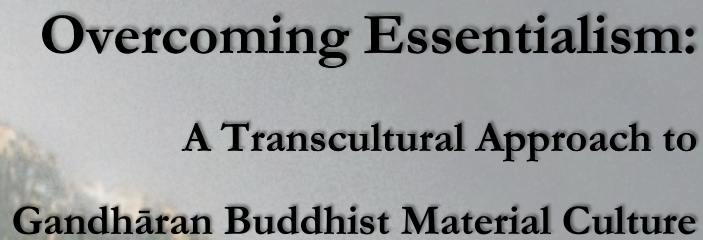

Overcoming Essentialism:

A Transcultural Approach to Gandhāran Buddhist Material Culture

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Abstract

This thesis aims to challenge the conventional essentialist approach and to suggest a more appropriate approach—the transcultural approach—to study Gandhāran Buddhist material culture in particular and religions or cultures in general. By answering the research questions that what deficiencies an essentialist approach possesses and what advantages the transcultural approach has, this thesis argues that taking a transcultural approach is more productive and heuristic than taking the conventional essentialist one. The essentialist approach has become prominent and even dominant in Gandhāran studies since the 19th century. The explanatory notes of Gandhāran Buddhist material culture in contemporary museums demonstrate that the essentialist view is still prevalent in the contemporary postcolonial era. However, the essentialist approach largely simplifies the complexity of cultural or religious processes in social-historical reality; it makes the mixed cultures lose their subjectivities and agencies; it is also more likely to make academic discussions vulnerable to be exploited by certain political agendas. Instead of following the essentialist approach, the author adopts a transcultural approach instead to re-examine Gandhāran Buddhist material culture. Taking the transcultural theoretical thinking as a first step, based on the case study of the visual representation of Gandhāran Vajrapāni, the author further attempts to re-construct a theory of cultural interactions and entanglements—the translocative framework. Based on the theorization of the translocative framework, the author argues that the transcultural approach can encourage us to attend to the complexity behind the interactive or integrative dynamics of religions and cultures; it is helpful to resume the subjectivity and agency of local cultures; it reflectively challenges the preceding politicalized discourses of cultural essentialism. Moreover, it can contribute to our understandings of religions and cultures as well as open up more space for further theoretical discussions.

Keywords: Gandhāra, Buddhism, material culture, essentialism, transcultural, translocative

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Introduction

When we set foot on some well-known museums in Europe or America, we might be easily attracted by a special sort of Buddhist art, which is usually named as "Gandhāran Buddhist art." This sort of Buddhist art that includes a series of sculptures, reliefs, architectural components, and other materials is famous for its highly eclectic visual features. The eclecticism implied by these materials might arouse great interest, fascination, and enthusiasm among audiences, encouraging them to explore and understand how these eclectic features took their shapes. The explanatory notes in the museums that match the exhibits answer that very question of how and why this eclectic art was formed in a very particular manner: Gandhāran Buddhist art is a hybrid product, which developed under the external influence of the foreign Western classical culture; it is a combination of Indian culture and Western classical culture, which reveals the cultural interactions between West and East. As some examples of the museums' explanatory notes show:

> "This figure shows that Buddhist art in Gandhara […] *was influenced by Greco-Roman sculpture*."[1]

> "Gandhara art depicts Buddhism in a *Hellenistic-Roman* way. *The styles are classically European; the content Buddhist*."[2]

> "Indo-Corinthian capitals are *a fusion of Indian and classical Greek architecture*."[3]

> "Western museums have assigned particular value to Gandharan art because of perceived stylistic similarities to *Greek and Roman art*. Some scholars had attributed the origins of the Buddha image to *the influence of Greco-Roman classical art*. Others argued that the first images of the Buddha were a product of an indigenous iconography."[4]

> "Gandhara is known from the *influence* that *the Greek civilization exerted in central Asia*. […] In this area from the 1st to the 6th century a peculiar style was created that is known as the '*Greco-*

[1] Quoted from the explanatory note of a bodhisattva Maitreya (3rd century, Gandhara, Pakistan) in the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam, the Netherlands, emphasis added.
[2] Quoted from the explanatory note of a stucco image of the torso of a seated Buddha in Gandhara style (AD 300-400, Afghanistan) in the Museum Volkenkunde in Leiden, the Netherlands, emphasis added.
[3] Quoted from the explanatory note of a stone Indo-Corinthian capital (c.a. AD 100-350, Jamalgarhi, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan) in the British Museum in London, emphasis added.
[4] Quoted from the general explanatory note of Gandhāran art in the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto, Canada, emphasis added.

Buddhist art of Gandhara.' […] The art of Gandhara, and especially sculpture, is differentiated from the art of other areas of Central Asia, as *it is mainly influenced from Hellenistic models*."[5]

However, if we look at these explanatory notes in the museums with a critical eye, we will find that these notes presuppose two common underlying assumptions. First, Western classical art and Indian art are *essentially different* as if these two are merely or simply categories naturally categorized to respectively reflect what they *really* are. Second, in the historical processes of cultural interactions, Western classical art from the West is always an active influencer, whereas Indian art is a passive recipient in the East. Both are typical assumptions that imply a tendency of cultural essentialism. Since Gandhāra art first attracted the attention of Western scholars, cultural essentialism has been deeply rooted in academic works on Gandhāra art. However, to what extent is essentialism helpful for us to comprehend cultures and religions? What inherent problems does it have? The endurance of cultural essentialism and its socio-political effects in the contemporary world also urge us to reflect upon cultural essentialism in time.

This thesis aims to trace and analyze cultural essentialism and its effects in Gandhāran studies and to suggest a new theoretical perspective—to replace the essentialist perspective—to re-examine Gandhāran Buddhist material culture. By analyzing the essentialist interpretations in Gandhāran studies, I criticize the essentialist approach and suggest a transcultural approach instead. Therefore, this thesis aims to answer two interrelated research questions: What inherent deficiencies does the essentialist approach possess when we try to make sense of Gandhāran Buddhist material culture, and even more broadly, cultures and religions in general? What are the advantages for us to take a transcultural approach instead? By answering these questions, I argue that the transcultural approach is more productive and heuristic than the conventional essentialist approach for us to understand Gandhāran Buddhist material culture in particular and religions and cultures in general.

In this introduction, I will first clarify some issues concerning terminology, i.e. what the term "Gandhāra" and "Gandhāran art" actually refers to and why I choose the term "Gandhāran Buddhist material culture" to describe the objects of this study. Then, I will present the historical context of Gandhāran Buddhist material culture. After that, I will compare the essentialist approach and the transcultural approach. Finally, I will show the chapter outline of this thesis.

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[5] Quoted from the general explanatory note of Gandhāran art in the Corfu Museum of Asian Art in Kerkira, Greece, emphasis added.

§ Nomenclature

"Gandhāra" is first a geographical concept. In historical records, "Gandhāra" first appeared as a name of a satrapy[6] mentioned in a list of satrapies belonging to the Achaemenid Empire in the inscriptions in Ancient Persia. However, where the Gandhāra satrapy and its boundaries were exactly located "cannot be said with certainty."[7] According to the ancient sources, "Gandhāra" roughly refers to a region that covers the basin around the modern city of Peshawar in Pakistan, "bounded to the north and west by foothills, to the east by the Indus River, and to the south by flatlands that become increasingly arid."[8] In addition, "Gandhāra" is also a cultural concept. Since the 19th century, the term "Gandhāran" has been employed to describe a series of archaeological findings from the areas that are culturally related to but geographically "beyond the Peshawar plains, such as the Swat valley, the Buner and Taxila regions, eastern Afghanistan, and even parts of Kashmir."[9] That is because the archaeological materials collected by the adventurers in the 19th century driven by the Western scholarly interest in Gandhāra lost their precise provenances when they were later kept in the British colonial museums. Thus, they were generally labeled as "Gandhāran" by the museums, which facilitated the term's shifting from referring to a specific geographical area to also referring to a broad culture.[10] In order to avoid this ambiguity, Richard Salomon proposed the term "Greater Gandhāra" to refer to the extended cultural area in the north-western region of South Asia.[11] Correspondingly, "Gandhāra/Gandhāran art" is a term coined by archaeologists and art historians to refer to the archaeological materials—including coins, reliquaries, sculptures, narrative reliefs, architectures like stūpas and monasteries, and other religious objects—that were discovered in the broad cultural region of "Greater Gandhāra."[12] Consistent with the use in archaeological and art historical studies, I use the term "Gandhāra" in this thesis to refer to the "Greater Gandhāra."

So far, most of the studies on Gandhāran archaeological materials come from the fields of archaeology and art history. Thus, "Gandhāra art" has been accepted as a common term for describing these research objects. However, the term "art" is inevitably laden with the implication of elite superiority and the assumption of modern cultural secularism. The notion of

[6] Satrapy is a province governed by a satrap (the governor of a province) in ancient Persia.
[7] Rafi-us Samad, *The Grandeur of Gandhara: The Ancient Buddhist Civilization of the Swat, Peshawar, Kabul and Indus Valleys* (New York: Algora Publishing, 2011), 24.
[8] Pia Brancaccio and Kurt Behrendt, "Introduction," in *Gandhāran Buddhism: Archaeology, Art, Texts*, ed. Pia Brancaccio and Kurt Behrendt (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2006), 1.
[9] Brancaccio and Behrendt, "Introduction," 1.
[10] Brancaccio and Behrendt, "Introduction," 1.
[11] Brancaccio and Behrendt, "Introduction," 2.
[12] Samad, *The Grandeur of Gandhara*, 25.

art is intrinsically complicated in itself. As Larry Shiner asserted in his *The Invention of Art: A Cultural History* (2001), "art as we have generally understood it is a European invention barely two hundred years old."[13] The English word "art" is derived from the Latin word *ars* and the Greek word *techne*, which meant any kinds of human skills. Thus, the concept of art used to traditionally signify "any human activity performed with skill and grace."[14] However, in the 18th century, a decisive division occurred. The traditional concept was separated, generating a binary between fine arts and craft/popular arts. Then, the fine arts were elevated, but the craft/popular arts were degraded. In the 19th century, the adjective "fine" was dropped, and the term "art" was narrowed down to only refer to the fine arts. Art thus became a symbol of the privilege of the elites, serving as a tool for class division. In addition to the added connotation of class superiority, the use of the term "art" also declares its divorce with religion. According to Hegel's account of the secularization of art, the history of art is a process of spiritualization from "the sensuous manifestation of the Idea in the classical art of antiquity" to the philosophical concept in Hegel's Idealism.[15] Through the process of cultural secularization, or Hegel's spiritualization so to speak, art won a degree of autonomy, and at the same time, its religious purpose was devaluated.[16] However, as Robert Nelson well put in his *The Spirit of Secular Art: A History of the Sacramental Roots of Contemporary Artistic Values* (2007), secularization in art "does not simply mean abjuring religion" but means "*abstracting* the sacred."[17] The sacramental aspect of art has never been abandoned but transformed into "secular enthusiasms."[18] He further argued that the processes of the secularization of artistic objects not only contain the stage of detaching themselves from religious institutions and celebrating their autonomy but also the stage of appropriating "the language of the former religious order by subsuming its prestige in an aesthetic refreshment" in order to achieve "a more universal expression of the human spirit."[19] Therefore, the secularized art retains to a certain extent the characteristics of religion; but in any case, it has been separated from religion in the traditional sense and has been transformed into what we commonly understand today: "autonomous things, charged with cultural meaning, intensity and prestige."[20]

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[13] Larry Shiner, *The Invention of Art: A Cultural History* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2001), 3.
[14] Shiner, *The Invention of Art*, 5.
[15] David Roberts, "Music and Religion: Reflections on Cultural Secularization," in *Philosophical and Cultural Theories of Music*, ed. Eduardo De La Fuente and Peter Murphy (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 72.
[16] Roberts, "Music and Religion," 72.
[17] Robert Nelson, *The Spirit of Secular Art: A History of The Sacramental Roots of Contemporary Artistic Values* (Clayton: Monash University ePress, 2007), 01.2.
[18] Nelson, *The Spirit of Secular Art*, 01.2.
[19] Nelson, *The Spirit of Secular Art*, 01.4.
[20] Nelson, *The Spirit of Secular Art*, 01.4.

It is also the case in "Buddhist art." Some scholars have already interrogated the separation of the religious aspect from the aesthetic aspect in Buddhist material culture, arguing that this separation "inevitably results in distortion and misrepresentation."[21] Donald McCallum argued in his *Zenkōji and Its Icon* that "there is an all-but-irresistible tendency to shift the focus from religious to aesthetic factors, to offer explications in terms of 'art.'"[22] In his essay "The Buddhist Icon and the Modern Gaze," Bernard Faure also attributed the repression of the animated Buddhist images to "the modern and Western values of aestheticization, desacralization, and secularization."[23] Unlike McCallum and Faure, Charles Lachman questioned the opposition between the religious and the aesthetic aspects of Buddhist material culture, arguing that these two overlap.[24] Anyhow, the employment of the term "art" in the studies of Buddhist material culture inevitably particularly emphasizes the de-religionized aesthetic aspect of Buddhist material culture.

