

The Discovery of Manichaean Paintings in Japan and Their Historical Background

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1. The Spread of World Religions and the Establishment of Cultural Spheres

Before the advancement of globalization, that is, in premodern times, the main stage of world history was Eurasia. Of course, since the North African coast of the Mediterranean, including Egypt, also needs to be included, it was, to be precise, Afro-Eurasia. There are many definitions of the so-called Silk Road, but in this article I define it as arterial roads for the distribution of goods and cultural exchange that connected north, south, east and west Eurasia in premodern times. It should be noted that though it consisted of roads linking far-off places, it was not a traffic route linking only east and west, as was previously imagined, and it formed a network of roads that also extended north and south. Not only were goods transported, such as silk fabrics and ceramics from the east, high-grade furs from the north, spices and gems from the south, and glass, gold and silver ware, and medicines from the west, but through the movement of people different languages and all sorts of information also intermingled, and there was interchange in every conceivable area of culture, including astronomy, mathematics, medicine, pharmacology, papermaking, sericulture, printing, coin or paper money, and music and dance. The “Silk Road” is a descriptive designation in which “silk” serves as a symbol for this movement of people, goods and information. At the same time, the Silk Road was also a “road of religions,” for since ancient times the dissemination of religion and the activities of long-distance traders have been inseparable.

Primitive religions such as shamanism, animism, sun worship, worship of heaven and earth, and mountain cults, which have arisen naturally in all parts of the world, have no concept of propagation or proselytization. In contrast, religions that have been founded by particular people can entail propagation or proselytization. Zoroastrianism and Judaism were

the ethnic religions of the Iranians and Jews respectively, and therefore they did not engage in missionary activities, but Buddhism, Christianity, Manichaeism and Islam set out to spread their teachings throughout the world in their capacity as universal religions that transcended ethnic distinctions. Buddhism, which was born in India in the fifth century B.C., had firmly established doctrines and an organized religious order, and its powerful influence led to the systemization of indigenous primitive religions, typical examples being Daoism in China, Shinto in Japan, the Bon religion in Tibet, and Hinduism in India itself. Mesopotamia and Arabia at the centre of West Asia is referred to as a melting pot of religions, and it was here that there emerged Christianity in the first century A.D., Manichaeism in the third century, and Islam in the seventh century. These three religions were closely related to each other and could be described as siblings.

Since World War II globalization has been advancing apace and a state of borderlessness has been developing, and as a result distinctions between so-called spheres of civilization or culture have become increasingly blurred. But if we focus on religion and writing systems, the modern world up until the first half of the twentieth century can be roughly divided in the following manner: two Christian and alphabetic cultural spheres, namely, the cultural sphere of Western Europe (Catholicism and Protestantism, Latin alphabet) and the cultural sphere of Eastern Europe (Greek Orthodox Church and Russian Orthodox Church, Greek alphabet and Cyrillic alphabet), the former of which spread to the New World (America and Australia) in the modern period; Islamic cultural sphere extending from West Asia to insular Southeast Asia (Arabic script and modern Persian script, which are the same); Buddhist cultural sphere of South Asia, extending from India and Sri Lanka to peninsular Southeast Asia (Buddhism and Hinduism, Indic scripts); and East Asian cultural sphere (Buddhism and Daoism, Chinese writing). When we probe the origins of this framework of cultural spheres in the modern period, we eventually arrive at the situation in Eurasia around the eighth century. This is illustrated in broad outline in the following map.

The situation in Eurasia around the eighth century

	Khazar			Türk~Uighur	
Bohai					
Frank	Byzantine	Umayyad	Tibetan	Tang	China
Xinluo	Japan	~Abbasside	India		Annam
Religions:					
	Christianity	Islam			Buddhism
	Catholicism	Orthodox			Hinduism
Daoism					
Scripts:					
Latin	Greek~Cyrillic		Arabic		Indic
Chinese					

Cultural spheres of the modern world:

West European c. s. / East European c. s. / West Asian c. s. / South Asian c. s. / East Asian c. s.

*Religion as sacred authority linked to secular power and serving the needs of state formation or state protection. Manichaeism spread among the Uighurs in the second half of the eighth century and occupied the position of state religion from the late eighth century to the second half of the tenth century.

2. The Significance of Manichaeism in World History

Manichaeism is a religion that has today completely disappeared, but its significance in world history was by no means inconsequential. It is a well-known fact that Islam had an enormous impact on the establishment of Christian Europe, as is illustrated by the statement that “without Mohammed Charlemagne would have been inconceivable,” and likewise it could in fact be said that “without Manichaeism Christianity would be inconceivable.” Christianity received official recognition in the Roman empire only in the fourth century, but at the time Manichaeism, which had spread to the Roman empire after Christianity, was gaining ground on Christianity, and it experienced its golden age in the fourth to fifth centuries. Augustine of Hippo (354-430), a church father who contributed to the establishment of Christian doctrine, was a Manichaean in his youth, but after having converted to Christianity under the influence of his mother Monica, he wrote several works refuting the doctrines of Manichaeism and left

his mark on history. It was only by confronting the ideas of Manichaeism that Christianity armed itself with greater theoretical backing for its doctrines and developed into the Catholicism of later times. The confrontation between the two ultimately ended in a victory for Catholicism, but the ideas of Manichaeism survived well into the middle ages in heretical sects of Christianity such as the Bogomils, Cathars and Albigensians, and Manichaeism had an enormous influence on European society.

Meanwhile, Manichaeism had also spread eastwards and encountered Buddhism and Jainism in India and Central Asia, and not only did Manichaeism itself come under the influence of them, but it also had considerable influence on the transformation and development of Buddhism in its northern transmission from India to China. This can be seen, for example, in the origins of the Maitreya cult and in memorial services to save ancestors from the sufferings of hell (*yulanpen* 盂蘭盆). According to official records, Manichaeism was transmitted to China in 694, during the reign of Empress Wu Zetian 則天武后 of the Tang 唐, but recently it has been suggested that it was introduced to China about a century earlier, and this view has been gaining support. Be that as it may, Manichaeism attracted the greatest attention when it became the state religion of the Uighur steppe empire, which ruled over Central Asia from the second half of the eighth century to the first half of the ninth century, and this state of affairs continued until the late tenth to early eleventh century in the West Uighur kingdom, the successor to the Uighur steppe empire, which ruled over the eastern Tianshan 天山 region. Manichaeism was brought to the Uighur steppe empire probably by Sogdian or Bactrian Manichaean monks (Electi) associated with Sogdian or Bactrian traders, and it would appear that they came to Mongolia from both northern Tang China and Turkistan. The Uighurs were the only people to have ever made Manichaeism a state religion, but its main centre survived at least until the ninth or tenth century in Mesopotamia in West Asia, which had by now been completely Islamicized. Manichaeism made enormous contributions to cultural exchange between East and West in areas such as astronomy, calendrical studies, narrative literature, music, art and bookmaking techniques.

For instance, the custom of marking Sundays on the calendar in red and the use of sumptuous illustrations in the Bible were due to the influence of Manichaeism.

