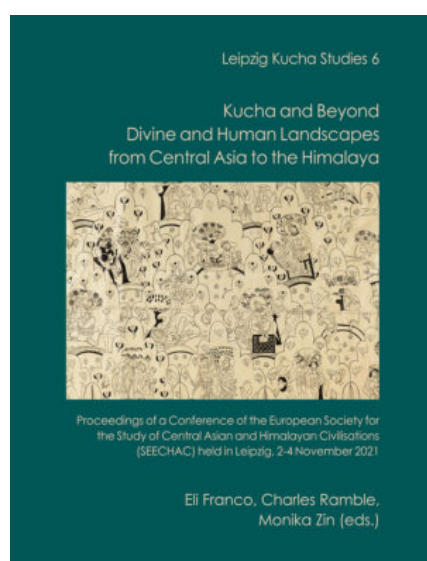


Kucha and Beyond, Divine and Human Landscapes from Central Asia to the Himalaya: Proceedings of a Conference of the European Society for the Study of Central Asian and Himalayan Civilisations (SEECHAC) held in Leipzig, 2-4 November 2021 (Leipzig Kucha Studies 6)



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About the Book

This volume is the outcome of a collaboration between the European Society for the Study of Central Asian and Himalayan Civilisations (SEECHAC) and the Leipzig-based research project "Buddhist Murals of Kucha on the Northern Silk Road." The conference, with the same title as the present proceedings, was held over the course of three days in November 2021 at the Bibliotheca Albertina in Leipzig. The sixteen articles that make up the collection explore aspects of the concept of landscape in the civilisations of Central Asia and the Himalayas from the perspectives of art history, archaeology, religious studies and anthropology. As the historian Simon Schama reminds us, "landscapes are culture before they are nature; constructs of the imagination projected onto the wood and water and rock." In this volume, landscape is understood in both senses, as the external environment but also, and more often, as the culturally mediated representation of the natural world. To the extent that such creations are constructs of the imagination, the meaning of "landscape" need not be confined to the category of painting that it conventionally designates. Heavenly realms and divine interventions in this world are widely reproduced in murals, scroll paintings and architectural forms, but their depiction is often founded on textual authority, and further perpetuated in secondary writings as well as oral narratives. Most of the papers in this collection explore landscapes that are simultaneously divine and human in that they embrace the this-worldly and the beyond, an extended space of humans, animals and praeternatural beings rendered on a variety of supports. The areas covered include Tibet, Dunhuang, the Tangut Empire, Khotan, Ladakh, Sikkim, Gandhara and Mongolia. As the sixth volume in a series dedicated to studies of Kucha, the collection also presents four contributions on the art and archaeology of that remarkable Buddhist oasis.

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