Considering the inherent complexity of the term "art" and the additional modern secularist meaning behind it, I decide to use the term "material culture" instead to keep it clear and straightforward. On the one hand, the term "material culture" is not laden with the complicated assumptions that the term "art" relies on. In this study, I have neither the secularist agenda to exclude religious aspect or to transcend religion, nor the excessive plan to explore the nature, status, or role of the secularized religious art in the contemporary societies. Thus, there is no need to adopt a term intrinsically attached with certain connotations of secularism and class superiority. On the other hand, in a theoretical sense, the term "material culture" is also open for discussions about religions because religions are not—as the protestant bias perceives them—merely belief-centered, but they intrinsically involve a series of practices and materials. Since in this study, the discussion of the religious aspect of the material culture—not only based on the contexts but also on the theories—is also one of the focuses of this thesis, it is necessary to adopt a term that is broad enough to discuss not only one specific religious material culture, but to enable theoretical reflection on religions more generally. Therefore, I decide to use the term "Gandhāran material culture" in my own analysis to refer to the archaeological materials that this study concerns instead of "Gandhāran art", the term commonly used in the fields of archaeology

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[21] Charles Lachman, "Art," in *Critical Terms for the Study of Buddhism*, ed. Donald S. Lopez Jr. (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2005), 38.
[22] Donald McCallum, *Zenkōji and Its Icon: A Study in Medieval Japanese Religious Art* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994), 5-6.
[23] Bernard Faure, "The Buddhist Icon and the Modern Gaze." *Critical Inquiry* 24, no. 3 (1998): 769.
[24] Lachman, "Art," 51.

and art history. The term "material culture" can open more space for us to directly approach religion without presupposing the modern secularist assumptions that the term "art" implies.

Although the term "material culture" allows us to approach religions without holding unnecessary assumptions, it does not naturally focus on the religious aspects of material culture. In the discussions about Gandhāran material culture, religion, especially Buddhism, is often a topic that cannot be avoided. The religious aspect, to be more specific, the Buddhist aspect, is inseparable from Gandhāran material culture. Buddhism played an indispensable role in the formation and the development of Gandhāran material culture. As the British archaeologist Mortimer Wheeler asserted in his essay "Gandhāra Art: A Note on the Present Position," "Gandhāra art is specifically Buddhist art." [25] In his view, if there was no "astonishing impact of the Buddhist revival upon Gandhāra under the Kushans," there would "have been no Gandhāra art at all."[26] Although Gandhāran material culture is not exclusively Buddhist, the role of Buddhism in Gandhāran material culture is indisputable. Considering the material culture that this study concerns is closely related to Gandhāran Buddhism, and in order to highlight the religious aspect of Gandhāran material culture, I add the adjective "Buddhist" in the term "Gandhāran material culture." Thus, finally, I get the somewhat prolix term "Gandhāran Buddhist material culture" to refer to the research objects of this study.

§ Historical Context of Gandhāran Buddhist Material Culture

To understand Gandhāran Buddhist material culture, we need to place it within a broader historical context of Gandhāran Buddhism and political developments in the Gandhāra region. Of special interest is the period of Kushan Empire. The following section will provide a chronological overview of the historical context of Gandhāran Buddhist material culture. In history, conquerors from different regions and different cultural backgrounds ruled the "Greater Gandhāra" region successively. It is the Persian conquers that first broke the relatively isolated state of the Gandhāra area. Around 535 BC, the Persian armies under the command of Cyrus the Great breached the natural barriers of the Hindu Kush and Karakoram mountains. In 438 BC, Darius the Great conquered the Taxila area and incorporated it into the Persian territory, which brought together the Gandhāra region and the Taxila region. As a result of this conquest, a cultural union of Gandhāra and Taxila—the predecessor of what we later call "Greater

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[25] Mortimer Wheeler, "Gandhāra Art: A Note on the Present Position," in *Le rayonnement des civilisations Grecque et Romaine sur les cultures périphériques*, ed. Huitième congrès international d'archéologie classique (Paris: Éditions E. de Boccard, 1965), 558.
[26] Wheeler, "Gandhāra Art: A Note on the Present Position," 558.

Gandhāra"—came into being. In 327 BC, Alexander the Great conquered the extended region of Gandhāra and established several Greek colonies besides the Gandhāra region in the north and the west, which stayed in close contact with Gandhāra. From 323 BC to the first century AD, this area was successively ruled by Mauryans of Pataliputra, the Bactrian Indo-Greeks, the Hellenistic Sakas, and the Parthians. During this period, the area of today's South-eastern Afghanistan was incorporated into the cultural union of Gandhāra and Taxila, and Buddhism, which was then nearly eliminated in India proper, revived in the region of "Greater Gandhāra" due to the relatively liberal environment provided by these regimes. In this period, the region of "Greater Gandhāra" also gained access to the Silk Road, which involved either long or short distance trade between the Roman Empire, the Parthian Empire, and China. In AD 60, the Kushans conquered the region of "Greater Gandhāra" and incorporated it into the territory of the Kushan Empire. The conquest of Kushans in Central Asia and the commercial exchanges among the regions along the Silk Road provided a huge impetus for the economy of the Greater Gandara. The Greater Gandhāra thus became one of the most prosperous regions along the Silk Road in the Kushan era. In addition, with the patronage of the Kushan rulers, Gandhāran Buddhism also dramatically prospered during this period. It is also in this period under the reign of the Kushan Empire (1st-3rd century AD) that Gandhāran Buddhist material culture reached its peak: the first anthropomorphic Buddhist images of the Buddha and the Bodhisattva emerged; the Buddhist narrative reliefs were widely produced; a large number of Buddhist monasteries and stūpas were established.[27]

Although Buddhism played a significant role in the Greater Gandhāra region during this period, and its corresponding Buddhist material culture was striking, Buddhism was not the only religion present in the Greater Gandhāra region. The frequent population movements caused by the successive political-military conquests and the prosperous inter-regional trade have made the Greater Gandhāra region "a pivotal contact zone for movement into and out of South Asia."[28] Migrations of Greeks, Sakas, Parthians, and Kushans largely enriched the religious and cultural diversity of this region. Different deities from different religions such as Buddhism, Hinduism, Zoroastrianism, Greek religions, and Saka religions were worshipped at the same time in the Greater Gandhāra region during the Kushan era. It is worth noting that the diverse religious traditions present in the region (including Buddhism), should not be seen in an essentialist way as rigid spheres with clear boundaries, which encapsulate the religious ideas. Under the culturally

[27] Samad, *The Grandeur of Gandhara*, 5-7.
[28] Jason Neelis, *Early Buddhist Transmission and Trade Networks: Mobility and Exchange within and beyond the Northwestern Borderlands of South Asia* (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 229.

diverse environment, different religions in the Greater Gandhāra region were always interconnected. As far as Gandhāran Buddhist material culture is concerned, it clearly reflected "the cosmopolitan culture of the frontiers between ancient India, Iran and Central Asia."[29] Its highly eclectic features due to "the long period of rapprochement with peoples and cultures foreign to South Asia" might also have played a role in strengthening the appeal of Gandhāran Buddhism in the adjacent areas along the Silk Road, such as the Tarim Basin in today's Xinjiang in China.[30] This appeal further turned this culturally and religiously fertile region into a "launching pad" or a "springboard" for the transmission of Buddhism across the Hindu Kush and Karakorum mountains beyond South Asia towards China, Korea, and even Japan in the farther East.[31] Therefore, Gandhāran Buddhist material culture presents a prime example to talk about cultural fusion, dynamics, interactions, interconnectivity, entanglements, and the relational aspect of religions.

§ Essentialist Approach vs. Transcultural Approach

For a long time, academia has been adopting an essentialist approach to make sense of and to explain the formation and eclecticism of Gandhāran Buddhist material culture. Today, we can still see the persistence of this sort of essentialist view in the explanatory notes of the museums. Before I outline the essentialist approach, let me first introduce its epistemological foundation—essentialism. Essentialism is a reductionist idea that assumes that there is some "essence" to individuals in a particular category. Every individual subsumed into this very category shares in some essence that organizes and determines their conditions, properties, or behaviors "from the inside out."[32] The essentializing process depends on another prior act, namely classification. Through classification, people "collect various phenomena and place them together under categories, concepts, or labels," even though sometimes these phenomena "have no common denominator or shared characteristics."[33] The categories we use produced by the act of classification are always linked to *our* interests. As Craig Martin pointed out in his *A Critical Introduction to the Study of Religion* (2017), things do not naturally appear to us in the world in different categories; it is *we* who divided things into categories for *our* purpose.[34] Thus, the distinctions between different categories are socially constructed based on certain differences for our interests and purposes. There is nothing natural about the distinctions. Due to the seemingly

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[29] Neelis, *Early Buddhist Transmission and Trade Networks*, 256.
[30] Neelis, *Early Buddhist Transmission and Trade Networks*, 256.
[31] Neelis, *Early Buddhist Transmission and Trade Networks*, 229, 256.
[32] Craig Martin, *A Critical Introduction to the Study of Religion (Second Edition)* (London and New York: Routledge, 2017), 52, 54.
[33] Martin, *Critical Introduction*, 54.
[34] Martin, *Critical Introduction*, 38.

self-evident differences that serve as the construction basis for the categories, we are usually inclined to "misrecognize social categories by taking them as merely or simply natural categories."[35] Thus, once the categories have been formed, we usually tend to continue to use them as deemed natural categories without questioning them. Essentialization is a further step based on the act of classification. Through essentialization, we tend to exaggerate, sharpen, and over-estimate the differences or the boundaries among the categories that we have classified by projecting some essences or cores as intrinsically possessed by these categories. Based on those essences, we often presume that all the constitutive individuals in these categories naturally possess some stable and common characteristics that are in line with the set essences regardless of the reality that the characteristics are always changing and some individuals might not actually possess those general characteristics. In this sense, essentialism distorts the reality by setting immutable or unchanging essences and ignoring the internal diversity and change within those categories. By imposing essences onto categories, the continuous reality is forced to be segmented into discontinuous fragments. Not only that, based on the act of classification, which is inseparable from the interests of the subjects who classify the categories, essentialism can further reinforce or develop these interests and thus might generate more prejudices or stereotypes. It is because the essential differences according to the different essences always serve as the basis for the justification and legalization of the stereotypes and of the differential treatment to deal with different categories based on the stereotypes.

Speaking of the interests behind the acts of classifying and essentializing cultures, I also need to mention the colonial agenda. In the colonial era, these acts cannot be set apart from colonialist interests. Through colonial encounters, Western colonialists deliberately essentialized the differences and constructed the distinct boundaries between themselves and the colonized, between "the Self" and "the Other," between "Western" and "non-Western" in order to maintain their self-proclaimed superiority. Not only were culturally essentialist discourses facilitated by colonial interests, but they could in turn also reinforce and justify the colonial agenda. Thus, the relationship between cultural essentialism and colonialism became even closer. For example, the historical narrative of ancient Gandhāra was placed "in parallel with the contemporary British politics of a civilizing mission in India" in order to justify British Indian imperialism.[36] The more realistic-looking Gandhāran Buddhist material culture among other Indian material cultures then became a prime example to demonstrate the desirable

[35] Martin, *Critical Introduction*, 48.
[36] Michael Falser, "The Graeco-Buddhist style of Gandhara—a 'Storia ideologica', or: how a discourse makes a global history of art." *Journal of Art Historiography* 13 (December 2015): 10.

achievements of the Greeks' civilizing influence on the East in history. It thus served as a historical antecedent to justify the contemporary British colonialism in India. Although the subsequently proposed anti-/post-colonial interpretations tried hard to get rid of the impact of colonialism, they were ironically caught in the trap of a colonial legacy, namely cultural essentialism.

The persistence of this colonial legacy is manifested by the continuing use of the conventional concept of cultures, which regards cultures as externally exclusive but internally unified and coherent spheres.[37] Based on the intentional classification of cultures, cultural essentialism serves as the theoretical basis for this conventional concept of cultures. The essentialist approach in cultural studies then is the approach, which attributes the cultural phenomena in question to the conditions of or the relationships among autonomous cultural spheres. These bounded spheres of cultures possess certain essences or cores. Thus, a binary between the "pure" cultures and the "impure" cultures has come into being. In order to keep cultures as "pure" categories, the scholars who take an essentialist approach usually tend to either suppress, ignore, or discard the internal diversity and inconsistency within those categories. That being so, the observed cultural diversity is reduced to either the coexistence of different "pure" cultural spheres within a larger framework (like in the notion of multicultural societies)[38] or the simple combination of different cultural elements derived from the essences of other "pure" cultures (like the "impure," "mixed," and "hybrid" cultures that consist of different elements of other cultures).[39] Gandhāran Buddhist material culture is a typical example of the latter.

