

# **Buddha on the Rocks: Gandhāran connections through the Karakorum mountains**

M. E. J. J. van Aerde, A. D. L. Mohns, and A. G. Khan





# **The Global Connections of Gandhāran Art**

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Gandhāran 'Atlas' figure in schist; c. second century AD. Los Angeles County Museum of Art, inv. M.71.73.136 (Photo: LACMA Public Domain image.)



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# Contents

<b>Acknowledgements .....</b>	<b>iii</b>
<b>Illustrations .....</b>	<b>iii</b>
<b>Contributors .....</b>	<b>iv</b>
<b>Preface .....</b>	<b>vi</b>
Wannaporn Rienjang and Peter Stewart	
<b>Part 1 Global perspectives</b>	
<b>Gandhāra perceptions: the orbit of Gandhāran studies .....</b>	<b>1</b>
Warwick Ball	
<b>Part 2 The Graeco-Roman connection</b>	
<b>On the crossroads of disciplines: Tonio Hölscher's theory of understanding Roman art images and its implications for the study of western influence(s) in Gandhāran art .....</b>	<b>29</b>
Martina Stoye	
<b>Roman sarcophagi and Gandhāran sculpture .....</b>	<b>50</b>
Peter Stewart	
<b>The transmission of Dionysiac imagery to Gandhāran Buddhist art .....</b>	<b>86</b>
Tadashi Tanabe	
<b>Part 3 Asian influences</b>	
<b>Buddha on the Rocks: Gandhāran connections through the Karakorum mountains.....</b>	<b>105</b>
M. E. J. J. van Aerde, A. D. L. Mohns, and A. G. Khan	
<b>Buddhist temples in Tukhāristān and their relationships with Gandhāran traditions .....</b>	<b>135</b>
Shumpei Iwai	
<b>More Gandhāra than Mathurā: substantial and persistent Gandhāran influences provincialized in the Buddhist material culture of Gujarat and beyond, c. AD 400-550.....</b>	<b>156</b>
Ken Ishikawa	
<b>Part 4 Gandhāra and China</b>	
<b>Cross-cultural Buddhist monastery ruins on the Silk Road and beyond: the layout and function of Buddhist monasteries reconsidered .....</b>	<b>207</b>
Joy Yi Lidu	
<b>The sinicization and secularization of some Graeco-Buddhist gods in China .....</b>	<b>234</b>
Juping Yang	
<b>Part 5 Epilogue</b>	
<b>De-fragmenting Gandhāran art: advancing analysis through digital imaging and visualization ...</b>	<b>251</b>
Ian Haynes, Iwan Peverett, Wannaporn Rienjang with contributions by Luca M. Olivieri	



# Buddha on the Rocks: Gandhāran connections through the Karakorum mountains<sup>1</sup>

M. E. J. J. van Aerde, A. D. L. Mohns, and A. G. Khan

‘It is a capital mistake to theorize before one has data. Insensibly one begins to twist facts to suit theories, instead of theories to suit facts.’

(Arthur Conan Doyle, *A Scandal in Bohemia*).

## Introduction

This paper takes the Gandhāra region as a starting point to explore its wider connections as part of ancient trade networks from c. 300 BC onwards, often referred to as the early ‘Silk Road’.<sup>2</sup> While taking a bottom-up approach to the archaeological record, we focus especially on the role and spread of the diverse Buddhist imagery along the trade routes that have been found throughout the Karakorum mountain range.

In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Gandhāra scholars worked from a near-exclusive focus on Greek and Roman influences on the art of the region. During such early excavations, as evidenced by their reports, materials were often taken out of their original archaeological and environmental contexts upon discovery.<sup>3</sup> On the one hand this enabled the detailed art-historical studies of what was labelled ‘Graeco-Buddhism’,<sup>4</sup> while on the other hand it remains an obstacle when we wish to analyse patterns of connectivity based on the much wider archaeological contexts from sites that were excavated during these early periods. Even within such a larger scope, however, the unique character of Gandhāran Buddhist art is undeniable. The arrival of Mediterranean migrations in this region does seem to coincide with the development of naturalistic sculpting techniques that would so significantly shape the repertoire of especially Buddhist material culture in Gandhāra.<sup>5</sup> As a result of the unique character of its Buddhist material culture in particular, the Gandhāra region itself has in the past been studied mainly as a unique or even isolated region, too. But, as is evident from its extensive archaeological record, not only has the *material culture* of Gandhāra spread out well beyond its regional borders – the very *region* itself, in a geographical sense, was ideally positioned between the Hindu Kush and Karakorum mountain passes and the north-western ports of the Indian Subcontinent to enable routes of exchange and trade and their naturally resulting processes of connectivity. Gandhāra would have functioned as a natural nodal point, a crossroads, within a network of interaction, migration, and trade that went not

<sup>1</sup> The authors wish to thank Peter Stewart and Wannaporn Kay Rienjang for inviting Marike van Aerde to speak at the third Gandhāra Connections workshop ‘The Global Connections of Gandhāran Art’ at Oxford, 18th-19th March 2019, where part of this research was first presented. Van Aerde’s research project at Leiden University is generously supported by the Byvanck Fellowship (2017-2019). We also wish to thank Jason Neelis and Murtaza Taj, whose Applied Field Workshop of Gilgit-Baltistan Petroglyphs, hosted by the Karakorum International University (KIU) in July 2019, was attended by co-authors Alexander Mohns and Abdul Ghani Khan. We are particularly grateful to Muhammad Zahir (Hazara University) for his collaboration and expertise. Our gratitude is likewise due to the late Harald Hauptmann for sharing his data and experience concerning the Karakorum petroglyphs with Van Aerde (Heidelberg 2017-2018). We furthermore wish to thank Mike Kneppers for his work on the zoomorphic petroglyphs, and Beatriz Gomez de Silva for her assistance with the GIS charts.

<sup>2</sup> We choose not use this term, as ‘Road/Roads’ incorrectly implies linear connections, which is not in line with the currently available archaeological data. The term ‘Silk’ is another issue: it refers to a traditional focus on luxury goods (which was based on fragmentary reference only, such as Pliny, *Natural History*, 12.84), while the archaeological records of the ‘Silk Roads’ trade exchanges in fact contain substantially more utility material, such as food stuffs, transport ceramics, spices and herbs, etc. For that reason, we here refer to ancient routes of exchange or trade networks. See also Van Aerde & Zampierin 2020 on the (misinterpretation of) archaeological statistics of early Afro-Eurasian trade routes.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Cunningham 1970; Marshall 1918; 1951.

<sup>4</sup> As first coined by Foucher 1905. The concept is still in use today, e.g. see recently, Boardman 1994; 2015; Beckwith 2015.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Van Aerde (2018: 203-230) for a review of Gandhāran sculpture at Taxila in particular, where these contexts are discussed more widely. See also Rienjang & Stewart (eds.) 2018; 2019 for various recent explorations on Gandhāran art and sculpture.

only beyond the region but also beyond the Indian Subcontinent; and Buddhist art, it seems, became part of these processes.<sup>6</sup>

When we turn to the full (currently available) record of the output of Gandhāran material culture through these wider connections, sculpture and monumental architecture make up only a fraction of the quantity; ceramics are perhaps not the first or most artistically striking example that comes to mind when we think of Gandhāra, but pottery used for exchanging goods such as spices, herbs, oils, and rice constitutes by far the most numerous finds; in the ceramics assemblage from Taxila, for example, amphorae can be found with parallel types from Gujarat ports like Somnath and Devnīmori, Arikamedu in the Tamil south, but also from Roman Palmyra, Petra, and Jerusalem, thus concretely linking Gandhāra with a widespread network of international trade exchange.<sup>7</sup>

In this chapter, we propose to study early Buddhist iconography within this same, wider context of the routes that led to and from the Gandhāra region. In particular, we focus on the Karakorum mountain range and the currently available dataset of rock carvings from that region. Specifically, after a brief introduction to the Karakorum archaeological record and state of research, this paper will: 1) examine the diversity of Buddhist iconography encountered by means of a database of all relevant anthropomorphic Buddhist carvings and their analysis; 2) use the above-mentioned data, in combination with statistical analyses of *stūpa* and animal carvings, to determine distribution patterns by means of GIS, and subsequently identify specific routes and nodal points along them.

Throughout these analyses, we have found that certain patterns in Buddhist carvings coincide with specific nodal points and/or changes in the empirically determinable routes; in the concluding section of this paper we will elaborate on the implications of this and offer several new points for future discussion. On the one hand, we hope to contribute new knowledge concerning Buddhism depicted in the Karakorum range in particular, and on the other hand, we wish to contribute concrete new data about the wider connected networks that linked ancient Gandhāra directly to these mountains.

### **The Karakorum carvings: state of research**

The Karakorum mountain range borders modern-day India, Pakistan, and China. It includes the Gilgit-Baltistan region in Pakistan, the Ladakh region in India, and the south-western Xinjiang region of China, and is part of the western edge of the Himalayas along with the Hindu Kush range bordering Pakistan and Afghanistan in the West (Figure 1).

From 1979 onwards, the Karakorum Highway enabled accessibility to remoter mountain regions for archaeological campaigns. The first collections of petroglyph documentation were conducted by Jettmar and Dani, overseen by the German Research Council and subsequently by the Heidelberg Academy.<sup>8</sup> The long-running project entitled ‘Rock Carvings and Inscriptions along the Karakorum Highway’ was initiated in 1983 as a collaboration between the Department of Archaeology and Museums (DOAM),

<sup>6</sup> One specific archaeological example of the apparent link between Buddhism and trade across the Indian Subcontinent is found in the diverse merchant patron portraits (with recognizable attributes and iconography from Arabian, Mauryan, Kushan, Bactrian, and Mediterranean origins) at Buddhist *stūpas* throughout Gandhāra and at Buddhist monasteries during Kushan times. Many of these portraits have now been separated from their original *stūpas* and remain unpublished. Cf. collections at the National Museum of Delhi; Kurita 2003 (for private collection records). For a more in-depth exploration of the connection between Buddhist religion and trade, see especially Neelis 2011; 2014b: 3–17; 2014b: 45–64.

<sup>7</sup> For Taxila ceramics: Marshall 1951, vol. 3: pls. 121–128. For Devnīmori ceramics: Mehta 1966. For Somnath ceramics: Nanavati et al. 1971. For Arikamedu ceramics: Begley et al. 1996; 2004. Cf. Van Aerde & Zampierin 2020 for a review of Mediterranean ceramics at Arikamedu and Berenike specifically.

<sup>8</sup> Documented in the *Materien zur Archäologie der Nordgebiete Pakistans (MANP)* catalogues, volumes 1–11, edited by Gérard Fussman, Karl Jettmar, Ditte König et al. between 1989 and 1994, and subsequently from 2003 to 2011, under the auspices of the Heidelberg Academy.





Figure 1. Map of Central Asia. The research area is shown within black lines (Imagery: Google Earth, 2018)

Government of Pakistan, and its regional branch at Gilgit, and the Heidelberg Academy, initially under the guidance of Jettmar and from 1989 of Hauptman.<sup>9</sup> Since that time, fieldwork in the region has been rare and has prioritized digital documentation techniques and cultural heritage preservation.<sup>10</sup> The Karakorum carvings must be considered to be under immediate threat. Rescue campaigns prior to the planned construction of the Diamer-Basha dam were restricted: the completion of the dam will flood an estimated 37,051 carvings found on 5,928 rock clusters.<sup>11</sup> Moreover, the Buddhist carvings in particular have been targeted in situ across the Gilgit-Baltistan region and many have been damaged and/or hidden beneath paint, a practice that is continuing today and makes the study and continued preservation of these carvings increasingly hard.<sup>12</sup> Because of this current state of the research, the MANP catalogues remain the primary available data; as a result, to date no systematic or statistical analyses are published of the currently catalogued data and so in-depth interpretative studies of the carvings, their contexts, and their implications remain a lacuna.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Hauptman 2017-2018, personal communication.

<sup>10</sup> E.g. recent applied fieldwork hosted by Karakorum International University (KIU), supervised by J. Neelis and M. Taj (2019), as well as cultural heritage campaigns of the National College of Art at Lahore (at present unpublished). Currently no substantial excavations have been conducted at Karakorum sites, only petroglyph recording and surveys.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Schrader 2011: 1; Yusuf 2011; personal communication with Prof. Hauptmann, 2017. Cf. Van Aerde 2019: 459. Upon completion, the dam is estimated to submerge over twenty-four villages and households of c. 25,000 people. It would likewise submerge 110 kilometres of the Karakoram Highway. Cf. Khan 2018: 1.

<sup>12</sup> Personal experience (KIU, Gilgit), Mohns and Khan 2019, and additional personal communication with Muhammad Zahir (Hazara University).

