

Zeitschrift: Asiatische Studien : Zeitschrift der Schweizerischen Asiengesellschaft = Études asiatiques : revue de la Société Suisse-Asie

Herausgeber: Schweizerische Asiengesellschaft

Band: 44 (1990)

Heft: 2

Artikel: Buddhist themes in Koguryuo Murals

Autor: Pak, Youngsook

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-146882>

Nutzungsbedingungen

Die ETH-Bibliothek ist die Anbieterin der digitalisierten Zeitschriften auf E-Periodica. Sie besitzt keine Urheberrechte an den Zeitschriften und ist nicht verantwortlich für deren Inhalte. Die Rechte liegen in der Regel bei den Herausgebern beziehungsweise den externen Rechteinhabern. Das Veröffentlichen von Bildern in Print- und Online-Publikationen sowie auf Social Media-Kanälen oder Webseiten ist nur mit vorheriger Genehmigung der Rechteinhaber erlaubt. [Mehr erfahren](#)

Conditions d'utilisation

L'ETH Library est le fournisseur des revues numérisées. Elle ne détient aucun droit d'auteur sur les revues et n'est pas responsable de leur contenu. En règle générale, les droits sont détenus par les éditeurs ou les détenteurs de droits externes. La reproduction d'images dans des publications imprimées ou en ligne ainsi que sur des canaux de médias sociaux ou des sites web n'est autorisée qu'avec l'accord préalable des détenteurs des droits. [En savoir plus](#)

Terms of use

The ETH Library is the provider of the digitised journals. It does not own any copyrights to the journals and is not responsible for their content. The rights usually lie with the publishers or the external rights holders. Publishing images in print and online publications, as well as on social media channels or websites, is only permitted with the prior consent of the rights holders. [Find out more](#)

Download PDF: 25.03.2026

ETH-Bibliothek Zürich, E-Periodica, <https://www.e-periodica.ch>

BUDDHIST THEMES IN KOGURYO MURALS

Youngsook Pak

Around the ancient capitals of the Koguryo kingdom are clustered the tombs of its kings. They are found near the first capital Kungnaesong, now Jian, on the upper reaches of the Yalu River, and around the second capital P'yŏngyang in the south-west corner of South P'yŏng'an Province, where over 50 tombs are concentrated. Several more are situated further south in Hwanghae Province. They are constructed between the 4th to 7th centuries AD and most of them were furnished with fantastic murals. The wall paintings are a joyful depiction of daily life, dancing, hunting, entertainment by jugglers, magnificent processions with armour-clad horses and guards, of Buddhist themes, of the four guardian animals *sashin*, immortals riding on their divine vehicles of dragon or phoenix, constellations in the heavenly sphere, cosmological visions of an imaginary world, which provide us with valuable sources and insights for the knowledge of the artistic traditions of Korean painting. Of greater importance is their value for the study of the cultural and religious views of the ancient Koreans. The wealth and variety of the themes represented in the Koguryo wall paintings offer understandably one of the most discussed subjects of Korean art among Korean, Chinese and Japanese scholars.¹ In particular

1 To list all the studies on Koguryo wall paintings would be too lengthy, therefore I have made some selections, especially of those published recently:

- (1) Kim, Kiung, *Chōsen hantō no hekiga kofun*. [Tomb paintings in the Korean peninsula]. Tokyo, 1980.
- (2) Kim, Wonyong, "Wall paintings of Koguryo Tombs", in *Art and Archaeology of Ancient Korea*. Seoul, 1968: 389-399.
- (3) idem, *Hanguk pyŏkhwa kobun* [Korean Tombs with Wall Paintings]. Seoul: Iljisa, 1983. 158pp.
- (4) Kim, Yongjun, *Koguryo kobun pyŏkhwa yon'gu*. [Study on Koguryo wall paintings]. P'yongyang, 1958. 164pp.
- (5) *Kokuri bunkaten* (Exhibition catalogue of Koguryo art). Osaka: Hankyu Gallery, 1985.
- (6) *Kokuri kofun hekiga* (Murals of Koguryo tumulus). Tokyo: Chosen Gabosha, 1985.
- (7) Yang, Hong, "Gaokouli bihua shimu", [Stone tombs with Koguryo wall paintings], *Wenwu cankao ziliao* 4 (1958): 12-25.

Chinese excavation reports on Koguryo tombs in Jilin Province appear in *Kaogu* 1964/2, 1964/10, 1977/2.

Professor Kim Wonyong in 1959 published in Korean a study on the Buddhist elements found in Koguryo murals.² Since then new materials have been discovered and a recent examination of Chinese studies and interpretations of this subject have led me to re-examine the Korean Buddhist themes and their meaning within the frame of the religious and cultural background. Should we understand for instance the lotus motifs found in Koguryo murals as a sign that Buddhism had already been promulgated in Koguryo? or how can we interpret the coexistence of Daoist motifs and Buddhist symbols and other Buddhist-like features? What is the significance of the newly discovered Changch'ŏn Tomb no. 1 and the inscription in the Tŏkhŭngni tomb?

There are two types of Koguryo tombs, the one covered with natural stones, *sŏkch'ukbun*, the other by an earthen mound, *pongt'obun*. Both have stone chambers of rectangular or square shape, facing south or west. According to the size of the tomb there are front and back chambers connected by narrow corridors. The front chamber sometimes has adjacent smaller side chambers. However most tombs have a single square stone chamber with an entrance corridor. Chinese records in the *Sanguozhi Weizhi* state that "Koreans used to exhaust all their capital, gold and silver for funerals; they sealed the tombs with piled stones and planted pines and cedar trees around them."³ Planting pine trees around the tomb is also mentioned in *Samguk sagi* in the section on King Tongch'ŏn. From this Professor Li Ogg has interpreted that Koguryo people believed that pine or other evergreen trees separate the worlds of the living and the dead.⁴ In the intervening centuries, however, the tombs have been opened and their valuable contents have been looted. This probably already happened in the 7th century when the Koguryo kingdom suddenly fell to Silla which had formed an alliance with Tang China, that is in 668 or even before.⁵

2 Kim, Wonyong, "Koguryo kobun pyŏkhwa e issŏsŏui pulgyo yoso" (Buddhist elements in Koguryo wall paintings), in *Paek Song'uk paksa songsu kinyŏm pulgyohak nonmunjip*, Seoul 1959: This article is a survey of Buddhist motifs which appear in Tomb of the Dancers, Tomb of Three Chambers, Tomb of Four Guardian Spirits, Tomb of Double Columns and Kangsŏ Great Tomb.

