

Practice of Visualization and the *Visualization Sūtra*: An Examination of Mural Paintings at Toyok, Turfan¹

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INTRODUCTION

WITH ITS PICTORIAL REPRESENTATION of the methods for visualizing the Pure Land presided over by Amitāyus Buddha, and with its tragic frame story of Queen Vaidehī imprisoned by her rebellious son Ajātaśatru, the *Visualization Sūtra* (*Kuan Wu-liang-shou ching* 觀無量壽經, “The Sūtra on the Visualization of Amitāyus” [*Taishō*, vol. 12, no. 365]) has been a very popular text in East Asian Pure Land traditions. On the other hand, it is also a very problematic text, the geographical origin of which has been seriously debated among Buddhist scholars. Much research has been done on this sutra, and nearly all the evidence relevant to its origin seems to have been exhaustively studied by now.² As a result, many scholars now suspect that the *Visualization Sūtra* was composed or compiled in Central Asia, more specifically in the Turfan area. However, since information concerning the origin of the *Visualization Sūtra* is very limited, their arguments inevitably have to rely (at least partially) on circumstantial evidence. Accordingly, their conclusions cannot be definitive.

The search for the origin of the *Visualization Sūtra* thus seems to have reached an impasse now, and, unless we change our approach, it will be difficult to make a significant breakthrough. Now, I believe, it is time to broaden our view and approach this problem from a wider perspective. In concrete, I would like to suggest the following two points.

First, we should not focus our attention on the *Visualization Sūtra* alone. Since Tsukinowa Kenryū published his pioneering and important work on the *Visualization Sūtra* and kindred texts,³ scholars have been aware that the *Visualization Sūtra* was closely related to other texts on visualization and meditation.⁴ Nevertheless, these texts surrounding the *Visualization Sūtra* have not received comparable scholarly attention thus far. The *Visualization Sūtra* needs to be studied in close conjunction with these texts, most notably the *Ocean Sūtra* (*Kuan-fo san-mei hai ching* 觀佛三昧海經, “The Sūtra on the Ocean-Like Samādhi of the Visualization of the

Buddha" [*Taishō*, vol. 15, no. 643]), the *Secret Essentials* (*Ch'an mi-yao-fa ching* 禪秘要法經, "A Manual of the Secret Essentials of Meditation" [*Taishō*, vol. 15, no. 613]), the *Cures* (*Chih ch'an-ping mi-yao fa* 治禪病秘要法, "The Secret Essential Methods to Cure the Diseases Caused by Meditation" [*Taishō*, vol. 15, no. 630]), and the *Five Gates* (*Wu-men ch'an-ching yao-yung fa* 五門禪經要用法, "The Essence of the Meditation Manual Consisting of Five Gates" [*Taishō*, vol. 15, no. 610]). As Tsukinowa has pointed out, all these texts have serious textual problems similar to the ones observed in the *Visualization Sūtra* and are very likely apocryphal.

To these traditionally well-known Chinese meditation texts, we should now add a Sanskrit meditation manual found at Qizil and Shorchuq, the so-called *Yogalehrbuch*.⁵ Since one of the major difficulties inherent in the study of these Chinese meditation texts was the absence of a directly comparable Sanskrit meditation manual, the *Yogalehrbuch* is a very valuable Sanskrit source that shares many similar elements with these Chinese texts. Further, the *Yogalehrbuch* can be a significant anchor for the identification of the geographical origins of the Chinese meditation texts, because the discovery of the manuscripts leaves no doubt about its presence in Central Asia.

The *Visualization Sūtra* needs to be studied in close conjunction with these relatively unstudied meditation texts. By doing so, we shall be able to discuss the origin of this attractive but problematic text on a much more solid basis.

Second, we should not limit our scope of study to only written sources. Since the meditative methods described in the *Visualization Sūtra* and other kindred texts are highly visual, we can easily expect such practice to have left some trace in visual art. If examined properly, some pieces of art may give us valuable "hard evidence" linking the *Visualization Sūtra* (and other meditation texts) to a particular geographical area.

I believe we can find such "hard evidence" in the mural paintings of visualizing monks at the Toyok caves in the Turfan area. Some scholars have previously attempted to use artistic evidence in the study of these meditation texts,⁶ but the materials used by them seem to me to be a little too general to pinpoint the geographical origin of these texts.⁷ On the other hand, since the mural paintings at Toyok were not introduced to the academic world until relatively recently,⁸ they have not previously been taken into account by Buddhist scholars. These paintings, however, can be linked to the relevant texts in a more specific way and appear to be invaluable material for revealing the practical background of these texts. It is also significant that the Toyok paintings cannot be explained by merely referring to the *Visualization Sūtra* alone but can be interpreted only by looking at the entire body of relevant meditation manuals. Thus, my second point is actually closely related to my first.

By considering these elements, we should be able to discuss the background of these meditation texts, including the *Visualization Sūtra* itself, on a much more solid basis. With this intention in mind, I would like to examine the mural paintings at Toyok in some detail below.

THE CAVES

Toyok is the oldest site of Buddhist cave temples in the Turfan area, dating approximately from the fifth century.⁹ Since the caves are dug into fragile cliffs, many of the caves are badly damaged now. Of the surviving forty-six caves that have been assigned cave numbers, only nine retain mural paintings.¹⁰ Among them, the most important caves for our purpose are Caves 20 and 42.

Cave 20 is on the western cliff of the valley and forms a part of a large temple complex. See the plan shown in Figure 1.

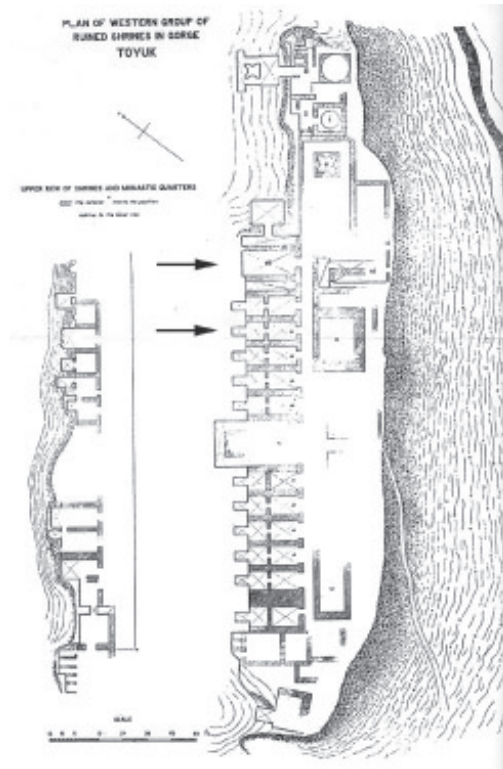


Figure 1¹¹

(Upper Arrow: Stein Cave VI. vii; Lower Arrow: Cave 20)

Cave 42, on the other hand, is on the eastern cliff and also constitutes part of a larger cave complex, as shown in Figure 2.

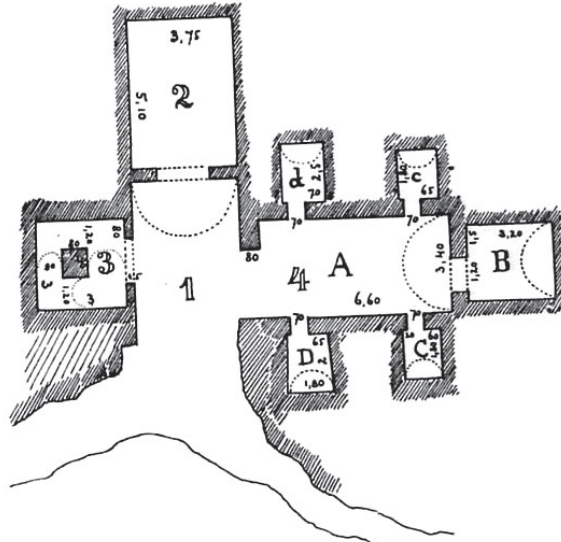


Fig. 658. Asketenhöhlen.

Figure 2¹²

This cave-complex is what Grünwedel calls Asketenhöhlen, “Ascetics’ Caves,” and in the system of Chung-kuo Pi-hua 1990, which we follow in this paper, Grünwedel’s Caves 2, 3, and 4 are numbered respectively as Caves 41, 40, and 42. The roof of Grünwedel’s Cave 1 has collapsed, and so this “cave” is now an open space;¹³ therefore, the original cave-complex has become three separate caves.¹⁴ It is the right-hand part of the plan (Cave 42 = Grünwedel’s Cave 4) that we are going to discuss below.