<sup>13</sup> Van Aerde (2019: 455-480) provides a partial statistical analysis of Buddhist *stūpa* carvings. Khan (2018, MPhil thesis, supervised by Muhammad Zahir at Hazara University), provides a full statistical analysis of *stūpa* carvings from the Diamer-Basha region. So far, publications apart from the MANP catalogues have mainly focused on selected case-studies from the Karakorum dataset, in particular pertaining to Buddhist art/iconographical studies and inscriptions. Cf. Dani 1983; 1995; Jettmar 1985; Jettmar 1993 and 1989; Carter 1993; Fussman & Jettmar 1994; Zwalf 1996; Rhie 1999; Thewalt 2008; Hauptmann 2008 and 2009; Neelis 2014b.

In this chapter, we offer initial steps towards a more statistical as well as interpretative understanding of the currently known Karakorum carvings by focussing on the full dataset of anthropomorphic Buddhist carvings, and subsequently offering, in addition, cross-references related to *stūpa* and animal carving clusters. The existing documentation offers catalogues according to survey location, but does not include specified categorizations or subsequent interpretations of the carvings: combined, these records offer multiple thousands of carvings for analysis, including early Buddhist imagery of *stūpas* and anthropomorphic figures, as well as caravan and hunting scenes, a wide variety of animal species, and a diverse range of inscriptions.<sup>14</sup>

A first analysis of Buddhist imagery at selected field stations already indicated several remarkable location spikes and distribution clusters, and the preliminary emergence of patterns, which are explored in greater depth here.<sup>15</sup> First of all, *stūpa* imagery make up by far the majority of Buddhist imagery among the Karakorum carvings, and the distribution of the carvings is almost exclusively found on rock clusters along the Indus river banks. From among the *stūpa* carvings, direct parallels of Gandhāran *stūpa* architectural types could be detected, featuring specific decorative designs not found on early *stūpa* architecture beyond that region.<sup>16</sup> However, the majority of the carvings are small and of a basic style, of which parallels are found in the (less thoroughly documented) Hindu Kush mountains.<sup>17</sup> Another remarkable parallel, and so far the only similar *stūpa* carving recorded beyond the Indian Subcontinent, is found at the Hoq cave on Socotra island (Yemen): quite recently, a Belgian team of geologists discovered, unexpectedly, hundreds of rocks carvings and inscriptions within one of the island's sea caves, left by maritime traders from the first half of the first millennium AD who used Hoq cave as shelter while crossing the Indian Ocean.<sup>18</sup> Carved on a wall near a Sanskrit inscription that mentions the Gujarat Satraps, several small *stūpa* carvings were found (Figure 2).<sup>19</sup>

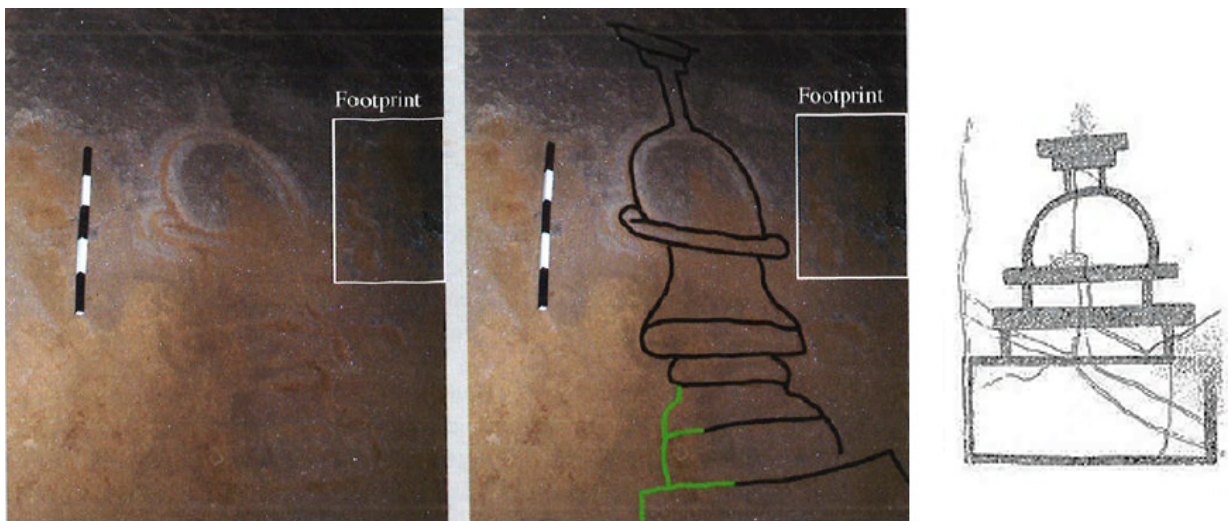


Figure 2. A *Stūpa* carving from Hoq cave and parallels from among the MANP volumes. (Images after: De Geest 2012: 252-254; Bandini-König & Von Hinüber 2001).

<sup>14</sup> As documented in the MANP volumes: Bennmann & König 1994; Fussman & König 1997; Bandini-König 1999; 2003; 2005; 2007; 2009; 2011; 2013; Bandini-König & Von Hinüber 2001; Bennmann 2001.

<sup>15</sup> These findings are discussed in Van Aerde 2019: 455-480. Initial conclusions and implications were presented at the European Association of Archaeologists (EAA) conference in Barcelona in 2018, as part of the session entitled *Advancing Global Rock Art as an Archaeological and Community Resource*.

<sup>16</sup> Van Aerde 2019: 465.

<sup>17</sup> Kotera et al. 1971: 40; fig. 38; Van Aerde 2019: 466.

<sup>18</sup> Socotra is briefly mentioned to that purpose in the *Periplus Maris Erythraei*. Recorded inscriptions from the Ho cave include Brahmi and Sanskrit, Ethiopian Ge'ez script, Palmyrene, and pre-Islamic Arabic, all from the first millennium AD. Cf. De Geest 2012: 232-253.

<sup>19</sup> De Geest 2012: 252-254.

This presents new evidence that not only (large quantities of) utility ceramics travelled from Gandhāra, via the ports of Gujarat, across the Indian Ocean, but that Buddhism (specifically, Buddhist imagery) also travelled as far as the southern edge of the Arabian Peninsula. In type, these stūpas show distinct similarities with the early, basic stūpa types known from the Karakorum carvings – and, as a result, they present a concrete indication of an apparently tangible connection between Buddhism and the expanding trade networks that flourished across and beyond the Indian Subcontinent from the first century BC to the first century AD.<sup>20</sup> Consequently, statistical and interpretative studies of the Buddhist carvings of the Karakorum range are highly relevant for our understanding of the spread of Buddhism as a religion and of its practical application as ‘lived religion’ along these mountain routes.<sup>21</sup> Moreover, they provide substantial archaeological evidence for in-depth study of the connecting patterns between Buddhism and trade routes. And lastly, as an integral part of the complete dataset of Karakorum rock art, along with animal scenes and inscriptions, they provide invaluable data to help reconstruct the actual, physical routes that led from the Gandhāra region to the East.

Our first step, to this end, is to provide the full overview and interpretative analysis of all currently recorded anthropomorphic Buddhist carvings. In the subsequent part, where we turn to distribution statistics, we will also include data concerning the record of stūpa carvings as well as our initial progress in cataloguing all recorded zoomorphic carvings according to taxa and distribution.

### Anthropomorphic Buddhist carvings

The full dataset presented in the Appendix consists of all recognizably Buddhist images that feature full or partial elements of anthropomorphic depiction. The current dataset consists of 118 individual carving entries. Among these, alongside the anthropomorphic images, some depictions of animals, stūpas, and inanimate objects are likewise included when they constitute integral parts of the anthropomorphic scene in question. For the purpose of our analysis, we have devised four main categories: the Buddha, bodhisattvas, humans (devotees), and spirits/celestials. In our Database 2 additional categories are included: animals as part of an anthropomorphic scene, and inanimate objects as part of an anthropomorphic scene. The statistical distribution of the four main categories is given in Figure 3.<sup>22</sup>

#### *The Buddha*

In total thirty individual, clearly defined images of the Buddha were found, from four different locations: Chilas (four), Thalpan (twenty-one), Shing Nala (four) and Shatial (one *jātaka* scene).<sup>23</sup> While all these recorded depictions feature the recognizable attributes of the Buddha (such as the *uṣṇīṣa* and the *ūrṇā*), it is immediately evident that they do not follow a single or even remotely uniform stylistic pattern. In fact, they seem to be evidence of a remarkable variety of different depicted attributes and characteristics, as well as what appear to be diverse carving methods, as will be explored in more detail below.

<sup>20</sup> As likewise raised by Neelis 2011; 2014a: 3–17; 2014b: 45–64.

<sup>21</sup> The concept of ‘lived religion’ was suggested by Jörg Rüpke (2016) for Roman religious contexts, but could be more widely applicable.

<sup>22</sup> Fussman & Bandini-König 1997 (Shatial data); Bandini-König & Von Hinüber 2001 (Shing Nala data); Bandini-König 2003 (Chilas Bridge data); Bandini-König 2003; 2005 (Thalpan data).

<sup>23</sup> At Shatial there are two additional possible Buddha figures, but they are only partially preserved and unclearly defined, providing only an abstract outline without iconographical details, and for that reason they are not included in our present database. The only clearly defined Buddha at Shatial is from rock 34, which is part of a depiction of a *jātaka* scene, containing an image of the Buddha in one of his previous lives as a bodhisattva. This is an important distinction, as in our database (Appendix, Table 1) we aim to maintain depictions of bodhisattvas and the Buddha as distinct categories, and have therefore grouped this carving under ‘*jātaka* scenes’.



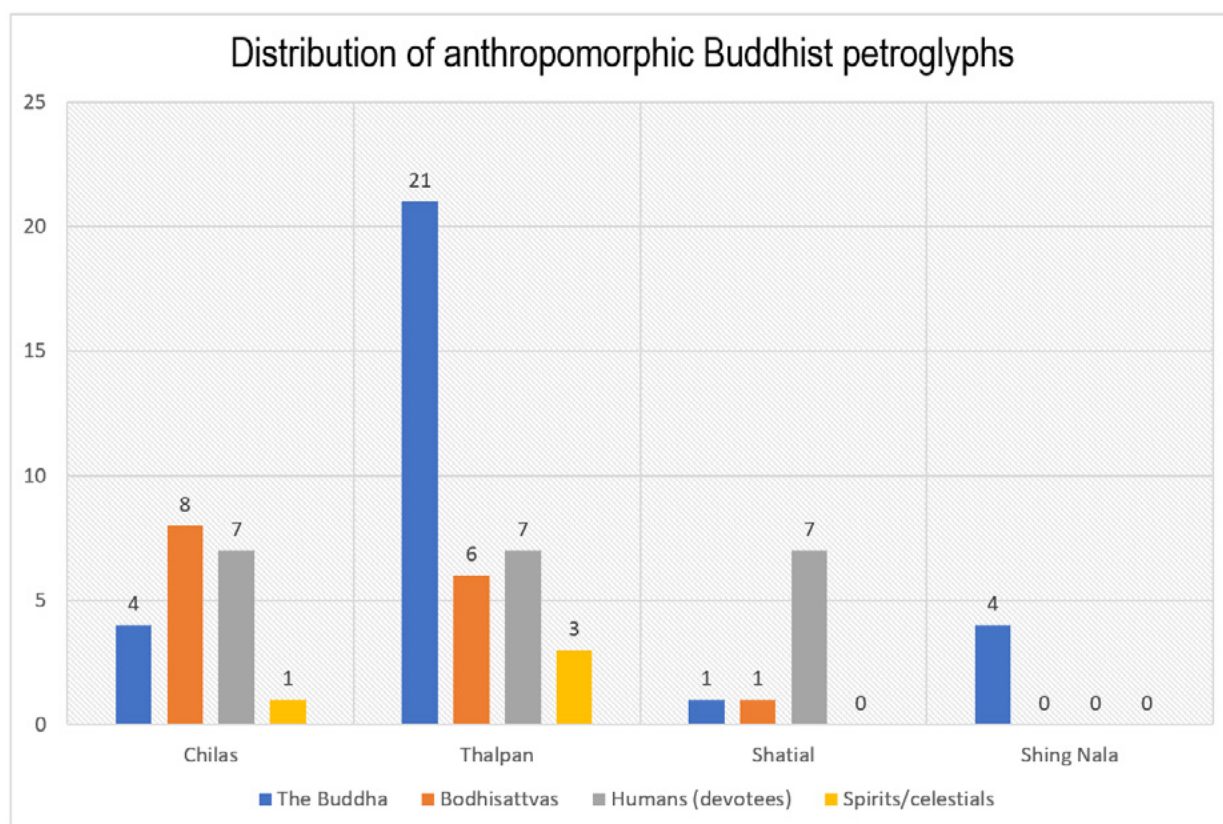


Figure 3. Graph showing the distribution of anthropomorphic Buddhist petroglyphs (by M.E.J.J. Van Aerde & A.D.L. Mohns, 2019).