3. What is Manichaeism?

Mani was an Iranian born in 216 in Mesopotamia, which was under the rule of Sassanid Persia. His mother was related to the Parthian royal family, while his father was extremely religious, and his native language was Aramaic (Syriac). At the time, this region was a melting pot of religions, and Mani, growing up in an environment where many different religions were intermingling, is said to have received a divine revelation at the age of twelve and again at the age of twenty-four, as a result of which he awoke to his destiny as a prophet.

Shortly after having started to preach his new religion, Mani made a missionary journey eastwards and is said to have achieved some success in northwestern India, which lay within the cultural sphere of Buddhism. Upon his return, he approached Shāpūr I (240-272) of the Persian Sassanid dynasty (226-651), which had overthrown the Parthian rulers, and succeeded in winning his support. Consequently he was able to preach freely throughout the vast Persian empire, and for a time Manichaeism enjoyed enormous influence. But shortly after the death of Shāpūr I Manichaeism came under attack from proponents of Zoroastrianism, Persia's traditional ethnic religion, and was banned by Bahram I (274-276). Mani himself was imprisoned and died in captivity, and his body, stuffed with straw, is said to have been suspended for some time over one of the city gates.

But during Mani's lifetime Manichaeism had been sending missions eastwards and westwards in its capacity as a "world religion" that had from the outset transcended the bounds of blood lines and ethnic divisions and had been accepted by different peoples in the three continents of Asia, Africa and Europe, and it eventually extended from the Atlantic Ocean in the west to the Pacific Ocean in the east and survived in various localities for a considerable length of time.

Manichaeism is a dualistic eclectic religion which was founded on the basis of

Gnosticism, a form of Hellenistic eclecticism, and also incorporated ideas taken from Zoroastrianism, Judaeo-Christianity, Buddhism, Jainism, and so on. For instance, its dualism derives from Zoroastrianism and Gnosticism, and it also adopted Christian ideas about salvation and Buddhist ideas such as monasticism and cycle of reincarnation.

The doctrines of Manichaeism constitute a strict dualism, and it considers all things to be composed of Light and Darkness. Light is the spirit and corresponds to good, while Darkness is the matter or substance and corresponds to evil. On the basis of these views, it developed a truly unique cosmogony.

4. The Survival of Manichaeism in Southeastern China

Manichaeism survived the longest in China. Buddhism, which had originally been a religion of non-Chinese “barbarians,” had by the Tang dynasty taken root and become Sinicized, but there subsequently arrived in China during the Tang dynasty “three barbarian religions,” namely, Manichaeism, Nestorianism (Church of the East) and Zoroastrianism. It will be noticed that Islam was not yet included among the “barbarian religions.”¹ Sogdians were closely involved in the spread and popularity of these three religions. During the Tang, fierce disputes broke out repeatedly between Buddhists and Daoists, and powerful politicians also became embroiled in these conflicts. Then, in the middle of the ninth century, Buddhism was suppressed in what is known as the Huichang 會昌 persecution, and the “three barbarian religions” ended up being persecuted together with Buddhism. The Japanese scholar-monk Ennin 圓仁, who was residing in China at the time, was unfortunate enough to be caught up in this persecution of Buddhism, and his experiences are recorded in his famous account of his travels in China (*Nittō guhō junrei kōki* 入唐求法巡禮行記), which also includes a valuable description of the persecution of Manichaeism.

In China the emperor Xuanzong 玄宗 had banned Manichaeism in 732, but an exception

1 The popular view that Islam was introduced to China by the Uighurs is a pure fabrication. Around this time Manichaeism was the state religion of the Uighurs, and the spread of Manichaeism in Tang China was due to pressure from the Uighurs.

was made for foreigners. Because Uighurs had rendered distinguished services in the suppression of the rebellion of An Lushan 安祿山 and Shi Siming 史思明, Manichaeans, who had the backing of the Uighurs, engaged in wide-ranging religious and economic activities centred on their temples that had been built in large cities throughout China. In particular, financial capital known as “Uighur money” (which was in fact “Sogdian money”) exerted an enormous influence along with “Persian money” on the Chinese market.² But these activities by Manichaeans, centred on Sogdians and Uighurs, came to an end with the fall of the Uighur steppe empire in 840. In other words, that the Tang administration was able to suppress not only Buddhism but also Manichaeism in the Huichang persecution was entirely due to the fact that the Uighur steppe empire had fallen a short time earlier. Buddhism, the main target of the persecution, revived soon afterwards, but the “three barbarian religions,” which had always had only a weak base in China, suffered a devastating blow, and only Manichaeism managed by a stroke of luck to escape to Jiangnan 江南, where it succeeded in living on for several centuries. Jiangnan means semantically the south of the Yangzi River 揚子江, i.e., South China, but practically Southeastern China. [Map]

There is a considerable body of research concerning the survival of Manichaeism as a form of heterodox religion in Jiangnan during the Song 宋, Yuan 元 and Ming 明 periods,³ and there are not the slightest grounds to doubt this. Of course, there would have been not only sects adhering to a pure form of Manichaeism, but also sects that had amalgamated with Buddhism or Daoism. At any rate, many of these sects were similar to secret societies and engaged chiefly in underground activities.

With regard to this Manichaeism that survived in Jiangnan, particularly in Zhejiang 浙江 and Fujian 福建, it was generally accepted that it had been transmitted by Manichaeans from northern China who had taken refuge here during the Tang. But then two leading scholars put forward the view that Manichaeism had been brought to this region from the south via the

2 Cf. Moriyasu 1997, pp. 108-112; Moriyasu 2004a, pp. 6-7; Moriyasu 2004b, p. 237, n. 92.

3 Cf. Pelliot 1923; Forte 1973; Lieu 1985a = Lieu 1992, chapter 9; Wu 2005, pp. 444-448.

maritime Silk Road, and so I reexamined this question. As a result, I not only reconfirmed that the prevailing view was correct, but also positively demonstrated that the Manichaeism of Fujian had inherited the traditions of Uighur Manichaeism. Since I have already written about this in both Japanese and English,⁴ I shall not repeat details here, but I would like to add one very important point, which is that it has become clear from a photograph taken from a video which I recently acquired that the name of the month in the Chinese inscription of 1339 pertaining to the image of Mani as the Buddha of Light (*Moni Guangfo* 摩尼光佛), in the Cao'an 草庵 (“Thatched Hermitage”) temple in Quanzhou 泉州, Fujian, famous as the last surviving Manichaean temple [Plates 1, 2],⁵ is not *xuyue* 戌月, *wuyue* 戊月, *shuyue* 戌月 or *jiuyue* 九月, but surely *jieyue* 戒月, as I had maintained. You can examine this point comparing a new ink rubbing taken at the beginning of this century with an old one published together in Wu 2005, pp. 443-444. In my opinion this unfamiliar word *jieyue* is a simple translation of Manichaean Uighur *čxšapt ay*, which means “the month of discipline or commandment” corresponding to the twelveth month. For Manichaeans the twelveth month is the month of fasting.