Due to the structure of the caves¹⁵ and the content of the mural paintings, both Cave 20 and 42 are considered to have been used for meditative visualization.¹⁶ Of these paintings, the ones in Cave 20 are more directly connected to the *Visualization Sūtra*, and so I shall discuss them first. Since, however, I have discussed the paintings in Cave 20 elsewhere,¹⁷ in this paper more emphasis will be placed on those in Cave 42. In any case, due to constraints of space, I cannot discuss all the relevant paintings in this paper. For the entirety of my argument, the reader is referred to my dissertation.¹⁸

Cave 20

On the left wall of Cave 20, we see the paintings shown in Figure 3.

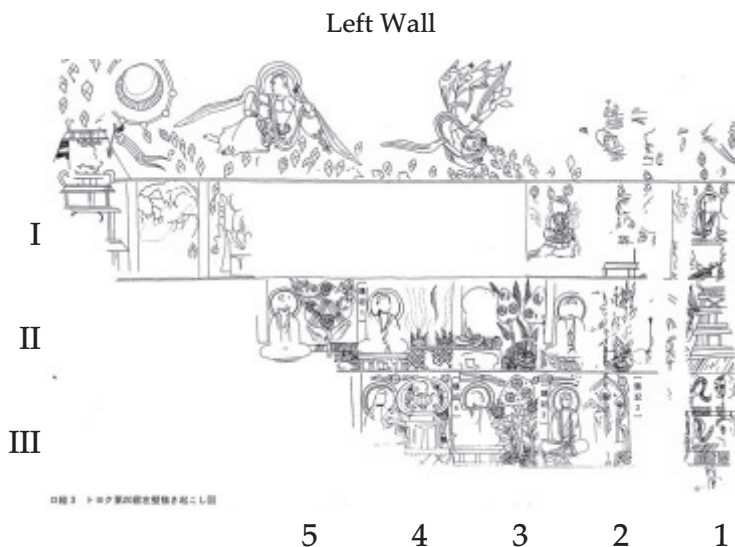


Figure 3¹⁹

It is reported that there are four legible inscriptions,²⁰ all of which have corresponding lines in the *Visualization Sūtra*. The content of the paintings also generally agrees with the descriptions in the *Visualization Sūtra*. However, there are also significant problems.

Here, let us discuss two of the paintings.²¹

II. 5

II. 3



[II-5]

Figure 4²²



[II-3]

Figure 5²³

Painting No. II.5 (Figure 4) retains a legible inscription, which can be translated as follows:²⁴

The [practitioner]²⁵ visualizes sevenfold nets on the tree of [seven types of (?)]²⁶ jewels. In each net, there is . . .

This inscription is very close to the following passage from the fourth item of visualization (“the image of [jewel] trees” 樹想) in the *Visualization Sūtra*:²⁷

Marvelous pearl nets entirely cover the trees. On each tree, there are sevenfold nets. In each net, there are fifty billion palaces of marvelous flowers, like the palace of a Brahmā king.²⁸

In painting No. II.5, the monk is indeed looking at a tree. Further, the cross-shaped object on the tree might have been intended to be the “nets” mentioned in the inscription. However, we do not see the palaces that should appear if we assume that the illegible part of the inscription was the same as the quoted line from the *Visualization Sūtra*.²⁹

In my opinion, the most conspicuous point here is that in the paintings (both Nos. II.5 and II.3) the trees are clearly burning, while the *Visualization Sūtra* does not state such a thing. As pictorial representations of Sukhāvati, these large flames strike us as being out of place. Since, however, the *Visualization Sūtra* does say that jewel trees in the Pure Land emit various colors of rays,³⁰ it might be possible that these flames were intended as “rays.”³¹ This possibility is actually not negligible, since, as we shall see below, in fragments of a mural painting taken from a nearby cave, flames coming out of jewels are described in the attached inscription as “rays of jewels” 寶珠光. Therefore, we need to consider the possibility that the imagery of “rays” was confused with the imagery of “fire.”³²

Nevertheless, even if this is the case, we should note that there are many passages from the kindred meditation texts that expressly mention burning trees. See the following quotations.

Above the jewel towers there are great jewel trees. Fire arises from all the branches and leaves of the trees, and the flames burn everything above and below [the jewel towers]. (*Ocean Sūtra*, in *Taishō*, vol. 15, p. 666a10–11)

At that time, fire naturally arises from the tip of the cudgel. [The fire] completely burns this tree and leaves only the core of the tree. (*Secret Essentials*, in *Taishō*, vol. 15, p. 254b24–25)

At the tip of the flower tree of the heart, among the flowers and leaves, there are minute flames just like the golden light that is emitted from the tip of [the flower tree] of the heart. (Ibid., p. 266a18–19)

[The meditator] sees the inside of his own heart. Fire gradually arises from the tips of flower trees and burns the diamond-like clouds. (Ibid., p. 266b20–21)

At that time fire naturally arises from the tips of marvelous flowers of the tree of the heart and burns the petals. Four fruits on the tree drop on the head of the practitioner. (Ibid., p. 267b1–2)

In particular, considering the fact that, in both of these paintings, the burning tree grows in a pond, the following passages are noteworthy:

The water is warm. In the water grows a tree. It is like a tree of seven jewels, and the branches and leaves are thick. On the tree there are four fruits, which ring like bells and preach suffering, emptiness, impermanence, and selflessness.³³ . . . Suddenly fire arises again. (*Secret Essentials*, in *Taishō*, vol. 15, p. 261b9–13)³⁴

[The master] teaches [the disciple] to observe, then, the pond in front of him. If [the disciple] says that he sees a pond, in which there are lotus flowers and trees with thick branches and leaves, after seeing this, [the disciple should] enter the water by himself and be seated by the trees. He [should] visualize that fire arises in his body and fills the pond. (*Five Gates*, in *Taishō*, vol. 15, p. 328b12–14)

Further, a similar image is found in the *Yogalehrbuch* also.

Then in the heart there is (a lotus pond) . . . [The meditator] sees a boy sunk there and absorbed in the pleasure of samādhi. A man (having) stars shining [like] charcoal seizes (the boy) in that lotus pond and lifts him up. Then the lotus pond burns. (p. 71.6–8)³⁵

Also, several other things (e.g., the whole world, the sea, etc.) are described as burning in the *Yogalehrbuch*. The following passage is more esoteric-seeming and peculiar.

Then a sword comes out of the navel of the meditator and arranges the six parts of (?) the meditator's body separately on his skin. . . . Then, in the same way, the swords that have come out of the body of the meditator arrange the whole sea of sentient beings according

to (the six elements [*dhātu*]) and non-sentient beings according to the five. (With both hands) the [meditator] examines these elements (*dhātu*) one by one; these [elements] are equally examined. Then he says: “(This) is earth-element, this is also earth-element, this is water-element, thus (up to consciousness-element. This is devoid of Self) and its possessions, this is also devoid of Self and its possessions.” Then . . . six parts [representing] the six elements burn in the fire of aversion. (pp. 165.7–166.8)

In this last passage, the “fire” is expressly said to represent the meditator’s sense of aversion. In the other passages also, the fire must symbolize something, but what it symbolizes is not necessarily clear. Nevertheless, it is certain that the “fire” image was a popular element in these Sanskrit and Chinese meditation manuals, and it must have been this popular image that was behind the seemingly strange depiction of the trees in these paintings.

Therefore, even if the flames in the relevant paintings in Cave 20 were intended as rays, I think it is still highly likely that such representations were influenced by the descriptions found in the kindred texts quoted above. In particular, we should note that in painting II.3 (Figure 5), not only the trees but also the pond itself seems to be burning. As we have seen above, quotations from the *Five Gates* and the *Yogalehrbuch* expressly state that the ponds are burning, but the *Visualization Sūtra* does not (at least explicitly) state that the ponds in the Pure Land emit rays. For this reason also, it is difficult to explain these flames just by looking at the *Visualization Sūtra*. Only if we assume that to the people who executed these paintings the *Visualization Sūtra* was inseparable from the meditation texts quoted above, does the presence of the flames become more understandable.

When we turn our attention to Cave 42, we notice that “fire” is one of the prominent motifs in that cave also.

Cave 42

On both the left and right walls of this cave, there are paintings of visualizing monks (see Figures 6 [left wall] and 7 [right wall]). The paintings in Cave 42 are usually considered to be older than those in Cave 20. In Cave 42, there is no painting that can be unambiguously linked to the *Visualization Sūtra*. They are much more closely linked to the other meditation texts mentioned above. Among these paintings, let us here discuss a few particularly noteworthy ones, all of which have “flame” elements.