### **Bodhisattvas**

In Buddhist cosmology, a bodhisattva is recognized as an individual who is on his or her way to attain enlightenment.<sup>24</sup> Unlike the image of the Buddha, bodhisattvas can include any living being, either animal or human. Moreover, the *jātaka* tales of the Buddha's former lives portray the Buddha Shakyamuni as a bodhisattva. For this reason, images of bodhisattvas are deliberately different from depictions of the Buddha; they are mostly recognizable by their specific characteristics of adornment or in the context of the depicted scene of which they are part. In total fifteen bodhisattvas were found within the dataset. The largest concentration is located at Chilas (eight), followed by Thalpan (six) and Shatial (one). Among these, Avalokiteśvara and Maitreya are the most clearly identifiable bodhisattvas in the dataset, each with three depictions, followed by the bodhisattva Mañjuśrī in two carvings at Thalpan and Chilas. In addition, there are three recognizable *jātaka* scenes that depict the Buddha as bodhisattva, one each at Chilas, Thalpan, and Shatial. The remaining four bodhisattvas are unidentified; three of them (64:16, 84:2, and 8:1) seem to be depictions of either Mañjuśrī or Maitreya, but the lack of clearly determining characteristics/attributes (such as Maitreya's water flask) forces us to classify these images as unidentified.

### **Humans (devotees)**

The majority of human images within the dataset are representative of practitioners and devotees of Buddhism. In total there are twenty-one human depictions within the dataset that cannot be classified as the Buddha or bodhisattvas. These images are found at Chilas (seven), Thalpan (seven), and Shatial

<sup>24</sup> Bodhisattvas occur in Buddhist scriptures since the earliest *jātaka* texts and the *Buddhacarita*, and are part of some of the earliest known examples of anthropomorphic Buddhist material culture. Cf. Nagar 1993; Shaw 2006; Krishnan 2009.

(seven), but none at Shing Nala that can be clearly identified as such. Several of these human images, especially at Chilas, are related to/clustered alongside *stūpa* depictions (e.g. groups 30:1, 30:2, 64:18 and scene 31:A). Human depictions associated with the Buddha are usually part of a specific scene from the Buddha's life (e.g. 194:K, depicting the Buddha's first sermon to his five future disciples at Sarnath). In some cases, the human figures associated with the Buddha are less clearly identifiable (e.g. 195:I, which contains an image of the Buddha alongside what appear to be several attendants who cannot be identified as bodhisattvas but may represent devotees/Buddhist practitioners).<sup>25</sup>

### *Spirits/celestials*

The number of carvings depicting spirits and/or celestial beings from Buddhist mythology is significantly lower than the aforementioned categories. The dataset contains only four, from Thalpan (three) and Chilas (one). Nonetheless, they do form an important role in determining the context of the image clusters of which they are part (e.g. 195:W, which depicts the scene from the life of the Buddha known as the 'Temptation of Māra', with two celestial beings flanking the Buddha who can be identified as the daughters of Māra, which is directly reminiscent of the well-known descriptions of this passage).<sup>26</sup>

### *A note on non-anthropomorphic depictions*

In many of the above-mentioned carving groups, non-anthropomorphic images constitute an integral part of the specific scenes depicted. These include animals, smaller inanimate objects, and *stūpas*, and in some cases their presence is crucial for identifying specific Buddhist scenes (e.g. 30:B from Chilas, which depicts the Tigress *Jātaka*, and 30:X from Thalpan, which depicts the Ṛṣipañcaka *Jātaka*). The identification of these scenes relies directly on the specific animals depicted, namely, the tigress and cubs in 30:B and the pig, crow, pigeon, snake, and deer in 30:X). In addition, the presence of recognizable *stūpas* in direct relation to anthropomorphic figures helps us to interpret practical aspects of these carvings as well, as *stūpas* themselves are objects of Buddhist devotion and worship, and their functionality thus translates, by association, to the anthropomorphic figures with which they are depicted.

While all our basic interpretations of the relevant carvings are included in Table 1 (Appendix), many of the depictions necessitated an in-depth comparative analysis because of the rather complex variety encountered, in terms of iconographical content, rendering techniques, and the more elusive aspects of artistic style and its related chronological nuances. While style and iconography cannot be regarded as an exact or empirical means to determine chronology, it cannot be ignored that many of the Karakorum anthropomorphic Buddhist depictions seem to suggest a long-term continuation of a Buddhist presence and the changing artistic influences that went along with these processes up until at least the eighth-ninth century AD. At Thalpan and Chilas Bridge especially, a variety of iconographies and styles are evident. In line with this, we here discuss five selected carving groups, representing all four above categories, from either Thalpan or Chilas specifically.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>25</sup> Some of these figures appear to be sweeping the ground around the depicted *stūpa* and Buddha, while others kneel down beside it. Based on this visual reference only, they may be devotees and/or attendants. With the current data it is not possible to tell whether these figures were a later addition to the *stūpa* and Buddha carving or created simultaneously to form a particular scene (195:I presents the clearest example of such a potential scene).

<sup>26</sup> The demon Mara and his daughters occur in many Buddhist traditions and texts, including the *Buddhacarita* and the *Māra-samyutta* passage in the *Samyutta Nikaya* scripture. On the representation of Māra throughout Buddhist art and literature, see Guruge 1991: 183-208.

<sup>27</sup> Owing to size limitations we cannot include our full analyses here. This chapter offers a selection that we deemed most suited to the context of this particular publication. We refer to the full database (Table 1) of anthropomorphic Buddhist carvings for further reference.



Figure 4. Carving 64:16 (Chilas); Buddha Vipasya seated in dhyānamudrā. (After Bandini-König 2003, table 2.)



Figure 5. Carving 64:18 (Chilas); Sīṇhoṭa (devotee). (After Bandini-König 2003, table 1.)



Figure 6. Seated Crowned Buddha. Kashmir, c. tenth century AD. (After Pal 1975: fig. 32).



Figure 7. Chinese seated Buddha. Gilt bronze, dated c. AD 338. (After Rhie 1999: fig. 2.2).

### 1. *The Buddha: 64:16 (35 x 101 cm, Chilas)*

Carving 64:16 of a seated Buddha in *dhyānamudrā* constitutes a unique image within the dataset (Figure 4). Most depictions of the Buddha present him as an ascetic in plain robes, but here we find him depicted as a crowned and richly adorned figure also known as the ‘Bejewelled Buddha’.<sup>28</sup> In a public lecture in 2011, Hinüber argued that this is an image of the Buddha *Vipaśya*, which is not frequently shown in Buddhist material culture, based on the inscription associated with the image (64:17).<sup>29</sup> Also associated with this image is a human individual (64:18; Figure 5), which appears to be a devotee and, quite possibly, the donor or patron of these carvings; this person can be identified as *Siṃhoṭa* from the same inscriptions associated with this particular Buddha image.<sup>30</sup> This human figure is depicted wearing garments that can be recognised as Central Asian or possibly related to more Southern regions.<sup>31</sup> This *Siṃhoṭa* figure holds an incense burner in his right hand and a *mala*, bead necklace for meditation, in his left. The figure has been rendered in a simplistic, nearly abstract manner with little elaboration of his garments or personal adornments, apart from the objects in his hands and his headgear.<sup>32</sup>

This image of the Buddha *Vipaśya* itself can be compared to several bronze sculptures from Kashmir, such as the seated crowned Buddha in Figure 6.<sup>33</sup> Remarkably similar clothing and crown iconography is apparent in these Kashmir sculptures and is only known from this region, and in some other parts of eastern India.<sup>34</sup> These bronze sculptures from Kashmir have been generally dated to the eighth-tenth century AD, which indicates the period in which Buddhism truly flourished throughout these regions and that coincides with the Tang Dynasty era in China, which led to a great flourishing of trade networks as well.<sup>35</sup> Apart from these similar clothing and adornment styles used for Buddhist iconography in Kashmir, this particular Buddha *Vipaśya* also shows another clothing style comparable to Buddhist gilt bronze figurines known from various Chinese sites, from the early to mid-first millennium AD (Figure 7), namely, the specific shape of the round, drooping drapery of the lower robe and the pleated folds across the wrist, which is also observed in 30:22, 64:14, 172:1, 194:65, and 38:13 in this dataset.<sup>36</sup> These Chinese bronzes, in turn, may have had some manner of influence from much older sculptures, such as those known from the first to fourth century AD Kara-Tepe monastery in Uzbekistan, which is well-known for its Gandhāran sculptural influences and where perhaps the oldest example of this round, drooping drapery style was found.<sup>37</sup> Lastly, another remarkable comparison is found in the terracotta figure of a Bejewelled Buddha found at the settlement and monastery at Fondukistan in Afghanistan, dated from the second-seventh century AD, which is likewise known for its Gandhāran Buddhist art; the three-fold triangular shape of the jewelled chest garment is remarkably similar to the one worn by our Bejewelled Buddha carving from Chilas.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>28</sup> Kim 1997: 235.

<sup>29</sup> Inscription 64:17 in Bandini-König 2003: 191-196. Cf. Von Hinüber’s public lecture on ‘Bronzes of the Ancient Buddhist Kingdom of Gilgit’, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 2011.

<sup>30</sup> As mentioned by Hinüber in New York 2011 (but remains unpublished).

<sup>31</sup> Jettmar 1987: 22.

<sup>32</sup> Parallels for devotees or possible *stūpa* donors can be found at Thalpan stone 63:1, which features a nearly identical figure holding prayer beads and incense burner (Bandini-König 2003: table 1, as well as 116:5, depicting a kneeling abstract human figure beside a large elaborate *stūpa* and a seated Buddha. Bandini-König 2005: table 83. Other possible devotees are 30:2 and 30:21 at Thalpan (Bandini-König 2003: table 1).

<sup>33</sup> Pal 1975: 106 (fig. 32): seated crowned Buddha, Kashmir, dated to c. tenth century AD.

<sup>34</sup> Krishnan 1996: 132.

<sup>35</sup> On the archaeology of Tang Dynasty, its capital Chang’an, and its connection to global trade networks, cf. Liu 2010: 62-108; Hansen 2016: 579-881.

<sup>36</sup> For full references see Table 1 (Appendix) entries on these particular carvings: from Chilas, Thalpan and one at Shing Nala. Cf. Bandini-König & Von Hinüber 2001; Bandini-König 2003; 2005.

<sup>37</sup> Rhie 1999: 34.

<sup>38</sup> The ‘Buddha adorned with three-cornered cloak’ was found at the Ghorband Valley, Fondukistan Monastery, Niche D, and dated to c. seventh century AD. It is made of unbaked clay, 72 x 24 cm. First published in Klimburg-Salter 1989: pl. XXXII. Currently at Musée Guimet, Inv. no. MG 18960. (Owing to copyright, no image of this famous work is reproduced here.)

These parallels may indicate a form of continuity, then, within both the Kashmiri and wider Karakorum regions; Kashmiri Buddhist material culture is generally regarded to have been strongly influenced by the Gandhāran style from the early first millennium AD onwards and this may be similarly true for Buddhist imagery throughout the Karakorum.<sup>39</sup> We might speculate, then, that this process of adaptability and addition of diverse stylistic and iconographical aspects would have continually been accumulated, up to the eighth-ninth centuries at least, by artisans depicting Buddhist scenes such as that represented in carving 64:16 at Chilas.

## 2. *Bodhisattva*: 63:6 (53x133cm, Chilas)

Carving 63:6 (Figure 8) presents an image of a bodhisattva standing upright, surrounded by a decorated halo reminiscent of leaves sprouting from the lotus flower pedestal upon which he stands. His hands are in *abhaya mudrā* and he wears an elaborate crown, a sash across his torso, and decorated garments covering his lower body; he is moreover adorned with jewellery, a beaded necklace and bracelets. In his left hand he carries a water vessel, which is known as a *kamaṇḍalu*. This iconography, especially in respect to the *kamaṇḍalu*, garments, and headdress, clearly identify this figure as Maitreya.<sup>40</sup> In the dataset, an almost identical carving can be found (64:19) in close proximity to this one and to carving 63:4, which portrays the bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara and shares several stylistic similarities, including the lower garment, decorated halo, and crown (Figure 9). It is noteworthy, however, that this Maitreya stands on a lotus flower that is placed in turn upon a pedestal, giving the impression of a physical sculpture rendered in a two-dimensional carving. Another unique aspect is the Maitreya's pectoral area, which has been rendered to give the appearance of a muscular upper torso, whereas the Avalokiteśvara of 63:4 is portrayed with a very slender physique. The three-pointed and leaf-like crown worn by both this Maitreya and Avalokiteśvara show a remarkable similarity to crowns found in the tombs at the site of Tillya Tepe in Afghanistan, specifically tomb VI, which have been dated to the first century BC–first century AD, coinciding with the particular flourishing of Gandhāran Buddhist art at the time.<sup>41</sup>

Another parallel is the Maitreya figure 64:19 at Chilas, which has iconography nearly identical to that of 63:6.<sup>42</sup> Another comparison for the Maitreya in particular is a bronze sculpture from the Swat region (Figure



Figure 8. Carving 63:6 (Chilas): a bodhisattva (Maitreya). (After Bandini-König 2003, table 3.)