3 Kim, Yongjun, see above 1 (4), p. 6.

4 Li, Ogg, *Koguryo minjok hyŏngsŏng gwa sahoe* [National formation and Society of Koguryo]. Seoul, 1986. p. 266.

5 Kim, Yongjun cites the *Samguk sagi* record (*ponki*, section on King Pongsang) that when Chinese Morong Hui invaded Koguryo he ordered his men to dig up King Sŏch'ŏn's tomb (r. 270-292), but as soon as work began, the diggers met instant death and music was heard out of the tomb. See above 1 (4), p. 120.

The murals have mostly been found in *pongt'obun*, the earthen mound type of tomb, whose burial chamber was built of stone slabs and then covered with earth. The painting was executed either directly on the stone surface or on white plaster applied to the stone surface in a sort of secco technique.

The Representation of Figures

One of the most notable features of Koguryo murals is the portrait of the deceased. They are shown in frontal view, whereas all other figures are seen in profile or three-quarter view. There is also a clear distinction in size according to their importance in hierarchical order, so that the servants are drawn standing on a much smaller scale than the master. The best illustration of this rule is Anak tomb no. 3. (fig. 1). In the west side chamber connected to the front chamber the master himself is represented seated on a panelled couch under a curtained canopy in an impressive appearance and dignified manner. His right hand holds a fan with a demon mask and the left hand gently touches his belt. He wears a flat-topped black hat and above it a larger white headgear. His features are drawn with sharp brush lines to emphasize the distinctive eyebrows, moustaches and horizontally-drawn thin beard, much resembling the figure paintings in Han dynasty tombs, for instance those from the tomb at Wang Du, Hebei province, dated to the 2nd century AD. The curtain itself is fastened with ribbons and the tent-like canopy is embellished with a large half-opened lotus in the centre and on either side. Two flanking figures remain outside this central scene. Even his wife is excluded from this. She is depicted in splendid attire in three-quarter view attended by her servants on the adjacent wall as if facing her husband.

At the entrance of this western side chamber an inscription written in ink and placed above the standing figure was found. According to this inscription a man called Tongsu (Chinese: Dongshou), a Chinese refugee immigrant, died at the age of 69 in the 13th year of Yingbo (AD 357), the Eastern Jin reign date. Judging from the short inscription he was a native of Youzhou, Liaodong, and had held various offices, serving the Koguryo King Kogukwonwang (r. 331-371).

Because of this inscription, the identification of the man in the portrait became the subject of constant and controversial scholarly disputes since its discovery in 1949. Kim Yongjun, Kim Wonyong, Su Bai, Hong Jingyu and others have identified the portrait as that of Tongsu, and Chu Yonghōn and others have thought that it is that of a Koguryo king.

The former group of scholars compared the similarity of the tomb plan, the structure and the content of the wall paintings with those of Chinese Han tombs in the Shandong area. Kim Wonyong also pointed out that the very fact of using the Eastern Jin reign date meant that the Chinese immigrants living in the Lelang area must have had contacts with the Eastern Jin dynasty across the Yellow Sea.⁶ The second group of scholars noted that the inscription was found directly above the standing figure, and therefore that it must refer to him, and that the white silk hat worn over a black inner cap by the seated principal figure was mentioned in Chinese historical sources and could be only worn by a Koguryo king.⁷ However in a recent article a young Korean historian, by means of a detailed analysis of the official titles recorded in this tomb and of the historical circumstances, taking Chinese sources into account, has convincingly argued that this is the tomb of the Chinese emigré official Tongsu.⁸ Furthermore the tomb structure with several stone chambers, octagonal pillars with bracket arms and lantern-deck ceiling, are all very similar to the Han tomb at Yinan in Shandong province (2nd-3rd century AD), which is geographically also close enough just across the Yellow Sea from Hwanghae province in which Anak is situated.

The familiarity of the whole setting and the very conception of the representation of the figure remind one of a Buddhist image such as can be found in Chinese cave-temples of the Six Dynasties period. As in Buddhist art the principal figure is depicted seated in frontal view and clad in a thick garment with attendants on both sides. The analogy to a Buddhist shrine is enhanced by the large lotus decoration over the canopy. The rolled-up curtains were a favorite motif in Buddhist art of the Six Dynasties, frequently employed to represent the Buddha image in a shrine. However this secular sinicized motif which was adapted to Buddhist iconography derives from an older tradition in Chinese art in which a

6 Kim, Wonyong, see above 1 (3), pp. 45ff. A thorough excavation report was published by the North Korean Academy of Science: *Anak che samhobun palgul pogo* [Report on the excavation of Anak Tomb No. 3, with Russian and Chinese summaries], P'yongyang: 1958. See also Hong Jingyu, "Guanyu Dong Shou mu de faxian he yanqiu (On the discovery of and research into the tomb of Dong Shou)", *Kaogu* 1 (1959), pp. 34f. Hong's article is a detailed description of Anak tomb no. 3 summarizing all the previous articles written by Chinese and North Korean scholars. On the identification of the person buried in Anak tomb no. 3 at least 18 articles have been published. For reference see below, 8, p. 2 n. 2.