In this thesis, I will argue that the essentialist approach has several deficiencies. First, I will show that it largely simplifies the complexity of cultural or religious exchange, interaction, and integration processes in social-historical reality. Second, I will demonstrate that an essentialist approach makes the so-called "impure," "mixed," and "hybrid" cultures lose their subjectivities and agencies. Third, I will argue that an essentialist approach is more likely to make relevant academic discussions vulnerable to be exploited by certain political agendas. In Chapter 1 and Chapter 2, I will analyze in detail the implications of cultural essentialism in both the colonial Orientalist interpretations and the anti-/post-colonial interpretations of Gandhāran Buddhist

[37] Wolfgang Welsch, "Transculturality: The Puzzling Form of Cultures Today," in *Spaces of Culture: City, Nation, World*, ed. Mike Featherstone and Scott Lash (London, Thousand Oaks, and New Delhi: SAGE Publications Ltd, 1999), 194-96.
[38] Welsch, "Transculturality," 196-97.
[39] Philipp W. Stockhammer, "From Hybridity to Entanglement, From Essentialism to Practice," *Archaeological Review from Cambridge* 28, no.1 (April 2013): 12-14.

material culture as well as their deficiencies. In the concluding chapter, I will also summarize the deficiencies of the essentialist approach to respond to my research questions.

Considering the deficiencies of the essentialist approach mentioned above, I realize that a theoretical approach allowing for cultural dynamics and interconnectivity is certainly needed. Rather than to follow the same pattern of the essentialist approach, in this thesis, I take a transcultural perspective instead to approach Gandhāran Buddhist material culture, aiming to respond to the research question that what and how the transcultural approach can contribute to our understandings of Gandhāran Buddhist material culture, Gandhāran Buddhism, and even religions and cultures in general. The transcultural approach is based on the theoretical assumption that cultures are not essentialist entities that naturally possess rigid boundaries outward and stable essences inward. It aims to transcend and to deconstruct the conventional essentialist assumptions of cultures and religions. Instead of taking cultures as bounded spheres, the transcultural approach regards cultures as something always in the dynamic process of being made and remade.[40] Taking the transcultural approach as a starting point to question and deconstruct the conventional essentialist understandings of cultures and religions, based on the cases of Gandhāran Buddhist material culture, I further take my reconstructive attempt to theorize the processes of cultural/religious interactive or integrative dynamics. Drawing upon Thomas Tweed's theory of *Crossing and Dwelling*, I adopt the transcultural method of *translocative analysis* to re-examine Gandhāran Buddhist material culture. By tracing the possible cultural flows that merged into or passed through Gandhāra region, I attempt to reveal the connections between various localities with the help of spatial orientation and chronological positioning. By showing how these various flows converged together to formulate a new stylistic form of religious material culture, I aim to show the dialectical dynamics of localization and fluidization in cultural interactions, integrations, innovations, productions, and reproductions through what I call the *translocative framework*, which encourages us to attend to the dialectical unities between mobility and locality, not only paying attention to the relatively mobile cultural flows but the relatively anchored localities as well. Thus, this study does not content to only reveal the eclectic traits of Gandhāran Buddhist material culture but further attempts to explore the processes and the propulsion of the formation of such an eclectic religious material culture, as well as a series of issues relating to agency and identity. Although due to the scarcity of the sources and the limited explanatory potentials of the material evidence, some discussions can be somewhat

[40] Esther Berg and Katja Rakow. "Religious Studies and Transcultural Studies: Revealing a Cosmos Not Known Before?" *Transcultural Studies* 2016, no. 2 (2016): 186.

speculative. However, it cannot largely weaken my arguments that a transcultural perspective can be more heuristic and productive than the essentialist one. First, a transcultural perspective does not evade but encourages revealing the intricately entangled networks behind the interactive or integrative dynamics of religions and cultures. Thus, such a perspective is more suitable to reveal the eclectic traits of Gandhāran Buddhist material culture without disregarding the diverse cultural idiosyncrasies on the micro local level. Second, it is also conducive to resume Gandhāra's local subjectivity by encouraging us turn to the investigation of local agency. Third, it reflectively challenges, contests, and deconstructs the preceding politicalized discourses of cultural essentialism. Last but not least, it can also contribute to our understandings of religions and cultures as well as open up more space for further theoretical discussions. I will also elaborate on the advantages of the transcultural approach in the concluding chapter in order to respond to my research question and to sharpen my argument.

§ Chapter Outline

In Chapter 1, I will review the emergence, development, and effects of the essentialist discourses that over-emphasize the role of the Western classical traditions in the formation of Gandhāran Buddhist material culture, revealing the essentialist, Orientalist, and colonialist ideas behind these discourses. This kind of discourses, which I call "Western classical influence discourse" in this chapter, took its form in the 19th century during the colonial period, but is still prevalent in the post-colonial era today. Thus, its persistence in the contemporary world particularly requires us to reflect upon it. In Chapter 2, I will review the anticolonial and the postcolonial interpretations that attempt to challenge the Eurocentric and colonialist Western classical influence discourse. Although the anticolonial interpretations have challenged the colonial prejudice implied by the Western classical influence discourse, they do not transcend cultural essentialism due to their retaining to either the Orientalist division or to nationalism. Although the postcolonial interpretations have been pluralized and regionalized since the post-colonial era, they do not transcend the cultural essentialism either due to their adherence to the discourse of "influence." In Chapter 3, I will first elaborate on the transcultural theory that aims to overcome cultural essentialism, its applicability, as well as its limitations. Taking transcultural theory as a starting point, in this chapter I apply the method of translocative analysis derived from Thomas Tweed's theory of crossing and dwelling to re-examine the representation of Vajrapāni in Gandhāran Buddhist material culture, arguing that Gandhāran Buddhist material culture is *translocative*. In Chapter 4, based on the case study elaborated in the former chapter, I will pursue further theoretical discussions to expound the productiveness and potentiality of the transcultural

approach by theorizing a translocative framework of religious or cultural interactions, by revealing the dialectical relationship between mobility and fixity that is implied by the translocative framework, and by showing the potential of the translocative framework to contribute to other theories of religion. In the concluding chapter, I will respond to the research question, namely what the advantages are to take a transcultural perspective in the studies of Gandhāran Buddhist material culture in particular and the studies of cultural/religious interactions, innovations, and entanglements in general.

Chapter 1: Essentialism, Orientalism, and Western Classical Influence Discourse in the Study of Gandhāran Buddhist Material Culture

Cultural essentialism has long been imbricated in cultural studies in Western scholarship. Although we should refrain ourselves from basically essentializing preceding Western academics as 'essentially essentialists', thus trapping ourselves in the essentialist circle, we should not turn a blind eye to the persistent trend of essentialism in Western scholarship. Essentialist thinking of cultures, especially "Eastern" cultures, was always linked with orientalism and colonialism. As Richard King defined in his essay "Orientalism and the Study of Religions," Orientalism refers to "the long-standing Western fascination with the East and the tendency to divide the world up into East and West, with the East acting as a kind of mirror or foil by which Western culture defines itself."[1] Through the classification of the East as distinct from the West, Europeans explicitly othered and constructed "the East," forming a dichotomy between the Self (the West) and the Other (the East).[2] As I mentioned in the introduction chapter, classification, which essentialist thinking is based on, always reflects and depends on certain kinds of human interests. The orientalist inflected distinction between "the East" and "the West" also reflects the European interests attempting to make sense of Asian cultures at the earliest stage of the modern encounters between Europe and Asia. The orientalist motifs, which usually represented both the mystique and the backwardness of the Orient, derived from "the hopes and fears of the European imagination and its perennial fascination with the East."[3] Based on this kind of imagination, which usually reflected distortions and misrepresentations of the East, Orientalists especially highlighted the differences between the East and the West, encouraging the "misleading search for essences" of Eastern cultures.[4] The American Indologist Ronald Inden also pointed out the link between essentialism and orientalism. In his essay "Orientalist Constructions of India," Inden argued that there was a tendency in most orientalist Indological discourses to assume that there was an essence underlying Indian civilization, which was deemed as "the opposite of the West's."[5] Therefore, works aimed at explaining the "Oriental mindset" or "Indian mentality" usually presupposed that there was "a homogenous, and almost-Platonic 'essence' or 'nature' which can be directly intuited by the Indological expert."[6] The search for cultural essences and the imagination of the East jointly produced a series of stereotypes of Asia

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[1] Richard King, "Orientalism and the Study of Religions," in *The Routledge Companion to the Study of Religion (Second Edition)*, ed. John R. Hinnells (London: Routledge, 2010), 292.
[2] King, "Orientalism and the Study of Religions," 291.
[3] Richard King, "Orientalism and the Modern Myth of 'Hinduism.'" *Numen* 46, no. 2 (1999): 147.
[4] King, "Orientalism and the Study of Religions," 295.
[5] Ronald Inden, "Orientalist Constructions of India," *Modern Asian Studies* 20, no. 3 (1986): 402.
[6] King, "Orientalism and the Modern Myth of 'Hinduism,'" 158.

as an "other" that is essentially different from the West.[7] The perceived essential differences could further serve as the foundation for the West to justify its colonial agenda in the East. Based on the representations of the depravity, backwardness, irrationality, and primitivity of the East, "the West was able to comfort itself that it was progressive, civilized and thoroughly modern in contrast to an ahistorical and unchanging Orient."[8] The spread of the deemed backward, impoverished, uncivilized, primitive, obsolete, indolent, and despotic "essences" of Oriental societies also "justified a Western sense of superiority and the belief that it was the duty of the West to civilize the savage and aid the Oriental in their progression away from tradition and dogmatism and towards modernity and civilization."[9] Edward Said also indicated the complicity between orientalism and colonialism. In his well-known work *Orientalism* (1979), Said examined a series of writings in the 19th century that formed the discipline of Orientalism "by which European culture produced and managed the 'Orient,'"[10] arguing that orientalism was not only a certain will or intention to understand the Orient, but in some cases also an attempt "to control, manipulate, even to incorporate what [was] a manifestly different (or alternative and novel) world."[11] Thus, orientalist discourses could be, but not necessarily, involved in the colonial agenda, legitimating European imperial aspirations and "the colonial aggression and political supremacy of the Western world."[12]

The interconnection between cultural essentialism, orientalism, and colonialism can also be observed in the study of Gandhāran Buddhist material culture. Although Gandhāran Buddhist material culture could not be easily subsumed exclusively into either the 'Indian essences' or the 'Western essences' due to its highly eclectic features, the Western academics at that time still attributed the Gandhāran "hybridity" to the interactions between the East and the West, which reflects the orientalist presupposition of an essentialist division between the two worlds. In addition, many scholars were disinclined to ascribe equivalent or similar status in the discussions of the formation of Gandhāran Buddhist material culture, but inclined to particularly elevate the Western classical (Greek and/or Roman) influences and to depreciate the Eastern traditions.[13] From the mid-19th century, considering the history of the former rule of Alexander the Great

[7] King, "Orientalism and the Study of Religions," 291.
[8] King, "Orientalism and the Study of Religions," 291.
[9] King, "Orientalism and the Study of Religions," 291.
[10] Moustafa Bayoumi and Andrew Rubin, "Introduction," in *The Edward Said Reader*, ed. Moustafa Bayoumi and Andrew Rubin (New York: Vintage Books, 2000), xxiv.
[11] Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979), 12.
[12] King, "Orientalism and the Modern Myth of 'Hinduism,'" 148.
[13] By using the term "Western classical" here, I do not aim to imply that ancient Greek and Roman cultures are the essences of Western civilization but only to imply that Greek and Roman cultures serve as the historical basis for modern European people to construct a common "Western" identity that is in line with the essentialist division between the West and the East.

and his Greek successors in this area, as well as the commercial exchanges between this region and the Roman Empire in this period, many European scholars took Gandhāran Buddhist material culture as a *derivation* of the classical cultural forms of ancient Greece. Thus, Gandhāran Buddhist material culture also begun to be identified as "Greco-Buddhist art." The inception of Gandhāran Buddhist material culture, along with the emergence of images of the Buddha in human form, was particularly attributed to Western classical influences. Thus, a series of essentialist, orientalist, and colonial discourses which I call "Western classical influence discourse" came into being in Gandhāran studies. Because of its recognized ancient Greek features, Gandhāran Buddhist material culture was endowed with aesthetic superiority within South Asian material cultures in general. The recognition of ancient Greco-Roman traits in Gandhāran Buddhist material culture has generated a great space for colonial officials and antiquarians to historicize the assumed supremacy of "Western" cultures. Through this historicization, colonial art historians and archaeologists constructed a parallel relationship between Alexander the Great's conquest of Gandhāra in Central Asia and the colonial "civilizing" mission of the British colonial authority in India by conducting a series of discursive practices to justify the colonial rule. Through these discursive practices, Gandhāran Buddhist material culture became an ideal, successful, and praiseworthy outcome and testimony of the colonial success of the ancient Greeks who "civilized" the Oriental savage, introducing the progressive realistic techniques as well as the anthropomorphic traditions into Indian visual representations, successfully aiding India to progress away from its obstinate, persistent, unchanging, and timeless traditions. This constructed image of Gandhāran Buddhist material culture thus provided the British colonial authority with a firm historical foundation to justify its colonial agenda.[14]