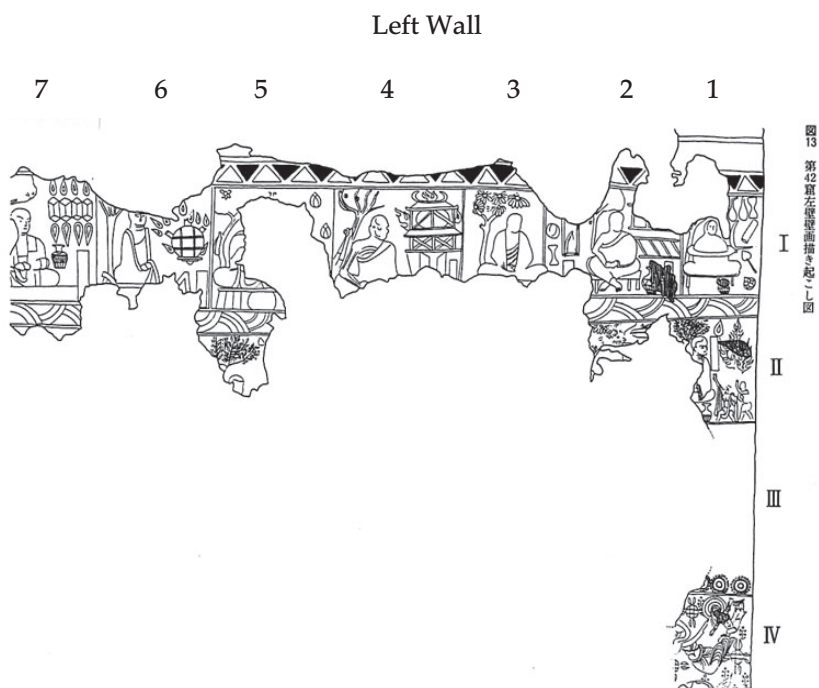


Figure 6³⁶

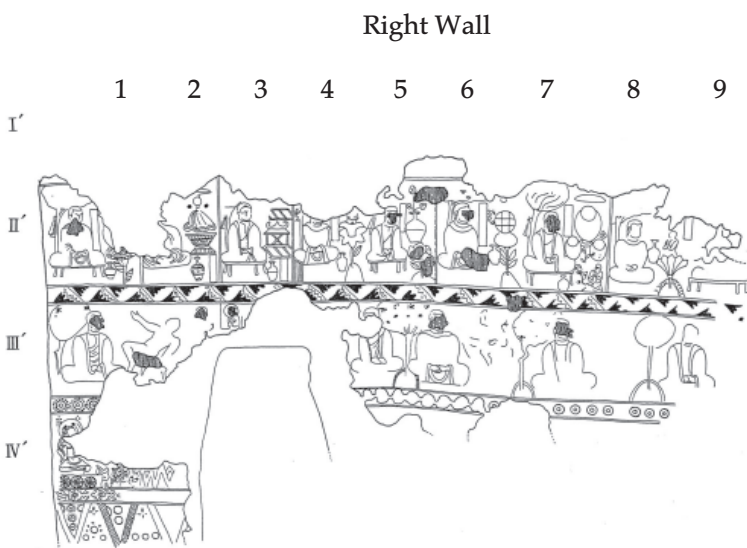


Figure 7³⁷

a. Demons

The most eye-catching image in this cave is the painting of two black demons with flames (II.1, III'.1).³⁸ Figures 8 and 9 show painting No. II.1.

II.1



Figure 8
(Picture taken by the author)

These demons are holding sticks (?) in their hands, and large flames are coming up from their heads (mouths?). Unfortunately no inscription is retained in the cartouche,³⁹ but this is a peculiar image that is hard to interpret without referring to the following passages:⁴⁰

Then at the tip of the flames there are five yaksas holding sharp swords in their hands. They have four mouths in their heads, and, inhaling the fire, they run. (*Ocean Sūtra*, in *Taishō*, vol. 15, p. 657c8–9)

There are yaksas residing in a fire mountain who move their bodies and inhale the fire. (*Secret Essentials*, in *Taishō*, vol. 15, p. 248b28–29)

There is a yakṣa demon, on whose head fire arises. (Ibid., p. 249a6)

Each kumbhānda⁴¹ spits out mountains of fire. (Ibid., p. 249b7–8)

[The practitioner] sees yakṣas who are naked, black, and skinny. Two fangs go upward, and fire burns on their heads. Their heads are like those of oxen, and the tips of their horns rain blood. (Ibid., p. 264c19–21)

[The practitioner] also sees a hungry demon as large as one billion yojanas spitting out poison and fire. (*Cures*, in *Taishō*, vol. 15, p. 339a28–29)

They were counting their breaths in a silent place and were seized by demons. They saw one demon whose face was like a lute, with four eyes and two mouths. The whole face was emitting light. . . making the mind of the practitioner uneasy. . . . If one sees such [a scene], one should remedy it quickly. As for the way to remedy this, . . . [The practitioner] shuts his eyes and secretly scolds him [i.e. the demon], saying: “I now recognize you. I know that you are the one who eats fire and smells scent in Jambūdvīpa” Then the demon will withdraw at a crawl. (Ibid., p. 341a29–b9)

Apparently, while practicing meditation one sometimes sees such terrifying scenes. These types of scenes are usually called *mo-shih* 魔事, “monstrous experiences,” and are well known in East Asia through the descriptions in the “Observation of Monstrous Experiences as Meditative Objects” (Kuan mo-shih ching 觀魔事境) chapter of the “The Great Calming and Contemplation” (Mo-ho chih-kuan 摩訶止觀, *Taishō*, vol. 46, no. 1911, p. 114c22–17a20).⁴² Demonic beings do appear here and there in Buddhist texts, but after a survey of relevant Indian texts, I have not been able to locate passages that explain these paintings as nicely as the Chinese visualization texts quoted above.

On the basis of these observations, I strongly suspect that these paintings were specifically linked to the passages quoted above. In this connection, it is suggestive that there is another painting of a demon on the opposite side of the same cave (No. III'.1). Further, according to Grünwedel's report (1912, 330–31),⁴³ the back chamber and side chamber C of this cave also had paintings of demons, both of whom had a sword or a club.⁴⁴ Unfortunately, neither of these paintings is visible now, but this record is very interesting, because the passage above from the *Ocean Sūtra* also states that the demons are holding swords. Further, according to the same report, the demon in the back chamber B was fleeing from an ascetic (*Asket*).⁴⁵ This can be compared with the last passage from the *Cures*,

which describes a demon that withdraws when his identity is revealed. These agreements, to my mind, strongly suggest close ties between the Toyok caves and the visualization texts with which we are concerned. However, we should note that it is not the *Visualization Sūtra* per se that explains these paintings. We must consult the entire body of relevant meditation manuals for a likely explanation.

b. Burning House

There is a painting of a burning house in Cave 42 (I.4). See Figure 9.

I.4

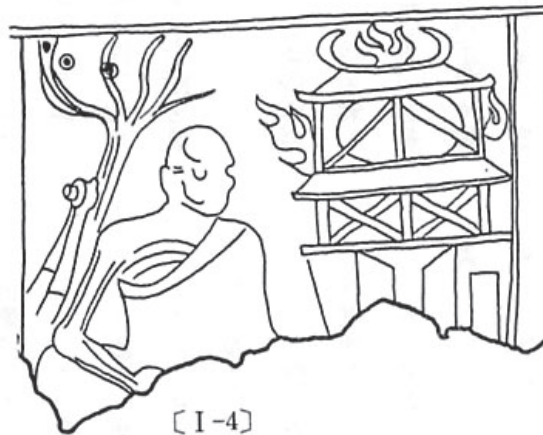


Figure 9⁴⁶

This is a curious scene, and we wonder what is intended here. In Buddhism in general, the most famous source of the scene of a burning house would be the “Chapter on a Simile,” (Aupamyaparivarta 譬喻品) of the *Lotus Sūtra*,⁴⁷ but in this particular cave, there is no other element that suggests specific ties to the *Lotus Sūtra*. I believe we should look for an explanation in meditation texts, and the following passage might be a good candidate (*Secret Essentials*, in *Taishō*, vol. 15, p. 266a18–22):

Visualization of the fire element is as follows: One visualizes the inside of the body. At the tip of the flower tree of the heart, among the flowers and leaves, there are minute flames just like the golden light that is emitted from the tip of [the flower tree] of the heart. [The flames] fill the body and go out through the pores. [Then the

flames] gradually grow larger and fill a bed. After filling the bed, they fill a chamber. After filling the chamber, they grow gradually larger and [eventually] fill a garden.

Miyaji points out the following passage from the *Ocean Sūtra* as a possible source of this scene (*Taishō*, vol. 15, p. 666a9–11):⁴⁸

In many waters there are as many jewel towers as the sands of the Ganges River. Under the jewel towers there is a jewel city like the city of Gandharvas.⁴⁹ Above the jewel towers there is a great jewel tree. Fire arises from all the branches and leaves of the trees, and the flames burn everything above and below [the jewel towers].