Figure 9. Carving 63:4 (Chilas): a bodhisattva (Avalokiteśvara). (After Bandini-König 2003, table 3.)

<sup>39</sup> On the development of Buddhist art in Kashmir see Kaul 2005: 159–171; Rhie 1999: 162–239. Cf. Pal 1975; Krishnan 2009.

<sup>40</sup> Kim 1997: 4; Iida 2016, trans. of Taisho vol. 14, 454 (on the descent of Maitreya Buddha and his enlightenment). Maitreya is known as the next Buddha to succeed the most recent one, Buddha Śākyamuni, who was also known as Siddhārtha Gautama.

<sup>41</sup> Hiebert & Cambon 2008: 284. The crown from tomb VI at Tillya Tepe is currently in the National Museum of Afghanistan, Kabul. Owing to copyright restrictions, an image of the famous crown is not reproduced here.

<sup>42</sup> Bandini-König 2003: table 4 (see also Table 1 in Appendix).



Figure 10. Standing Maitreya from the Swat Valley. Bronze, inlaid with copper and silver. Lost; formerly in Berlin. (After Barrett 1962, fig 20.)

10); this bronze was originally located in Berlin but has been lost since the Second World War.<sup>43</sup> Despite its lack of halo, the bronze in the photograph shows remarkably similar iconography and stylistically identical elements, such as the shape of the water vessel, the lower decorated drapery, the sash, beaded necklace, position of arm bracelets, muscular torso, and the leaf-like pointed crown and headgear, with tassels that flow down from the side of the crown onto the Maitreya's shoulders. Some of these iconographical similarities can also be found in the seated Maitreya statue dated to Kushan-era Gandhāra, first-second century AD, currently at the National Museum of Tokyo.<sup>44</sup> Although seated and rendered in a more clearly naturalistic style, this Maitreya wears a similar lower garment and has a muscularly defined physique, but especially the beaded necklace, arm bracelets, and the tassels that fly down in a wide angle from the smaller headgear/crown are comparable to the Maitreya carving at Chilas, while they do not seem to be typical attributes of Gandhāran Maitreya sculpture overall.<sup>45</sup>



### 3. The Buddha and bodhisattva: 194:151 and 194:152 (42 x 57cm and 7 x 11cm, Thalpan)

The carvings 194:151 and 194:152 are part of one scene, depicting the Buddha seated with his hands held in *varadamudrā*, the wish-giving *mudrā*. He wears ascetic robes that are carved to give the impression of a much lighter fabric texture compared to the double or multiple pleated technique found in many of the other Buddha carvings at Thalpan (e.g. 30:22, 172:1, 194:65, 195:429). The double-lined halo is of a simple design, undecorated, and the Buddha is seated upon a lotus flower with two petal rows. The face and body present a more naturalistic rendering of the anthropomorphic physique than the other anthropomorphic carvings in the data set, even offering a suggestion of subtle perspective to give a more three-dimensional quality to the image; the seated Buddha is shown at a nearly three-quarter angle, while all other anthropomorphic Buddhas in the dataset are rendered frontally. The contours of the body are very round and give the impression of an overall smooth rendering, in part by means of the thinner carving lines used compared to the majority of the other anthropomorphic carvings. The Buddha's facial features seem reminiscent of the Gupta style recognizable from the third to sixth century AD across the Indian Subcontinent, which emphasizes fleshy lips and the roundedness of the face (the fleshy lips can also be observed in carvings 30:22 at Thalpan and 38:13 at Shing Nala, but without any of the other characteristics of naturalism, perspective, and thinner carving lines).<sup>46</sup>

Accompanying this Buddha is a richly adorned bodhisattva figure rendered in the same style and also at a subtle three-quarter angle, and his head tilted slightly to the right. He wears an elaborately adorned, pointed crown (which, in turn, is reminiscent of the bodhisattva crowns discussed above), lightly rendered garments and multiple types of jewellery such as earrings and bracelets. In his right hand he holds a delicate, thin flower, while in his left hand he holds a very recognizable rendering of the *Vajra* (lightning bolt), which

<sup>43</sup> Filigenzi 2015: 106-107; Barrett 1962: fig. 20.

<sup>44</sup> National Museum of Tokyo, currently on display, no further details known (it is listed only as Kushan, from Gandhāra, north India). Owing to copyright restrictions, no photograph of the sculpture is reproduced here.

<sup>45</sup> Cf. Harle 1994: 59-71; Rhie 1999: 1-4; Kim 1997; Krishnan 2009 on various Maitreya portrayals. The recognizable attributes here are the crown, physique, water flask, and prayer beads. In this case also the tassels of the headgear and specific details of the jewellery and clothing provide a parallel.

<sup>46</sup> Harle 1994: 87-122.



Figure 11. Carvings 194:151 and 194:152; the Buddha and bodhisattva (Thalpan). (After Bandini-König 2005, table 4.)



Figure 12. Cave 1, Ajanta Caves: Mural of Vajrapāṇi, 25. (Photo: copyright Archaeological Survey of India, ASI.)

makes the figure directly identifiable as the bodhisattva *Vajrapāṇi*, the well-known *yakṣa* disciple, attendant, and guardian of the Buddha.<sup>47</sup> Especially with the rise of *Vajrayāna* Buddhism mainly across the north of the Subcontinent from around the third century AD (coinciding with the rise of the Gupta Empire), similar depictions of *Vajrapāṇi* become very common among Buddhist imagery. In respect to its technical rendering, the particular style of drapery is recognizable as the so-called ‘clinging technique’ of the garments around the legs and arms made popular in Sarnath during the Gupta era from around the late fourth century onwards.<sup>48</sup> The smaller, close folds of *Vajrapāṇi*’s arm drapery are likewise indicative of the Gupta tradition.<sup>49</sup> An interesting parallel may be found in the *Vajrapāṇi* depicted as part of the Buddhist wall paintings known from the Ajanta caves in Maharashtra (first phase dated c. second century BC up to the early fifth century AD, and the second phase c. fifth to seventh century AD).<sup>50</sup>

While this Ajanta painting (Figure 12), most likely from the late Gupta era, is notably more rich in detail and elaborate in appearance than carving 194:152, both depictions of *Vajrapāṇi* are rendered in recognizable naturalistic style; they are positioned in a slight three-quarter angle with head tilted to the right; they both hold a thin, delicate flower in their right hand (the left hand of the Ajanta figure is too damaged to recognise a *Vajra*); they both wear a remarkably similar, elaborate crown with pointed tips and lush decorations; and they each wear long earrings and a lower garment tied at the waist by a thin sash and the fabric rendered according to the ‘clinging technique’, giving the appearance that the garment clings tightly to the upper legs. Consequently, both the Ajanta painting and the Thalpan carving reflect recognizable elements of late Gupta style and technique in their respective depictions of the *yakṣa* bodhisattva *Vajrapāṇi* and his attributes.

#### 4. Celestials: 95:428 and 195:430 (11x30cm and 15x30cm, Thalpan)

This carving group depicts an important scene from the life of the Buddha, the temptation of *Māra*: the demon *Māra* attempts to prevent the Buddha’s enlightenment by tempting him with earthly pleasures, therefore he sends

<sup>47</sup> On *Vajrapāṇi* in narrative Buddhist reliefs, see e.g. Santoro 1979: 293–341; Zin 2009: 73–88.

<sup>48</sup> Rani Tiwari 1998: 73.

<sup>49</sup> Ganguly 1987: 74, 108; Harle 1994: 111–117; Rani Tiwari 1998: 73–76.

<sup>50</sup> See most recently, Spink & Yaguchi 2014: 16–64. The Ajanta complex features thirty caves with elaborate paintings and carvings. The excavation reports of the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) are currently unpublished.



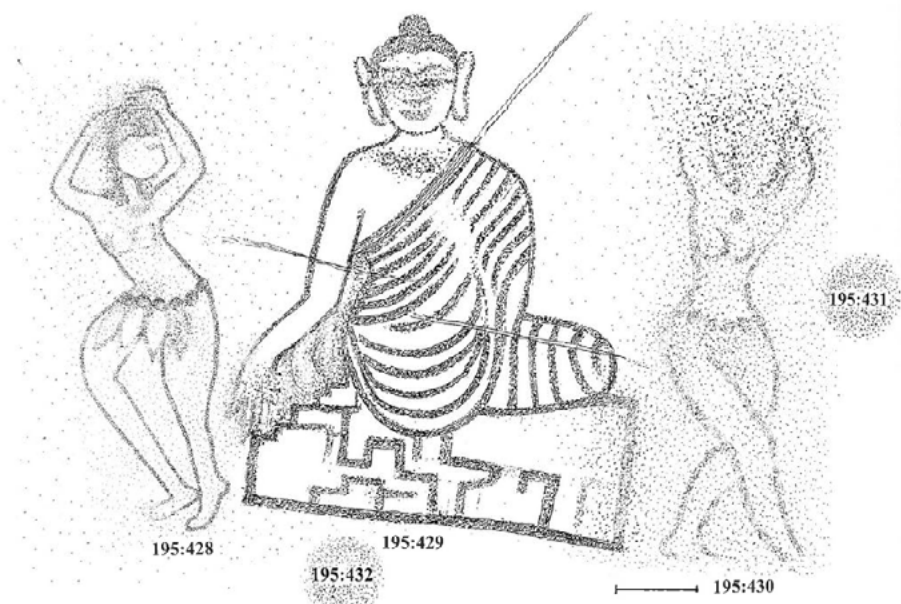


Figure 13. Carvings 95:428 and 195:430: the Buddha and the daughters of Māra (Thalpan). (After Bandini-König 2005, table 94.)

his daughters to seduce him, but the Buddha resists them and gains his enlightenment (Figure 13).<sup>51</sup> The Buddha in this scene (carving 195:429) holds his arm positioned in *bhūmisparśamudrā*, touching the earth in order to call upon the earth goddess to witness his enlightenment. The celestial beings known as the daughters of Māra (carvings 195:428 and 195:430) are depicted as half-naked women in dancing positions, flanking the Buddha.<sup>52</sup> They have their backs turned to him and their hands held joined above their heads; this could be interpreted either as their dancing or as their flight from the Buddha as he reaches enlightenment. The carving style of the two celestials seems more naturalistic than that of the Buddha figure they flank, although judging by the similar thickness of the carving lines and the rounded shapes of the body silhouettes, all three figures seem part of a single scene and were most likely carved simultaneously. Especially for the celestials, a basic attempt has been made at creating proportional body parts and natural postures, by means of perspective and overlap. A remarkable comparison for the dancing posture of the daughters of Māra is known from Gandhāran relief panels.<sup>53</sup>

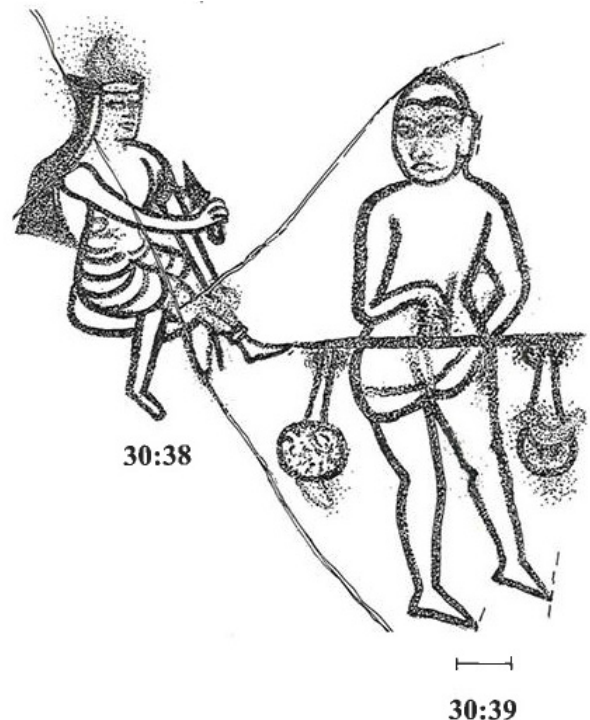


Figure 14. Carving group 30:D, Sibi jātaka scene (Thalpan). (After Bandini-König 2003, table 53.)

<sup>51</sup> For an overview of the Buddha's encounters with Māra, see Guruge 1991: 183-208.

<sup>52</sup> In the *Samyutta Nikaya* scripture 4.25, v. 518, the three daughters of Māra are described as stripping naked in front of the Buddha in order to tempt him. This passage seems to correspond to the specific scene depicted by the rock carving discussed here.