7 Chu, Honyong, see above 1 (6): 6-14.

8 Kong, Seok-koo, "A study on the epitaph of the Tomb No. 3. Anak" (in Korean), *Yoksa Hakpo* 121 (1989, March): 1-41.

figure is depicted in a canopied couch with curtains such as in Gu Kaizhi's Admonitions scroll.

Ahn Hwi-Joon compared the iconography of the portrait of Anak Tomb No. 3 to the representation of Vimalakīrti in Chinese art.⁹ There the layman sage, holding a fan and garbed in Chinese robes, is seated in relaxed pose on a canopied couch. Unlike Tongsu's portrait, he is always depicted in three-quarter view as he was in debate with the Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī opposite. The iconography of a figure in a frontal view in a prominent position inside the house under the curtain was employed to represent Xiwangmu or Dongwanggong in Han tombs, such as in the stone engraving dated AD 141 (fig. 2). Thus Tongsu's portrait appears to be a successful modification between the traditional Daoist iconography and new Buddhist elements.

The portrait of the person buried in Tōkhūngni Tomb in South P'yōng'an Province (Fig. 3), executed a half century later than Anak Tomb no. 3, still offers the same basic iconographical formula to represent the principal figure as discussed above. Apart from the visible stylistic shift from the Tongsu's rigid sharp lines to the fluent brush strokes in this portrait, there are further changes in some details. The attendant figures are now pushed back behind the panelled couch. In the centre of the canopy a flaming half-circle nimbus appears instead of a lotus flower. This motif looks like the *cakra*, the Buddhist symbol. On the next wall instead of the portrait of the consort, 13 figures are depicted standing and bowing toward the central figure. Each of them wears official robes and pointed hat. They are identified with their titles as Prefects of Youzhou Commandery with the place names written in rectangular cartouches.

The tomb also bears an inscription on the wall above the corridor which links the front and the back chamber (fig. 4). This inscription is an important one; the full translation based on the deciphered text is as follows:

From Commandery..., district Xindu, township..., village..., the disciple of Śākyamuni Buddha ...Chin [Chinese Zhen], holding the post of Jianwei General, Kuksodaehyōng, Left General, Longxiang General, Liaodong Prefect, with the authority of Commandant for Eastern Tributaries, and Governor of Youzhou. Chin died at the age of 77 in the 12th month of the 18th year of Yōngnak, cyclical date *musin*. On the 25th day [of the month whose] first day is *sinyu*, the funeral rite was completed and his jade outer coffin was moved to the place which was selected by Duke of Zhou. Confucius

9 Ahn, Hwijoon, "Characteristics and Significance of Ancient Korean Painting – with emphasis on painting of the Three Kingdoms period –" (Part I). *Misul charyo* 41 (1988): 39.

chose the date and King Wu selected the time... may seven generations be prosperous and may the descendants flourish; may they be continually promoted until they become marquises and princes. Therefore [we] made ten thousand efforts, and each day [during the funeral rites] the sacrifice of cattle and sheep was made, with abundance of wine and fine rice. Every day [we] had salted beans. Here [we] record this for future generations and wish them long life.

Several facts are significant in this inscription; especially that Chin was a Buddhist devotee. The importance of this fact is clear since “Sōkkamunbul cheja”, the disciple of Buddha Śākyamuni, is written after his name. Also instead of using a Chinese reign date, the inscription here was a date in the reign of King Kwanggaet’o, the 18th year of Yōngnak, i.e. AD 408. Quoting Yi Pyongdo, Kim Wonyong also indicated that the peculiar title, Kuksodaehyōng, unlike all the other Chinese offices mentioned, was a Koguryo official title which Chin must have received from the Koguryo king.¹⁰ Youzhou in Liaodong is mentioned a second time in a tomb inscription (Tongsu was a native of Youzhou). This shows the political importance of the Liaodong area which is said at that time to have been under Koguryo rule.¹¹ Koguryo administrators might have employed Chinese immigrant officials from that area to govern that district.

The inscription reveals further more that he was buried some time after his death. It was customary in ancient Korea not to bury the corpse immediately after death.¹² Chin’s funeral was conducted according to the ancient Chinese custom, selecting the burial place properly and choosing the right time etc. The following lines indicate the contemporary funerary customs. However the most remarkable fact to emerge is that Chin while was a converted Buddhist, his funeral was held in the Chinese tradition.

Further evidence that Chin was a Buddhist can be seen on the eastern wall of the burial chamber, even though the wall painting is much damaged (fig. 5). The wall is divided in the middle in two halves and the left half is filled with two prominently displayed large lotuses with round petals and undulating stems while on the right figures are arranged in rows in two registers carrying some objects toward the lotus pond. The inscription reveals that this scene depicts the offering of the Seven Treasures.¹³ These, the *sapta ratna* or *ratnāni*, vary slightly in different Buddhist sutras, but

10 Kim, Wonyong, above 1 (3), p. 94.

11 Li, Ogg, *ibid.*, p. 176.

12 Li, Ogg, *ibid.*, pp. 262ff.

13 For the inscriptions see *Kokuri kofun hekiga*, pls. 79 and 80.

are generally gold, silver, lapis lazuli, crystal, agate, red pearls, and cornelian.¹⁴ The figures obviously carry these precious things as offerings. It is difficult to judge whether this was the kind of ceremony commonly held in the 5th century in Koguryo, or whether it denotes the religious act carried out by the Buddhist devotee Chin to earn merit.

While the authentic Buddhist themes are depicted like this, the other walls are decorated in the traditional themes of Koguryo mural decoration with earthly scenes like hunting, among which mingle a profusion of mystic animals like red phoenix, flying horse, spiky fish, *kalavinka*-like creatures, flying immortals, legendary figures, Kyōnu (Altair) and Chingnyō (Vega) in human form, and other constellations amidst swirling clouds. A Chinese theme to document the political power of the deceased like the scene of magnificent military procession is depicted in the front chamber on the wall adjacent to Chin's portrait. The Tōkhūngni murals give us an insight into the peaceful coexistence of the old customs and newly promulgated religious concepts.