In addition, we might refer to the following line from the *Five Gates* (*Taishō*, vol. 15, p. 331a23–b21):

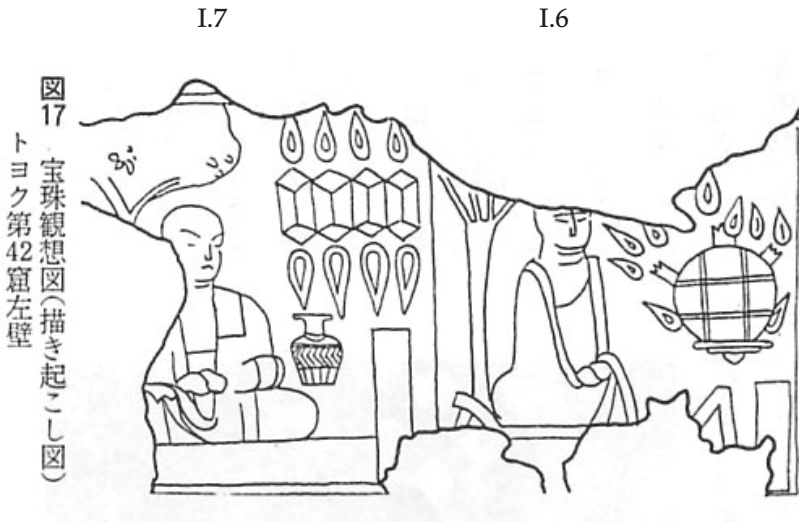
[A master] further teaches [the meditator] to visualize this. If [the meditator] says: “I see that there are ponds of blood and pus in the high hills on the four sides of the hell. In four places in the ponds, fire arises abruptly and burns the sinners. . . .” [The master teaches the meditator to visualize that] on the four sides of the ponds, fire arises. . . . [Then the master] teaches [the meditator] to visualize the four sides of the ponds. If [the meditator] says: “I see that on the four sides of the ponds towers naturally appear, and [the towers] contact flowers,” [then the master should teach the meditator] to make people quickly climb these towers to take a rest.

We should further note that *kūṭāgāra*, “vaulted house,”⁵⁰ which is usually translated in Chinese as *lou-kê* 樓閣, *t'ai* 臺, and so forth (thus, the *pao-lou* 寶樓, “jewel towers,” which appears in the above quotation from the *Ocean Sūtra*, also corresponds to a *kūṭāgāra*), is a prominent image in the *Yogalehrbuch*. Although I cannot find the image of a burning house in the *Yogalehrbuch*, as we have already seen, we find scenes in which various things burn in this text.⁵¹ The “burning” imagery seems certainly to have been popular among meditators in Central Asia.

In this case also, we cannot observe any direct ties with the *Visualization Sūtra*. The relevant passages are found in other meditation manuals.

c. Burning Jewels

Cave 42 has three paintings of burning jewels (I.6, I.7, II'.6).⁵² Figure 10 shows painting nos. I.6–7, while Figure 11, painting No. II'.6.

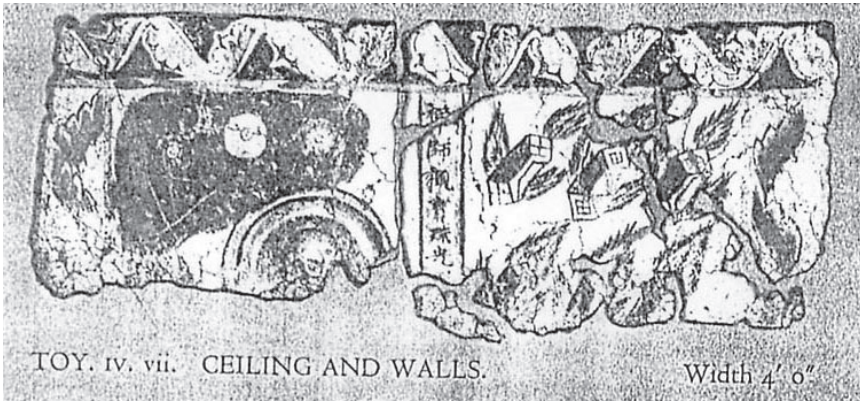
Figure 10⁵³

No.II'.6.

Figure 11⁵⁴

The imagery of a burning jewel itself is not a rare one,⁵⁵ but as an object of visualization, it is not a common motif.

Here again, no inscription is left in the cartouches. Fortunately, however, we have fragments of a very similar motif found in Stein Cave IV. vii,⁵⁶ which retain a legible inscription.

Figure 12⁵⁷

This appears to consist of fragments of a painting of a meditating monk, who is watching six burning square-column jewels, very similar in shape to those seen in painting No. I.7. The important point here is that we can read the following inscription in this painting:⁵⁸ “The meditator visualizes rays of jewels.”⁵⁹

This inscription is very significant, because we can confirm that (1) these paintings are scenes of visualization, and that (2) the burning columns in painting No. I.7 are indeed jewels.⁶⁰ As possible textual sources that can be linked to these paintings, I would like to suggest the following:

There are four venomous snakes holding a jewel in their mouths. They come out of flames and fly away over clouds.”⁶¹ (*Ocean Sūtra*, in *Taishō*, vol. 15, p. 664c28–29)

When [the practitioner] visualizes the inner fire, he sees the fire of the heart. It always has light that surpasses one hundred billion bright moons or divine jewels. The purity of the light of the heart is also similar. When he enters or comes out of *samādhi*, it is as if a man were walking carrying a bright burning jewel . . . Further he sees the king of mani jewels in the water of the great ocean, which emits flames.⁶² (*Secret Essentials*, in *Taishō*, vol. 15, p. 262c12–20)

In order to visualize the purification of one’s heart, one should first visualize the heart and make it clearer and clearer like a burning jewel. (*Cures*, in *Taishō*, vol. 15, p. 333b27–28)

A Brahmā king holds a *maṇi* mirror and illuminates the chest of the practitioner. Then the practitioner sees his own chest as if it had become a wish-granting jewel, which is clear and lovely, and has a burning jewel as its heart.⁶³ (Ibid., p. 333c1–3)

One should imagine that the rays of fire become a wish-granting jewel, which comes out of the pores [of the practitioner]. (Ibid., p. 333c25–26)

[The practitioner] says: “I see water of a great ocean, in which there is a *maṇi* jewel. Flames come out of the jewel as if from a fire.” (*Five Gates*, in *Taishō*, vol. 15, p. 329a5–6)

The important point here is that these passages describe not just burning jewels in general, but jewels seen in meditation. Here again, therefore, we can observe close ties between the quoted passages and the paintings.

OVERALL EVALUATIONS OF THE PAINTINGS

According to Sudō Hirotooshi, “paintings of meditating monks,” *zenjō biku zō* 禅定比丘像, in which monks are depicted simply in the posture of seated meditation without any particular object in front of them, are widely seen from Afghanistan to Japan. However, the distribution of “paintings of visualizing monks,” *zenkan biku zō* 禅觀比丘像, in which meditating monks are depicted with the objects of visualization, is more limited.⁶⁴ Sudō’s list indicates that they are mostly concentrated in Qizil (in the Kuchā area)⁶⁵ and Toyok.⁶⁶ Sudō observes that there is a clear stylistic difference between the paintings of visualizing monks in Qizil and those in Toyok.⁶⁷

In the paintings of visualizing monks at Qizil,⁶⁸ monks are scattered in natural settings and are depicted in a very unstylized way.⁶⁹ They are looking at items such as a lotus pond, coiled snakes, a skull, and so forth. By contrast, in Toyok (Caves 20 and 42), scenes of visualization are lined up horizontally and seem to presuppose detailed visualization manuals.⁷⁰ One of the features of the *Visualization Sūtra* and other closely related texts, namely, the *Ocean Sūtra*, the *Secret Essentials*, the *Cures*, the *Five Gates*, and so forth, is itemized systems of visualization.⁷¹ Therefore, the structures of these lined-up paintings and the meditation manuals seem to closely correspond.