It was because of this background that some Manichaean paintings connected with Central Asian Uighurs became mixed up with paintings generically known as Song and Yuan Buddhist paintings (which include Ningbo 寧波 Buddhist paintings), produced chiefly in Jiangnan. We are now able to affirm that at least six Manichaean paintings are preserved in Japan,⁶ but they have all been discovered only during the past three years. Next, I wish to explain the circumstances leading to their discovery.

5. The Discovery of Manichaean Paintings in Japan

It all began with an article entitled “A Possible Nestorian Christian Image: Regarding the

4 Moriyasu 1990, section 7; Moriyasu 2000.

5 Cf. Wu 1957, pp. 44-45, pls. 105-107; Bryder 1988.

6 In some of these paintings it is possible to discern connections with Uighur Manichaean paintings discovered in Central Asia.

Figure Preserved as a Kokūzō Bosatsu Image at Seiunji,” published in Japanese in 2006 by Professor Izumi Takeo of Tōhoku University [Plate 3]. I shall be arguing below that this image is not a Nestorian painting, but a Manichaean painting of Jesus, but even though our conclusions differ, the significance of Izumi’s work deserves to be highly rated. This is because he not only made known to academic circles for the first time the existence of this silk painting formerly held by the temple Seiunji 栖雲寺, in Yamanashi prefecture, but also showed that paintings which are in fact not Buddhist paintings have found their way into the category of paintings known as Jiangnan Buddhist paintings of the Song and Yuan, and he further pointed out that the main figure in a silk painting held by Yamato Bunkakan Museum 大和文華館, in Nara city [Plate 4], belonging to the same category and taken up by Izumi as a secondary topic, has artistic characteristics closely resembling the image of Mani as the Buddha of Light, enshrined in the Cao’an temple in Quanzhou, as well as hinting strongly at the possibility that both may represent the same figure. Following on from this article by Izumi, Professor Yoshida Yutaka of Kyoto University visited Yamato Bunkakan in Nara to examine the original painting, and as a result he became convinced that the painting in question is a Manichaean painting.

The silk painting held by Yamato Bunkakan is 142 cm high and 59 cm wide, and the painting as a whole is divided into five registers. It had long been referred to as a *rokudōzu* 六道圖, or painting of the six paths or realms of transmigration in Buddhism [Plate 5], and was considered to be a Buddhist painting of the Yuan period (or Ningbo Buddhist painting) produced in the fourteenth century. The six paths or realms of transmigration consist of the paths of gods (Skt. *deva-gati*), human beings (Skt. *mānuṣya-gati*), demigods (Skt. *asura-gati*), animals (Skt. *tiryagyoni-gati*), hungry ghosts (Skt. *preta-gati*) and hell (*naraka-gati*), and in some schools the demigods are omitted, resulting in five paths. In the past, the first register from the top in this painting had been considered to depict the realm of gods (or paradise), the second register (the main part of the painting) [Plate 6] the unity of the three religions of Confucianism, Buddhism and Daoism as represented by Śākyamuni flanked by Daoists and

Confucians, the third register the realm of human beings typified by the four social classes of officials, farmers, artisans and merchants, the fourth register **[Plate 7]** the final judgement of the dead, and the fifth register at the bottom the realm of hell. But this would mean that this painting depicts only the three realms of gods, human beings and hell.

In order to corroborate Izumi's suggestion that the main figure in the second register **[Plate 8]** might represent Mani as the Buddha of Light, Yoshida turned his attention to an article by J. Ebert entitled "*Segmentum and Clavus in Manichaeian Garments of the Turfan Oasis.*" According to Ebert, distinctive features of the garments worn by the highest Manichaeian dignitaries, redeemers or saints as depicted in paintings include the fact that they wear a white shawl (not a gown, since it has no sleeves), which not only has golden and/or red borders (*clavi*), but also has four small insignia (*segmenta*), red in colour and square in form, two beneath the shoulders and two at the knees, showing the contours of a female face (possibly the head of the "Light Maidens"). Having ascertained that the main figure in the painting held by Yamato Bunkakan was also endowed with all the other characteristics indicated by Ebert, Yoshida not only identified this figure as Mani as the Buddha of Light, but also focused on the fact that the painting as a whole depicts only three of the six paths. This was because in Manichaeism the soul takes one of three paths: to "Life" (New Paradise), to "Mixture" (back to this world), or to "Death" (hell). He further considered that the three female deities borne by clouds and watching the scene of the final judgement were headed by the goddess Daēnā and interpreted the fact that these same three goddesses also appear in the depiction of paradise as an indication that they have guided the soul of the dead (Light = good) to paradise. Yoshida thus concluded that the main scene in the second register depicts a sermon on Mani's teaching of salvation **[Plate 9]**, which was the principal duty of Manichaeian monks. In other words, Yoshida considered that the actual centre of movement in the painting is the seated Manichaeian monk or Elect in white robes who is preaching to the left (on the viewer's right) of the central figure of Mani, that the person in white robes standing in front of him with his palms together in prayer is an assistant Manichaeian monk,

that the person in crimson robes seated to the right of Mani (on the viewer's left) with his palms together in prayer is an auditor (i.e., lay Manichaean) of high rank, and that the person in Uighur attire standing in front of him is an attendant. The Chinese inscription on the left-hand edge of the fourth register is faded and difficult to read, but the main part, in the decipherment of which I assisted, reads: "[We] offer and respectfully present a sacred picture of the King (= Judge) of Hades to the vegetarian (probably Manichaean) monastery located on Baoshan Hill." In content, this inscription is not inconsistent with the identification of this painting as Manichaean.

In this manner, the silk painting held by Yamato Bunkakan Museum became the first Manichaean painting to have been discovered in Japan, and Yoshida made his findings public for the first time in a paper read on 18 May 2007 at the international conference "A Hundred Years of Dunhuang Studies," held in London. The English version of his paper is going to be published in a felicitation volume for Professor Tardieu [Mohammed-Ali Amir-Moezzi and Jean-Daniel Dubois, eds., *Pensée grecque et sagesse orientales: Hommage à Michel Tardieu*, Turnhout: Brepols], while a revised Japanese version is due to be published in a special issue of *Yamato Bunka* 大和文華 (published by Yamato Bunkakan Museum) on Manichaean painting. In addition, prior to this the two art historians Z. Gulácsi and J. Ebert, who were provided with a draft of Yoshida's paper and detailed photographs of the silk painting held by Yamato Bunkakan, promptly produced studies that further corroborated Yoshida's thesis. In particular, according to Gulácsi, a specialist in Manichaean painting, this Ningbo Buddhist painting ought to be regarded as a work of the thirteenth century, and although it was produced by a Chinese painter, in matters of detail there is evidence of the strong influence of Uighur Manichaean paintings from Central Asia. Further, the female deity whom Yoshida, attaching particular importance to the Zoroastrian background, called Daēnā, is transposed by Gulácsi to a Manichaean context and the three goddesses are identified by her as Light Maidens. Of course, there is no essential difference in the views of Yoshida and

Gulácsi⁷. Gulácsi has in fact written two articles on this subject, one of which has been translated into Japanese and will appear together with Yoshida's Japanese article and a Japanese translation of Ebert's article in the forthcoming issue of *Yamato Bunka*, while the other has been published in English in *Nairiku Ajia Gengo no Kenkyū* 内陸アジア言語の研究 (*Studies on the Inner Asian Languages*) 23, a special issue commemorating my own sixtieth birthday. In the event, this latter article became the first academic study in either Japanese or English to report on the important news of the discovery of a Manichaean painting in Japan, and I am extremely honoured that it appeared in a publication of special significance to myself.