Changch'ōn tomb no. 1 (which is probably either in South P'yong'an Province or North Hwanghae Province)¹⁵ has revealed one of the most significant Buddhist themes so far found in Koguryo murals; a devotional scene in front of a Buddha image and flying *pich'ōn*, apsaras (Fig. 6). There has been no detailed report yet published, hence it is difficult to grasp the scene in the proper context of the murals in their location. The Buddha, wearing his robe with both shoulders covered, sits in *dhyāna mudrā* on a Sumeru throne encircled by a flaming mandorla. A red dot prominently marks his *ūrṇā* and his *uṣṇīṣa* is round and flattened. Two tiger-like lions guard the sides of his throne. Two figures, a man and a woman, kneel towards the Buddha in deep devotion. Further figures holding parasols approach from the left. Further left two new-born souls, apparently a couple, emerge from a lotus blossom. This scene suggests that Pure Land Buddhism might have already been introduced in Koguryo, and that the Buddha may be Amitābha. Above this adoring scene apsaras with head nimbi fly amidst lotus buds.

14 Mochizuki, *Bukkyō daijiten*: 1920cff. The other well-known Seven Treasures, frequently shown in Buddhist paintings, eg. from Dunhuang, are related to the concept of the cakravartin or Universal Monarch. They are: the wheel, cintāmaṇi, consort, minister, white elephant, horse and general.

15 None of the North Korean excavation reports indicates the clear location of this tomb. However, according to the Japanese dictionary *Gendai Kita Chōsen chimei jiten* (Dictionary of North Korean Place Names) edited by the Kokushō kankokai (1982): 36, 117, there are two likely sites in these two provinces. It has been suggested, however, that Changch'ōn may be in Liaoning province.

In the Tomb of Double Columns, Ssangnyŏngch'ong, an actual Buddhist procession is represented. (Fig. 7) Here a young person in the front carrying a censer on his head is followed by a monk wearing *kaṣāya* and holding a lotus stem, as well as by noble ladies wearing three-quarter length tunics and pleated skirts. All of them apparently are heading to the temple for an offering. Similar scenes representing figures in rows can be frequently observed in Chinese cave-temples of the Six dynasties (fig. 8).

The other wall of Changch'ŏn Tomb no. 1 is filled with a panorama of figures in various activities and hunting, the favorite leisure pursuit of Koguryo aristocrats. Again lotus buds and flowers are scattered randomly to decorate this genre scene. They all wear, like the devotees and donors in the Buddha scene, characteristic Koguryo costumes, polka-dots tunics, trousers, pleated skirts, and the gentlemen hats adorned with feathers in the front. The figure style and the arrangement of such a genre scene is the unmistakably Koguryo type found in the Tomb of Dancers or Tomb of Wrestlers in Tonggou.¹⁶ The Koguryo tombs in Tonggou area near Jian are considered to be of the late 4th and early 5th century, taking into account the historical circumstance that Kungnaesŏng (the present Jian area) was the Koguryo capital until 427 when the capital was moved to P'yŏngyang. The Changch'ŏn tomb no. 1 thus can be dated around this time as well.

Still more graceful flying *pich'ŏn* are depicted in Anak tomb no. 2 in Hwanghae province. Here the figures are drawn in fluent and elegant lines in black and red holding a lotus tray for offerings creating a fine sense of unearthly and airy atmosphere (fig. 9). It appears that the Koguryo painters now had thoroughly absorbed and modified the art of representation of Buddhist subjects to suit their own tradition.

Human-shaped flying beings are frequently depicted in Koguryo tombs roaming in the upper space of the tomb, blowing a long curved horn or riding swiftly on phoenix or dragon amongst clouds to ascend to heaven (fig. 10). They are Daoist immortals or divine beings, *xianren*. A recent study by Yoshimura has shown that though they appear in some cases very similar to Buddhist devas or heavenly beings, in fact the iconography of *xianren* is clearly distinctive as they have a tall upright hair bundle, large ears, high forehead, and wear winged robes and shoes or bare

16 As for Koguryo genre scenes see, *Kokuri kofun hekiga*, pls. 204, 205, 215, 216.

feet. Sometimes hairs grow from limbs, hence the name “feathered Man” (*yuren*) is applied to *xianren*.¹⁷

Structural Elements

In most Koguryo tombs the so-called *malgak chochǒng*, literally “off-corner ceiling” or “lantern-deck ceiling”, system was used, a triangular cantilever method in which stone slabs are set diagonally across the four corners of the ceiling opening to leave a square space at the centre, then another four corner slabs are placed above them in the same way, this process being repeated to result, when seen from below, in the appearance of a small square ceiling resting on triangular cornices. In the centre of the square capstone a large lotus with pointed petals is painted (fig. 11).

The earliest dated tomb with this ceiling construction is Anak tomb no. 3 (AD 357). Painted versions of similar structures can be found in the Dunhuang caves, such as Cave 254 of the Northern Wei, cave 288 (Western Wei), cave 461 (Northern Zhou) etc., and cave 428 (also Northern Zhou) (fig. 12). The great similarity of the conception of ceiling design of Koguryo tombs clearly indicates that Buddhist influence on Koguryo mural art in 5th to 6th century was considerable. Examples built in stone can be seen in Chinese tombs such as that at Yinan of the Eastern Han.