Nevertheless, the arrangements of the paintings in both Cave 20 and Cave 42 do not agree with any available text. Even in Cave 20, where we can observe clear links between the paintings and the *Visualization Sūtra*, the disagreements are conspicuous (Table 1).⁷²

Table 1

Painting No.	II.5	II.4	II.3	II.2	II.1
Content of the Painting	a burning tree (inscription)	checkered ground	two burning trees from a pond	two flowers from a pond	a tower, musical instruments
Corresponding Item in the Visualization Sūtra	4. jewel trees	2. water	4. jewel trees(?) or <i>Ocean Sūtra, Secret Essentials(?)</i>	5. water of eight superior qualities(?)	3. ground or 6. an overall view
Painting No.	(lost)	III.4	III.3	III.2	III.1
Content of the Painting	--	a baby in a lotus (inscription)	a flower tree, two flowers (inscription)	flowers with strips (inscription)	trees with water streams
Corresponding Item in the Visualization Sūtra	--	12. general visualization	4. jewel tree	7. flower seat	5. water of eight superior

If one looks at the numbers attached to the items of the *Visualization Sūtra*, which signify the position in the sequence of visualization, and which are given by the *Visualization Sūtra* itself, it will be evident how disorderly the arrangement of these paintings is. It is particularly noteworthy that paintings corresponding to the same item in the *Visualization Sūtra* appear more than once on this wall (painting Nos. II.5 and III.3 corresponding to item 4; painting Nos. II.2 and III.1 corresponding to item 5).⁷³ Such a chaotic arrangement is in clear contrast to the “transformation tableaux based on the *Visualization Sūtra*” (*Kuan-ching pien-hsiang* 觀經變相) widely seen from Tun-huang to Japan, in which the pictorial representations generally follow the structure of the *Visualization Sūtra*.⁷⁴ We should further recall here that at Toyok even the individual paintings have elements that are difficult to be explained by reference to the *Visualization Sūtra*, but can be easily explained by consulting other meditation texts.

On the other hand, the arrangements of the paintings at Cave 42 are as shown in Tables 2 and 3:

Table 2: Left Wall

I.7 burning jewels	I.6 burning jewel	I.5 [lotus flower in a jar, flames, remnant of an inscrip- tion]	I.4 burning house	I.3 musical instru- ments	I.2 ponds (?)	I.1 musical instru- ments, lotus flower
--	--	--	--	--	--	II.1 two demons, flames
--	--	--	--	--	--	--
--	--	--	--	--	--	flying heavenly beings, burning jewels

Table 3: Right Wall

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II'.1 lotus seat [halo and mandorla]	II'.2 bowl, cloth	II'.3 house, ponds (?)	II'.4 lotus flower, mirror (?), [parasol]	II'.5 lotuses in a pot, lotus from a pond, the face of a boy	II'.6 lotus flower from a pond, burning jewel	II'.7 three halos and mandorlas	II'.8 lotus from a pond, a boy
III'.1 demon	III'.2 damaged	III'.3 demon (?)	III'.4 some figure	III'.5 some figure	--	--	--
IV'.1 bodhisattva (?), moun- tain	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Many paintings are damaged or lost, and so the overall structure is not necessarily clear. Nevertheless, the first row of the left wall and the second and third rows of the right wall are relatively well preserved, and we can observe some sequences of images. Most of the individual items are closely tied to the Chinese meditation texts we are concerned with, but the arrangements of these items do not agree with any system of the available meditation texts.

What conclusion can we draw from these observations? One possibility is that these paintings were based on some texts that are not extant today. This is in a way an easy solution, but the difficulty is that the painters who executed the paintings at Cave 20 seem to have been familiar with the tradition of the *Visualization Sūtra* itself. Therefore, it is difficult to assume that the paintings were based on some text completely unknown to us, at least in the case of Cave 20.

This indicates that to the mind of the people who executed (or planned) these paintings, the *Visualization Sūtra* and other cognate meditation manuals were not clearly separable, distinct texts. Otherwise, it would be difficult to explain the coexistence of the motifs corresponding to the *Visualization Sūtra* and other meditation texts.

It seems to me that these images were in a way “common property” widely shared by the Buddhist meditators in Central Asia. I suspect that many practitioners visualized similar images, but the combination or arrangement of these images was largely up to the individual practitioners. In this connection, we should further consider that in those days the primary means of communication must have been oral, and that the instructions on meditation were probably given orally by masters to disciples.⁷⁵ In such a situation, it is easily imaginable that individual masters taught largely similar but not identical methods. As if testifying to such a situation, in the relevant meditation texts themselves, similar elements appear in different orders. It is, in a way, just like people cooking very different dishes using the same ingredients. In Central Asia in those days, many different systems of visualization consisting of similar constituents seem to have been propagated and followed.

We should also take into consideration here that many painters may well have been illiterate,⁷⁶ unless we assume that painters were themselves monks.⁷⁷ Therefore, it is highly likely that monks gave instructions to the painters orally based on their own understanding. Even if the monks themselves were the painters, they must have been dependent to a large extent on the oral instructions given by their masters. It seems rather unlikely that the painters consulted the texts directly, and determined the content of what they painted.

Another noteworthy point is that the paintings at Toyok give a much more practical impression than those at Tun-huang. In most of the “transformation tableaux on the *Visualization Sūtra*” at the Tun-huang Mo-kao caves, Vaidehī is painted as the person looking at the objects of visualization.⁷⁸ This point gives us the impression that these paintings were intended as narrative scenes rather than as meditative scenes. Since the arrangements of the scenes also largely follow the contents of the *Visualization Sūtra*, these paintings seem to suggest that the *Visualization Sūtra* was already accepted as a scriptural authority.

On the other hand, in the Toyok paintings, monks in meditation are looking at the meditative objects, and no narrative elements are found there. Thus, these paintings are clearly intended as meditative scenes. We should further recall that the caves themselves seem to have been used for the practice of meditation. Therefore, the likelihood is great that these paintings reflect the content of visualization practiced right on the spot. The great degree of deviation from the text is also not surprising if we consider the oral nature of meditative instructions and directions given to the painters.

Considering all the evidence, I think at least in the case of the Toyok caves, it is simplistic to assume that the paintings were based on particular written texts. Rather, I think it is closer to the truth that both the texts and the paintings independently preserve different aspects of the same large stream of oral tradition. An oral tradition is like a big river with many waves and ripples on its surface. We can no longer access the oral tradition itself, which has long since died out, and accordingly most of the "waves" are also irretrievably lost to us. Fortunately, however, some of the "waves" are preserved for us through the texts and paintings that have survived to this day. Therefore, we should probably consider that these texts and paintings are individually based on the oral tradition, and not that the paintings are directly based on any particular text. Only in this way are we able to explain the situation we observe in the paintings and texts.

In order for this model to work well, the texts must be local products. If the texts were composed elsewhere and imported as already established religious authorities, one would hesitate to deviate from them too much. They would be followed respectfully as "the words of the Buddha." This seems to be the situation we observe in the Tun-huang transformation tableaux. On the other hand, if the texts were local products, and if the practical (and oral) tradition that gave birth to those texts was still alive, they would be just some examples of many possible ways of arranging and combining popular visionary images. In such a situation, even if the texts were already there, people would feel much freer to deviate from them and represent their own systems in the paintings. This seems to be the situation we observe in the Toyok paintings.

As I have discussed elsewhere,⁷⁹ the opinions of art historians vary concerning the dating of these paintings (Cave 42: fifth to seventh centuries; Cave 20: sixth to seventh centuries). Since the relevant meditation texts are considered to be from the fifth century, the paintings at Cave 42 might have been (nearly) contemporary with the texts, but those at Cave 20 must have been later than the texts, whichever dating we follow. Nevertheless, as I stated above, when the paintings at Cave 20 were executed, the practical tradition that served as the matrix of these texts seems to have been still active. Otherwise, it would be very difficult to explain the markedly chaotic situation we observe in the paintings of this cave.

Therefore, I believe these paintings suggest rather strongly that the *Visualization Sūtra* and surrounding texts reflect the visualization actually practiced in the Turfan area and thus these texts are themselves local products.

NOTES

1. An earlier version of this paper was read at a symposium, "Visions and Visualization: Buddhist Praxis on the Silk Road," which was organized by Dean Richard Payne of the Institute of Buddhist Studies and held at Stanford University on March 22, 2002. I thank Dean Payne and Dr. Wendy Abraham (Center for Buddhist Studies, Stanford University) for their hard work to make the symposium successful. Exchanges with participants, particularly those with the discussant, Professor Bruce Williams (Institute of Buddhist Studies), were very fruitful, and I thank them for their stimulating questions and suggestions.

This paper is an abridged and revised version of Section III, Chapter 4 of my dissertation (Nobuyoshi Yamabe, *The Sūtra on the Ocean-Like Samādhi of the Visualization of the Buddha: The Interfusion of the Chinese and Indian Cultures in Central Asia as Reflected in a Fifth Century Apocryphal Sūtra*, [Ph.D. dissertation, Yale University, 1999]), which is partly based on the information I obtained during the field trip to Turfan (May 6–11, 1996) of the Silk Road Project organized by Professor Valerie Hansen (Yale University). I thank Professor Hansen and other participants in the project for their many constructive suggestions. Discussions with Professors Victor H. Mair, Ma Shi-ch'ang, and Sarah E. Fraser were particularly helpful, and I express my sincere gratitude to them. I am grateful to the Henry Luce Foundation, which has funded this project. I have also greatly benefitted from exchanges with Professors Miyaji Akira and Sudō Hirotooshi during the preparation of earlier drafts of this paper. My thanks are particularly due to Professor Miyaji, who has kindly allowed me to use line-drawings published in his papers. Last but certainly not least, I thank Professor Robert Kritzer for his kind assistance with my English.