6. The Affiliation of the Silk Painting Formerly Held by Seiunji

In the rest of this article I shall concern myself with the silk painting formerly held by Seiunji in Yamanashi prefecture [**Plate 3**], which was discussed by Izumi Takeo with reference to colour photographs of the painting. It is a little over 150 cm high and just under 60 cm wide, and since, according to Izumi's detailed investigations from the vantage point of art history, the characteristics of Ningbo Buddhist paintings are quite pronounced in this painting, it belongs to the same category as the silk painting held by Yamato Bunkakan. This figure had long been regarded as the bodhisattva Kokūzō 虚空藏 (Ākāśagarbha), but there can no longer be any doubt whatsoever that this identification was incorrect. Izumi, basing himself chiefly on an oral tradition that this painting originally belonged to Arima Harunobu 有馬晴信 (1567-1612), a Christian *daimyō* 大名 of Hizen 肥前 province in Kyushu, and on the fact that the main figure is holding a cross, considers this painting to be of Christian affiliation and, taking into account the broadened ends of the bars [**Plate 10**], identifies it as a Nestorian Christian image, the Nestorians being a Christian sect that was widespread in Jiangnan during the Yuan dynasty, but regrettably one cannot accept these conclusions. In my view, this painting cannot be Christian and, based on circumstantial evidence, there is a

7 Cf. Sundermann 2008, pp. 160-161.

strong probability that it is of Manichaeism. Let me now list my reasons for this supposition.

(1) It is known that, after the Huichang persecution of Buddhism in the mid-ninth century during the Tang, Manichaeism went underground in Jiangnan and survived through to the Song, Yuan and Ming periods, but there is no evidence whatsoever that the same happened to Nestorianism.

(2) Some Mongols of the ruling class in the Mongol empire (not only the Onggirat/Qonggirat tribe, which maintained a matrimonial relationship with the family of Genghis Khan, but also the Mongol Kereit and Merkit tribes) and also the Turkic Naiman and Öngüt tribes, who occupied a quasi-Mongol position, are well-known for having been Nestorians, and during the Yuan Christianity was an officially recognized religion.

(3) From the second half of the thirteenth century there suddenly appear references to the existence of large numbers of Christians in Jiangnan. In the section on the “*yelikewen* religion” 也里可温教 in the *Yuan dianzhang* 元典章 33, “Libu” 禮部 6, it is recorded that in Dade 大德 8 (1304) Daoists complained to the authorities that the *yelikewen* in Wenzhou 温州 were infringing on their rights, and they claimed that until then there had been only the two religions of Buddhism and Daoism in Jiangnan, with each being administered separately, and there had been no religion of the *yelikewen*.⁸

(4) Christianity was officially sanctioned throughout the Yuan, and after the fall of the Southern Song the majority of Christians in Jiangnan, ranging from the imperial family to petty officials, army officers, ordinary soldiers and merchants, belonged to the ruling side. They had no need whatsoever to disguise their sacred images as Buddhist images, as in the case of the clandestine Christians of Japan, who produced the Maria Kannon, a statue of the Buddhist Kannon 觀音 (Avalokiteśvara) rendered as a mother with a child in her arms.

(5) In contrast, Manichaeism, which continued to live on in Jiangnan during the Song and Yuan, was frowned upon as a heretical cult, and in many cases it lay low among the general

8 Cf. Saeki 1951, p. 506; Izumi 2006, pp. 9-10; Wu 2005, pp. 400-401.

populace and conducted underground activities in the manner of a secret society. Therefore, it had a need to produce and worship images that were disguised as Buddhist images.

(6) It has been demonstrated with the silk painting held by Yamato Bunkakan that Manichaean paintings have got mixed up with Jiangnan Buddhist paintings of the Song and Yuan (including Ningbo Buddhist paintings). Furthermore, Yoshida and I have identified at least four more Manichaean paintings in Japan that belong to the same category (making a total of six), although owing to various circumstances we have not been able to publish details. However, not a single Christian painting belonging to this category has been found.

7. Followers of an Unknown Religion in Fuzhou Described by Marco Polo

When Marco Polo and his uncle Mateo Polo, who had been granted permission by the Mongol emperor Khubilai Khan to visit Jiangnan, were staying in Fuzhou 福州, a city on the coast midway between Ningbo and actual Hong Kong, an Islamic acquaintance told them about an unusual community whose religion nobody knew, and so, their interest piqued, they visited the community. An account of their visit is included in *The Travels of Marco Polo* (also known as *The Description of the World*).⁹ During the Yuan, the location of the Branch Secretariat established in this region alternated between Fuzhou and Quanzhou in the south, and this means that Fuzhou was not a provincial town, but a large city.

When Marco Polo and his party first visited the followers of the unknown religion, they seemed to be afraid that they were being interrogated with a view to depriving them of their religion. But once these fears had been allayed and they had got to know the two Polos, they showed them their holy books. On reading through them, the Polos discovered that there were the words of the Psalter, and so they mistook this community for a Christian sect. They then advised them that, since they were Christians like the Polos themselves, they ought to send someone to the capital city Dadu 大都 (Beijing) and, through the head of the

⁹ Cf. Ricci 1931, pp. 261-263; Moule / Pelliot 1938, pp. 349-350; Otagi 1971, pp. 108-110; Waugh 1984, pp. 136-137.

Christians at the court, ask Khubilai Khan for his recognition and protection of their religion.

Two delegates of that community accordingly went to Dadu and asked to be recognized as a Christian sect, but the leader of the idolators (i.e., Buddhists) opposed this, claiming that they were and always had been idolators. There then took place a great disputation in the presence of the Khan, but because the debate dragged on without end, at length the Khan grew angry and, having dismissed everyone, summoned the two delegates and asked them whether they wished to be Christians or idolators, whereupon they answered that they wished to be Christians.

Khubilai Khan then had the necessary writs (probably including a decree) issued, stating that they were to be called Christians and that all the rules for Christians and all the rites demanded by that doctrine were to be valid for them. It was subsequently found that, scattered throughout the province of Manji (i.e., South China), there were more than 700,000 households that followed this teaching.