<sup>53</sup> A particularly notable parallel is provided by a schist relief in the Museum Rietberg, inv. no. RVI 25. However, the unpublished relief was acquired from antiquities market and does not have a verified collection history or archaeological provenance. It was



Figure 15. Gandhāran relief of the Śibi Jātaka. London, British Museum, inv. 1912,1221.1 (Photo: courtesy of the Warburg Institute, London.)

the Buddha and the dancing celestials required to tell this tale, there are distinct differences in the rendering of garments and attributes.

##### 5. Śibi jātaka: 30:38 and 30:39 (51x30cm and 40x64cm, Thalpan)

The scene catalogued as 30:D consists of two anthropomorphic figures (30:38 and 30:39), flanked by several *stūpa* carvings on the same rock surface, and can be identified as a carving of the Śibi Jātaka, which tells of a king (a former life of the Buddha) who, out of compassion, feeds part of his own flesh to a hawk in order to save the life of the dove that the hawk wished to eat. The scene from our dataset offers a simple, visual version of the story: the first anthropomorphic figure (30:38) is recognizable as King Śibi himself, who is seated and has raised his right arm while brandishing a knife over his own left arm. Beside him stands another man who holds a set of scales (30:39), used to measure the right amount of flesh that the king offers the hawk in exchange for the dove, which is depicted within one of the scales for balance (the right scale in the image, on the figure's left). The opposite scale contained an undefined round mass, which seems to represent the king's flesh. In respect to clothing and attributes, King Śibi can be recognized according to his rank by his more elaborated robes and the adorned headgear he wears, which is a stark contrast with the nudity of the second figure. The Śibi Jātaka is often depicted in Buddhist material culture, e.g. at the above-mentioned Gupta-era Ajanta cave paintings, as well as in several relief panels from the Gandhāra region, around the first to third century AD. One particular Gandhāran relief is strikingly similar (Figure 15; cf. also Stewart's chapter in the present volume).<sup>54</sup>

This image shows a more elaborated visual rendering of the *jātaka*, including many more individuals present at the scene: to the left of the scale-bearer we see a bodhisattva carrying the *vajra*, while King Śibi is once again seated to the left of the panel, in similar adorned garments and headgear, while attendants cut flesh from his exposed leg, and with a bird seated directly below him (which could indicate either the hawk or the dove). But most interesting about this particular relief is the depiction of the scales: the detailed rendering of their various components is directly comparable to those in carving 30:39. This would indicate that this particular type of scales, with measuring parts apparently made out of cloth or hide that are tied with rope to a long stick, would have been in use and thus the most recognizable

displayed in the 'Next Stop Nirvana' exhibition at Museum Rietberg, Zurich, 2019.

<sup>54</sup> London, British Museum, inv. no. OA 1912,1221.1; Zwalf 1996: 85, pl. 136.

type of weighing tool for a visual narrative in both the regions where the relief was made (Gandhāra, northern Pakistan) and the Karakorum carvings to the north-east.

Taken overall, the Karakorum dataset of anthropomorphic Buddhist carvings consists of highly diverse depictions in varying styles that contain recognizable, iconic components from Central Asian and Chinese material culture, the Gandhāra region, and the wider Indian Subcontinent throughout the first millennium AD. From our current analyses, pertaining to the individual anthropomorphic images of the Buddha and bodhisattvas, we have been able to discern two images that contain Central Asian styles (63:4, 194:65), one image that is comparable to Buddhist sculptures known from Kashmir (64:16), one image that can be compared to sculpture known from the Swat region (63:6), one image that is most comparable to parallels from the post-Gupta period (194:151, 152), and two images that show evidence of a combination of stylistic components from China, Central Asia and regions such as Kashmir and Swat (64:14, 30:22), with an additional three images that seem to lack a clear stylistic identification (30:18, 38:13, 172:1). We must note here, however, that while some depictions give clear indications for a certain stylistic influence from a particular region, this is in most cases based on the presence of several important recognizable characteristics or attributes, such as the type of crowns worn by the Buddha or bodhisattvas. But alongside these indications, in many instances, the same images also contain indications of different stylistic influences at the same time. Essentially, in most cases we seem to encounter a kind of fusion or mixture of multiple styles, sometimes even from multiple time periods, converging in these carvings. It appears to be this flexibility and adaptability that produced this particular and, indeed, unique dataset of Karakorum anthropomorphic Buddhist depictions.

## Distribution

Following the selected analyses above, in this final section we ask what new insights can be gleaned from a wider statistical analysis of the distribution of the Karakorum carvings throughout the mountain range. Studies concerned with Buddhist art and the spread of the religion have primarily highlighted examples of Buddhist carvings from among these datasets, but such a selected focus does not allow for a comprehensive overview and, subsequently, cannot give an empirical interpretation of the carvings' statistical distribution through the mountains and the implications this might have for human-environment relationships, specific indications of physical routes, and emerging patterns and/or variables of human travel, presence, and religious practice throughout the Karakorum. To that purpose, we combined three statistical datasets of 1) anthropomorphic Buddhist carvings, 2) *stūpa* carvings, and 3) zoomorphic carvings for our analysis here.<sup>55</sup> The first noticeable aspect is quantity. In total, 118 identifiable anthropomorphic Buddhist images have so far been documented among all known carving sites. In comparison, a total of 485 *stūpa* carvings have been identified in the Diamer-Basha reservoir area (Chilas, Shing Nala, Gichi Nala, Oshibat, Dadam Das).<sup>56</sup> Combined with *stūpa* carvings recorded at Thalpan (937) and Shatial (156), this dataset comes to a current total of 1,578 *stūpa* carvings.<sup>57</sup> The total number of zoomorphic carvings currently documented at all known carving locations is 2,976, with a

<sup>55</sup> Data pertaining to the anthropomorphic Buddhist carvings was gathered and analysed by Alexander Mohns (2018) – is this also a bibliographical reference? If so, please could you provide details?, and the statistical analysis of zoomorphic carvings was conducted by Mike Kneppers (2019) – is this also a bibliographical reference, if so, please could you provide details? , both as part of Van Aerde's project at Leiden University. The statistical analysis of *stūpa* carvings in the Diamer-Basha region was conducted by Abdul Ghani Khan and supervised by Muhammad Zahir at Hazara University, Pakistan (2018) at Hazara University, Pakistan. The additional statistical data for *stūpas* and Shatial and Thalpan is from Van Aerde 2019: 455-480.

<sup>56</sup> From this total, 352 *stūpas* can be securely identified, the remaining 133 carvings are less well preserved or somewhat unclear in their design, even though their general form and shape is highly reminiscent of Buddhist *stūpas* (Khan 2018, MPhil research conducted under supervision of Muhammad Zahir). Cf. on the interpretation and implications of Karakorum *stūpa* carvings: Van Aerde 2019 460-460.

<sup>57</sup> All data based on MANP vol. 1, 2, 6–11, pertaining to Oshibat, Shatial, Thalpan and Chilas field stations: Bennmann and König 1994; Fussman and Bandini-König 1997; Bandini-König 2003; 2005; 2007; 2009; 2011; 2013.

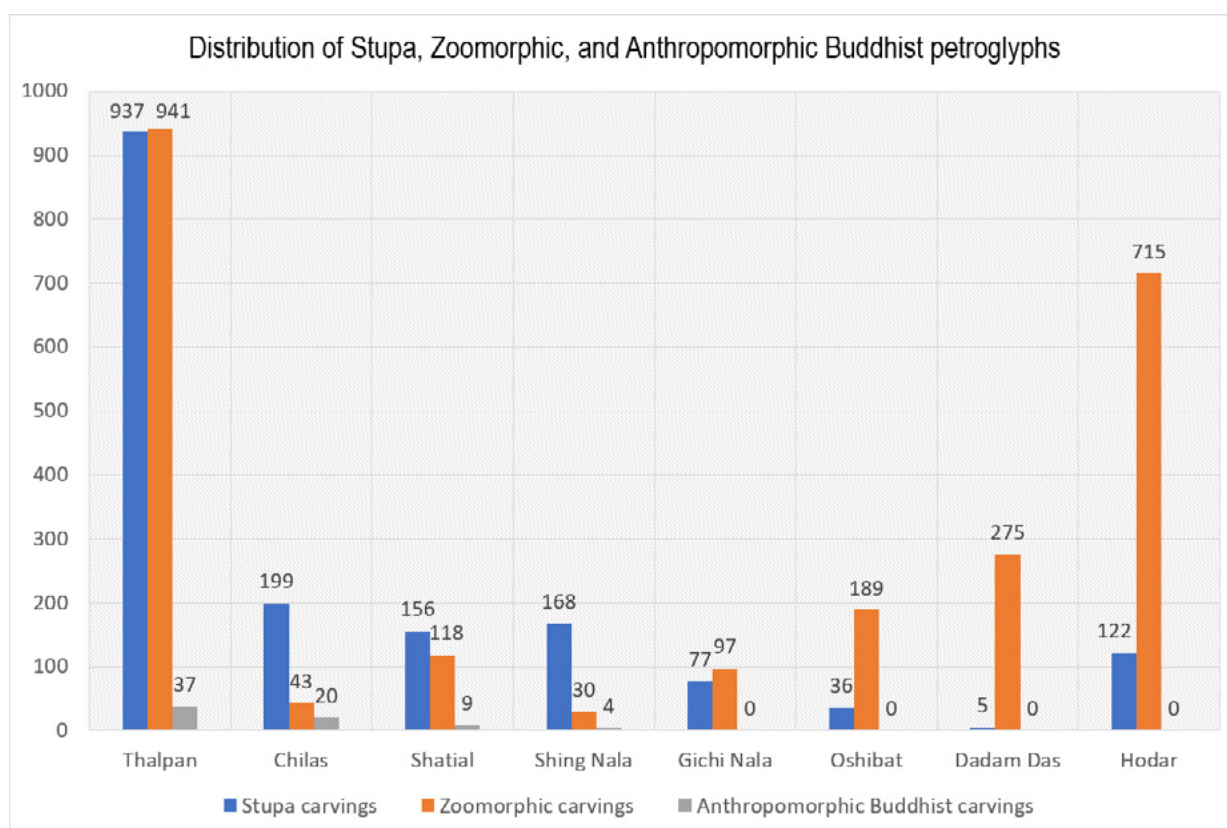


Figure 16. Graph showing the distribution of stūpa, zoomorphic, and anthropomorphic Buddhist petroglyphs (compiled by Van Aerde, Mohns, Khan, Zahir & Kneppers, 2018-2019).

taxa distribution of 96.7% Mammalia, 2.4% Aves, and 1.0% Reptilia.<sup>58</sup> In the graph in Figure 20, these basic statistics are combined with those of the anthropomorphic Buddhist carvings from the first section of this paper.

Two patterns are immediately evident: first of all, the fact that anthropomorphic Buddhist carvings are noticeably rare compared to the stūpa and zoomorphic carvings throughout the dataset, and secondly, the fact that of all three categories the largest number of carvings is found at Thalpan (even if the total number of anthropomorphic carvings at Thalpan is significantly lower than the number of stūpas and zoomorphic images, it is still the largest of its category). A third interesting pattern is the fact that the second largest recorded cluster of zoomorphic carvings is at Hodar, where no anthropomorphic Buddhist carvings were found, and there is a lower number of stūpa carvings (122) compared to the high number of zoomorphic carvings (715); we will return to this point below.

Anthropomorphic Buddhist carvings are currently documented only at four locations: Thalpan, Chilas, Shing Nala and Shatial, of which the large majority are found at Thalpan (thirty-seven) and Chilas (twenty). For this reason, previous studies of Buddhist art especially have hypothesized the emergence of a Buddhist petroglyph shrine at these locations, which are in each other's direct vicinity.<sup>59</sup> At both Chilas and Thalpan, we indeed find remarkably large and elaborately carved depictions of the Buddha,

<sup>58</sup> Kneppers 2019 (MA thesis, full database in progress) – this is not listed in reference. Please could you provide details?.