The Western classical influence discourse has generated many effects in colonial politics, academia, and the public sphere. First, in the colonial era, the Western classical influence discourse colluded with the British colonial mission, contributing to the justification of the British colonial rule in South Asia. Second, the Western classical influence discourse caused considerable effects in academia. Since the late 19th century, Western academia has paid enormous attention to the Greek or Roman influences on the formation and the development of Gandhāran Buddhist material culture. Due to this special attention, the superior status of the Western traditions in the representations of Indian culture was strengthened on the one hand,

[14] For the collusion between the constructed image of Gandhāran Buddhist material culture and the colonial agenda, see Stanley K. Abe, "Inside the wonder house: Buddhist art and the West," in *Curators of the Buddha: The Study of Buddhism Under Colonialism*, ed. Donald S. Lopez (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1995), 63-106; and Michael Falser, "The Graeco-Buddhist style of Gandhara," —a 'Storia ideologica', or: how a discourse makes a global history of art." *Journal of Art Historiography* 13 (December 2015): 1-53.

and the Western influence theory became hegemonic among the global academic communities on the other. Even though the Eurocentric perspective of the Western classical influence discourse in Gandhāran studies and its complicity with the British colonialist civilizing mission in India have been later recognized and criticized by some scholars (Coomaraswamy 1908, Falser 2015), "coherent paradigms" for "unbiased interpretations" of the eclectic features of Gandhāran Buddhist material culture have not yet been produced.[15] Last but not least, the Western classical influence discourse is deeply embedded in the public sphere, for example in the contexts of museums. More importantly, the Orientalist narrative of Western classical influences on Gandhāran Buddhist material culture has somehow escaped from our postcolonial critiques, being persistent in the corners of contemporary museums and lingering around us, even if we have been living in the postcolonial era for several decades.

In this chapter, I aim to review the emergence and development of Western classical influence discourse in the study of Gandhāran Buddhist material culture and to reveal how this discourse connects Orientalism and colonialism. The following sections trace the historical development of this discourse from Welby Jackson's proposition of the Greek influence theory in the study of Gandhāran Buddhist material culture in 1852, through Gottlieb Wilhelm Leitner's coinage of the term "Graeco-Buddhist art" in 1871, and James Fergusson's integration of Gandhāran Buddhist material culture into his world architectural history in 1876, to the stylistic analyses of the French Orientalist Alfred Foucher in the 1910s. By tracing the genealogy and indicating the historical contexts of the Western classical influence discourse in the study of Gandhāran Buddhist material culture, I aim to reveal the complicity between the essentialist and orientalist discourses of the Western classical influences on Gandhāran Buddhist material culture and the British colonialist interests. In addition, I will also indicate the considerable and persistent effects of this discourse. At the end of this chapter, I will conclude by summarizing the deficiencies of the essentialist view entailed in the Western classical influence discourse in the study of Gandhāran Buddhist material culture.

1. The Genealogy of the Western Classical Influence Discourse in the Colonial Period

Since the middle of the 19th century, Western classical influences in Gandhāran Buddhist material culture have begun to attract the attention of Western scholars. Over a hundred years since then, more and more scholars have supplemented and enriched the discourse that particularly focused on the Western classical influences on the East. Although such kind of discourses had

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[15] Anna Filigenzi, "Orientalised Hellenism versus Hellenised Orient: Reversing the Perspective on Gandharan Art." *Ancient Civilizations from Scythia to Siberia* 18 (2012), 112.

undergone nearly a hundred years of development until the end of World War II, scholars who supported the theory of Western classical influences did not get rid of cultural essentialism. In this section, I will review the emergence and the development of the Western classical influence discourse in Gandhāran studies, analyzing how this sort of discourses reflects essentialism, orientalism, and colonialism.

(1) Historical Background of the Emergence of the Western Classical Influence Discourse

The study of Gandhāran Buddhist material culture in the colonial period did not only reflect the Orientalist interests to construct, understand or imagine the East, but also engaged with the self-construction of the West by seeking and confirming its self-worth in its interactions with the East. This need for self-construction also resonated with European romanticism and Philhellenism, causing an enthusiasm to trace the Western classical legacy in the Hellenistic East. The enthusiasm for the historical study of the Greek rule in Central and South Asia, which was an extension of the European romanticism and Philhellenism into the territory of India, already began in the early 19th century before the British colonial authorities ruled the Indian subcontinent.[16] Colonial officials actively explored ancient sites and enthusiastically collected antiquities in Central Asia, the region which was once conquered by Alexander the Great and ruled by his successors.[17] At that time, antiquarians and colonial officials like Alexander Burnes in the Bombay Army had an inclination to track the traces of Alexander the Great in Central Asia.[18] This was also reflected in collecting and studying ancient coins (e.g. Bactrian coins) for the sake of verifying the claim of a continuing Greek heritage in Central and South Asia.[19] Bactria, which is located in the northwest of Gandhāra, was known as one of the Hellenistic outposts that were established due to the conquest of Alexander the Great. It was also believed to be the principal source of Greek tradition and inspiration that significantly influenced Gandhāran Buddhist material culture. The study of ancient Bactrian coins in the early 19th century confirmed the history of Greek rule in this area, which was based on the indisputable material proof of the coins that were imprinted with ancient Greek inscriptions and the profiles of Bactrian kings.[20] Therefore, since 1833, Western classical cultural influences in Central and

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[16] Abe, "Inside the wonder house," 70.
[17] Abe, "Inside the wonder house," 70.
[18] For more information, see the reports in the *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*: Alexander Burnes, "On the reputed Descendants of Alexander the Great, in the Valley of the Oxus," *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal* 2 (1833): 305-07, as well as his another report "On the 'Topes' and Grecian Remains in the Panjab," *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal* 2 (1833): 308-10.
[19] Falser, "The Graeco-Buddhist style of Gandhara," 7.
[20] Abe, "Inside the wonder house," 69.

South Asia had come to the notice of European scholars, generating an academic background for the formation of the Western classical influence discourse in the study of Gandhāran Buddhist material culture in particular and Indian material culture in general.

(2) The Emergence of the Western Classical Influence Discourse

In 1852, three years after the British annexation of Punjab, Welby Jackson, the vice-president of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, officially described Gandhāran Buddhist material culture as exhibiting some classical characteristics of ancient Greece for the first time.[21] In his short report published in the *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, Jackson made a comparison of two stucco heads that were said to be found near Peshawar. By focusing on the countenance and the sculpting style of the two sculptures, he indicated how different these two heads were:

> "[The first head] is evidently a head of the Boodhistic [Buddhistic] form; […] the eyelids heavy; the eyes but little open, and sloping upwards towards the ears; the nose flat and thick; the mouth large with thick flat lips; the ears very large and flat, with the lobes drawn down to a *hideous* extent; the expression of the face *stolid and heavy*; […] the workmanship is *coarse*, and the modelling of the head *incorrect*."[22]

> "(The second head) is of a *superior* character in *every* respect; the eyes open and *intelligent*; the nose well formed; and the nostrils open and well articulated; the upper lip short; the lips well and sharply defined; and the mouth bearing a *pleasing* and *intellectual* expression; the head too is *correctly* modelled, shewing (showing) some knowledge of the art of sculpture; the ears are concealed by the full curls of the hair, […] the countenance is *handsome* and *pleasing* in its expression, either in profile, or in full face; […] indeed the sharpness of the work is surprizing considering its antiquity."[23]

It seemed to be evident to Jackson that the second head was "not a Hindu head."[24] After demonstrating how aesthetically superior the second head was, he tentatively proposed that the representation of these superior characteristics might be attributed to the Greek influence:

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[21] Abe, "Inside the wonder house," 70.
[22] Welby Jackson, "Notice of two heads in the northern districts of Punjab," *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal* 21 (1852): 512, emphasis added.
[23] Jackson, "Notice of two heads," 512, emphasis added.
[24] Jackson, "Notice of two heads," 512.

> "[…] and on comparing it with the heads on the early Bactrian coins, there appears to be a great resemblance in general character; sufficient to induce me to think it belongs to that period. The expression of the face is somewhat of a *Greek* cast, but it is not a pure Greek countenance; […]."[25]

Jackson here did not merely make a stylistic comparison between two stucco heads but also presupposed the orientalist assumptions of essential differences, or even oppositions, between the Greek and the Hindu/Indian/Buddhist traditions. Just as he pointed out at the beginning of his report, the two heads were "of most opposite characters and the contrast shews [shows] to advantage the peculiarities of each."[26] Based on these differences, he attached additional values to these two stucco heads, praising the Greek features while debasing the Eastern characteristics. For example, Jackson used only negative words (like "hideous," "stolid," "coarse," and "incorrect") to describe the first head. Thus, the first head, which Jackson considered to be Buddhist, symbolically represented the inferior colonized, backward, barren, ignorant, and uncivilized. In stark contrast, he applied only praising words (like "pleasing," "intellectual," and "handsome,") for describing the second head, which was believed to bear the signs of Greek heritage and thus was endowed with significant aesthetic superiority. By praising the second head, which was believed to bear Greek heritage, Jackson also highlighted the advantage of the Western classical traditions. Thus, we can read his description as an attempt to construct a comparison of progression between the essentially different East and West. It is not difficult to observe the constitutive and constructive aspects of Jackson's words. The lack of solid and persuasive archaeological evidence did not prevent him from making speculations that the second head inherited ancient Greek traces. Based on his European gaze on the Gandhāran sculptures, his words were highly resonant with the racial and colonial discourses, revealing his identification with Western civilization and the contemporary colonial knowledge system. Anyhow, Jackson's speculation marks the beginning of the Western classical influence discourse in the study of Gandhāran Buddhist material culture.

A report that was written by the Anglo-Indian archaeologist Edward Clive Bayley published in the same journal of the same year (1852) also reflects the essentialist presupposition of cultures. In this report, Bayley enumerated a large number of sculptures from the Gandhāra area that were recognized as possessing both Greek and Buddhist cultural traits. He first claimed that Greek art must have a share in the production of these Gandhāran specimens, and it was so evident to him

[25] Jackson, "Notice of two heads," 512, emphasis added.
[26] Jackson, "Notice of two heads," 511.

that he doubted that anyone examining these samples could think otherwise.[27] He then demonstrated that these items should not be dated back to a very late age, an age that Bayley called a "debased period" due to the appearance of increasingly impure Greek features.[28] According to him, only the specimens that were produced in the early period—a period in which Greeks directly ruled the Gandhāra region—can maintain a considerable degree of "purity" of the Greek characteristics. Therefore, "the purity of their style of art forbids our attributing these sculptures to so late an era."[29] On the basis of perceived aesthetic purity resonant with Greek art, Bayley concluded that these samples should not be dated to the period later than the rule of the Indo-Greek king Menander.[30]

Let us set aside the examination to which extent Bayley's dating of the samples is accurate and credible but focus on his assumptions instead. His analysis and argumentation demonstratively epitomize the essentialist assumptions that were embedded in contemporary colonial contexts. Greek culture from far-away Europe, at the very beginning, was *inserted* into the Gandhāra area as a complete cultural entity that self-evidently encapsulated its essences. This process generated the existence of "pure" Greek culture in the East. In the later period, namely the "debased period," the reduction of the Greek characteristics that were deemed as reflecting the essences of the Greek culture implies the loss of the original purity of Greek culture in Central Asia.

If we now turn to the accuracy of Bayley's argumentation, we see that his analysis may not be credible enough. He firstly presupposed a concept of purity of Greek culture, then took it for granted that the more Greek he thought these samples looked, the older they were. To him, these specimens must not be produced in a period later than the direct Greek rule due to their perceived purer representation of Greek culture. However, according to later scholarship, the sculptures of the Buddhist figures did not appear until the rise of the Kushan Empire, hundreds of years later than the period of Greek rule. Thus, we can see how strongly the epistemological assumptions dominated by the colonialist essentialism influenced and misguided the academic judgment at that time.

(3) Leitner's Coinage of the Term "Graeco-Buddhistic"

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[27] Edward Clive Bayley, "Note on some Sculptures found in Peshawar," *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal* 21 (1852): 610.
[28] Bayley, "Note on some Sculptures found in Peshawar," 610.
[29] Bayley, "Note on some Sculptures found in Peshawar," 612.
[30] Bayley, "Note on some Sculptures found in Peshawar," 610.