2. See, most notably, Fujita Kōtatsu, *Genshi Jōdo shisō no kenkyū* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1970); "The Textual Origins of the *Kuan Wu-liang-shou ching*: A Canonical Scripture of Pure Land Buddhism," in *Chinese Buddhist Apocrypha*, Robert E. Buswell, Jr., ed. (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1990), pp. 149–73; and *Kan Muryōju kyō kōkyū: Kangyō shijōsho o sankan shite* (Kyoto: Shinshū Ōtaniha Shūmusho Shuppanbu, 1985); Sueki Fumihiko, "Kan Muryōju kyō kenkyū," *Tōyō Bunka Kenkyūjo kiyō* 101 (1986): pp. 163–225; "Kan Muryōju kyō: Kanbutsu to jō," in Sueki Fumihiko and Kajiyama Yūichi, eds., *Jōdo Bukkyō no shisō*, vol. 2, *Kan Muryōju kyō, Hanju sammai kyō* (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1992); Tsukinowa Kenryū, "Butten no shūshi," *Bungaku, Tetsugaku, Shigaku gakkai rengō henshū kenkyū ronbun shū* 4 (1953): pp. 90–91; and *Butten no hihanteki kenkyū* (Kyoto: Hyakkaen, 1971).

3. Tsukinowa, "Butten no shūshi," and *Butten no hihanteki kenkyū*.

4. See, for example, Fujita, *Genshi Jōdo shisō no kenkyū* and “The Textual Origins of the *Kuan Wu-liang-shou ching*.”

5. The *Yogalehrbuch* is edited and published by Dieter Schlingloff as *Ein buddhistisches Yogalehrbuch: Textband*, Sanskrittexte aus den Turfanfunden, vol. 7 (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1964). Due to the fragmentary state of its manuscripts, we cannot confirm the original title. Therefore, we tentatively call it “Yogalehrbuch,” after the title of Schlingloff’s publication. For a discussion of the similarities between the *Yogalehrbuch* and the Chinese meditation texts, see Yamabe Nobuyoshi, “New Fragments of the ‘Yogalehrbuch,’” *Kyūshū Ryūoku Tanki Daigaku kiyō* 43 (1997): pp. 11–39, and Yamabe, “The Significance of the ‘Yogalehrbuch’ for the Investigation into the Origin of Chinese Meditation Texts,” *Bukkyō bunka* 9 (1999): pp. 1–74.

6. For example, see Ono Genmyō, *Kendara no Bukkyō bijutsu*, reprinted in *Ono Genmyō Bukkyō geijutsu chosaku shū*, vol. 5 (1923; Tokyo: Kaimei Shoin, 1977); Alexander C. Soper, “Aspects of Light Symbolism in Gandhāran Sculpture, Part 1,” *Artibus Asiae* 12 (1949): pp. 252–83; “Aspects of Light Symbolism in Gandhāran Sculpture, Part 2,” *Artibus Asiae* 12 (1949): pp. 314–30; “Aspects of Light Symbolism in Gandhāran Sculpture, Part 3,” *Artibus Asiae* 13 (1950): pp. 63–85; Fujita, *Genshi Jōdo shisō no kenkyū*, pp. 124–26; “The Textual Origins of the *Kuan Wu-liang-shou ching*,” pp. 158–59; and *Kan Muryōju kyō kōkyū*, pp. 36–39.

7. Ono and Soper see ties between the *Ocean Sūtra* and Gandhāran Buddhist art (for the references, see note 6, above), but since the influence of Gandhāran art was widespread in Central Asia, these similarities are not specific enough to determine the geographical origin of the text. Nakamura Hajime (“Jōdo sanbukyō no kaisetsu,” in Nakamura Hajime, Hayashima Kyōshō, and Kino Kazuyoshi, *Jōdo sanbukyō*, vol. 2 [Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1964], pp. 205–6) and Fujita (*Kan Muryōju kyō kōkyū*, pp. 36–39) try to link the gigantic Buddhist statues in Bāmiyān and Kuchā to the descriptions of a huge buddha and bodhisattvas in the *Visualization Sūtra*. Since these descriptions, however, may be purely imaginary, Nakamura and Fujita’s arguments are not definitive either.

8. Chung-kuo Mei-shu Ch’üan-chi Pien-chi Wei-yüan Hui, ed., *Chung-kuo Mei-shu Ch’üan-chi: Hui-hua pien*, vol. 16, *Hsin-chiang shih-k’u pi-hua* (Beijing: Wên-wu Ch’u-pan-shê, 1989); Chung-kuo Pi-hua Ch’üan-chi Pien-chi Wei-yüan Hui, *Chung-kuo pi-hua ch’uan-chi: Hsin-chiang*, vol. 6, T’u-lu-fan (Shenyang: Liao-ning Mei-shu Ch’u-pan-shê; Urumchi: Hsin-chiang Jên-min Ch’u-pan-shê, 1990); Hsin-chiang Wei-wu-êrh Tzû-chih-ch’ü Po-wu-kuan, ed., *Hsin-chiang shih-k’u, T’u-lu-fan Po-tzû-k’ê-li-k’ê shih-k’u* (Urumchi: Hsin-chiang Jên-min Ch’u-pan-shê; Shanghai: Shang-hai Jên-min Mei-shu Ch’u-pan-shê, 1990).

9. Hu Chi, Li Hsiao-ts'ung, Jung Hsin-chiang, *T'u-lu-fan* (San-ch'ın Ch'u-pan-shê, n.d.), pp. 123–26; *Chung-kuo Pi-hua*, p. 5.
10. "Introduction," in *Hsin-chiang shih-k'u, T'u-lu-fan Po-tzû-k'ê-li-k'ê shih-k'u* (unpaginated); Chia Ying-i, "T'u-yü-kou ti 44 k'u yü Mo-kao-k'u Pei-liang Tung-k'u pi-chiao yen-chiu 44," in *1987 Tun-huang shih-k'u yen-chiu kuo-chi t'ao-lun-hui shih-k'u k'ao-ku-pien wên-chi* (Liao-ning Mei-shu Ch'u-pan-shê, 1990), p. 184.
11. After Aurel Stein, *Innermost Asia: Detailed Report of Explorations in Central Asia, Kan-su and Eastern İrân*, vol. 4 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1928), p. 27.
12. After Albert Grünwedel, *Altbuddhistische Kultstätten in Chinesisch-Turkistan: Bericht über Archäologische Arbeiten von 1906 bis 1907 bei Kuča, Qarašahr und in der Oase Turfan* (Berlin: Georg Reimer, 1912), p. 327, figure 658.
13. The central part (Grünwedel's Cave 1) seems to have had already collapsed when he visited the site (Grünwedel reports that the rear lunette of his Cave 1 was visible above the entrance to his Cave 2). See Grünwedel, *Altbuddhistische Kultstätten in Chinesisch-Turkistan*, p. 329.
14. For the correspondence between the Chinese system and Grünwedel's, see Miyaji Akira, "Turufan, Toyoku sekkutsu no zenkankutsu hekiga ni tsuite: Jōdozu, Jōdo kansōzu, fujō kansōzu, part 1," *Bukkyō geijutsu* 221 (1995): p. 18.
15. In particular, Cave 42 has the characteristic structure of meditation caves, consisting of a main hall and several side chambers (probably for individual meditation). "Meditation caves" in Central Asia are considered to have originated from Indian *vihāra* caves (residential caves). In Central Asia, the side chambers attached to these types of caves generally are too small to live in, and thus scholars believe that the side chambers were used for individual meditation. See Mogi Keiichirō, "Kutsu kōzō ni tsuite," in *Tonkō sekkutsu gakujutsu chōsa daiichiji hōkokusho*, Tokyo Geijutsu Daigaku Bijutsu Gakubu Tonkō Gakujutsu Chōsadan, ed. (Tokyo: Tokyo Geijutsu Daigaku Bijutsu Gakubu Tonkō Gakujutsu Chōsadan, 1983), p. 11. See also Ma Shih-ch'ang "Shin-chiang shih-k'u-chung tē Han-fēng tung-k'u ho pi-hua," in *Chung-kuo Mei-shu Ch'üan-chi: Hui-hua pien*, vol. 16, *Hsin-chiang shih-k'u pi-hua*, Chung-kuo Mei-shu Ch'üan-chi Pien-chi Wei-yüan Hui, ed. (Beijing: Wên-wu Ch'u-pan-shê, 1989), p. 47.
16. Chia Ying-i, "Toyoku sekkutsu kō," translated from Chinese by Sudō Hirotooshi, *Bukkyō geijutsu* 186 (1989): pp. 66–67; Miyaji, "Turufan, Toyoku sekkutsu no zenkankutsu hekiga ni tsuite, part 1," p. 19.
17. Yamabe Nobuyoshi, "An Examination of the Mural Paintings of Toyok Cave 20 in Conjunction with the Origin of the *Amitayus Visualization Sutra*," *Orientations* 30-4 (1999): pp. 38–44.