Kim Byongmo’s study has shown however that the lantern ceiling was a widespread architectural element used in Etruscan tombs, Greek temples, in Afghanistan, and in tombs and temples in Central Asia and north East Asia. The remarkable consistency found here is that this peculiar structure is used primarily in religious and ceremonial architecture, built with stone slabs. It is also noticeable that this ceiling structure was not found either in Paekche or in Silla tombs.¹⁸ It appears that this building element was introduced via Central Asia and northern China to Korea. In fact the lantern decks were found in the Bamiyan

17 Yoshimura, Rei, “Sennin no zukei o ronzu – Hōryūji kondō Yakushi nyorai daiza no bokuga hisenju ni kansuru gimon” (A treatise on the figure of Legend Wizard – A doubt about the flying wizard, depicted in sumi ink on the pedestal of Bhaiṣajyaguru statue in the main hall of Hōryūji–), *Bukkyō Geijutsu* 184 (May 1989): 31ff.

18 Kim, Byongmo, “Malgak chochǒng ūi sǒnggyōk e taehan chaegōmt’o [A reconsideration of the lantern-deck ceiling]”, *Yoksa Hakbo*, 80 (1978): 1-26.

Buddhist caves (4th-5th century) and also in the Kizil caves. R.A. Stein, however, has an anthropological interpretation that this ceiling system is connected with the notion of a well at the centre of the house.¹⁹ It is worthwhile to note that to this day Koreans call the ceiling of a room *ch'ŏnchŏng* (literally: heavenly well).

Another distinctive architectural element is that of columns with lotus capitals. In Ssangnyŏngch'ong, two octagonal stone columns which give the name to the tomb stand between the front and back chambers. These have painted lotuses on their capitals. Painted lotus petals also appear on the sides of the square capital of the octagonal columns in Anak Tomb No. 3, where the front of the capitals shows a demon mask.²⁰ In Susanni tomb (mid-5th-6th century) the architectural elements are prominently painted in the four corners of the chamber to simulate a real building (Fig. 13). Here, between the top of the round column with entasis and the bracket set, is a lotus capital. These building elements were applied primarily in Buddhist architecture in India and China (e.g. Yungang Cave 10). A strikingly similar example of lotus column can be found in a Northern Wei Buddhist stele from Maijishan, where it is used as a device to divide the niches on both sides from the central niche in the upper part of the stele (fig. 14).

Conclusions

Samguk sagi records that Buddhism was officially recognized in Koguryo in the reign of King Sosurim, in AD 372. However, it appears that Buddhism had already penetrated, at least among the upper classes, before its official recognition. The point is manifest in Tongsu's tomb of AD 357, and Changch'ŏn Tomb No. 1 (4th-5th century). Furthermore there is also the Chinese record in the *Gaosengzhuan* that the Chinese monk Daolin (314-366) communicated with a Koguryo Daoist priest about contemporary famous Chinese monks.²¹ The *Haedong kosungchŏn* also gives several accounts of Koguryo monks and their activities. For instance, the Chinese monk Tamsi, who was known for his practice of Daoist magic from childhood, and who was jealous of Buddhism, came to Liaodong in the fifth

19 R.A. Stein, "Architecture et pensée religieuse en Extrême-Orient", *Arts Asiatiques* IV, 3 (1957): 163-186; for illustrations of Kizil and Bamiyan lantern-deck ceilings see 181, fig. 19 and 183, fig. 21.

20 See the excavation report of Anak Tomb No. 3, note 5 above, pl. 16.

21 Yi, Byongdo. *Chindan Hakpo. Hanguksa*, vol. I. Seoul, 1950, pp. 576f.

year of King Kwanggaet'o (AD 395). In other places in the same record, Monk Uiyon is said to have been profoundly learned in Confucianism and *xuanxue* (deep learning = Daoism), and to have been a Buddhist monk as well.²²

Judging from the sparse records and visual material found in Koguryo murals, we can assume that the character of the early formative period of Koguryo Buddhism was much the same as in early China: the co-existence of Daoist traditional values, including the profound belief that there will be a continuity after departing this world in the form of immortals, and the newly-introduced Buddhism. Wu Hung has convincingly argued that in early Chinese art the lotus was regarded as an auspicious omen rather than as a symbol in a Buddhist context, and has offered a similar interpretation for Buddhist images. In this view, Buddha with his superhuman capability was worshipped as an immortal and Daoist Heavenly Master.²³ This may be the reason why so many lotus motifs have been found in Koguryo tombs, and why the early Buddha images were represented like Daoist deities. Such a fusion of Daoist and Buddhist motifs, and the co-existence in that period, may be due to the flexible Chinese mind and also because of the tolerant character of Buddhism itself.

The Buddhist themes in the later Koguryo murals of the 6th and 7th century display the fully-developed artistic achievement that was transferred to early Japan.²⁴ In view of the lack of early written materials, Koguryo murals thus inform us of various facets of early Korean culture.

Acknowledgements

I am very grateful to the following three persons: my husband who kindly looked through my manuscript and made valuable suggestions; and my colleagues at SOAS Dr Andrew Lo, for checking the translation of the Chinese inscription, and Paul Fox for his help with the photography of the illustrations.

22 Peter H. Lee (transl.), *Lives of Eminent Korean Monks. The Haedong Kosung Chŏn* (Harvard-Yenching Institute Studies XXV). Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1969, pp. 26, 35, 40f.

23 Wu, Hung, "Buddhist Elements in Early Chinese Art (2nd and 3rd Centuries A.D.)", *Artibus Asiae* 47 (1978): 263-352.

24 Uehara, Kazu, "Kokuri kofun hekiga to Nihon kodai bijutsu" (Koguryo Mural Paintings and Early Japanese Art) in *Kokuri bunkaten*, Osaka 1985: 113-16.