The definite term that articulately ascribes the formation of the Gandhāran Buddhist sculptures to Greek influences first appeared in 1871. Gottlieb Wilhelm Leitner—the Austro-Hungarian Orientalist based at the Indian Punjab Museum in Lahore—coined the term "Graeco-Buddhistic" (which was later commonly used as "Greco-Buddhist") in the context of the study of Gandhāran Buddhist material culture.[31] He discovered these sculptures during a two-day visit at the Buddhist monastery Takht-i-Bahi near Peshawar during the Christmas vacation of 1870. Leitner first described these sculptures as "Graeco-Buddhistic" in the journal *Indian Public Opinion*, published on 11th February 1871.[32] In the comment on his discoveries in 1871 reprinted in *Asiatic Quarterly Review* in 1894, Leitner asserted that the term "Graeco-Buddhistic", in the area of Central and South Asia, was not only applicable to the field of art history but to those of religion and general history. When referring to the study of Buddhism of this historical area, he also presupposed the Orientalist delimitation between "the West" and "the East":

> "Buddhism, as a whole, must not be confounded with the one-sided interpretations of those who are mainly acquainted with its Ceylon School and has to be studied on the broader basis of Universal History, in which the first attempt—through the Greeks—of the *West* to carry its *Law* and *civilization* to the *East* from which it had received its *Light*, forms an important epoch."[33]

As the quote reveals, Leitner clearly expressed an Orientalist view. In Leitner's eyes, "the West" brought "Law and Civilization" to "the East"; in turn, "the West" also received the "Light" from "the East." The metaphor "Light" here evidently reflects *ex oriente lux*, namely "the belief that greater wisdom and deeper spirituality can be found in Eastern religions than in the materialistic West."[34] It also reflects Said's critical analysis of the Orientalist discourse that assumes a dichotomy between a rational, developed, superior "West" and a sensual, undeveloped, inferior "East."[35] This view mirrors a clearly demarcated binary between "the East" and "the West" based on an imagined image of "the Other." This image of the Orient relies on our own needs. If we try to recover the lost spirituality, we believe we would find it if we resort to "the East." However, this image of "the East" is imagined, which is unable to tell us anything about the realities behind the misrepresented image of "the East."

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31 Falser, "The Graeco-Buddhist style of Gandhara," 14.
32 Gottlieb Wilhelm Leitner, "Graeco-Buddhistic Sculpture," *Asiatic Quarterly Review*, no. 13/14 (January and April 1894): 186.
33 Leitner, "Graeco-Buddhistic Sculpture," 186, emphasis added.
34 "Ex oriente lux." The Concise Oxford Dictionary of World Religions. Encyclopedia.com. (August 25, 2019). https://www.encyclopedia.com/religion/dictionaries-thesauruses-pictures-and-press-releases/ex-oriente-lux
35 Said, *Orientalism*, 4, 300.

Anyhow, the establishment of the term "Graeco-Buddhistic" marked a milestone in the study of the cultural history of Gandhāra. It "unambiguously secured the source of Western influence in the discourse of Greece and Hellenism."[36] Therefore, the widespread acceptance of this term in academia marks the formation of the hegemonic position of Greek influence theory in the study of Gandhāran Buddhist material culture.

(4) Fergusson's Emphasis of the Western Classical influences on Gandhāran Buddhist Material Culture

James Fergusson, the Scottish architectural historian, was the first person who integrated Gandhāran architecture into a world comparative architectural history. He was also another scholar who firmly supported the theory of the comprehensive influence of Greek culture on Gandhāran culture. At the end of the chapter introducing Gandhāra monasteries in his *History of Indian and Eastern Architecture* first published in 1876, Fergusson concluded that "in the first centuries of the Christian Era the civilization of the *West* exercised an influence on the arts and religion of the inhabitants of this part of India far greater than has hitherto been suspected."[37] Like all the scholars mentioned above, Fergusson also emphasized the superiority of the West and the inferiority of the East. In his *History of Indian and Eastern Architecture*, he particularly depreciated Hindu architectures as "barbarous," "vulgar," "exaggerated," and "coarse,"[38] which reflects his imperial attitude and Victorian aesthetic principles:

> "It cannot, of course, be for one moment contended that India ever reached *the intellectual supremacy of Greece*, or *the moral greatness of Rome*; but, though on a *lower step of the ladder*, her arts are more original and more varied, […]."[39]

Fergusson's words here reflect two assumptions. First, he assumed that there was a universal linear progress model of history. The analogy of the ladder is a clear indicator of Fergusson's evolutionary view of history. Second, the Indian arts were positioned in the linear progress model of history as a unified and independent entity that was never comparable to the essences

[36] Abe, "Inside the wonder house," 72.
[37] James Fergusson, *History of Indian and Eastern Architecture*, vol. 3 of *History of Architecture in all Countries* (London: J. Murray, 1876), 184, emphasis added.
[38] In Fergusson's *History of Indian and Eastern Architecture*, the word "vulgar" and its derivative form have appeared about 7 times; the word "barbarous" and its derivative form have appeared about 5 times; the word "coarse" has also appeared approximately 7 times; and the word "exaggerate" has appeared around 6 times. All of these words that are counted here are employed to describe South Asian architecture or Indian people.
[39] Fergusson, *History of Indian and Eastern Architecture*, 4, emphasis added.

of Western cultures reflected through the intellectual strengths of the Greeks and the moral advantages of the Romans. Western cultures were on a much higher step of the "ladder" of history than any other cultures. This evolutionary view was also applied to Asian cultures in general but not limited to the Gandhāra culture in particular. By incorporating the alleged non-Western cultures into this linear progress model of history, these colonial art historians constructed a complete set of cultural value evaluation standards that can be applied to any cultures on a universal level. To these scholars, on this standardized historical progression "ladder," when the cultures on the "upper step" on the ladder met with the cultures on the "lower step" on the ladder, something new, namely, the civilizing process of the lower-level cultures must happen. To scrutinize the exact influence of Greek culture in the historical process of South Asia, Fergusson also paid particular attention to the origin of some cultural phenomena in India, like the origin of the extensive use of stone for architectural purposes and the emergence of the images of the Buddha in anthropomorphic form.

Fergusson believed that the wide use of stone for architectural purposes in India should be attributed to Greek influence. Long before the stone architectures appeared, India had already possessed magnificent palaces and halls, which were all made from wood.[40] It seemed to him that at that time stones were only used for the building foundations, city fortifications like city walls and gates, and engineering facilities such as bridges and dams.[41] Everything else, however, was made from wood. Despite the fact that wood as building material is much cheaper, lighter, and easier to be cut, carved, and applied with color and gilding than the stones, it has a significant shortcoming, that is, its ephemeral nature.[42] Considering the shift from the use of wood to that of rocks as building materials in Indian architecture, Fergusson speculated as follows:

> "From this the inference seems inevitable that it was in consequence of *India being brought into contact with the western world*, first by Alexander's raid, and then by the establishment of the Baktrian [Bactrian] kingdom in its immediate proximity, that led to this change. We do not yet know precisely how far the Baktrian [Bactrian] kingdom extended towards the Indus, but we feel *Greek influence* on the coinage, on the sculpture, and generally on the arts of India, from an

40 Fergusson, *History of Indian and Eastern Architecture*, 47.
41 Fergusson, *History of Indian and Eastern Architecture*, 47.
42 Fergusson, *History of Indian and Eastern Architecture*, 47.

> early date, and it seems as if we might be able to fix with precision not only the dates, but the forms in which *the arts of the Western world exerted their influence on those of the East*."[43]

In addition, Fergusson was one of the first to propose that the origin of the Buddha images in human form was also inspired by Greek tradition.[44] In the late 19th century, it was widely acknowledged by Western academia that no anthropomorphic Buddhist image had ever appeared in the very early period of Buddhist art in India. At that time, the presence of Sakyamuni Buddha was represented by a serious of symbols such as lotus, sacred tree, lion, the wheel of Dharma, and his footprint. Therefore, the way and forms to represent the presence of the Buddha experienced a shift from the "non-idolatrous period" to an "idolatrous period."[45] Because of the importance of epiphany in ancient Greek theology, the presence of gods is always associated with the representations of gods' images.[46] Therefore, it was not difficult for those colonial scholars to attribute the origin of anthropomorphic images of the Buddha to the influence of the ancient Greek tradition. As Fergusson demonstrated in his *Archaeology in India* published in 1884:

> "I suspect that when the matter comes to be carefully investigated, it will be found that the Indians *borrowed* from the Greeks some things far more important than stone architecture or chronological eras. It is nearly certain that the Indians were not idolaters before they first came in contact with the *Western nations*. […] Buddhism is absolutely free from any taint of idolatry till after the Christian era. So far as we can at present see, it was in the Buddhist monasteries of the Gandhara country, where the *influence* of the *Graeco-Bactrian* art is so manifestly displayed, that the disease broke out, which was afterwards so *completely* to transform and pervade the outward forms, at least, of *all* the ancient religions throughout India."[47]

The quotations from Fergusson's academic works show that he used the term "influence" quite commonly. The discourse of "influence" presupposes two assumptions. First, both the influencer and the influenced are taken as unified and independent entities. Second, the influencer is always the active actor who launches actions, whereas the influenced is the passive

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[43] Fergusson, *History of Indian and Eastern Architecture*, 48, emphasis added.
[44] Abe, "Inside the wonder house," 78.
[45] James Fergusson, *Archaeology in India* (London: Trübner & Co., 1884), 36.
[46] For more information, see Verity Platt's *Facing the Gods: Epiphany and Representation in Graeco-Roman Art, Literature and Religion* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011).
[47] Fergusson, *Archaeology in India*, 36.

recipient of these actions. As Falser analyzed, the use of the word "influence" reveals an art historical pattern of thoughts that treated 'the West' as the active transmitter whereas the East is seen as the mere passive receiver of stylistic expressions.[48] With the employment of the discourse of "influence," Gandhāran Buddhist material culture completely lost its autonomy and agency, being reduced to a remote "frontier" or a "periphery" that was destined to be influenced and civilized by a much more advanced culture transmitted from its distant cultural centers in Europe.

(5) Smith's Broadening of the Range of the Western Classical influence Discourse

Vincent Arthur Smith, the Irish Indologist and art historian, also supported Fergusson's hypothesis on the origin of anthropomorphic Buddhist images. In his article "Graeco-Roman Influence on the Civilization of Ancient India" published in the *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal* in 1889, Smith endorsed Fergusson by indicating that Fergusson was right in holding that the worship of the anthropomorphic images of the Buddha was introduced from the North West; and "it is probable that the development of sculpture, which was undoubtedly stimulated by Hellenic influence, gave encouragement to idolatrous practices."[49]

In addition to supporting Fergusson's view that the Buddhist images in human form emerged due to the influence of ancient Greek religious tradition, Smith also firmly supported that the influence of Greek culture on Indian culture comprehensively involved almost every aspect of Indian culture. In his article "Graeco-Roman Influence," he incorporated the discussions of a Greek influence on Indian literature, drama, religion, science, and philosophy, thus establishing a much broader range of the discourse of Western supremacy and authority in relation to Indian culture. The discovery and the evaluation of Gandhāran Buddhist material culture only constituted a specific cultural and artistic aspect of this vast colonial ideological discourse system.

In addition, Smith was the first to pay attention to the mediator role of the ancient Romans who transmitted the Greek influence to Central and South Asia.[50] One of the most challenging matters for the validity of the term "Graeco-Buddhist" was the suspicion caused by the considerably long distance—not only geographical but also temporal—between ancient Greece and ancient Gandhāra. Considering such a long distance, one might wonder what is the feasible

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[48] Falser, "The Graeco-Buddhist style of Gandhara," 10.
[49] Vincent Arthur Smith, "Graeco-Roman Influence on the Civilization of Ancient India," *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal* 58 (1889): 193.
[50] Abe, "Inside the wonder house," 73.

way to enable the Greek culture from such a distant place to effectively affect the remote Gandhāra region. To dispel such doubts became particularly important in the construction and validation of the Western classical influence discourse. Smith made the earliest attempt to mediate this distance.[51] Considering the crucial intermediary role of some Roman cities, such as Palmyra in today's Syria, in transmitting Greek influence to Central and South Asia, he responded to Leitner's proposition of the concept of "Graeco-Buddhist" as follows:

> "The name Graeco-Buddhist proposed by Dr. Leitner cannot be asserted to be incorrect, all Roman being only a modification of Greek art, but the term *Romano-Buddhist* would be much more appropriate."[52]

Smith's most significant contribution to the development of the Western classical influence discourse was that he endowed this discourse with more credibility by elaborating the intermediary role of the Roman cities in the spread of the Greek influence. Most importantly, he expanded the scope of the Western classical influence discourse, incorporating the Roman influence into his consideration and discussions in order to make his analysis more accurate. According to Abe, Smith generated a kind of "elasticity" that "allowed for examples of *both Greek and Roman* art to be used in his discursive scheme."[53] For example, he emphasized the Roman traits of Gandhāran Buddhist art, claiming that "Roman or Christian subjects have been made to serve Buddhist purposes, but have been transferred bodily to India with little change, save that of name."[54] However, when he analyzed the death-bed scene in the visual representations of Buddhist narrative, he also considered the Greek share of this way of representation, thus adopting another hyphenated term "Graeco-Roman" to refer to this representation style:

> "The design of these death-bed scenes is certainly an *importation* from the west. The recumbent figure on the bed surrounded by morning attendants is clearly *copied* from *Greek* banqueting reliefs of a sepulchral character, as *imitated* on *Roman* sarcophagi. […] I have no doubt that the Gandhara sculptures were *copied* from *Graeco-Roman*, and not pure Greek, models."[55]

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[51] Abe, "Inside the wonder house," 73.
[52] Smith, "Graeco-Roman Influence," 172, emphasis added.
[53] Abe, "Inside the wonder house," 73, emphasis added.
[54] Smith, "Graeco-Roman Influence," 190.
[55] Smith, "Graeco-Roman Influence," 126, emphasis added.

