

Panel 23, Tibetan Inscriptions

Kurt Tropper (Vienna University), The Buddha-vita in the White Temple of Tsaparang

The apse of the white temple at Tsaparang in Ngari features a cycle of wall paintings with various scenes from the life of the Buddha. The paintings are combined with narrow bands of inscriptions, which were documented in detail during a recent field trip to Western Tibet. In my paper I will discuss the contents of these short epigraphs as well as their possible sources. Building on previous studies on similar cycles, I will also address the relationship between the paintings and the inscriptions.

Ben Wood (University of Toronto), Records of Fifteenth-Century Conflicts at Zhwa lu Monastery in Inscription and Biography: Cautionary Narratives in their Historical and Literary Contexts"

This paper focuses on a paper inscription located at Zhwa lu monastery, and specifically examines a sermon that describes a conflict given by an abbot of Zhwa lu, 'Jam dbyangs Grags pa rgyal mtshan (1365-1448), found within it. I attempt to clarify the historical events narrated within the inscription, as well as the literary features of the inscription itself by comparing the inscription to the nineteenth-century *Zhwa lu gdan rabs*, which, like the inscription, narrates a conflict at the monastery in another of 'Jam dbyangs Grags pa rgyal mtshan's sermons. Through comparing these two records of conflicts, this paper explores how the *Zhwa lu gdan rabs* and the inscription (similarly and differently) narrate past conflicts. This paper suggests that these documents skillfully portray abbots as accomplished orators of cautionary narratives to facilitate conflict prevention and resolution, dramatically and meaningfully ennobling abbots' characters amid struggles local to Zhwa lu and specific to its history.

Namgyal Lama Kunsang (University of Paris IV, Sorbonne), Inscriptions on *Tsha tsha*: A Preliminary Survey

In the wake of the contributions presented to IATS by Braham Norwick (1979 and 1982) and by Toni Huber (1989) on *tsha tsha*, I propose to discuss in my paper the inscriptions found on these clay mouldings and stampings. These objects represent not only unique iconographic material but also a writing medium that has not yet been thoroughly researched.

Thanks to the large number of *tsha tsha* now available we are able to build up series and to undertake analytical and statistical studies taking into account various characteristics (material, formal, stylistic, epigraphic, etc.) and highlighting their geographical and chronological distribution throughout the Tibetan world, as well as the abundance or scarcity of some items. Apart from the archeological value of this material still so far hardly used by researchers, we also have at our disposal many textual sources about the techniques used for making them and about their ritual uses which provides a complementary approach for investigating the complexity of these objects.

Based on a large corpus of about 1,600 items, I will present a typology of the *tsha tsha* bearing inscriptions (just under half), an inventory of the inscriptions, their scripts and any possible association between them. I will also focus on possible links between these inscriptions and the images depicted on them, between the inscriptions and the destination of the object (used as consecration or funeral deposits...), and finally, between the inscriptions and the presence of a text (*gzungs gzhug*) inside the *tsha tsha*.

Nathan W. Hill (SOAS), Une nouvelle interpretation de l'incipit de l'inscription du Rkong-po

L'inscription du Rkong-po n'est pas seulement une source superbe pour la compréhension des relations de l'empire tibétain à l'un de ses états subjugués, il contient également le récit le plus explicite du mythe de Gnyag khri btsan po en tibétain ancien et une discussion sur les interactions entre mythe et rituel. Malheureusement, ces informations précieuses sont contenues dans un passage très difficile et obscur. tibétologues différents ont tiré des conclusions sensiblement différentes sur ce passage. Cette communication vise à fournir une compréhension plus précise du passage à travers une analyse philologique attentive de la diction et la grammaire du passage en question.

Cristina Scherrer-Schaub (University of Lausanne and CHWH, Vienna), Classifying, Questioning, and Interpreting Tibetan Inscriptions