<sup>59</sup> For a more detailed discussion of these hypotheses see Van Aerde 2019: 460-463. Cf. Von Hinüber 1989a; 1989b: 41-72, 73-106; Fussman 1993: 1-60 (This is not listed in reference. Please could you provide details?); Fussman 1994: 57-72. Most interpretative approaches have been mainly ethnoarchaeological, focused on cultural and/or ethnic iconographical categories among the variety of carving types (Jettmar 1989: XXII).

bodhisattvas, and *jātaka* scenes that are not found at any other locations, in terms of size and detail/quality, and most likely reflecting a diverse chronology as well, as indicated by the selected iconographical analyses above. We also find patron dedications, such as the inscription and depicted figure of the devotee Siṃhoṭa at Chilas, carved right beside a large and elaborate carving of the Buddha Vipāśya.<sup>60</sup> Such examples certainly argue for a prominent Buddhist presence or function at these locations, although more extensive excavation and survey would be necessary before such a hypothesis can be further substantiated. But the currently known carvings themselves can shed more light, as well. We see a very large quantity spike of *stūpa* carvings at especially Thalpan (937). Moreover, the subsequent three largest *stūpa* recordings are at Chilas (199), Shing Nala (168) and Shatial (156) – thus encompassing all four locations where anthropomorphic Buddhist carvings have been recorded. Moreover, only at these four locations (Chilas, Thalpan, Shing Nala and Shatial) do we encounter notably large *stūpas*, as well as a much greater number of medium-sized *stūpas*; all other locations feature small and medium *stūpas* only.<sup>61</sup> However, in respect to chronology, to the degree that this can be determined based on recognizable style and the *stūpas*' architectural features, 80% of all documented *stūpas* coincide with early *stūpa* designs known from around the first century AD, usually linked to Gandhāran architectural types.<sup>62</sup> However, at both Thalpan and Chilas, a higher percentage of what may be recognized as sixth century AD *stūpa* architecture is found than at other locations, which, in turn, would coincide with the Gupta-style Buddhist imagery discovered at the same locations (such as, most noticeably, the Buddha and bodhisattva group 194:151 and 194:152 at Thalpan, discussed above).<sup>63</sup> On the basis of these data, we can identify, 1) a noticeable cluster at both Thalpan and Chilas for anthropomorphic Buddhist carvings of diverse style and chronology, and 2) at especially Thalpan a very substantial cluster of *stūpa* carvings, including rare large-sized carvings, and mainly of relatively early architectural style. These statistics are relevant not only in terms of petroglyph quantity, but also in relation to their varying sizes, the diversity of iconography, style and manufacture technique, and subsequent indications of chronology.

The dataset of zoomorphic carvings adds yet another pattern to these observations. When we look closely at the many different Mammalia taxa and, especially, their relation to depicted human scenes and context throughout the dataset, distinct clusters of mounted animals, pack animals, and animals that directly accompany human figures become evident, the most prominent examples being, in plain terms, horses, camels, yaks, donkeys, and dogs.<sup>64</sup> Remarkably, these specific clusters appear most notably (and most numerous) at Thalpan, and subsequently at Chilas, Shing Nala, Shatial and, finally, Hodar. At these stations specifically, the presence of significant numbers of mounted and/or domesticated zoomorphic carvings may indeed indicate a more prominent presence of such domesticated animals which may have inspired their remaining depictions. Moreover, it is noteworthy that at the other locations, which are situated in between the above-mentioned five, carvings of wild animals, such as eagles, leopards and many different kinds of bovid species (Bovidae) are far more numerous while domesticated animals are rare.<sup>65</sup> When these data are joined together to reflect their physical locations per satellite, in basic summary, the cluster patterns become clear (Figure 17).

<sup>60</sup> 64:18, Bandini-König 2003: tafel 1.

<sup>61</sup> Khan 2018: fig. 4.8 and table 4.4. At Chilas we find 7 large *stūpas*, and at Shing Nala 31.

<sup>62</sup> Khan 2018: fig. 4.9 and table 4.5. Cf. Fussman & Bandini-König 1997: 40; Dani 1989: 91; Arif 2001: 35.

<sup>63</sup> Khan 2018, table 4.6. See the discussion of Gupta influences from carvings 194:151 and 194:152 at Thalpan at the above section.

<sup>64</sup> These statistics were initiated by Mike Kneppers as part of Van Aerde's research project in 2018-2019 and the finalisation of the full data analysis is currently ongoing: specific zoological taxa determination is forthcoming. So far, only one article has been published on the animal species encountered among the Karakorum carvings, but this does not offer any statistical overview or a scientifically correct taxa determination: König 2004: 73-172.

<sup>65</sup> In many cases mounted or domesticated animals are rare at these locations or even entirely absent (full analysis forthcoming, Van Aerde & Kneppers 2019 – this is not listed in reference, please could you provide details?).



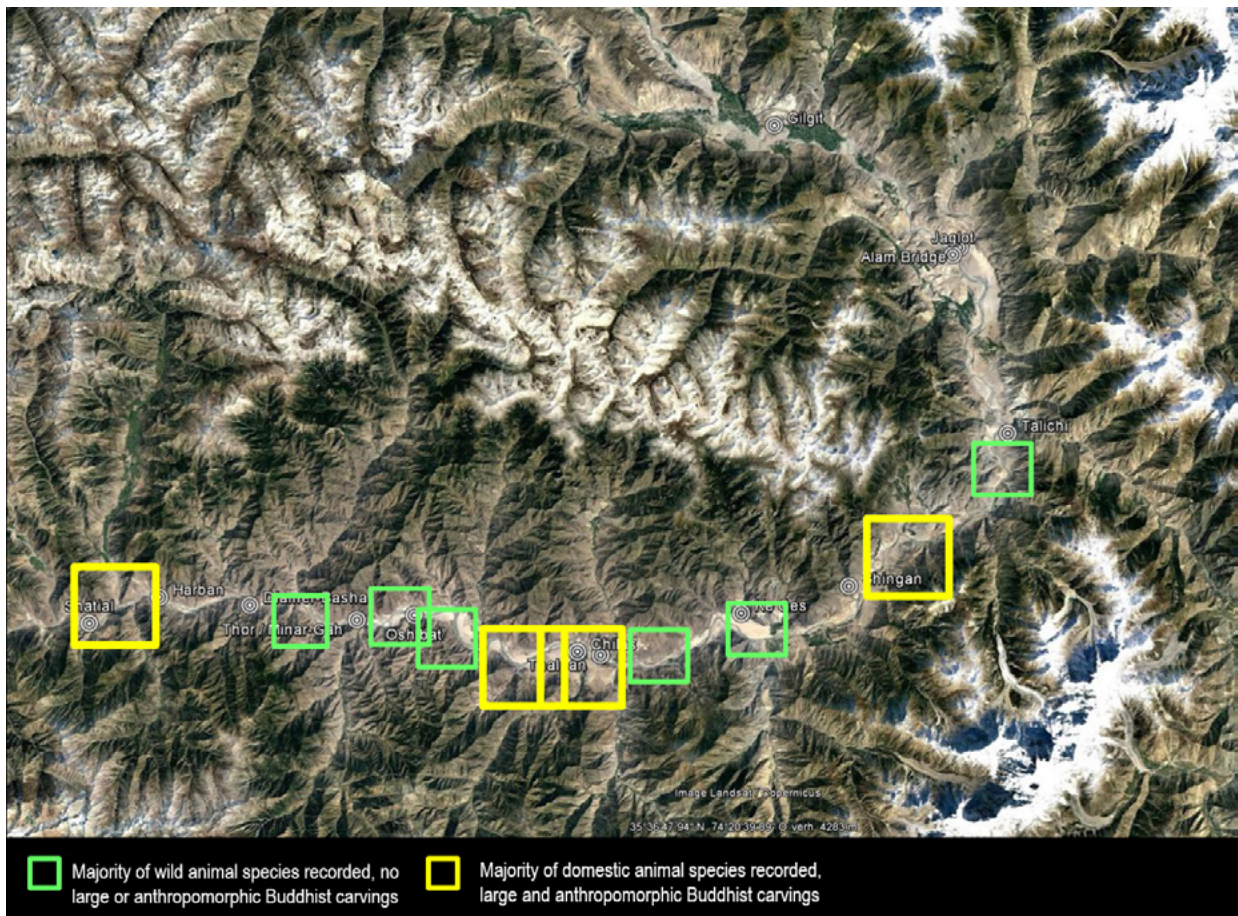


Figure 17. Summary overview of wild/domestic animal carvings and the presence of Buddhist carvings.  
(Image: Van Aerde 2019, GoogleEarth).

In this image, the four locations of Shatial, Thalpan, Chilas, and Shing Nala clearly stand out. Moreover, the distances between these four seem relatively evenly distributed, which might indicate specific travel distances that were most suitable/practical between station posts or nodal points along these routes, for example, where travellers could stay overnight, meet other caravans or pilgrims on the road, after specific periods of travel. A less speculative observation from these data is the apparent relation between the routes, which are indicated by the carving locations, and their vicinity to the Indus and Gilgit rivers. All so-far recorded Buddhist carvings, anthropomorphic and *stūpa*-related, are situated along riverbeds, and only sporadic zoomorphic carvings have been found further up the mountain slopes.<sup>66</sup> The vicinity of water and the lower, more accessible terrain near these rivers are crucial variables for practical travel through a mountain range such as the Karakorum; if indeed transit stations emerged along these specific routes it is probable that they would develop along the sequence indicated by the currently documented carvings at these locations. The additional evidence of domesticated animals specifically found at these stations likewise supports this type of functionality. At such places, we can speculate, travellers could gather and rest while on their journeys, and thus they were also the most likely locations for people to practice the rituals of their religion. If, for example, merchants who were Buddhist followers travelled these routes from as early as the first century AD, and they left their initial marks in the form of relatively simple *stūpa* and Buddhist carvings, perhaps the initial spread of Buddhist imagery and ideas in these regions was coincidental with the spread of the routes themselves and the trade conducted through them. Over time, then, some of these locations (and Thalpan most particularly) apparently developed beyond their practical function; as evident from the appearance of

<sup>66</sup> Kneppers 2019 (MA thesis), full data analysis forthcoming.



more elaborate Buddhist carvings that can be dated in terms of iconography to as late as the sixth century AD, perhaps these initial transit posts gradually developed into Buddhist mountain shrines or monasteries and in that capacity became destinations for pilgrims specifically. The evidence of the rock carvings in these locations, which is currently the only archaeological material available, seems to support this hypothesis. This is also in line with many theories concerning the spread of Buddhism from Gandhāra and the textual evidence of Chinese pilgrims travelling to these mountains.<sup>67</sup> But to expand this investigation, excavation and survey would be necessary to further document these ancient routes on a larger scale, as well as study the potential materials and carvings left behind in more detail. Another angle of investigation would turn to the differing pattern evident from the Hodar location: in regard to its large quantity of zoomorphic carvings and clusters of domesticated animals, as well as its general distance between the other four locations, it seems at first similar to Thalpan, Chilas, Shing Nala and Shatial. However, there is no evidence of anthropomorphic Buddhist carvings here and a relatively low number of 122 *stūpas*. This might indicate that Hodar was a station post like the others, but with a somewhat different practical function: a gathering place specifically intended for pack animals and caravans, we could speculate, in the vein of road stables. The distribution chart for Hodar (Figure 18) provides more detail in terms of the petroglyphic spread across the landscape, and is noteworthy for its lack of Buddhist carvings. This, too, would call for further investigations: if similar clusters exist throughout the mountain range to the north, we might continue to recognise distinctions between such travel stations based on the patterns evident from the types and styles of carvings and their statistical distributions – and this, in turn, would allow us to better identify potential locations for excavation and closer investigation. Based on the data at present, however, the Thalpan location can already be identified as such a specific place of interest.

The distribution chart in Figure 19 allows us a closer look at the range of carvings documented at Chilas Bridge in the Thalpan region, which indeed seems to reflect a remarkably high amount of human activity at this location from at least the first century AD onwards. Its geographical location, at a central crossing of the Indus river, may be an important environmental factor in both facilitating and necessitating access at this particular location. While not divergent in terms of the categories of carvings encountered here, the sheer quantity of petroglyphs at Thalpan, and the Chilas Bridge section, is so far unique in the region. As these clusters indicate, that location yields by far the most Buddhist petroglyphs, with numerous *stūpas* and anthropomorphic figures, as well as domestic zoomorphic carvings, as were found at Hodar.<sup>68</sup> It is important to note here, however, that there is a clear variety among the carvings' potential chronologies as well: whereas most of the *stūpas* and possibly also many of the zoomorphic carvings seem to date back to the first century AD, the most elaborate anthropomorphic Buddhist carvings show clear signs of a much later chronology, as explored in the previous section. So then, the bustle of human activity that is implied by the many diverse petroglyphs of Thalpan/Chilas Bridge, and especially its remarkable range of Buddhist carvings, should be read as a chronicle of time passing, as well. This, too, would support the hypothesis that the Thalpan area may have started out as one of the most active field stations for travellers/merchants in these mountains from the first century AD, and that (at least in part) because of these apparent practical merits of the location, it eventually developed into a Buddhist shrine and continued to thrive as such, as late as the sixth century AD.

## Conclusion

To return to the quotation at the start of this chapter, studies of Gandharān art and the archaeology of the connected regions still face obstacles in attempts to theorize before sufficient data has been gathered. In many cases, this is due to circumstances of documentation or lack of access to the relevant materials. But it can also lead to substantial misunderstandings of the empirical evidence. Especially

<sup>67</sup> Cf. Arif 2001: 29-32; Hauptmann 2009: 8-9; Neelis 2014a: 3-17; 2014b: 45-64.

<sup>68</sup> In the present distribution chart (Figure 20) we include the specific data for (domestic) zoomorphic and anthropomorphic Buddhist carvings at Thalpan/Chilas Bridge only. Our database for the *stūpa* carvings is currently in progress and would, in fact, be too numerous to be included in full in a single chart.