18. Yamabe, “*The Sūtra on the Ocean-Like Samādhi*,” pp. 427–97.
19. After Miyaji, “Turufan, Toyoku sekkutsu no zenkankutsu hekiga ni tsuite: Jōdozu, Jōdo kansōzu, fujō kansōzu, part 2,” *Bukkyō geijutsu* 223 (1995), plate 3.
20. Miyaji, “Turufan, Toyoku sekkutsu no zenkankutsu hekiga ni tsuite, part 2,” pp. 24–27.
21. Concerning the numbering of the paintings, I follow the system used by Miyaji, “Turufan, Toyoku sekkutsu no zenkankutsu hekiga ni tsuite: Jōdozu, Jōdo kansōzu, fujō kansōzu,” parts 1–3, *Bukkyō geijutsu* 221 (1995): pp. 15–41; 223 (1995): pp. 15–36; and 226 (1996): pp. 38–83. In this system, the rows are numbered in Roman numerals from top to bottom, and the columns in Arabic numerals from rear to front.
22. Detail of Miyaji, “Turufan, Toyoku sekkutsu no zenkankutsu hekiga ni tsuite, part 3,” p. 56, figure 13.
23. Detail of Miyaji, “Turufan, Toyoku sekkutsu no zenkankutsu hekiga ni tsuite, part 3,” p. 56, figure 13.
24. The original inscription is found in Miyaji, “Turufan, Toyoku sekkutsu no zenkankutsu hekiga ni tsuite, part 2,” p. 24. The English translation is the author’s.
25. One illegible character is supplied by Miyaji, probably correctly, as *hsing* 行.
26. One character is illegible in the original inscription. *Ch’i* 七 (seven) is supplied by the author from the context.
27. *Taishō*, vol. 12, p. 342b7–9; Miyaji, “Turufan, Toyoku sekkutsu no zenkankutsu hekiga ni tsuite, part 1,” p. 24.
28. We should also note that the inscriptions do not follow the text of the *Visualization Sūtra* word for word. Since, however, deviation of inscriptions from texts is not an unknown phenomenon elsewhere (Sarah Elizabeth Fraser, “The Artist’s Practice in Tang Dynasty China [8th–10th Centuries],” Ph. D. Dissertation, University of California, Berkeley [1996], pp. 89–90), we should not put too much emphasis on this point. Perhaps the scribe who wrote these inscriptions was referring to casual excerpts from the sutra.

On the disagreements between the inscriptions and the paintings, and between the inscriptions and the *Visualization Sūtra*, Miyaji (“Turufan, Toyoku sekkutsu no zenkankutsu hekiga ni tsuite, part 3,” pp. 69–70) considers two possibilities: (1) the inscriptions were added later based on insufficient knowledge, or, more likely, (2) there were collections of icons and passages excerpted from various texts intended as manuals for practice.

It is reported that there is indeed a casual excerpt from the *Visualization Sūtra* on the verso of S.2544, which apparently was used by the scribes. See Fujita, *Kan Muryōju kyō kōkyū*, pp. 45–46 (the page numbers refer to those in the appendix).

There is also a collection of cartouches (Pelliot 3304; Fraser, “The Artist’s Practice in Tang Dynasty China,” p. 91) and sketchbooks (*ibid.*, p. 25ff.). Note that Pelliot 3304 verso also contains excerpts from the *Visualization Sūtra*.

29. Grünwedel (*Altbuddhistische Kultstätten in Chinesisch-Turkistan*, p. 320, n. 2) gives the following German translation (by Franke) of the inscription copied by Grünwedel: “Wer die Liebe besitzt, der shaut alle Kostbarkeiten. Auf den Bäumen sind sieben Arten von Gewändern (?); wenn die Gewänder (?) sich öffnen, so enthalten sie zweihundert . . .” (“A benevolent one sees all the jewels. On the tree there are seven types of clothes; then the clothes open, they hold two hundred . . .”). Clearly some miscopying is involved here (especially, 行者 “a practitioner,” seems to have been copied as, 仁者 “a benevolent one”; and 間, “in, among,” as 開, “to open”). We can, however, deduce from the German translation that the inscription he saw had two more characters *êrh-pai* 二百, “two hundred,” after the last character of the inscription that we can read. (Note also that partly-faded *wu* 五, “five,” might have been miscopied as *êrh* 二, “two,” by Grünwedel.) Therefore, it is likely that some words very similar to the text of the *Visualization Sūtra* followed the surviving part of the inscription.

30. “Flowers and leaves [of the jewel trees] show different colors respectively. From the color of beryl, gold rays emerge. From the color of crystal, red rays emerge. From the color of agate, rays of [the color of] the giant clam emerge. From the color of giant clam, rays of [the color of] the green pearl emerge,” (*Taishō*, vol. 12, p. 342b4–6).

31. I have profited from a discussion with Professor Bruce Williams on this point.

32. We should perhaps also consider that the Chinese characters for “ray, light” 光 is visually somewhat similar to the character for “fire” 火.

33. Cf. 其摩尼水流注華間尋樹上下。其聲微妙演說苦空無常無我諸波羅蜜 (*Visualization Sūtra*, in *Taishō*, vol. 12, p. 342b29–c1).

34. Quoted in Miyaji, “Turufan, Toyoku sekkutsu no zenkankutsu hekiga ni tsuite, part 3,” p. 56.

35. Quotations from the *Yogalehrbuch* are from the edition found in Schlingloff, *Ein buddhistisches Yogalehrbuch*.

36. After Miyaji, “Turufan, Toyoku sekkutsu no zenkankutsu hekiga ni tsuite, part 1,” p.29, figure 13.

37. After Miyaji, “Turufan, Toyoku sekkutsu no zenkankutsu hekiga ni tsuite, part 1,” p. 31, figure 14.

38. See Miyaji “Turufan, Toyoku sekkutsu no zenkankutsu hekiga ni tsuite, part 3,” pp. 49–50.

39. Grünwedel (*Altbuddhistische Kultstätten in Chinesisch-Turkistan*, p. 229) already reports that all the Chinese inscriptions on this wall are damaged.

40. For a few other similar passages, see Miyaji, “Turufan, Toyoku sekkutsu no zenkankutsu hekiga ni tsuite, part 3,” p. 50.

41. Name of a class of demons.

42. This text was based on Chih-i’s 智顛 lectures delivered in 594 CE.

43. Grünwedel, *Altbuddhistische Kultstätten in Chinesisch-Turkistan*, pp. 330–31.

44. Further, Grünwedel (*Altbuddhistische Kultstätten in Chinesisch-Turkistan*, p. 332) testifies that Klementz Cave 38, Hall B had another painting of demons.

45. According to Grünwedel (*Altbuddhistische Kultstätten in Chinesisch-Turkistan*, p. 331), all the “ascetics” in this back chamber wear loincloths instead of monks’ robes and have hair and beard like *Brāhmaṇa* penitents.

Further, Grünwedel (*ibid.*, p. 320) interprets a figure that is depicted in painting III’ 2 on the right wall of Cave 20 as a demon fleeing from the meditating monk. Miyaji (“Turufan, Toyoku sekkutsu no zenkankutsu hekiga ni tsuite, part 2,” p. 32) disagrees with this interpretation and suggests that this is a sick person, though he admits that the painting is faded and rather unclear.

46. After Miyaji “Turufan, Toyoku sekkutsu no zenkankutsu hekiga ni tsuite, part 3,” p. 63, figure 24.

47. *Saddharmapuṇḍarīkasūtra*, U. Wogihara and C. Tsuchida, eds. (Tokyo: Sankibō Busshorin, 1958), pp. 59–94; in Kumārajīva’s version, *Miao-fa lien-hua ching* 妙法蓮華經, in *Taishō*, vol. 9, no. 262, pp. 10b–16b.

48. Miyaji, “Turufan, Toyoku sekkutsu no zenkankutsu hekiga ni tsuite, part 3,” p. 63 and p. 81, n. 86.

49. *Gandharvanagara* usually means “mirage,” but I am not sure if that is the intended meaning here. Since the *Ocean Sūtra* is apocryphal, there is no guarantee that the person who wrote this passage was familiar with the usage of this Sanskrit word.