As his quote demonstrates, Smith regarded the Gandhāran artists as passive imitators. He frequently used the words "copy" and "importation" in his article. He asserted that Indians used the pillars *copied* from Greek prototypes with modifications in their buildings;[56] many technical terms in the vocabulary of Hindu astronomy were also *imported* from Greek terms;[57] and "ample opportunities existed during several centuries for the *importation* of *all sorts of* Greek ideas, dramatic or other."[58] The discourse of "copy," "importation," and "imitation" concentratedly reflect the asymmetry of power and the inequality of status between Indian and Western cultures. When this asymmetry, along with its accompanying ideology, was involved in comparative cultural studies, the evolutionary view of history and culture would be strengthened. Like the colonial scholars mentioned above, Smith was also an advocate of the linear progress model of history. Although their Greek traits were widely recognized by Western academics, Gandhāran Buddhist sculptures, to Smith, were still not comparable to their Greek prototype in terms of aesthetic value. They were merely the clumsy imitations that were "devoid of life or elegance, and far inferior to the worst Graeco-Roman example."[59] However, to Smith, even though Gandhāra art, as an extension of the tradition of Greek art, was never Greek enough due to "its inability to match the achievements of the classical West,"[60] the excellent sculptures from Gandhāra were still "so artistic, and so far superior to the feeble conventionalism of ordinary Indian art."[61] As Smith's quote of the words of the colonial archaeologist Alexander Cunningham in Smith's article "Graeco-Roman Influence" shows:

> "It is a fact, which receives fresh proofs every day, that the art of sculpture, or certainly of good sculpture, appeared suddenly in India at the very time that the Greeks were masters of the Kabul valley, that it retained its *superiority* during the Greek and half-Greek rule of the Indo-Scythians, and that it *deteriorated* more and more the further it receded from the Greek age, until the *degradation* culminated in the wooden inanities and bestial obscenities of the Brahmanical temples."[62]

Therefore, we can see that under this standardized cultural evaluation system, a more complete hierarchical classification among different cultures, from "the West" to "the East," had been

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[56] Smith, "Graeco-Roman Influence," 110.
[57] Smith, "Graeco-Roman Influence," 194.
[58] Smith, "Graeco-Roman Influence," 187, emphasis added.
[59] Smith, "Graeco-Roman Influence," 135.
[60] Abe, "Inside the wonder house," 74.
[61] Smith, "Graeco-Roman Influence," 128.
[62] Alexander Cunningham, *Archaeol. Rep.* Vol. III, p. 100, quoted by Smith in his article "Graeco-Roman Influence," 183, emphasis added.

formed. This hierarchical classification system also had significant potential for those imperial scholars to re-narrate Indian art history to make it compatible with their colonial epistemological framework.

(6) The Complicity between Foucher's discourse and the Colonial Agenda

Within the aforementioned linear progress model of the art development, and in comparison with Greek art, the downplaying, or even, the degrading of Gandhāran Buddhist material culture in particular and the broader range of Indian material culture in general was very common among those imperial art historians. However, Alfred Foucher, the French Orientalist, was the first scholar who attempted to explicitly neutralize the Western classical influence discourse in the study of Gandhāran Buddhist material culture. At the end of his essay "The Greek origin of the image of Buddha" in his monograph *The Beginnings of Buddhist Art and other Essays in Indian and Central-Asian Archaeology* (1917), he offered a more "humanistic" conclusion with a "bold and liberal stance":[63]

> "It is not the father *or* the mother who has formed the child; it is the father *and* the mother. The Indian mind has taken a part *no less essential* than has Greek genius in the elaboration of the model of the Monk-God. It is a case where the *East* and the *West* could *have done nothing without each other*. It would be childish to associate ourselves, in a partisan spirit and turnabout, with the exaltation or the contempt, whether of Europe or of Asia, when so fine an opportunity offers for saluting in the Eurasian prototype of Buddha one of the most sublime creations wherewith *their collaboration has enriched humanity*."[64]

In Foucher's view, "the West" and "the East" appeared together as two independent and essentially different individuals, who jointly brought about the Gandhāran Buddhist material culture, just like a pair of parents begets a baby. Still, Foucher also presupposed the essential differences between the East and the West like other Orientalists. In addition, even if he tried to neutralize the Western classical influence discourse by providing a more "humanistic" interpretation, this attempt cannot get his discourse out of the fate of colluding with the colonial agenda. From Abe's point of view, Foucher was not indifferent to the role of Indian traditions in the formation and development of Gandhāran Buddhist material culture. His original intent was

[63] Abe, "Inside the wonder house," 80.
[64] Alfred Foucher, "Greek Origin of the Image of the Buddha," in Alfred Foucher, *The Beginnings of Buddhist Art and other Essays in Indian and Central-Asian Archaeology*, trans. L. A. Thomas and F. W. Thomas (Paris: Paul Geuthner, 1917), 136-37, emphasis added.

to cultivate an appreciation for Buddhist art in the West, to "counter representations of Indian art as lacking merit," and to ultimately establish a feeling of sympathy between India and Europe.[65] Even if Foucher's attempt to neutralize the Western classical influence discourse was remarkable in the colonial period, his views, positions, stances, and discourse were still unable to transcend the colonial context and escape from the limitations of the social structure dominated by the colonial authority. Although his downplaying of Indian culture was not as evident as his predecessors, he still examined the Gandhāran sculptures from a Eurocentric perspective and was even latently in favor of British colonial rule.

On the one hand, Foucher expressed an analogy and juxtaposition between contemporary British colonial rule and the historical "colonial" rules. In his essay "Greek Origin," he introduced the colonial historical background of Punjab in a continuous and coherent way by which he made the British colonial mission look natural, constructing a comparability and even a consistency between the contemporary British rule and the historical Greek, Scythian, and Mogul rules:

> "During a century and more the Panjab was thus a *Greek colony*, *in the same way as it afterwards became Scythian, then Mogul, and finally English*. That is to say, a handful of foreigners, supported by mercenary troops, in great part recruited in the country itself, became masters there, and levied the taxes."[66]

Here the intention to legalize British colonial rule is quite clear, even though it is indirectly revealed by a juxtaposition: if the Greek, Scythian, and Mogul rules of Punjab in history can be accepted, why then can the English rule not be accepted "in the same way"?

On the other hand, Foucher's special emphasis on the Greek features of Gandhāran Buddhist sculptures evidently unveils his Eurocentric gaze:

> "Look at it at leisure. Without doubt you will appreciate its dreamy, and even somewhat effeminate, beauty; but at the same time you cannot fail to be struck by its *Hellenic character*. That this is a statue of Buddha there is not the least doubt […]. But, if it is indeed a Buddha, *it is no less evidently not an Indian work*. Your *European eyes* have in this case *no need of the help of any Indianist*, in order to appreciate with full knowledge the orb of the nimbus, the waves of the

[65] Abe, "Inside the wonder house," 79.
[66] Foucher, "Greek Origin," 126, emphasis added.

> hair, the straightness of the profile, the classical shape of the eyes, the sinuous bow of the mouth, the supple and hollow folds of the draperies. All these technical details […] indicate in a material, palpable and striking manner *the hand of an artist from some Greek studio*."[67]

> "Thus we arrive quite naturally at the strange and quaint mixture which we were analyzing a short time ago, at this statue, which is *a Hellenized Buddha*, unless you prefer to describe it as an *Indianized figure of Apollo*."[68]

Both the analogy between *Hellenized Buddha* and *Indianized Apollo* and the easy recognition of Greek characteristics made by the European eyes without any Indianist's assistance are the distinctive signs of Foucher's Eurocentrism. Not only that, he even tried to relate the discussions of the "Indo-Greek school of Gandhāra" to those of "Christian art," making the Buddhist art of Gandhāra equivalent to Christian art in the sense of inheriting Greek legacy.[69] He compared two statues, one that represents Christ taken from a sarcophagus from Asia Minor exhibited in Berlin and another that represents Buddha discovered in a temple ruin in Gandhāra exhibited in Lahore, to examine the stylistic similarities.[70] He asserted that both of them were "direct descendants of a common ancestor," a Greek statue called the Orator.[71] Thus, Foucher concluded as follows:

> "It is not to be doubted that, plastically speaking, they are cousins-german. The one is a *Greco-Christian Christ*; the other is a *Greco-Buddhist Buddha*. Both are, by the same right, a legacy left *in extremis* to the old world by the expiring Greek art."[72]

By making the "Greco-Buddhist art" comparable to the "Greco-Christian art," Foucher ambitiously constructed a common plane that could bear both at the same time, incorporating both of them into a universal history of art. On this common plane, whether Buddhist sculptures or Christian statues, they were merely "stylistic derivates" of their Greek prototypes.[73] Foucher's approach of bringing Christian art and Buddhist art to the same plane seems to have enhanced the status of Gandhāran Buddhist material culture. It seems that he developed an appreciation and an affirmation of Buddhist art, and thus seemed to be different from his colonial scholar predecessors. However, this is not the case. This approach made Gandhāran Buddhist material

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[67] Foucher, "Greek Origin," 119-20, emphasis added.
[68] Foucher, "Greek Origin," 128, emphasis added.
[69] Foucher, "Greek Origin," 135.
[70] Foucher, "Greek Origin," 135.
[71] Foucher, "Greek Origin," 136.
[72] Foucher, "Greek Origin," 136, emphasis added.
[73] Falser, "The Graeco-Buddhist style of Gandhara," 19.

culture available to be absorbed in the cultural heritage discourse that served as a foundation for the construction of "the Westerness" of South Asia. Foucher could bring the Buddhist art of Gandhāra to the same level as Christian art, not because of its "Buddhistness" or "Indianness," but because of its "Greekness." Gandhāran Buddhist material culture did not actually regain its autonomy through Foucher's neutralization. On the contrary, due to its "Westerness" or its "Greekness," the Buddhist art of Gandhāra was elevated to the apex of the linear development classification system of South Asian art, being utilized by the colonists as an intermediary buffer between Western colonizer and Indian colonized.

(7) Marshall's Essentialist View of the Limitations of the Western influences in the East

Unsurprisingly, relying on the material evidence, the supremacy of "Western" culture was also backed up by colonial archaeologists. John Marshall, the British-colonial archaeologist, was one of the most typical proponents of the Western classical influence theory in the 20th century. Even though Marshall insisted that the Western inspirations—which Gandhāran Buddhist material culture received from the Western classical influences—declined very slowly in Central Asia, bearing "testimony to the remarkable persistency of its teachings,"[74] considering the "radical dissimilarity" between the Hellenistic art and the Indian art, he was still skeptical about the extent to which Hellenistic culture had ever influenced South Asian cultures:

> "Nevertheless, in spite of its wide diffusion, Hellenistic art *never took the real hold upon India that it took, for example, upon Italy or Western Asia*, for the reason that the temperaments of the two peoples were *radically dissimilar*. […] these [Greek] ideals *awakened no response in the Indian mind.* The vision of the Indian was bounded by the immortal rather than the mortal, by the infinite rather than the finite. Where Greek thought was ethical, his was spiritual; where Greek was rational, his was emotional."[75]

Here, we can clearly see Marshall's presupposition of the essential differences between the Western culture and the Indian culture, which also reflects the Orientalist dichotomy between an "ethical" and "rational" West and a "spiritual" and "emotional" East. Due to the "radical dissimilarities" between the temperaments of the two peoples, the Western influence exerting upon the Eastern Indian culture turned out to be rather limited. Moreover, based on this essentialist division, Marshall stereotyped Indian culture, granting Greek culture superiority and depreciating the Indian culture by claiming that the Greek was ethical and rational while the

[74] John Marshall, *A Guide to Taxila* (Calcutta: Superintendent Government Printing, 1918), 29.
[75] Marshall, *A Guide to Taxila*, 33, emphasis added.

Indian was spiritual and emotional. Unlike Foucher who claimed that Western culture played a critical role in the mixing of Western and Eastern cultures, Marshall highlighted the limits of the Western culture to be mixed with the Eastern due to their essentially distinct differences.