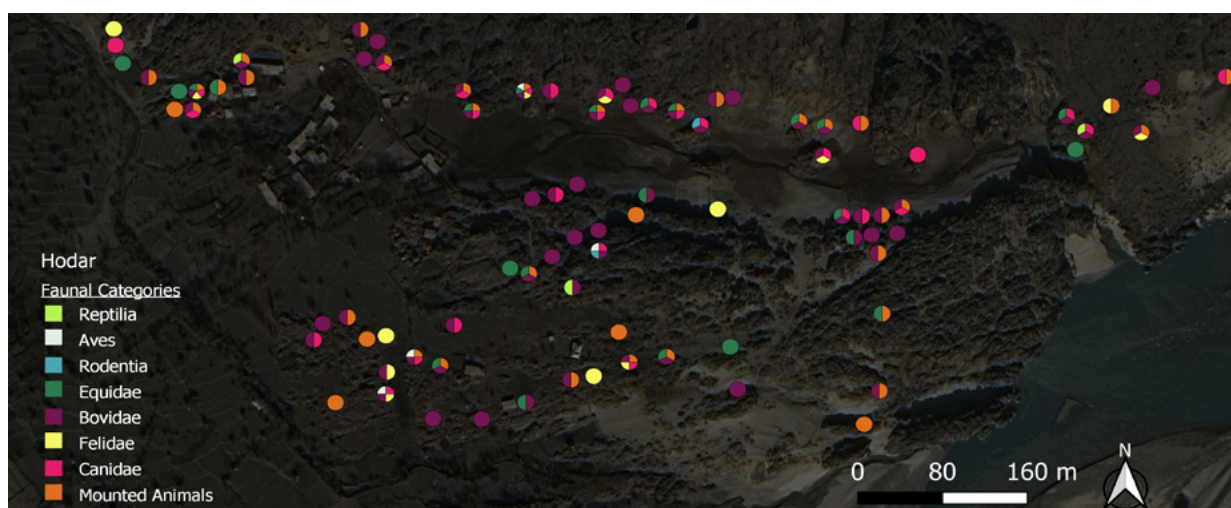


Figure 18. Distribution chart of zoomorphic carvings at Hodar, by faunal category. (Van Aerde & Kneppers 2019.)

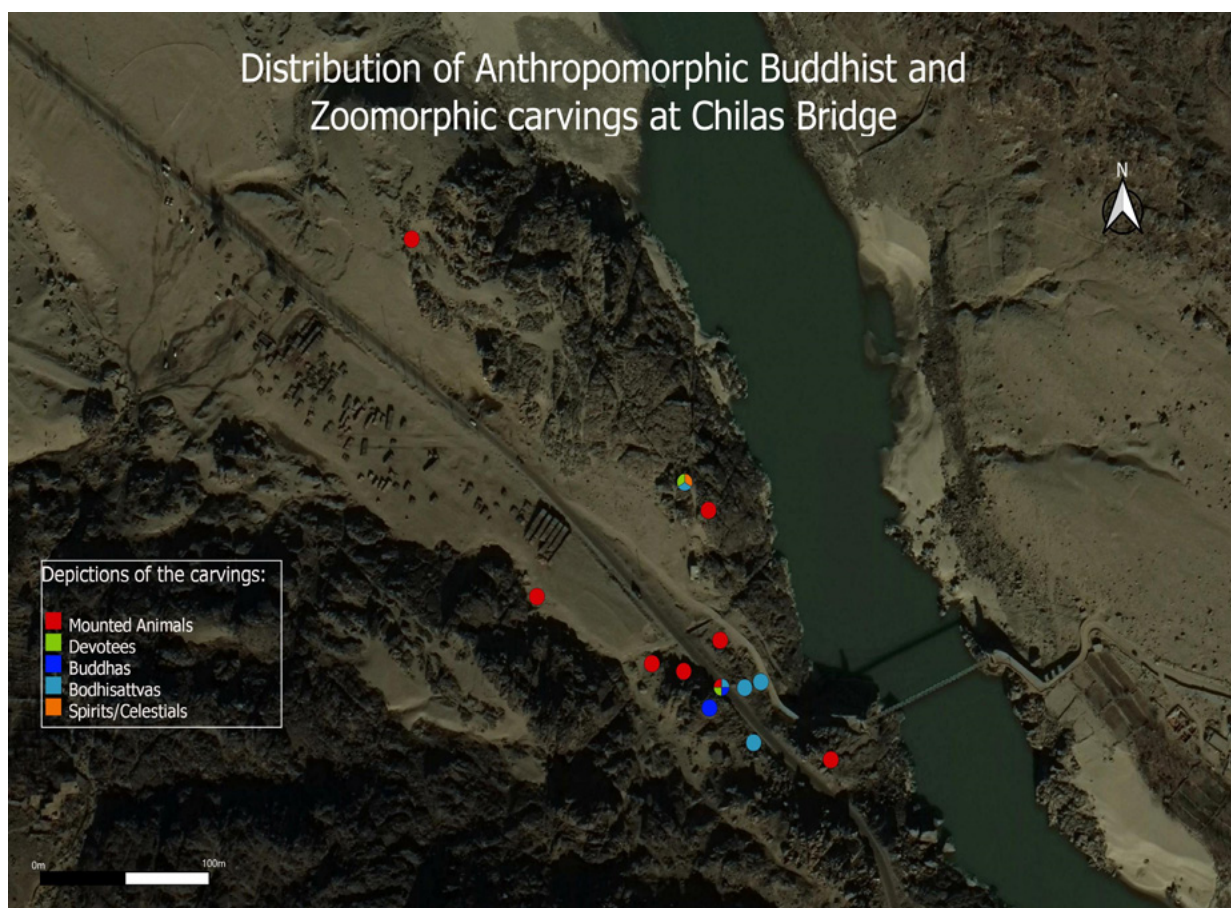


Figure 19. Distribution chart of anthropomorphic Buddhist and zoomorphic carvings at Chilas Bridge. (Van Aerde & Gomez de Silva 2019.)

when wider patterns and processes are concerned, when merely a handful of objects are presented to support a particular theory of widespread connectivity, in reality that theory may not in any other way be supported by the full or at least statistically viable datasets of the available evidence, and as such can





Figure 20. Alexander Mohns exploring undocumented Buddhist carvings near Gilgit (2019).

become unintentionally misleading. To avoid these pitfalls, for our research presented here we chose to turn to all available documentation of the Karakorum carvings, of which we conducted, for this first time, comprehensive statistical analyses and subsequent interpretations of these data. Based on our findings we could, albeit tentatively, raise several new points of discussion concerning: 1) the spread of Buddhism and Buddhist imagery as evident from the Karakorum carvings; 2) reconstructions of the actual routes that transgressed these mountains during the first millennium AD; and 3) Gandhāra's wider connection to its surrounding regions.

Concerning the Buddhist carvings in particular, we encountered a great diversity of influences, or rather a mixture of them that is difficult to label, including contemporary iconographical elements from Gandhāra, Kashmir, and the Gupta Empire. This also relates to the fact that these carvings seem chronologically diverse, too: it appears that most *stūpa* carvings, especially those of the simpler carving type, were introduced as early as the first century AD and show particular parallels with Gandhāran *stūpas*, whereas the more elaborate and larger Buddhist carvings appear to have been added in later times, when, as we might hypothesize, certain station posts along the Karakorum routes had gained a distinct religious significance and functionality. As part of this process, then, these Buddhist petroglyphs developed a mixture of styles and influences, throughout various time periods, that seems unique to the Karakorum in particular.

Concerning the routes themselves, at this point in our analysis certain recurring variables are already noteworthy. The vicinity of rivers seems a crucial component for the maintenance and success of such routes throughout the ancient world.<sup>69</sup> The additional evidence of domestic zoomorphic carvings at

<sup>69</sup> See also Van Aerde & Zampierin 2020, which discusses the variable of river vicinity concerning the data of ancient trade routes and connecting ports in both Egypt and South India.

specific station posts, where also the most Buddhist carvings were encountered, likewise supports the significance of these particular locations as gathering places and nodal points, and can help us continue to chart out the Karakorum routes beyond their current documentation. At present, the rock carvings are the only available archaeological material, but it seems highly likely that large quantities of goods, e.g. spices, medicinal herbs, rice, oils, ores, and pigments, would have travelled these same routes, from Gandhāra to Kashmir to Xinjiang, and eventually even all the way into the Tang Dynasty, transported in (ceramic or other) containers and reliant on a complex bureaucratic system of exchange throughout the entire region, necessitating contact and exchange between multiple different cultural spheres and political contexts. And alongside, Buddhism seemed to have travelled the same routes, perhaps unintentionally at first, in the company of merchants who were Buddhist devotees, and eventually came to leave a distinct mark on the Karakorum region. As a result, it seems, the Karakorum can be regarded as a passageway for early Buddhism in both a figurative and a literal sense.

For that reason, also, it is crucial to ensure the continued documentation, study, and preservation of these petroglyphs, of which many remain unpublished and threatened today, so that our understanding of this region's rich past will likewise be able to grow.

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## Appendix

Table of recognizably Buddhist images in Karakorum rock carvings that feature full or partial elements of anthropomorphic depiction.

### A

Group	Scene	Contains	Page Number	Photo Number	Place	Description
6:A		6:1,2,3	G37, 1,14	I-a,b	Chilas Bridge	Bodhisattva and 2 stupas
	30:A	30:1,2,21	G41, 1,21	III-a,b,c	Chilas Bridge	2 devotees near elaborate stupa
	30:B	30:6,10,11,12,13, 14,15,16,17,18,19	G41,3,5,7,8,9,11	IV-a,b,c V-a	Chilas Bridge	Tigress Jataka
	63:A	63:1,2	G44,1,30	IX-a	Chilas Bridge	Devotee near stupa
63:B		63: 4,6,8,10	G44,3,11,30	IX-b X-a,b	Chilas Bridge	2 Bodhisattvas, 1 stupa, 1 flower pot
	64:D	64:16,18	G45, 1,2	X-c XI-a XII-b,c	Chilas Bridge	Devotee making offering to Bodhisattva
64:C		64: 13,14,15,16,18,19	G46+47, 1,2,4,32	X-c XI-a,b XII-a,b,c,d	Chilas Bridge	3 Bodhisattvas, 1 Buddha, 1 stupa, 1 devotee (*Contains Scene 64D)
64:E		64:20,	G46, 2	XIII-a	Chilas Bridge	Buddha on pedestal (face is damaged)
**1		65:1	4	XIII-b	Chilas Bridge	Buddha in Dharmacakra mudra. single figure
**2		84:1,2	4,34	XV-a,b	Chilas Bridge	Celestial deity with stupa (no group number listed)
**3		8:1	2	I-c	Chilas Bridge	Bodhisattva, possibly Manjusri or Maitreya
19:A		19:1,2	G82, 49	XVI-b	Thalpan	2 figures, 1 silhouette of Buddha, 1 unidentified
	30:C	30:31,32	G84, 50	XVII-c XVIII-a XXII-a	Thalpan	2 figures, possible part of Jataka
	30:D	30:38,39	G84, 53	XXII- b XXI-a,b	Thalpan	Sibi Jataka or associated w/ stupa 30:40
30:Q		30:140,141,142,143, 144	G86,51	XXV-b,c	Thalpan	1 large Buddha with 4 smaller Buddhas (noteworthy for folded robes and halos)
30:R		30:145,146,147,148, 149,150	G86,51	XVII-c XXV- b,c	Thalpan	4 Buddhas, similar to 30:Q, possibly part of the same group

