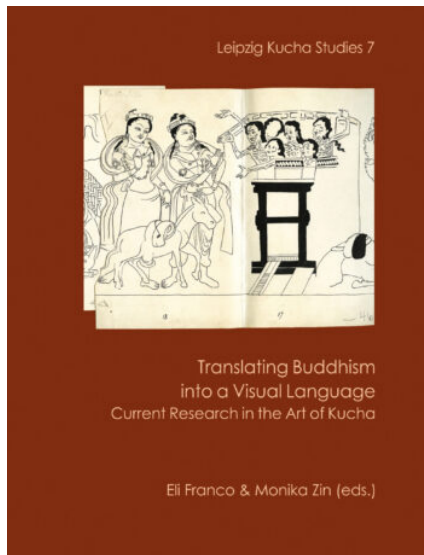


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Translating Buddhism into a Visual Language Current Research in the Art of Kucha (Leipzig Kucha Studies 7)



About the Book

This seventh volume of Leipzig Kucha Studies marks a decade of the long-term research project at the Saxon Academy of Sciences and Humanities devoted to the Buddhist cave paintings of the Kucha region along the Northern Silk Road. The fifteen contributions collected in this volume cover a broad range of current research on Kucha art: from the reconstruction of vanished archaeological sites to the study of musical instruments; from innovative techniques for depicting narrative content to the identification of the literary sources represented; and from stylistic analyses of various iconographies and the identification of prototypes in the Mediterranean, Iran and South Asia to early temple architecture and Chinese influence thereon.

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Kucha art is fundamentally narrative, and most of the essays explore the literary sources, such as S?tras, Vinayas, and J?takas, that were translated into visual form in the murals. Over the past decade, hundreds of painted scenes have been identified and connected to a wide range of texts. The present volume advances this work through numerous new identifications of pictorial narratives, including sermons, legends, parables, and the iconography of individual figures. Taken together, these studies represent a significant step forward in the study of Kucha, broadening and deepening our understanding of the region through diverse and complementary approaches. They provide an essential basis for situating the culture and religion of Kucha within the wider historical developments of Central Asia and beyond, and for appreciating a culture that, while engaging with surrounding traditions, maintained a strikingly distinctive identity.

About the Author

Eli Franco has taught Indian philosophy and religion at the university of Tel Aviv, La Trobe University and the University of Leipzig. He published most extensively on the Buddhist logical-epistemological tradition, as well as on other Buddhist and non-Buddhist philosophical traditions of India, such as Yog?c?ra and Madhyamaka, Lok?yata, Ny?ya, Vai?e?ika and M?m??s?. Franco was a fellow of the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation and the Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin, and is a member of the Saxon Academy of Sciences and Humanities, where he directs, together with Monika Zin, the long-term project “Buddhist Murals of Kucha on the Northern Silk Road.”

Monika Zin leads the team of the Leipzig Kucha Project. In this series, she has published Representations of the Parinirv??a Story Cycle in Kucha (2020), Gods, Deities and Demons in the Paintings of Kucha (2023) and Essays and Studies in the Art of Kucha (2020), together with Ines Konczak-Nagel. Monika Zin has contributed monographs i.a. on Ajanta paintings (2003) and the Kanaganahalli St?pa (2018), and has published more than 100 articles on the identification of narrative art dealing with Buddhist art from South, Central and Southeast Asia.

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