Such is the account given in *The Travels of Marco Polo*. Pelliot realized already in 1929 that these followers of an unknown religion were in fact Manichaeans, but because he did not give adequate grounds to support this claim, the reasons were subsequently carefully rehearsed by Olschki, and since then his views have been widely accepted.¹⁰

Marco Polo rejoiced on discovering the words of the Psalter and so deemed these people to be Christians, but there is in fact a strong possibility that the Psalter of the Old Testament was incorporated in the scriptures of the eclectic religion of Manichaeism. Olschki not only stresses this point,¹¹ but also suggests that the delegates of the Manichaean community in Jiangnan who travelled from Fuzhou to Dadu (probably Manichaean monks or Electi) decided to affiliate themselves with Christianity because they had decided that this would be better for their own interests than affiliating themselves with Buddhism.¹²

10 Cf. Ricci 1931, pp. xii-xiii; Moule 1930, pp. 141-143; Olschki 1951, pp. 2-9, 13-15; Olschki 1960, pp. 203 ff.; Otagi 1971, pp. 112-113; Lieu 1985a, pp. 256-257; Lieu 1992, pp. 295-297.

11 Olschki 1951, pp. 14-15.

12 Olschki 1951, p. 7.

Olschki's article dispelled any lingering doubts about identifying this community as Manichaeans, and further decisive proof was provided with the discovery of a bilingual epitaph in Syro-Turkic and Chinese unearthed at Quanzhou, the existence of which was brought to the attention of academic circles by Wu Wenliang and Enoki Kazuo. I have, however, for a long time had doubts about the reading of the Chinese inscription of this epitaph, but with the discovery of at least six Manichaean paintings among Jiangnan Buddhist paintings preserved in Japan I feel that my doubts have finally been resolved, and I wish to discuss this in the following sections.¹³

8. A New Interpretation of the Bilingual Epitaph in Syro-Turkic and Chinese from Quanzhou

In the twentieth century there have been discovered in Quanzhou, which was at the time of the Mongol empire one of the largest seaports in the world (and is today located in Fujian province and faces the Taiwan Strait), an enormous number of Islamic, Christian, Manichaean and Hindu stone engravings (epitaphs, inscriptions, carved tombstones, stone statues, and stone pillars and other building materials). The best-known catalogue of these engravings is Wu Wenliang's *Quanzhou zongjiao shike* 泉州宗教石刻, published in 1957 (revised and enlarged in 2005), and one of the more unusual items included in this work is a bilingual epitaph in Syro-Turkic and Chinese dating from 1313 [Wu 1957, pl. 108 = Wu 2005, pl. B37 in p. 396]. Coupled with the fact that the Cao'an temple, the remains of the last Manichaean shrine in the world, is located on Huabiao 華表 Hill near Quanzhou, this epitaph was included by Wu Wenliang under Manichaean items, but in actual fact it ought to be classified as Christian (it is all right in 2005 edition revised and enlarged by Wu Youzhi). There were, however, reasons for Wu Wenliang's misunderstanding, and since these are connected to the interpretation of the Chinese inscription, I shall next reexamine this

13 That this epitaph, about which Olschki had no knowledge, has connections with Marco Polo's above account was already pointed out by Otagi (1971, p. 113).

inscription.

Chinese text:

- (1) 管領江南諸路明教秦教等也里可温馬里失里門阿必思古八馬里哈昔牙
- (2) 皇慶二年歲在癸丑八月十五日帖迷答掃馬等泣血謹誌

Researchers agree that the term *Mingjiao* 明教 refers to Manichaeism, while *Qinjiao* 秦教 corresponds to the *Daqinjiao* 大秦教 of the Tang, that is, Nestorianism (Church of the East), and there is no disagreement in this regard. But when it comes to the overall interpretation of the first line containing these two terms, many different views have been put forward. Since it would be rather tedious to retrace the relevant research history, I shall omit details. But initially it was suggested, for instance, that this was the epitaph of two or three people rather than a single person.¹⁴ In the end, the commonsensical and reasonable conclusion that it is the epitaph of a single person was arrived at, but in order to highlight the differences between these various interpretations, I wish to contrast the standard reading when it is regarded as the epitaph of two people with the standard reading when it is regarded as the epitaph of a single person.

Epitaph of two people:

- (1) [This is the grave of] the [two] Administrators of the Manichaeans (*Mingjiao*) and Nestorians (*Qinjiao*), etc., in the circuits of Jiangnan, the Christian priest (*Yelikewen*) [named] Mar Solomon (Mali Shilimen) and the Bishop (*abisiguba*) [named] Mali Haxiya.
- (2) In the second year of Huangqing, *guichou* (= element *gui* + Ox year), on the fifteenth day of the eighth month (5 September 1313 A. D.), having wept with tears of blood, Timothy Sauma (*Tiemida Saoma*) and others have respectfully written [this epitaph].

Epitaph of one person:

14 Cf. Lieu 1980, p. 84, n. 13; Wu 2005, pp. 396-397.

(1) [This is the grave of] the Administrator of the Manichaeans (*Mingjiao*) and Nestorians (*Qinjiao*), etc., in the circuits of Jiangnan, the Most Reverend (*mali haxiya*) Christian (*Yelikewen*) Bishop (*abisiguba*) [named] Mar Solomon (Mali Shilimen).

(2) (Same as above)

With regard to *mali haxiya* 馬里哈昔牙, my former teacher Enoki Kazuo initially interpreted it correctly as *mar hasia* “saint” and considered the epitaph to be that of a single person, but for some reason he subsequently came to regard it as the epitaph of two people called Mali Shilimen and Mali Haxiya.¹⁵ Later, S. Lieu deemed *mali haxiya* to be a transcription of Syriac *mry ḥsy*, a common title meaning “saint” or “bishop,” and determined that the epitaph was for a single person.¹⁶ But there was still no adequate explanation of why there was a single administrator for Christians and Manichaeans in Jiangnan during the Yuan. Next I wish to elucidate this point.

Now, for a correct understanding of the Chinese text of this bilingual epitaph in Syro-Turkic and Chinese dating from 1313, the corresponding Turkic text ought to be of considerable help. The first person to decipher the Turkic text was Murayama Shichirō, although he was not able to read all of it correctly.¹⁷ The first word in particular is problematic. Murayama read it as *Maḥi*, and it was also suggested on the basis of the word *Mingjiao* in the corresponding Chinese text that it should be read *Mani*. But Lieu considered this to be inappropriate, and at a conference on Turfan studies held in Berlin in 2002 he asked me for my opinion. Unfortunately I am unable to read the Syriac script, but having noticed that the Turkic corresponding to the Chinese *Jiangnan zhulu* 江南諸路 “circuits of Jiangnan” is *M...i illär-ning* and that *zhulu* 諸路 and *illär* have the same meaning (being the plural form of the administrative unit “country, circuit, district”), I suggested that since the

15 Enoki 1962, p. 175 = Enoki 1993, p. 177; Enoki 1964, p. 62.

16 Lieu 1980, pp. 73, 84; Eccles / Franzmann / Lieu 2005, pp. 264-265. The identification with a Syriac term had, however, already been suggested by Pelliot; cf. Moule / Giles 1915, p. 639, n. 32.

17 Murayama 1963, p. 25; Murayama 1964, p. 394; Wu 2005, pp. 397-398, 401-403.

only possible place-name signifying “Jiangnan district” with an initial *M*- and a final *-i* was Manji (Ch. Manzi 蠻子), he might like to consider whether the said word could be read in this way. On checking the recent book *From Palmyra to Zayton*, published in 2005, I found that my idea would seem to have been adopted,¹⁸ and the Syro-Turkic text has been transcribed in the following manner.

