

Abstract of Dissertation
entitled

From India to Xinjiang: Buddha's Life Story – a Case Study on Kizil Cave 224

Submitted by

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During the late 19th century, lots of archaeological expeditions were set upon Northwestern China, thus the mural paintings of the Kizil Caves were subjected to be removed from the original context. Among the caves, the murals in Cave 224 were scattered around different countries such as Germany, Russia, France, the UK, and Japan. Due to the scatter, it has been challenging for scholars to investigate the content of this cave until recent breakthroughs. This research aims to collect, showcase and discuss the information of Cave 224, including the sermon scenes in the main chamber; and the episodes related to Buddha's Nirvana in the rear chamber. A substantial focus will be put on the sermon scenes, to organize their visual content and corresponding topics with the use of recent scholarly works of mural restoration and cave inscriptions. The relationship between the mural paintings and the cave function will also be discussed concerning the theme of Buddha's life story. Moreover, it is found that Cave 224 might be built around the period when Kucha was under the conquest of the Western Turks (~mid. 7th century A.D.). The cultural influences brought by such political change were vividly presented in this cave, and these elements will also be examined in this paper.