	30:X	30:192,193,194,195, 196,197,198	G88, 54,58,61,62,63,65	XVII-c XXVII-a	Thalpan	Rsipancaka Jataka
**1		30:18	49	XVII-c XVIII-a XX-a	Thalpan	Celestial being with crown holding prayer beads. Possibly associated w/ stupa
**2		30:22	50	XVII-c XX-b XXI-a,c	Thalpan	Buddha in dhyana mudra (noteworthy for fleshy lips) associated w/stupa 30:26
**3		30:30	50	XVII-c XX-c	Thalpan	Avalokitesvara with lotus
116:A		116:1,2,3,4,5	G83,1,9,22,49	XI-c,d	Thalpan	Buddha under Bo tree with ghostly devotee. Associated w. stupa 116:1
122:A		122:1,3	G84, 2, 52	XIV-a,b,c XV- a	Thalpan	Elaborate Stupa with miniature Buddha associated
126:A		126: 1,2	G85, 1,2	??*	Thalpan	Outline of halo and one image of Buddha with undefined body and halo
174:A		174,1,2	G88, 2,10	XXIII-a	Thalpan	One seated Buddha with arms beneath robes, and one undefined face
194:I		194:55,56,57, 58,59,60,61	G90, 3,64,65	XXVI-a,b	Thalpan	Buddha on pedestal, associated with 4 stupas, upper part of face not preserved
194:K		194: 65,66,67, 68,69,70,71,72	G90,3,7,16,27	XXVI-c XXVII-a	Thalpan	First sermon at Sarnath scene
194:S		194: 151,152	G91,4	XXVIII-c	Thalpan	Mahayana, Buddha with celestial being
195:I		195:124,125,12 6,127,128,129, 130,131	G92,1,5,69,73	XXXI-a	Thalpan	Stupa with 4 associated beings in a tree, and one person (devotee) sweeping/praying
195:W		195:428,429,430	G94, 5, 9,	XXXIII-b	Thalpan	Temptation of Mara scene
**1		132:39	1	XVII-c	Thalpan	Outline of seated Buddha
**2		172:1	2	XXII-c	Thalpan	Seated Buddha, noteworthy for folded robes
**3		176:1	3	XXIII-b	Thalpan	Seated Buddha, unfinished
**4		194:103	3	XXVIII-a	Thalpan	Buddha in gift-giving mudra
**5		195:170	5	XXXI-b	Thalpan	Outline of seated Buddha, no distinct features
**6		135:1	9	??	Thalpan	Adorned figure, unidentified, possibly Bodhisattva
**1		34:125,126,127, 128,129,130-133, 134,135,146,170, 171	Tafel D 1,3,4,16,20,23	V-a,b	Shatial	Sibi Jataka
31:A		31:114,115	G38,3,22	IV-b	Shatial	Small figure (devotee) making offering to stupa
**1		38:13	1	II-b,c	Shing Nala	Seated Buddha in dharmacakra mudra, noteworthy for fleshy lips
**2		47:3	2	??	Shing Nala	Seated Buddha, rippling robes, dhyana mudra
**2		47:3	2	??	Shing Nala	Seated Buddha, rippling robes, dhyana mudra
**3		47:5	3	IV-a	Shing Nala	Seated Buddha, hands beneath robes
**4		47:6	3	IV-b	Shing Nala	Small seated Buddha, undefined features, hands beneath robes
**5		48:4	4	??	Shing Nala	Halo, no Buddha
**1		215:12	6		Shatial	Unidentified face
**2		215:17	6		Shatial	Unidentified face



## B

Number	Orientation	Technique	Patination	Size	Type	Inscription	Interpretation/Remarks
<i>Chilas Bridge</i>							
6:1	N	-	Middle	29x70cm	Stupa		
6:2	N	-	Middle	40x61cm	Bodhisattva	6:6	Manjusri according to inscription
6:3	N	-	Middle	28x83cm	Stupa		
30:1	SW		Middle	96x213cm	Stupa	30:3,4,5,22,28	
30:2	SW		Middle	40x67cm	Man	30:3,4,5,22,28	Practitioner praying to Stupa
30:21	SW		Middle	19x44cm	Man	30:3,4,5,22,28	Practitioner praying to stupa
30:6	SW		Middle	32x83cm	Tree spirit	30:8,9,29	Some kind of female tree spirit
30:10	SW		Middle	29x14cm	Man	30:8,9,29	Man/possibly a celestial being
30:11	SW		Middle	32x13cm	Man	30:8,9,29	Man/possibly a celestial being
30:12	SW		Middle	30x29cm	Man	30:8,9,29	Man/possibly a celestial being
30:13	SW		Middle	32x104cm	Mountain side	30:8,9,29	Mountain side, strangely depicted w/ zigzagged lines
30:14	SW		Middle	21x62cm	Bodhisattva	30:8,9,29	Buddha as Mahasattva bodhisattva
30:15	SW		Middle	11x33cm	Tiger	30:8,9,29	Starving tiger cub
30:16	SW		Middle	6x19cm	Tiger	30:8,9,29	Starving tiger cub
30:17	SW		Middle	7x22cm	Tiger	30:8,9,29	Starving tiger cub
30:18	SW		Middle	11x21cm	Tiger	30:8,9,29	Starving tiger cub
30:19	SW		Middle	16x39cm	Tiger	30:8,9,29	Starving Tigress
63:1	E		Middle	47x55cm	Man	63:3	
63:2	E		Middle	53x135cm	Stupa	63:3	
63:4	S		Middle	33x112cm	Bodhisattva	63:5	Avalokiteshvara according to inscription
63:6	S		Middle	53x133cm	Bodhisattva		Bodhisattva Maitreya
63:8	S		Middle	29x82cm	Stupa		
63:10	S		Middle	13x24cm	Flowerpot		Offering pot next to stupa.
64:16	E		Middle	35x101cm	Buddha	64:17*	Buddha Vipasya according to inscription
64:18	E		Middle	29x61cm	Man	64:17*	Man practicing devotion towards the Bodhisattva. With 64:16 is part of larger scene 64:C
64:13	E		Middle	61x81cm	Bodhisattva	64:12	Avalokiteshvara according to the inscription
64:14	E		Middle	30x80cm	Buddha		Buddha in Dhyana mudra on a pedestal
64:15	E		Middle	64x130cm	Stupa		Associated with the large group
64:19	E		Middle	27x104cm	Bodhisattva		Maitreya
64:20	-	-	-	-	Buddha		Face broken off in dhyana mudra
65:1	N		Middle	49x62cm	Buddha		No group, dharmacakra mudra
84:1	N		-	-	Stupa		

84:2	N		-	-	Bodhisattva		Richly adorned Bodhisattva, manjusri or maitreya.
8:1	NE		Middle	43x53cm	Bodhisattva		Possibly Maitreya or Manjusri
<i>Thalpan I</i>	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
19:1	S		Middle	19x26cm	Silhouette		Silhouette of Buddha/deity in asana
19:2	S		Middle	25x27cm	Silhouette		Robust silhouette, not entirely sure what it is.
30:31 (C)	W		Middle	58x74cm	Bodhisattva		Left figure of S30:c. Adorned with necklace talking with figure on the right.
30:32 (C)	W		Middle	54x75cm	Bodhisattva	30:33	Manjusri according to inscription
30:38 (D)	W		Middle	51x30cm	Bodhisattva		King Sibi, part of the king sibi Jataka
30:39 (D)	W		Middle	40x64cm	Man		Man holding scales
30:140 (Q)	SE		Middle	64x102cm	Buddha		Central Buddha surrounded by 8 small buddhas. Rippling robes and fleshy lips
30:141 (Q)	SE		Middle	13x24cm	Buddha		Small Buddha
30:142 (Q)	SE		Middle	14x26cm	Buddha		Small Buddha
30:143 (Q)	SE		Middle	15x30cm	Buddha		Small Buddha
30:144 (Q)	SE		Middle	14x30cm	Buddha		Small Buddha
30:145 (R)	SW		Middle	11x20cm	Buddha		Small Buddha
30:146 (R)	SW		Middle	18x29cm	Buddha		Small Buddha
30:147(R)	SW		Middle	17x30cm	Buddha		Small Buddha
30:148(R)	SW		Middle	17x28cm	Buddha		Small Buddha
30:192(X)	W		Middle	50x80cm	Man		Part of the Rsipancaka Jataka. This is the hermit
30:193(X)	W		Middle	20x25cm	Ram		Rsipancaka Ram
30:194(X)	W		Middle	12x4cm	Pigeon		Rsipancaka pigeon
30:195(X)	W		Middle	17x9cm	Crow		Rsipancaka Crow
30:196(X)	W		Middle	24x8cm	Snake		Rsipancaka snake
30:197(X)	W		Middle	32x17cm	Pig		Rsipancaka pig? (Not normal in the jataka)
30:198(X)	W		Middle	20x70cm	Tree		Tree under which the hermit sits.
30:18	W		Middle	38x52cm	Bodhisattva	30:17	Maitreya according to inscription
30:22	W		Middle	55x78cm	Buddha	30:21	Buddha with folded robes and fleshy lips.
30:30	W		Middle	30x55cm	Bodhisattva	30:28	Avalokitesvara (according to inscription)
<i>Thalpan II</i>	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
116:1	SW		Middle	50x75cm	Stupa		
116:3	SW		Middle	38x34cm	Tree		
116:4	SW		Middle	46x87cm	Buddha		Buddha under a tree in dhyana mudra, folded robes, associated w/ stupa
116:5	SW		Middle	20x19cm	Man		
122:1	SW		Middle	79x146cm	Stupa		
122:3	SW		Middle	22x31cm	Buddha		Small Buddha associated w/ elaborate stupa

126:1	SE		Middle	21x41cm	Silhouette		Silhouette of a halo
126:2	SE		Middle	39x79cm	Buddha		Buddha, upper body only, few details preserved.
174:1	SE		Middle	18x16cm	Face		Face, possibly of Buddha
174:2	SE		Middle	73x103cm	Buddha		Buddha in dhyanamudra
194:56	S		Middle	17x21cm	Stupa		Associated w/58
194:57	SW		Middle	14x29cm	Stupa		Associated w/58
194:58	S		Middle	32x32cm	Buddha		Buddha on a pedestal in dharmacakra mudra, upper half of face is missing.
194:59	S		Middle	28x38cm	Stupa		Associated w/58
194:61	S		Middle	22x42cm	Stupa		Associated w/58
194: 65	NW		Middle	35x43cm	Buddha		Buddha w/ dharmacakra mudra. Scene of first sermon.
194:66	NW		Middle	8x11cm	Man		1 of 5 first disciples
194:67	NW		Middle	10x12cm	Man		1 of 5 first disciples
194:68	NW		Middle	10x10cm	Deer		Deer re-presenting deer at Sarnath scene.
194:69	NW		Middle	10x22cm	Wheel		Wheel of suffering, meant to represent enlightenment
194:70	NW		Middle	10x12cm	Deer		Deer re-presenting deer at Sarnath scene.
194:71	NW		Middle	8x10cm	Man		1 of 5 first disciples
194:72	NW		Middle	10x12cm	Man		1 of 5 first disciples
194:151	E		Middle	42x57cm	Buddha		Buddha, Mahayana style. Varada mudra.
194:152	E		Middle	7x11cm	Bodhisattva		Vajrapani (most probably)
195:124	NE		Middle	13x12cm	Man		
195:125	NE		Middle	13x47cm	Stupa		
195:127	NE		Middle	7x14cm	Man		
195:128	NE		Middle	7x14cm	Man		
195:129	NE		Middle	4x7cm	Man		
195:130	NE		Middle	14x40cm	Throne		
195:131	NE		Middle	6x9cm	Man		
195:428	N		Strong	11x30cm	Spirit		Daughter of Mara
195:429	N		Strong	23x33cm	Buddha		Buddha in Bhūmisparsa mudra, scene of the temptation of Mara.
195:430	N		Strong	15x30cm	Spirit		Daughter of Mara
132:39	W		Middle	19x32cm	Silhouette		Silhouette of Buddha in dhyana mudra.
172:1	SE		Middle	53x57cm	Buddha		Buddha in dhyana mudra, folded robes.
176:1	N		Middle	48x41cm	Buddha		Seated Buddha, body is unfinished, fleshy lips.
194:103	W		Middle	40x40cm	Buddha		Buddha in Varada mudra. robes in clinging style.
195:170	N		Middle	17x23cm	Silhouette		Silhouette of Buddha/ bodhisattva in dhyana mudra.
135:1	S		Middle	38x55cm	Celestial		Celestial being, possibly a prince or a Bodhisattva. Unclear.

<b>Shatial</b>	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
34:125	SW	Picked	Middle	72x73cm	Bodhisattva		Jataka scene of king Sibi
34:126	SW	Picked	Middle	174x162cm	Building		Top of a temple/stupa
34:127	SW	Picked	Middle	33x68cm	Flower Pot		
34:128	W	Picked	Middle	55x45cm	Man		Man figure holding a type of sickle with a ball in the middle.
34:129	SW	Picked	Middle	40x60cm	Man		Kneeling w/ flowers
34:130	SW	Picked	Middle	50x40cm	Man		Man with scales
34:133	SW	Picked	Middle	410x207cm	Stupa		Very elaborate, with many decorations, associated with devotees.
34:134	SW	Picked	Middle	65x60cm	Man		w/ sickle and ball and a type of torch w/ flames.
34:135	SW	Picked	Middle	46x36cm	Man		Bent over in devotion with flowers.
34:146	SW	Picked	Middle	30x60cm	Man		Kneeling w/ flowers
34:171	SW	Picked	Middle	304x260cm	Tree		Decorated tree, possibly bo tree w/ pedestal for Bodhisattva
31:114	NW	Picked	Middle/ Strong	64x32cm	Stupa		
31:115	NW	Picked	Middle/ Strong	38x13cm	Man		Devotee worshipping stupa
<b>Shing Nala</b>	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
38:13	ESE		Middle	135x210cm	Buddha		Buddha in folded robes and fleshy lips
47:3	S		Middle	65x93cm	Buddha		Buddha in folded robes and fleshy lips.
47:5	S		Middle	50x63cm	Buddha		Buddha w/ halo and folded robes, hands under robes.
47:6	S		Middle	27x51cm	Buddha		Small Buddha, no defined features.
48:4	SSW		Middle	89x57cm	Silhouette		Silhouette of halo