It is noteworthy that there were two different viewpoints in the Western classical influence discourse in terms of the extent to which Western classical culture was able to influence Buddhist material culture and Indian culture. No matter which viewpoint those colonial scholars took, they all presupposed the essential differences between the West and the East and more or less highlighted the superiority of "Greekness" and "Westerness" in South Asia. One of the viewpoints, reflected by Foucher's point of view, believes that the "Westerness" transmitted by the Greeks was deeply absorbed by Asian cultures, making an enormous contribution in the formation and the development of some mixed cultures, like the "Graeco-Buddhist art." The influence of the "Western" culture was so successful and excellent that the spread of this influence even "went along the Silk Road as far as China and Japan."[76] Therefore, this viewpoint emphasized the superiority of "Western" culture by highlighting its contribution to a universal history of art. The other viewpoint, reflected by Marshall's point of view, claimed that the penetration of Western classical influences into the Indian subcontinent was limited due to the radical dissimilarities between Western culture and Indian culture. By exaggerating the essentialist differences and the incompatibility between "the West" and India, this viewpoint further advocates and defends the purity and uniqueness of Western culture in order to secure its supremacy in the world.

2. The Effects of the Western Classical Influence Discourse in the (Post)colonial Era

The Western classical influence discourse has generated a lot of effects. First, it inevitably caused certain effects in colonial politics, consolidating and justifying the British colonial rule in South Asia. Second, it caused significant effects on academic knowledge production by strengthening Western superiority in academic representations of Indian cultures, suppressing the possibilities of the suggestions of other voices with its established hegemony, and sparking an array of academic debates. Third, it continues its persistent effects in the public sphere, such as museum contexts, even until the postcolonial era in which we live today.

(1) The Effects of the Western Classical Influence Discourse in Colonial Politics

[76] Falser, "The Graeco-Buddhist style of Gandhara," 17.

The intimate relationship between the Western classical influence discourse and the colonial ideology lent this discourse more potential to collude with the British colonial power. As mentioned above, Foucher's juxtaposition of the contemporary British colonizers with the historical "colonizers"—such as Greeks, Scythians, and Moguls—evidently reflects the attempt to normalize the British colonial rule by historicizing the colonial activity. In addition, the linear progress model behind this discourse provided colonialism with a kind of analogical rhetoric that helped to consolidate their British rule. The discourse asserts that by introducing Western ideas, institutions, and techniques into non-Western societies, British colonizers stimulated the dramatical development of the perceived stagnant non-Western societies in the same way as the Greeks benefited Buddhist material culture by introducing Greek aesthetics, techniques, and the idea of anthropomorphic representation of gods into India two thousand years ago. Therefore, the British colonial rule, with the significant assistance of the propagandistic aspects of the Western classical influence discourse, was represented "not as intrusive but as enlightening and altruistic."[77] The Western classical influence discourse thus provided British colonialism with an ethical foundation and moral high ground to legitimize and consolidate its colonial rule in South Asia.

(2) The Effects of the Western Classical Influence Discourse in Academia

In academia, the Western classical influence discourse caused a series of effects in the study of Gandhāran Buddhist material culture, and on a broader scale, Indian culture. First, it consolidated the superior status of the Western classical traditions in the representations of Indian cultures. For one thing, scholars such as Gottlieb Wilhelm Leitner and Vincent Arthur Smith established the principal role of the Western classical influences in the inception of Gandhāran Buddhist material culture. After the establishment of the primary status of the Western culture in the representation of Gandhāran Buddhist material culture, most European scholars at that time were inclined to follow the exciting knowledge that there was one style of Indian material culture whose origin could be attributed to the Western classical traditions, the same traditions on which the modern "Western civilization" was deemed to be based. For another, the Western classical influence discourse served to formulate and reinforce a value-judging criterion, with which Indian art styles were evaluated and classified along a linear progress model. It provided European scholars with a model that offered a means to evaluate Indian art that was alien to them and to integrate Indian art into the universal narrative of world art history. Originated from a Eurocentric perspective, this evaluation criterion was particularly

[77] Abe, "Inside the wonder house," 79.

in line with Western values and preferences. Due to the unquestionable perfection of the Western classical art, the art of Gandhāra that was deemed to possess Greek characteristics was undoubtedly considered to be both aesthetically and technically superior to the other styles of Indian art. Thus, "a descending scale of values could be formulated with Gandhara at the apex, which would make the task of judging different Indian styles easier."[78] Consequently, the comparative juxtaposition of Western advancement and Indian debasement in art history reproduced "a central binary in the colonial discourse: Western progress versus native stagnation."[79]

Second, the academic effects of the Western classical influence discourse have also unsurprisingly extended beyond the circle of "Western" academia into the range of "non-Western" academia, such as Asian academia. The hegemony of the Western classical influence discourse in the academic representations of Gandhāran Buddhist material culture has once suppressed the possibilities of the suggestions of other voices among the global academic communities. According to Coomaraswamy, "Indian (and Japanese) scholars have shown a singular humility, and perhaps some timidity, in their ready acceptance of all the results of European scholarship."[80] Ironically, most scholars who had ever expressed doubts about the Greek origin theory were from Europe, not Asia. It is a clear indicator of a powerful and lasting effect of this kind of Eurocentric discourse on the academic worlds on a global scale. Western academia firmly took up the leading voices in the study of Gandhāran Buddhist material culture. The strength of this discourse in Asian academic contexts reflects the hegemonic role of Western academia in the production and reproduction of modern knowledge, causing "their uncritical acceptance in the non-Western world."[81] Under the hegemony and the overwhelming advantage of Western discourse, Asian scholars were passively inclined to go with the stream, intentionally or unintentionally accepting the Western opinions without sufficient reflection and criticism.

Third, the prevalence of the Western classical influence discourse also induced the skepticism and criticism of some scholars, thus prompting a series of fierce academic debates. During the colonial era, the most prominent opponent of the Western classical influence discourse was Ananda Kentish Coomaraswamy. By taking a clear anticolonial stance, Coomaraswamy criticized

[78] Partha Mitter, *Much Maligned Monsters: A History of European Reactions to Indian Art* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1992), 258.
[79] Abe, "Inside the wonder house," 83.
[80] Ananda Kentish Coomaraswamy, "The Origin of the Buddha Image," *The Art Bulletin* 9, no.4 (1927), 288.
[81] Abe, "Inside the wonder house," 82.

Foucher's theory and re-interpreted the origin of Buddhist images in human form as purely Indian. In the postcolonial era, based on scholars' reflection of the Greek origin theory and the discourse of Hellenistic influence, the interpretation of Gandhāran artistic style became much more diversified and regionalized.[82] More details about the criticism and the reflection of the Western classical influence discourse in the study of Gandhāran Buddhist material culture in both the colonial and postcolonial era will be elaborated in Chapter 2.

(3) The Lasting Effects of the Western Classical Influence Discourse in the Public Sphere in the Postcolonial Period

The effects of the Western classical influence discourse are not limited to colonial politics and academia. They also extend into the public sphere, affecting the museum and exhibition contexts until the contemporary postcolonial era. Although the interpretation of Gandhāran Buddhist material culture has already experienced a process of diversification and regionalization in academic contexts since the 1950s, this process does not seem to effectively extend into the field of museum representation in the public sphere. The explanatory notes attached to Gandhāran Buddhist material culture usually specifically emphasize the Greek role whereas intentionally or unintentionally neglect other cultural contributions. Even if the process of diversification and regionalization of the academic interpretations in the postcolonial period also presuppose cultural essentialism, its failure to effectively intervene into representational practices in contemporary museums evidently reflects the intransigence of the colonial legacy of the Western classical influence discourse. In 2018 and 2019, I visited several museums that possess Gandhāran collections in Europe and North America, such as the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam, the Volkenkunde Museum in Leiden, the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto, and the Museum of Asian Art in Corfu. As the quotes in the introduction show, the Western classical influence discourse is still prevalent in the contemporary museum contexts, not only following and presupposing the conventional idea of cultural essentialism but sometimes also particularly over-emphasizing the Western contributions. Although these examples did not cover all the museums housing Gandhāran Buddhist material culture, their similar phrasing clearly indicates an inheritance of the Western classical influence theory in their explanatory notes. These examples are sufficient to indicate a persistence of the Western classical influence discourse today.

3.Concluding Remarks

[82] Falser, "The Graeco-Buddhist style of Gandhara," 35.

In this chapter, I have reviewed the genealogy and the effects of the Western classical influence discourse, which emerged in the historical contexts of Orientalism and colonialism. The essentialism entailed by the Western classical influence discourse is reflected through the Orientalist distinct delimitation between "the East" and "the West." My quotations and analysis of this kind of discourses are evident to show how the Orientalist essentialism in this discourse produced prejudices and exculpated colonialism. The essentialist Western classical influence discourse adequately reflects three main disadvantages of cultural essentialism. First, it encourages a reductionist thinking, which largely ignores and obscures the complexity, heterogeneity, and rich diversity within the essentialized categories of not only "the East" but also "the West." Just as Jayant Lele rightly pointed out in his essay "Orientalism and the Social Sciences," the essentialist Orientalist discourses misrepresent both Asian culture and Western culture. They censured the attempts to critically analyze the West itself as well.[83] Second, it elevates the Western classical culture whereas it devaluates the Indian cultures. By the employment of the discourse of "influence," it reduces the Indian cultures to the passive recipients of the Western influences "as if Asian cultures and peoples were *subject to* rather than *agents* of historical change"[84] At the end of Chapter 2, I will also analyze the discourse of "influence" in detail. Finally, the Western classical influence discourse is very likely to be exploited by the British colonial agenda, serving as a collusion of the British colonialism to produce, maintain, or consolidate "the sources of hypocrisy and oppression on which [the colonial] social order rests."[85] Although the Western classical influence discourse originated in the colonial era, its comprehensive effects are so considerable that they have continued into the postcolonial era, lingering around us in contemporary museums. The above-mentioned disadvantages and the persistence of the Western classical influence discourse demand our critical reflections upon this discourse as well as the cultural essentialism behind it.

[83] Jayant Lele, "Orientalism and the Social Sciences," in *Orientalism and the Postcolonial Predicament: Perspectives on South Asia New Cultural Studies*, ed. Carol A. Breckenridge and Peter van der Veer (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993), 59.
[84] King, "Orientalism and the Study of Religions," 295.
[85] Lele, "Orientalism and the Social Sciences," 59.

Chapter 2: Essentialism and Anti-/Postcolonial Interpretations of the Origin of Gandhāran Buddhist Material Culture

In Chapter 1, I have enunciated the drawbacks and the continuance of the Orientalist Western classical influence discourse. Although this discourse is still existent in the postcolonial era, the Orientalist and colonialist connotations behind the Western classical influence discourse have already been criticized by some scholars since the colonial era. The earliest and the most prominent anticolonial interpretation is Ananda Coomaraswamy's Indian origin theory, which is accompanied by a strong tint of nationalist resistance. However, the essentialist perspective implied in this discourse has rarely been questioned and challenged.[1] It has continued into postcolonial scholarship and was adopted by some scholars who proposed other alternative theories to interpret the origin of Gandhāran Buddhist material culture. In this sense, the essentialist implications seem to be more persistent and more likely to be taken for granted by scholars than the Orientalist and colonialist implications. Since the postcolonial era, the examination of the inception of Gandhāran Buddhist material culture has experienced a process of regionalization and pluralization. Scholars in Gandhāran studies have also identified various foreign elements other than the Western classical elements in Gandhāran Buddhist material culture. However, these scholars still followed the essentialist assumptions by adopting the discourse of "influence" without necessary critical reflections. An unbiased and coherent theory that explains the origin and development of Gandhāran Buddhist material culture remains to be developed. In this chapter, I will review the anticolonial and postcolonial interpretations of the origin of Gandhāran Buddhist material culture, reflecting upon the essentialism implied by them and revealing the essentialist connotations behind the discourses of "influence."

1. The Anticolonial Interpretation: Indian Origin Theory

The most typical anticolonial interpretation of the origin of Gandhāran Buddhist material culture, and more specifically, the image of the Buddha, is the Indian origin theory. Proposed by Ananda Coomaraswamy, the Indian origin theory argues that the Western classical influences were not as prominent, critical, and essential as the indigenous Indian influences in the formation of Gandhāran Buddhist material culture. In the academic debate of the origin of the Buddha images, the scholars who supported the Indian origin theory advocated that Mathurā art, rather than

[1] Very few scholars have questioned the essentialist connotation in the Western classical influence discourse. For the reflection upon the essentialist implications in the study of Gandhāran material culture, see Shailendra Bhandare "Numismatics of 'the Other': Investigating Coinage and 'Greekness' at Taxila," in *Buddhism and Gandhara: An Archaeology of Museum Collections*, ed. Himanshu Prabha Ray (London: Routledge, 2018), 70-103. In this essay, Bhandare questioned the essentialist "Greekness" through his investigation of numismatic evidences.

Gandhāra art, played a much more significant role in the emergence of Buddha image and the development of Indian art. According to them, the influence of Mathurā on Gandhāra is greater than that of Gandhāra on Mathurā.[2] In the decades after the death of Coomaraswamy, the Indian origin theory was still prominent so that some postcolonial scholars, such as the Dutch archaeologist Johanna Engelberta van Lohuizen-de Leeuw and the British numismatist Joe Cribb, still followed Coomaraswamy's Indian origin theory. In the political context of postcolonialism, the Indian origin theory also served as a symbol of anticolonialist political correctness. Although the Indian origin theory seems to be 'politically correct' enough to help us criticize and reflect upon the Orientalist stereotypes towards Indian cultures, it does not transcend the essentialist division between the Western cultures and the Asian cultures but consolidates this very division instead.