Syro-Turkic text [Eccles / Franzmann / Lieu 2005, p. 264]:

(1) *M(a)nzi illär-ning m(a)ri ḥ(a)sya m(a)ri Š(i)limon episqopa-ning q(a)bra-si ol*

This is the tomb of the Most Reverend Bishop Mar Solomon of the Circuits (lit. realms) of Manzi (i.e. South China).

(2) *ud yil s(ä)kiz(inč) ay-ning on biš-tä başlap qilyučü Z(a)wma bitimiš*

Zauma (= Syr. Sauma), the administrator-in-chief, wrote this on the fifteenth day of the eighth month of the Ox year.

In Syriac *mār* means “teacher, excellency” and *ḥasya* generally means “saint,” but as a compound *mār ḥasya* (*mry ḥsy*’) means “bishop.” This can be confirmed through a comparison with two sources to be quoted in the following section (an inscription on the seal of Mār Yahballāhā III and a passage from the *Yuanshi* 元史 89).

The next question I wish to address is *yelikewen* 也里可温 (sometimes also written *yelikewen* 也里克温 or *yeliqiao* 也里喬), a term peculiar to the Yuan. While there can be no doubt that it derives from the Turkic and Mongolian *ärkä’ün* / *ärkägün* / *erke’ün*, there is still no generally accepted view on its etymology, and its original meaning is also unclear,¹⁹ for it is used in the sense of (1) Christians in general (both clerics and lay believers), (2) Christian clerics,²⁰ (3) Christian lay believers, and (4) Christianity as a religion. Furthermore, although Christianity in this case frequently refers only to the Nestorians, historically

18 Lieu 2005, pp. 199-200.

19 Cf. TMEN, no. 15; Hamilton 1972, pp. 163-164; Ligeti 1972, pp. 170, 178; Hamilton / Niu 1994, pp. 159-160; Eccles / Franzmann / Lieu 2005, p. 258; Rybatzki 2006, pp. 159-160.

20 In almost all of the many decrees issued during the Yuan that have been inscribed on steles in Mongolian and Chinese, *yelikewen* signifies Christian clerics. Cf. Cai 1955, Nos. 21, 22, 23, 25, 28, 33, 36, and so on; Poppe / Krueger 1957, pp. 82-83, note 9.

speaking the possibility that it also includes Catholics cannot be totally rejected. Unfortunately the Turkic equivalent of the Chinese *yelikewen* does not appear in the Turkic text of the above bilingual epitaph, and it is therefore of no help in determining the meaning of *yelikewen*. Accordingly, I next turned my attention to two sources in which *mār ḥasya* and *ärkä'ün* appear together.

9. A New Interpretation of *Yelikewen* and Its Relationship to *Mingjiao*

The inscription on the seal affixed to two letters sent to the pope in 1302 and 1304 by Mār Yahballāhā III, the catholicos of the Nestorian Christians, was initially brought to the attention of academic circles by J. Hamilton. More recently I was extremely gratified to find that the article which Nakamura Jun happened to contribute to my felicitation issue of *Studies on the Inner Asian Languages* delves into the historical background of these letters. Leaving all explanatory remarks to these two articles,²¹ here I shall present a translation of the inscription, based on the translations by Hamilton and Nakamura with minor modifications.

In (*or by*) the power of eternal heaven, the decree of us, Möngke Khan: Saying, “For our benefit celebrate the feast day (?), perform a blessing, and bestow merit on our family (i.e., the Golden Clan of Genghis Khan),” we have given the Mār Catholicos a cruciform seal. [He] is the manager (?) of this seal; do not let *mār ḥasya* (bishops), *rabban* (priests) and *ärkä'ün* come [to the Mongol court] without word or recommendation from the Mār Catholicos! I shall regard (?) as wicked *rabban* and *ärkä'ün* who come on their own initiative without a writ affixed with this seal. Thus have we decreed.

In this seal inscription, *rabban* (priests) and *ärkä'ün* are ranked below *mār ḥasya* (bishops), and therefore the *ärkä'ün* appearing in this inscription ought to be regarded not as Christian clerics but as ordinary lay believers.

21 Hamilton 1972; Nakamura 2008, pp. 56-76.

The ranking of Christians appearing in this seal inscription coincides perfectly with the following passage in the *Yuanshi* 元史 89, “Baiguan zhi” 百官志 5 [Zhonghua Shuju 中華書局 edition, p. 2273].

崇福司，秩 [從] 二品。掌領馬兒哈昔·列班·也里可溫，十字寺祭享等事。

Chongfu si: An agency of the second class. It controls *ma'er haxi* (= *mār ḥasya*), *lieban* (= *rabban*) and *yelikewen* (= *ärkä'ün*) as well as sacrifices and other matters in Monasteries of the Cross.²²

There are two points that become clear on the basis of the above. The first is that *mār ḥasya* (*ma'er haxi* or *mali haxiya*) is not a proper noun, but signifies “bishop,” a high-ranking Christian ecclesiastic. The second is that in sources in which both *mār ḥasya* and *ärkä'ün* appear, *ärkä'ün* signifies neither (1) Christians in general (both clerics and lay believers) nor (2) Christian clerics, and it ought to be considered to refer only to (3) Christian lay believers.

It would seem that none of the past studies about the interpretation of *yelikewen* appearing in the bilingual epitaph in Syro-Turkic and Chinese has really hit the mark. This is because all scholars since Wu Wenliang have inserted a break after 明教秦教等 and have connected the next word *yelikewen* 也里可溫 with what follows. Although this is probably a more natural way of reading the Chinese, I would like to propose that 明教秦教等也里可溫 be read together, with the break coming after 也里可溫. This shift in my thinking was prompted by the existence of at least six Manichaean paintings among Jiangnan Buddhist paintings of the Song and Yuan and by a reevaluation, supported by these paintings, of Marco Polo's account of followers of an unknown religion.

Looking back, we find that Wu Wenliang and Enoki Kazuo had already correctly pointed out that *mali shilimen abisiguba* 馬里失里門阿必思古八 appearing in the bilingual epitaph in Syro-Turkic and Chinese was the same person as *ma'er shili hebisihuba* 麻兒失理河必思忽八 mentioned in the reference to a stele erected by Xuelijisi 薛里吉思 (Sergis), deputy

22 There are English and Japanese translations in the following works, but their interpretations differ from mine: Moule 1930, pp. 225-226; Saeki 1943, Vol. 1, pp. 465-467; Saeki 1951, p. 497.

daluhuachi 達魯花赤 (*darughachi*) of the circuit, in 1281 which appears in the section on Daxingguosi 大興國寺 in the *Zhishun Zhenjiang zhi* 至順鎮江志 9 [Jiangsu Guji Chubanshe 江蘇古籍出版社, 1990, pp. 367-368]. *Hebisihuba* is no doubt a scribal error for *abisihuba* 阿必思忽八.