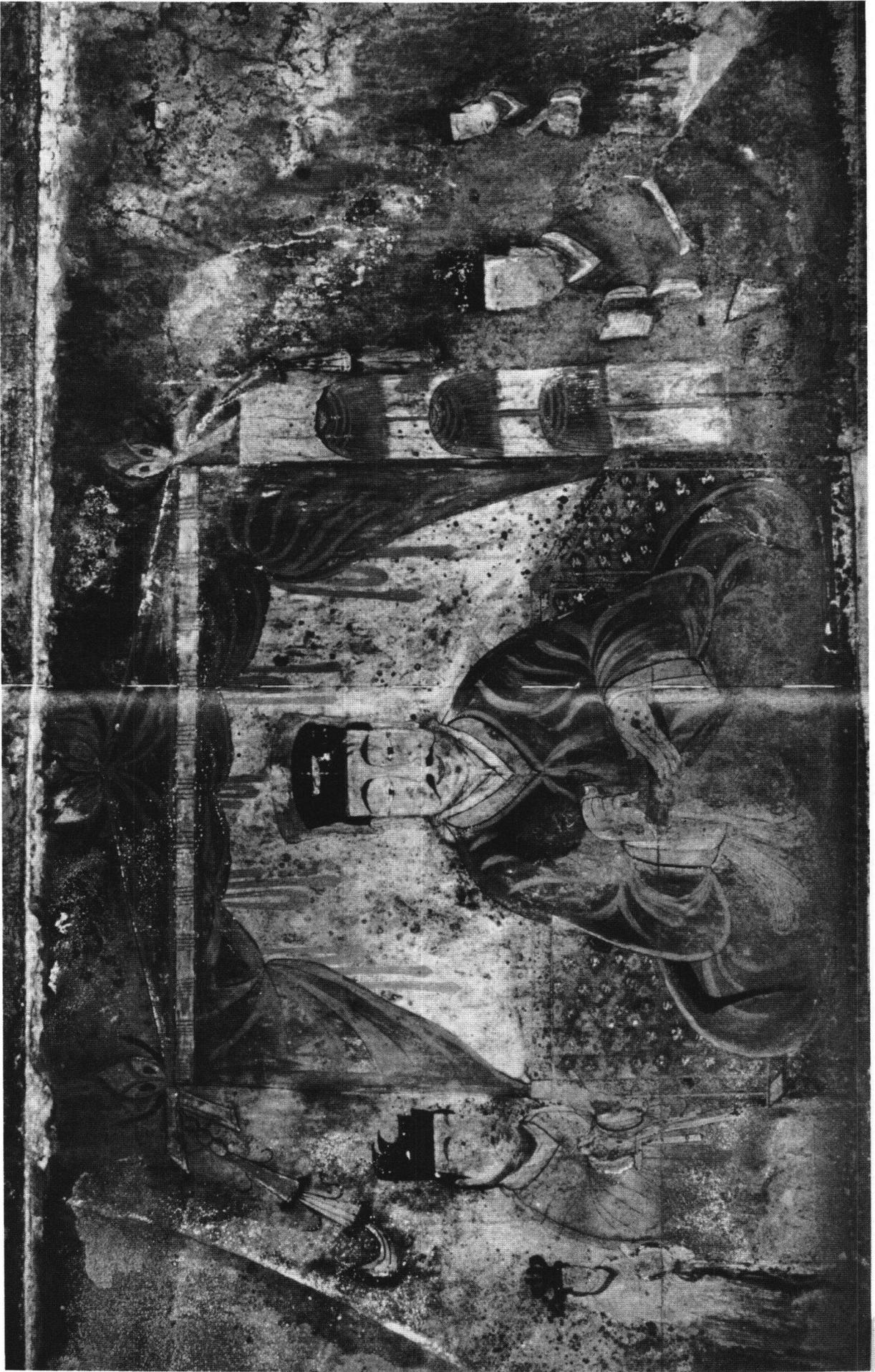
Glossary

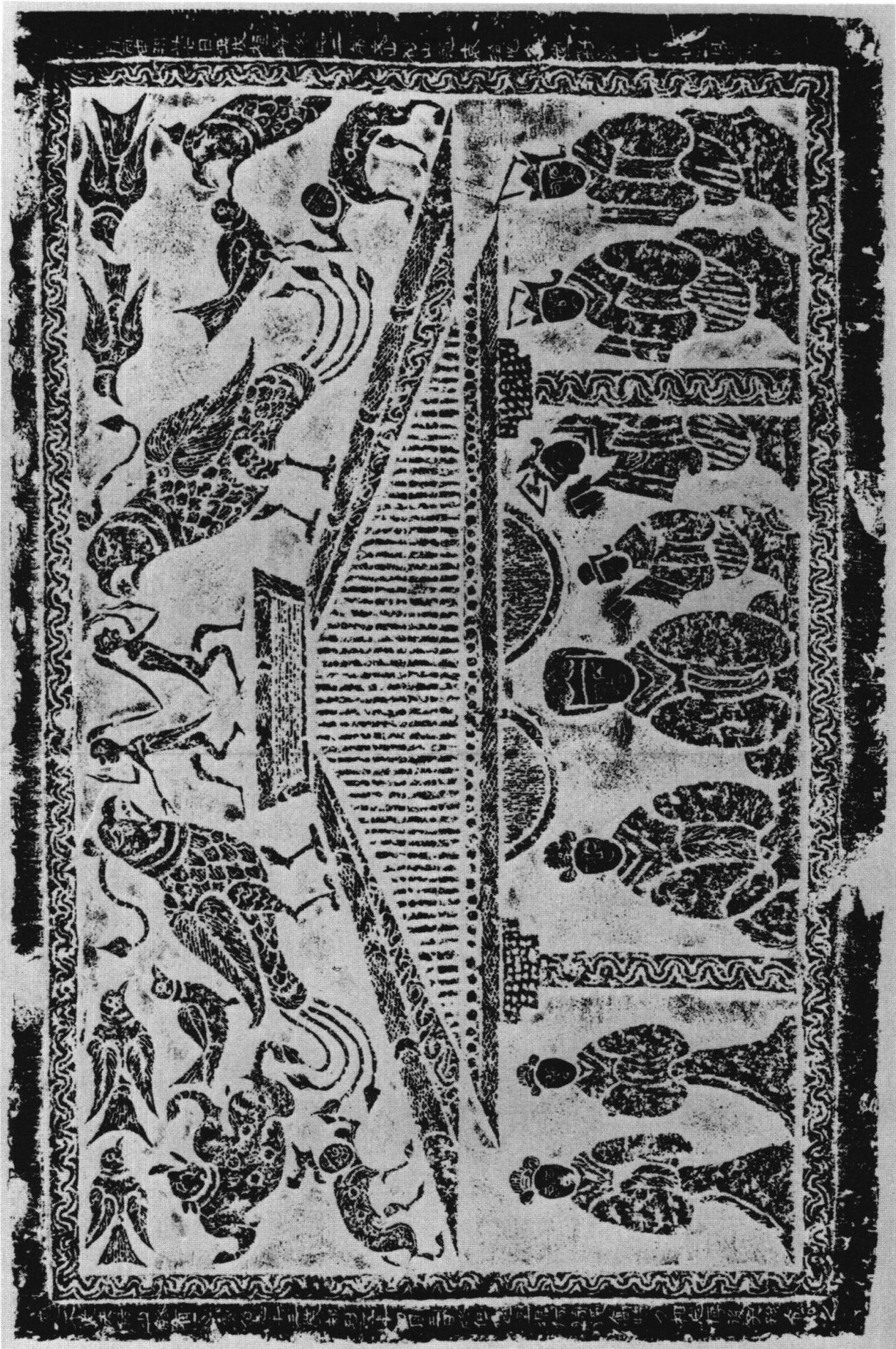
Anak	安岳
ch'önchǒng	天井
Changch'on	長川
Chin [Zhen]	鎮
Chingnyǒ	織女
Dongwanggong	東王宮
Dunhuang	敦煌
Gaosengzhuan	高僧傳
Gu Kaizhi	顧愷之
Haedong kosǔng chon	海東高僧傳
Hwanghae Province	黃海道
Jian	集安
Jin	晉
Kogukwonwang	故國原王
Koguryǒ	高句麗
Kuksodaehyong	國小大兄
Kungnaesong	國內城
Kwanggaet'o Taewang	廣開土大王
Kyǒnu	牽牛
Liaodong	遼東
Maijishan	麥積山
malgak chochong	抹角藻井
Morong Hui	慕容熙
Northern Zhou	北周
P'yǒngyang	平壤
pich'ǒn	飛天

pongt'obun	封土墳
Samguk sagi	三國史記
Sanguozhi Weizhi	三國志魏志
sashin	四神
Shandong	山東
Silla	新羅
sökch'ukbun	石築墳
Sökkamunbul cheja	釋加文佛弟子
Ssangnyöngch'ong	雙楹塚
Tamsi	曇始
Tokhüngni	德興里
Tongch'ön King	東川王
Tonggou	通溝
Tongsu	冬壽
Wang Du	王都
Western Wei	西魏
xianren	仙人
Xiwangmu	西王母
xuanxue	玄學
Yinan	折南
Yingbo	永保
Yöngnak	永樂
Youzhou	幽州
Yungang	雲岡
Yuren	羽人
Zhejiang	浙江