50. Concerning the meaning of this word, see Willem B. Bollee, “Le *kūṭāgāra* ou de la maison des hommes au manoir dans l’Inde orientale et l’Asie du Sud-Est,” *Bulletin d’études indiennes* 4 (1986): pp. 189–214. This

word is discussed in Section III.1 of my dissertation (*"The Sūtra on the Ocean-Like Samādhi of the Visualization of the Buddha"*).

51. Due to the fragmentary nature of the manuscripts of this text, the fact that the image of a burning house does not appear in the available portions of the manuscript does not necessarily prove that it was not contained in the original text.

52. Miyaji, "Turufan, Toyoku sekkutsu no zenkankutsu hekiga ni tsuite, part 3," pp. 58–59.

53. After Miyaji, "Turufan, Toyoku sekkutsu no zenkankutsu hekiga ni tsuite, part 3," p. 58, figure 17.

54. Detail of Miyaji "Turufan, Toyoku sekkutsu no zenkankutsu hekiga ni tsuite, part 1," p. 31, figure 14.

55. Inamoto Yasuo ("Shōnankai chūkutsu to metsuzai no shisō: Sōchō shūhen ni okeru jissengyō to Nehangyō, *Kan muryōjukyō no kaishaku o chūshin ni*," *Kaon zasshū* 4 [2002]: pp. 25–26) points out that in China jewels were identified with the relics of the Buddha.

56. See Nakamine Masanobu, "Chūō Ajia Toyoku iseki Bukkyō jūin hekiga danpen ni hyōgen sareta hōju ni tsuite," *Beppu Daigaku kiyō* 21 (1980): pp. 33–38; Miyaji, "Turufan, Toyoku sekkutsu no zenkankutsu hekiga ni tsuite, part 1," p. 38; and Figure 1.

57. Part of Fred H. Andrews, *Wall Paintings from Ancient Shrines in Central Asia* (London: Oxford University Press, 1948), plate 9.

58. See Nakamine, "Chūō Ajia Toyoku iseki Bukkyō jūin hekiga danpen ni hyōgen sareta hōju ni tsuite," p. 34.

59. According to the observation by Professor Ma Shih-ch'ang of Beijing University (personal discussion during the Third Silk Road Conference, July 10–12, 1998), this inscription seems to be from the fifth or sixth century (i.e., before the Sui period) judging from the calligraphic style. He further observed that stylistically this inscription is close to those in Toyok Cave 20.

60. Concerning the burning jewel (*cintāmaṇi*), see also Moriyasu Takao ("Uiguru-Manikyōshi no kenkyū," *Osaka Daigaku Bungakubu kiyō* 31 and 32 [1991]: pp. 13–15), which reports the existence of this motif in a Buddhist-Manichean double cave, Bezeklik Cave 25 (early ninth to early tenth century; *ibid.*, p. 32).

61. The text has *hsü* 虛, "empty," but I read as *yün* 雲, "cloud," according to the variant given in the footnote of the *Taishō* canon.

62. See Miyaji, "Turufan, Toyoku sekkutsu no zenkankutsu hekiga ni tsuite, part 3," p. 58.

63. Namely, the meditator's heart is visible like a burning jewel in his chest, which is like a clear wish-granting jewel.

64. Sudō Hirotooshi, "Zenjō biku zuzō to Tonkō dai 285 kutsu," *Bukkyō geijutsu* 183 (1989): pp. 12–20; and "Ch'an-ting pi-ch'iu t'u-hsiang yü Tun-huang 285 k'u," in *1987 Tun-huang shih-k'u yen-chiu kuo-chi t'ao-lun-hui shih-k'u k'ao-ku-pien wên-chi* (Liao-ning Mei-shu Ch'u-pan-shê, 1990), pp. 395–403.

65. See also Miyaji Akira, "Kijiru daiichi yōshiki no vōruto tenjōkutsu hekiga: Zenjōsō, sangaku kōzu, Miroku bosatsu no zuzō kōsei," in *Nehan to Miroku no zuzōgaku: Indo kara Chūō Ajia e* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1992), pp. 428–31.

66. Sudō Hirotooshi, "Zenjō biku zuzō to Tonkō dai 285 kutsu," p. 14; and "Ch'an-ting pi-ch'iu t'u-hsiang yü Tun-huang 285 k'u," pp. 412–13.

67. Sudō, "Zenjō biku zuzō to Tonkō dai 285 kutsu," pp. 15 and 18; "Ch'an-ting pi-ch'iu t'u-hsiang yü Tun-huang 285 k'u," p. 397 and pp. 400–401).

68. See Miyaji, "Kijiru daiichi yōshiki no vōruto tenjōkutsu hekiga," pp. 414–35; Sudō, "Zenjō biku zuzō to Tonkō dai 285 kutsu," pp. 13–18; "Ch'an-ting pi-ch'iu t'u-hsiang yü Tun-huang 285 k'u," pp. 396–400.

69. This point is also noted in Liu Hung-liang, "Kao-ch'ang shih-k'u k'ai-shu," in *Chung-kuo pi-hua ch'üan-chi: Hsin-chiang*, vol. 6, T'u-lu-fan, Chung-kuo Pi-hua Ch'üan-chi Pien-chi Wei-yüan Hui, ed. (Shenyang: Liao-ning Mei-shu Ch'u-pan-shê; Urumchi: Hsin-chiang Jên-min Ch'u-pan-shê, 1990), p. 11.

70. Sudō, "Zenjō biku zuzō to Tonkō dai 285 kutsu," pp. 18–19; "Ch'an-ting pi-ch'iu t'u-hsiang yü Tun-huang 285 k'u 285," pp. 400–401.

71. A typical example is seen in the *Visualization Sūtra*, in which the objects of visualization are numerically itemized in the following way:

1. the sun
2. water
3. the ground
4. [jewel] trees
5. water of eight superior qualities
6. an overall view
7. a flower seat
8. a statue [of Amitāyus]
9. physical forms [of Amitāyus and all the other buddhas]
10. Avalokiteśvara
11. Mahāsthāmaprāpta
12. general visualization
13. miscellaneous visualization

72. In this table, “Corresponding Item in the *Visualization Sūtra*” refers to the items of visualization listed in the previous note 71.

73. The identification of the subject of II.2 is uncertain, but the identification of II.5 and III.3 are based on the inscriptions and thus very likely. Further, note that if II.3 is also meant to be a representation of “4. jewel trees,” then we have three paintings of the same topic on the same wall.

74. At Tun-huang also, there are some transformation tableaux that deviate significantly from the *Visualization Sūtra*. Nevertheless, they certainly deviate to a lesser degree than the completely disorganized paintings at Toyok. Further, we should note that at Tun-huang, the degree of deviation becomes greater in the paintings from later periods (see Sun Hsiu-shên, “Tun-huang shih-k’u chung tê *Kuan Wu-liang-shou ching pien-hsiang*,” in *1987 Tun-huang shih-k’u yen-chiu kuo-chi t’ao-lun-hui shih-k’u k’ao-ku-pien wên-chi* [Liao-ning Mei-shu Ch’u-pan-shê, 1990], pp. 230–33; Tun-huang yen-chiu yüan, ed., *Tun-huang shih-k’u ch’üan-chi*, vol. 5., *Ê-mi-t’o-ching hua-chüan* [Hong Kong: Shang-wu Yin-shu Kuan, 2002], pp. 227–28, etc.). This is an important phenomenon, but it is probably an issue to be considered separately from the paintings at Toyok.

75. Also, I myself have some personal experiences in meditation in Japanese, Sri Lankan, and Taiwanese traditions. Everywhere initial instructions are given orally. I have even been expressly discouraged from reading books (even those on meditation) during retreats in Japan and Sri Lanka.

76. I thank Professor Valerie Hansen for her helpful suggestion on this point.

77. Fraser (“The Artist’s Practice in Tang Dynasty China,” pp. 86–98) points out that the artists who painted the murals and the scribes who wrote the inscriptions were separate people during the T’ang period. If that is the case here also, the existence of the inscriptions does not prove the literacy of the painters.

78. It is noteworthy, however, that in the oldest extant transformation tableau on the *Visualization Sūtra* at Tun-huang Mo-kao Cave 431, a monk is visualizing the objects, as in the paintings at Toyok Caves. See Katsuki Gen’ichirō, “Tonkō hekiga no kangyō hensō jūrokkan zu ni miru jinbutsu hyōgen ni tsuite,” in *Higashi Ajia bijutsu ni okeru hito no katachi*, Heisei 5–6 nendo Kagaku Kenkyūhi hojokin (ippann kenkyū A) kenkyū seika hōkokusho (1994), pp. 59–62.

79. Yamabe, “*The Sūtra on the Ocean-Like Samādhi*,” pp. 488–493.