公任鎮江五年，連興土木之役，秋毫無擾於民。家之人口受戒者，悉爲也里可温。迎禮佛國馬里哈昔牙麻兒失理河必思忽八，闡揚妙義，安奉經文，而七寺道場，始爲大備。

His Excellency (i.e., Mar Sergis) held office in Zhenjiang for five years (1277-1281). While carrying out continuously civil engineering works, he did not oppress any of the common people in the slightest degree. Members of his household (i.e., families, employees, servants, etc.) who received the commandments all became *yelikewen*. He ceremoniously invited *mali haxiya ma'er shili hebisihuba* from the land of the Buddha so that he might expound the wondrous meaning [of the religion] and reverently deposit the Scriptures; only then did the chapels of the seven monasteries (built in Zhenjiang by Mar Sergis) become complete.²³

Let us now compare the strings of characters referring to a single Christian bishop.

A. Chinese text of bilingual epitaph:

馬里失里門阿必思古八馬里哈昔牙 *mali shilimen abisiguba mali haxiya*

B. Syro-Turkic text of bilingual epitaph:

m(a)ri h(a)sya m(a)ri Š(i)limon episqopa

C. *Zhishun Zhenjiang zhi*:

馬里哈昔牙麻兒失理河必思忽八 *mali haxiya ma'er shili hebisihuba*

It is intriguing to find that whereas B and C tally with each other, B and A, which are taken from the same source and ought to refer to the same person, are different. This means

23 There are English and Japanese translations in the following works, but their interpretations differ slightly from mine: Moule / Giles 1915, pp. 638-639; Moule 1930, p. 150; Saeki 1943, Vol. 2, p. 300; Saeki 1951, p. 515.

that the Chinese rendering C should be considered to have been written either deliberately or accidentally in the same way as A, in which case it is to be surmised that although *abisiguba*, *hebisihuba* (which should be emended to *abisihuba*) and *episqopa* all retain the meaning of the original Greek *episkopos* “bishop,” they are here used as an element of a proper noun.

Taking all the above into account, I would like to propose my own definitive interpretation of the bilingual epitaph, which has been read in various ways by past scholars.

Chinese text (line 1):

[This is the grave of] the Administrator of the *Ärkä’ün* (*Yelikewen*) people believing in Manichaeism (*Mingjiao*), Nestorianism (*Qinjiao*) and other religions (probably Catholicism or Hinduism) in all (lit. various) circuits of Jiangnan (i.e., South China), the Bishop (*Mali Haxiya*) [named] Mar Solomon Episqopa (*Mali Shilimen Abisiguba*).²⁴

Syro-Turkic text (line 1):

This is the tomb of Mar Solomon Episqopa, the Bishop of all (lit. various) districts of Manzi (i.e., South China).

The chief distinguishing feature of my proposal is that by reading the first portion of the Chinese text as “Administrator of the *Ärkä’ün* (*Yelikewen*) people believing in Manichaeism (*Mingjiao*), Nestorianism (*Qinjiao*) and other religions in all circuits of Jiangnan,” I have included Manichaeans (Manichaeism) in the category of *yelikewen*, which has hitherto been considered only in terms of Christians (Christianity), be they Nestorians or Catholics.

24 Aside from the interpretation in his 1980 article in which he proposed that the epitaph was for a single person, Lieu has also presented the following interpretation in his book on the history of Manichaeism: “Supervisor of the Christians (*Ye-li-ko-wen*): Manichaeans (*Ming-chiao*) and Nestorians (*Chin-chiao*) in the Circuit of Chiang-nan” [Lieu 1985a, *Manichaeism*, p. 257 = Lieu 1992, *Manichaeism*, revised edition, p. 297]. This may possibly represent an interpretation along the same lines as my own. But in an article also published in 1985 [Lieu 1985b, p. 418] he gives the following, rather loose translation: “Supervisor of the Christians (*Ye-li-ko-wen*), Manichaeans (*Ming-chiao*) and Nestorians (*Chin-chiao*) in the Circuit of Chiang-nan.” Not only is there no comment on the use of the colon in the translation given in *Manichaeism*, but in his latest article published in 2005 the colon has been discarded and he has returned to the interpretation found in his 1980 article [Eccles / Franzmann / Lieu 2005, p. 265; Lieu 1980, p. 73].

Furthermore, by doing so it becomes possible to do away with the unnaturalness of having first Manichaeism and then Nestorianism as representatives of the *yelikewen* in the circuits of Jiangnan. This is because at the time Manichaeans would have been in the majority in Jiangnan, where they had settled since the Song, while Christians in the true sense of the term, having come south for the first time when they accompanied the Yuan forces that took over the former territory of the Southern Song, would have been in the minority.

The language of the inscriptions written in Syriac script that have been unearthed in Quanzhou and Yangzhou 揚州 and published in works such as *Quanzhou zongjiao shike*, *Quanzhou zongjiao shike zengdingben* (revised and enlarged edition) and *From Palmyra to Zayton* is in fact the Turkic used by the Uighurs and Öngüt in the north. In addition, the earliest epitaph dates from 1277,²⁵ and the majority date from the first half of the fourteenth century.²⁶ It is evident from one epitaph that the deceased was a Uighur from Gaochang 高昌. Furthermore, the Office for Christian Clergy (*chongfu si* 崇福司), an agency responsible for supervising Christian communities, was established in 1289. It may be assumed, in other words, that the rapid increase in the number of Nestorians in Jiangnan in the final quarter of the thirteenth century was due to the presence of large numbers of Nestorians among the Türks and Mongols who came south together with the Mongol army as it overthrew the Southern Song.²⁷

The section on population in the *Zhishun Zhenjiang zhi* 3 gives statistics not only for the large numbers of indigenous “common people” (*min* 民), or Han Chinese in the former territory of the Southern Song, but also for various categories of foreigners under the headings of Mongols (Menggu 蒙古), Uighurs (Weiwur 畏吾兒), Muslims (Huihui 回回), Yelikewen, Tanguts (Hexi 河西, corresponding to inhabitants of the former territory of the Xixia 西夏 kingdom), Khitans (Qidan 契丹), Jürchens (Nüzhen 女真), and Chinese

25 Cf. Lieu 2005, p. 224.

26 Cf. *From Palmyra to Zayton*, pp. 220-228, 255, 260-272.

27 Cf. Olschki 1951, p. 7; Niu 2006, pp. 295, 332; Lieu 2005, p. 201; Eccles / Franzmann / Lieu 2005, pp. 257, 258, 262; Wu 2005, p. 400.

