

ÖSTERREICHISCHE AKADEMIE DER WISSENSCHAFTEN
PHILOSOPHISCH-HISTORISCHE KLASSE
SITZUNGSBERICHTE, 856. BAND

Cultural Flows across the Western Himalaya

Patrick Mc Allister, Cristina Scherrer-Schaub,
and Helmut Krasser

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This collection of essays is the outcome of a symposium hosted by the International Institute of Advanced Studies, Shimla (15th–18th April 2009). An international group of scholars, collaborating in the project “The Cultural History of the Western Himalaya from the 8th Century” (sponsored by the Austrian Science Fund, NFN S98), present here some of their own specific research on various areas, archaeological sites, monuments and centres of learning that, in various degrees, have studied the region along the centuries.

The complex morphology of the Western Himalaya has favoured quite a number of dynamic interactions with their bordering countries (present-day U-tsang and Chang-thang in the TAR, Nepal, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu-Kashmir, North Pakistan and beyond) that is here followed through the study of iconographic elements in the coinage of Nezak Shah or portable cult objects from Khotan, items that, like manuscripts, often travelled over long distances. Like art-historical evidence surviving in Lahul, they help to trace Buddhist pilgrimage routes and recover religious maps. The consideration of the historical, cultural and social background of the Buddhist sculptures in ancient Uḍḍiyāna, where Indian motifs interlace with local elements, gives yet another view of such a landscape.

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