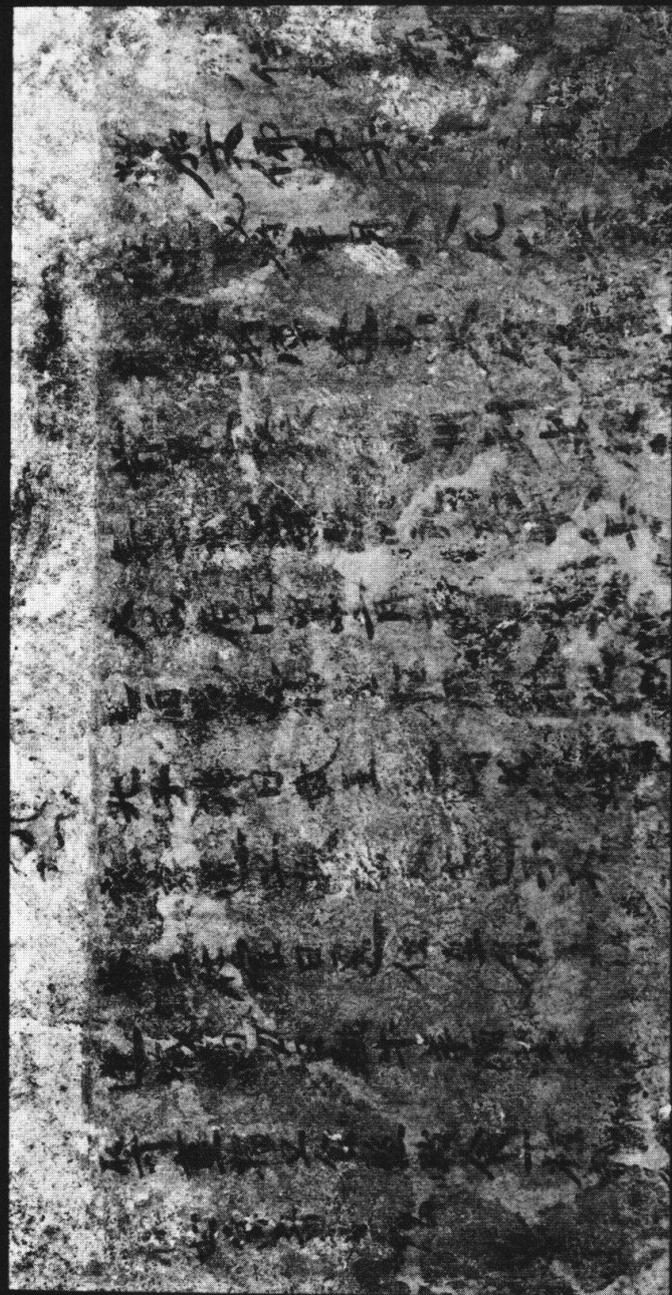
List of Figures

1. Portrait of Tongsu. Anak Tomb No. 3, west side chamber. AD 357 (from *Kokuri kofun hekiga*, Tokyo 1985, pl. 2).
2. Stone engraving from Weishan xian, Shandong province. Eastern Han (AD 141) (from Li Falin, *Shandong Han huaxiangshi yanjiu*. Jinan 1982, pl. 10).
3. Portrait of Chin. Tokhüngni Tomb in South P'yöngan Province. AD 408 (from *Kokuri kofun hekiga*, Tokyo 1985, pl. 54).
4. Inscription of Tokhüngni Tomb (from *Kokuri bunkaten*, Osaka 1985, pl. 23).
5. Lotus and offering of seven Treasures. Tokhüngni Tomb (*Kokuri kofun hekiga*, Tokyo 1985, pl. 79).
6. Changch'ön Tomb No. 1. 4th-5th century (*Kokuri kofun hekiga*, Tokyo 1985, pls. 206-7).
7. Buddhist Procession, Ssangnyöngch'ong, near Yonggang, South Pyöngan Province. 5th-6th century (from Kim Kiung, *Chösen hantö no hekiga kofun*, Tokyo 1980: pl. 34).
8. Buddhist Procession, Gong xian, Cave 4. Eastern Wei, 534-43 (from *Chügoku Sekkutsu; Köken sekkutsu-ji*, Tokyo: Heibonsha 1983, pl. 146).
9. Anak Tomb No. 2, Hwanghae Province. 5th-6th century (*Kokuri bunkaten*, Osaka 1985: pl. 52).
10. Divine being riding dragon. Five Tombs, Tomb No 5. in Jilin province. 5th-6th century. (*Kokuri kofun hekiga*, Tokyo 1985, pl. 225).
11. Lantern-deck ceiling with painted lotus. Anak Tomb No. 2, Hwanghae Province, 5th-6th century. (*Kokuri kofun hekiga*, Tokyo 1985, pl. 132).
12. Painted lantern-deck ceiling. Dunhuang Cave 431. Northern Wei (AD 386-534) (from *Chügoku Sekkutsu: Tonkö Bakkokutsu*, vol. 1. Tokyo: Heibonsha 1980, pl. 78).
13. Painted wooden architecture with lotus column. Susanni Tomb. 5th-6th century (*Kokuri kofun hekiga*, Tokyo 1985, pl. 109).
14. Upper half of Buddhist stele. Maijishan, Cave 133 Northern Wei (AD 386-534) (from *Chügoku Sekkutsu: Bakuseizan sekkutsu*, Tokyo: Heibonsha 1987, pl. 101).









□□郡信都彭都□甘單
 釋加文佛弟子□□氏顯仕
 位建威將軍國小大左將軍
 龍驤將軍還東太守使持
 節東夷校尉州州刺史顯
 年七十七歲即八月十八年
 太歲在戊申十二月辛酉朔廿五日
 乙酉歲遷移玉柩開公相地
 孔子擇日武王顯時歲使一
 良葬送之靈富及七世子孫
 壽昌仕宦日遷位至侯王
 是瑞鳳功日蒸牛羊酒三米穀
 不可顯其日食靈改改一特記
 之後世萬古無疆





图1 常州晋墓出土的壁画残片，内容为东晋时期的
 飞天图。出自《晋书·艺术传》。现藏于南京博物院。
 Flying Fairy. Mural in Chang chuan Tomb No. 1, Late 4th Century to Early 5th Century

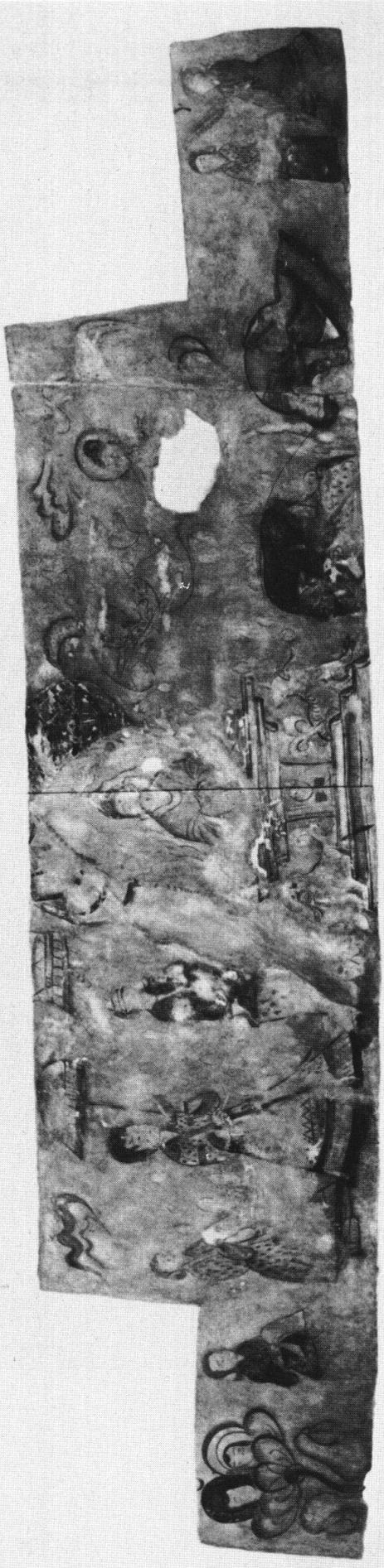


图2 常州晋墓出土的壁画残片，内容为东晋时期的
 佛教供养图。出自《晋书·艺术传》。现藏于南京博物院。
 Buddhist Memorial Service. Mural in Chan chuan Tomb No. 1, Late 4th Century to Early 5th Century