(Hanren 漢人, corresponding to Han Chinese from the former territory of the Jin 金 dynasty). Since Buddhist monks and Daoist priests, who are treated separately, were probably members of the indigenous population going back to the time of the Southern Song, Yelikewen and Huihui were not only the designations of religious communities, but were also perceived as ethnic groups of foreign provenance, and these designations would also have been used as categories or units at times of tax collection and civil service examinations. The communities of Manichaeans who had continued to live in Jiangnan since the Song period possessed idols or paintings, and since their inclusion among Muslims would have been inconceivable, the Yuan government would have had no choice but to include them among Yelikewen if they were not to be included in the category of Buddhists or Daoists. Olschki is probably correct in surmising that there is no mention whatsoever of Manichaeans in Yuan-period sources because prior to Marco Polo's arrival they had feigned the appearance of Buddhists (idolators) and thereafter, because they chose to become Christians, they came under the supervision of the Office for Christian Clergy.²⁸ Moreover, if one pays particular attention to the expression 江南諸路明教秦教等也里可溫 in the bilingual epitaph, *yelikewen* would have encompassed not only Manichaeans and Nestorian Christians, but probably also minorities such as Hindus, who had been in Quanzhou and elsewhere since the time of the Song, and followers of the Armenian Church and Catholics, who arrived from Europe for the first time during the Mongol period.²⁹

Marco Polo reports that the "Christians" in Jiangnan numbered 700,000. But this is an unduly large figure and cannot be taken at face value. However, if one assumes that it includes not just Nestorian Christians, but also encompasses the large numbers of Manichaeans who had been residing in Jiangnan since the Song, it is probably not such an absurd figure without any foundation whatsoever. This is because, despite the all-out efforts by Confucian officials of the Song to clamp down on Manichaeans, their efforts were to no

28 Olschki 1951, p. 9.

29 Olschki 1951, p. 13.

avail, and it is most unlikely that the Manichaeans would have numbered only several tens of thousands. Though Marco Polo's figure may be exaggerated, one ought to assume that there actually were several hundred thousand "Christians."

10. Manichaean Images of Jesus

On the basis of the above train of reasoning, I have been convinced for two years now that the silk painting formerly held by Seiunji is a Manichaean painting rather than a Nestorian painting. It is also comparatively easy to infer that a figure holding a cross in a Manichaean painting must represent Jesus. Up until now, however, there had been no positive proof that Manichaeans used the cross, but this matter has now been resolved in the article kindly contributed by Gulácsi to my felicitation volume.³⁰ On perusing the bibliography appended to her article, I also learnt that, quite independently of myself, she had reached the same conclusion that the main figure in the Seiunji painting is the Manichaean Jesus and that an article by her on this subject is to appear in the art journal *Artibus Asiae*. This article of hers has yet to appear, but it will probably be published before the present article, and her chief grounds for identifying this figure as the Manichaean Jesus will presumably overlap with my own reasoning. Therefore, changing my initial aim in writing this article, I shall leave all details to Gulácsi's article and set out my own views quite briefly.

The main reason that Manichaeism was able to survive for so long from east to west right across Eurasia, albeit unlawfully, was that it succeeded in incorporating the Buddha and Jesus into its pantheon,³¹ and the omnipresence of Jesus is a conspicuous feature of Manichaeism.³² There are several forms of Jesus in Manichaeism, including Jesus the Splendour, Jesus the Apostle of Light, and Jesus the Judge, which refer to a spiritual essence similar to the Dharma-body (*dharmakāya*) of Buddhism, and, in the same way as a single actor plays

30 Gulácsi 2008, pp. 11-12 & n. 27.

31 Cf. Olschki 1951, pp. 6, 11.

32 Cf. Olschki 1951, p. 11; Asmussen 1975, chapter 10; Tardieu 1981, pp. 13-27, 46-48, 51-54; Sundermann 1992; Klimkeit 1993, chapters 5, 6 and 27; Franzmann 2004.

several roles, they are in essence one person. In addition, there is also the historical Jesus, the Christian prophet, who, along with Seth (the antediluvian prophet), Zarathustra (the Zoroastrian prophet), and Śākyamuni (the Buddhist prophet), is regarded as one of the prophets who preceded Mani. Mani's mother is called Maryam, and everything from his birth to his death, including the manner of his martyrdom, is made to imitate the life of the historical Jesus. We know that there is a formula "I am Mani, the apostle of Jesus Christ" both in Greek and Middle Persian texts. Furthermore, on a small concave disc resembling a seal stone and made of rock crystal, held by the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris, there is engraved on the convex surface a picture of Mani and two followers with an Aramaic (Syriac) inscription that reads "Mani, the apostle of Jesus Christ."³³

Decisive proof that Manichaeans in Jiangnan were worshipping portraits of Jesus is provided by a passage pertaining to 1120 in the *Song huiyao jigao* 宋會要輯稿,³⁴ according to which in Wenzhou (Zhejiang province) and other localities there were communities of the Religion of Light (*Mingjiao* = Manichaeism), a heretical cult. In Wenzhou alone there were some forty assembly halls disguised as Buddhist shrines, and on Sundays of the first month of each year monks and auditors (lay Manichaeans) would erect an altar thought to have been a Manichaean *bēma* platform, made to resemble a *bodhi*-site (Skt. *bodhimaṇḍa*; Ch. *daochang* 道場), or the place where the Buddha attained enlightenment, and incite the ignorant masses, both male and female; they assembled at night and dispersed at dawn. In addition to various scriptures, they are also said to have had the following "pictures and images of the Buddha or Buddhist deities" (*huihua foxiang* 繪畫佛像).

妙水佛幀 *Miaoshui fo zheng* "Portrait of the Buddha (= Deity) Wondrous Water"

先意佛幀 *Xianyi fo zheng* "Portrait of the Buddha (= Deity) First Thought"

33 Cf. Sundermann 1992, pp. 536-537; Decret 1974, p. 70; Klimkeit 1982, p. 50 and pl. 61. Needless to say, Jesus Christ in these phrases does not mean the historical Jesus of Nazareth, but the cosmic, mythological, or eschatological Jesus in Manichaean doctrine.

34 Since this is a well-known passage which, though previously known to Japanese and Chinese researchers, has also become widely known among Western scholars through a detailed annotated translation in French by A. Forte [1973, pp. 227-253], I shall not quote the entire passage here. There is also an English translation by Lieu [1985a, pp. 234-235 = Lieu 1992, pp. 276-277].

夷數佛幀 *Yishu fo zheng* “Portrait of the Buddha (= Deity) Jesus”

善惡幀 *Shan’e zheng* “Portrait of Good and Evil”

太子幀 *Taizi zheng* “Portrait of the Prince Royal”

四天王幀 *Si Tianwang zheng* “Portrait of the Four Heavenly Kings”

It is thus evident that Manichaeans in Jiangnan were worshipping portraits of Jesus. The main figure in the Seiunji painting has, moreover, the following characteristics [Plates 10, 11]: (1) a white shawl; (2) the shawl has golden and red borders (*clavi*); (3) the shawl has four small insignia (*segmenta*), red in colour and square in form, two beneath the shoulders and two at the knees; and (4) a small coronetted human face is depicted on each insignia inside a square formed with double lines. These characteristics are shared with the image of Mani in the silk painting held by Yamato Bunkakan Museum and with the image of Mani as the Buddha of Light, in the Cao’an temple in Quanzhou. In contrast, it is not even known whether it was customary for Nestorians to produce portraits of Jesus. When considered in this light, there remains not the slightest shadow of doubt that the main figure holding a cross that is depicted in the silk painting formerly held by Seiunji represents not the Christian Jesus, but the Manichaean Jesus.

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