Ananda Coomaraswamy is one of the earliest scholars who explicitly addressed the colonial agenda behind the Western classical influence discourse in the colonial era. He criticized the Greek origin theory that dominated the discussions of the origin of the Buddhist anthropomorphic images. According to Coomaraswamy, proponents of the Greek origin theory, like Foucher, exaggerated the importance of the Western classical influences on the development of Indian art. Bolstered by an anticolonial ideological stance, Coomaraswamy instead argued that the anthropomorphic images of the Buddha indigenously originated from India. In 1908, Coomaraswamy first expressed his research interests in the discussions of the origin of the Buddha image in his article "The Influence of Greek on Indian Art," which was presented at the Fifteenth International Oriental Congress in Copenhagen. The primary purpose of this paper was to criticize the over-rated importance of the Greek influence on Indian art and to suggest the Indian origin theory as a more appropriate interpretation in the debate of the origin of Buddhist anthropomorphic images. In this paper, Coomaraswamy first indicated that "the influence of Greek on Indian art, however extensive at a certain period, was ultimately *neither very profound nor very important*."[3] He pointed out the unjustifiable exaggeration of the role of both the Gandhāra school and the Western classical influences in the development of Indian art that was overstressed by some European scholars as a result of their Eurocentric prejudice. At the same

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[2] Mathurā is located in central northern India. Mathurā art refers to a school of Buddhist art that is well-known for its indigenous Indian features. It is usually contrasted with the so-called "Greco-Buddhist" school of Gandhāra art. Both the Mathurā school and the Gandhāra school of Buddhist art took their forms during the rule of the Kushan Empire.

[3] Ananda Kentish Coomaraswamy, "The Influence of Greek on Indian Art," *Studies in Comparative Religion* 8, no. 1 (Winter 1974), first published by Essex House Press in 1908, http://www.studiesincomparativereligion.com/Public/articles/The_Influence_of_Greek_on_Indian_Art-by_Ananda_K_Coomaraswamy.aspx, emphasis added.

time, he also attempted to elevate the value of Eastern art to an extent that it could be comparable to Western art:

> "It is *the concentration of attention* upon the effeminate and artistically *unimportant* work of the Gandhāra school that has given *undue prominence* to the Greek influence. It must be admitted also that a certain *prejudice* has led European investigators to think naturally of Classic Greece as the source of all art, and to suppose that the influence of Classic Art must have been as permanently important in the East as in the West. At the same time, it is to be remembered that it is not generally realized by Western scholars, who are not always artists, that Eastern Art, whether Indian or Chinese, has a value and significance *not less than* that of the Western Art of any time. […] No artist, familiar with the true genius of Indian art, could suppose that the work of the Gandhāra school was the real foundation of Indian figure sculpture, or that Indian art could have been founded on such a decadent Graeco-Roman basis."[4]

Opposed to the viewpoint that it was foreigners who created the ideal type of Buddha,[5] Coomaraswamy regarded the Gandhāran sculptures as "the work of late Graeco-Roman craftsmen striving *in vain* to interpret *Indian ideals*."[6] Unlike his predecessors who placed Gandhāran Buddhist material culture at the apex of the linear progress evaluation system in South Asian art, Coomaraswamy not only believed that Greek culture contributed very little to the development of Indian art but also considered the Western classical influence a potential obstacle for Indian art to realize its own great achievement:

> "It would be truer to say that *not until* the direct effects of the foreign influence *had been forgotten*, could the truly Indian schools of sculpture have arisen. […] Early India did not, alone in all the world, lack all knowledge of the arts; the period of strong Graeco-Roman influence was *not of great artistic importance*; and *it was not until this influence had largely, if not entirely, faded, that the really great achievement of Indian art was attained*."[7]

One of the striking points in this paper is that Coomaraswamy not only seemed dissatisfied with merely placing Eastern art in a position that was equivalent to Western art but that he elevated Eastern art towards a higher level than Western art in some aspects while in turn depreciating

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[4] Coomaraswamy, "The Influence of Greek on Indian Art," emphasis added.
[5] For the oppion that foreigners created the ideal type of Buddha, see Albert Grünwedel, *Buddhist Art in India*, trans. Agnes C. Gibson (London: Bernard Quaritch, 1901), 68.
[6] Coomaraswamy, "The Influence of Greek on Indian Art," emphasis added.
[7] Coomaraswamy, "The Influence of Greek on Indian Art," emphasis added.

Greek art. After demonstrating the very limited role of the Western classical traditions in the Indian contexts, Coomaraswamy made a value comparison between Greek and Indian art based on the considerations in terms of religion and philosophy. From his point of view, transcendentalism is "the *essential character* of *true* Indian art;" in contrast, Greek art "has in it no touch of mysticism," its representations of the Greek gods "belong entirely to the Olympian aspect of Greek religion."[8] The Greeks merely depicted their gods in the images of grand and beautiful men. In the case of the representations of Apollo, sometimes it seemed confusing to Coomaraswamy to tell whether it was the gods or the athletes that these Greek sculptures exactly represented.[9] Compared with Greek art, Indian art, which is "essentially transcendental," is not interested in the representation of "perfect men," but concerned with "the intimation of divinity."[10] In his view, the transcendentalist feature of "Being beyond Appearance" that the real Indian artistic manifestations have is precisely what is lacking in the Greek representations of the handsome and athletic men.[11] Based on the essentialization of Indian art, Coomaraswamy gave prominence to transcendentalism, the essence of the "true Indian art," highlighting the advantage of Indian art over Greek art especially in terms of the manifestations of the divine and the thought depth of mysticism. Thereby, he attempted to reinstall Indian art's independence and dignity.

After criticizing the dominant Greek origin theory regarding the origin of Buddha images, Coomaraswamy referred to Indian literary sources such as Divyāvadāna, Mahābhārata, and Rāmāyana to demonstrate the probability of the existence of anthropomorphic Buddha images long before the Gandhāra period. He argued that the absence of tangible evidence of images from ancient Buddhist sites was a negative proof of the non-existence of the early Buddha images because it was "insufficient to prove that images of impermanent materials or the precious metals were not made."[12] Then he further indicated that it was reasonable to believe that the use of wood, clay, or brick for anthropomorphic sculptures preceded the use of stone in India, just like the use of wood in architectural construction preceded that of stone in this region.

In general, "The Influence of Greek on Indian Art" (1908) was Coomaraswamy's early attempt to formulate his theory on the Indian origin of the Buddha image. By highlighting the "essentially transcendental" property of the "true Indian art" as an advantage over the Greek art,

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[8] Coomaraswamy, "The Influence of Greek on Indian Art," emphasis added.
[9] Coomaraswamy, "The Influence of Greek on Indian Art."
[10] Coomaraswamy, "The Influence of Greek on Indian Art."
[11] Coomaraswamy, "The Influence of Greek on Indian Art."
[12] Coomaraswamy, "The Influence of Greek on Indian Art."

he denied the importance of Gandhāran Buddhist material culture and the Western classical influences in the development of Indian art. Through criticizing the overemphasis of the role of the Gandhāran school and the Western classical influences, upgrading the value of Indian art, and demonstrating the possibility of the presence of impermanent Buddha images prior to the Gandhāran Buddha images, Coomaraswamy endeavored to defend the independence, autonomy, as well as the worthiness of Indian art.

His later paper "The Significance of Oriental Art" (1919) further reflects his efforts to enhance the value of Eastern art. As I have mentioned in Chapter 1, imperial scholars always showcased the superiority of Gandhāran Buddhist material culture over other Indian artistic styles with the help of its realistic features. Jackson's comparison of two stucco heads mentioned in Chapter 1 is one of the most typical examples. He regarded the second head, whose aesthetically superior features he attributed to the Greek influence, as "*correctly* modelled," "pleasing," "intellectual," and "handsome." In contrast, he judged the first head in the conventionally deemed Indian form as "hideous," "stolid," "coarse," and "*incorrect*."[13] In this sense, the "correctness" of the facial representations refers to the extent to which the sculptures realistically represented the subjects. The realism of Gandhāran Buddhist material culture, which was deemed to be inherited from the Greeks and Romans, thus became a proof and a symbol of the aesthetic ascendancy of Gandhāran Buddhist material culture over other Indian material cultures. However, in his paper "The Significance of Oriental Art," Coomaraswamy used an artistic argument to argue against the emphasis of Western schools of art on the importance of realism. According to him, a training that stresses artistic realism could damage creative imagination:

> "At present, almost all children possess a greater or less degree of creative imagination, which is *destroyed* as soon as they are taught that it is more important to draw *accurately* than to draw expressively. The training in accuracy, however necessary, should be patently *subordinated* to the cultivation of imagination."[14]

Compared with the appeal for accuracy in Western schools of art, the Indian cultivation of the ability of the artists to "be preoccupied, saturated with" and "identified with" their subjects could provide artists with more space for creative imagination:[15]

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[13] Jackson, "Notice of two heads," 512, emphasis added.
[14] Ananda Kentish Coomaraswamy, "The Significance of Oriental Art," *The Art Bulletin* 2, no. 1 (September 1919): 19, emphasis added.
[15] Coomaraswamy, "The Significance of Oriental Art," 19.

"And it is precisely in the cultivation of this power—partly as the result of the practice of drawing always from stored memories rather than from still life […], but still more from the regular practice of visualization, alike in the private practice of religion and in the artist's preparation for any work he may undertake—that the East, and particularly India, has something of importance for Western artists."[16]

Therefore, the creative motivity, which according to Coomaraswamy is embedded in the dynamic of art creation and even in the genesis of art, is precisely what Western art can learn from Indian art. Moreover, Coomaraswamy further defended the unrealistic features of some Indian artistic creations, arguing that "the expression of dominant ideas may often demand an exaggeration or distortion of normal form."[17] At the end of the paper, Coomaraswamy concluded that the significance of oriental art should lie in the relationship between art and life in Eastern societies.[18] Therefore, it is evident that Coomaraswamy did not transcend the Orientalist thinking but consolidated the dichotomy between "the East" and "the West."

Coomaraswamy's monograph *Introduction to Indian Art* published in 1923 marked a new stage in his development of the Indian origin theory. Far from simply rejecting the Greek origin theory as he did in his paper "The Influence of Greek on Indian Art," he posited the Indian origin theory as a possible interpretation to take the place of the then-dominant Greek origin theory for the first time. In this work, he listed five primary arguments for his Indian origin theory: 1) The purely Indian attitudes of the Gandhāran figures, the use of the lotus seat, and the characteristically realistic transformation of the *uṣṇīṣa*[19] would seem to imply the existence of purely Indian prototypes; 2) Bodhisattva and Buddha figures of the first century AD do actually occur at Mathurā in a style quite distinct from that of Gandhāra and plainly developed from earlier Indian art; 3) Negative evidence holds good as much in one sense as the other, particularly in a period of still uncertain chronology; 4) No Western prototype for a seated figure with crossed legs and hands in *dhyānamudrā*[20] or *bhūmisparśamudrā*[21] can be cited or imagined; 5)

[16] Coomaraswamy, "The Significance of Oriental Art," 19.
[17] Coomaraswamy, "The Significance of Oriental Art," 19.
[18] Coomaraswamy, "The Significance of Oriental Art," 22.
[19] *Uṣṇīṣa* (उष्णीष) is "the protuberance appearing on the top of the Buddha's head, which is commonly depicted in the Buddha images." For more details, see Robert E. Buswell Jr. and Donald S. Lopez Jr., the entry "uṣṇīṣa," in *The Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2014).
[20] *Dhyānamudrā* (ध्यानमुद्रा) in Sanskrit means "gesture of meditation." This gesture "is formed with both hands resting in the lap, the back of the right hand resting on the palm of the left hand and both thumbs lightly touching."

Regarded simply as works of art, there is no suggestion of primitive inspiration in Gandhāran sculpture. In other circles of art, creative energy finds immediate expression in powerful and simple form.[22]

In 1926, Coomaraswamy defended his theory in his paper "The Indian Origin of the Buddha Image," articulating that it was necessary to abandon the commonly accepted Greek origin theory. In this paper, he enumerated many quotations mostly from the works of the well-known scholars who adhered to the theory of Greek origin. He chose quotations that were a bit inconsistent with the central arguments of the authors, which allowed Coomaraswamy to regard these inconsistencies as incidental admissions of the probability of the Indian origin. By recognizing the internal inconsistencies of the argumentations of the supporters of the Greek origin theory, he refuted the Greek origin theory with the weaknesses of their own arguments, aiming to show that "there actually existed a great deal of evidence in favour of an Indian origin of the Buddha image."[23] The main argument of this paper was that both Gandhāra and Mathurā styles "were created locally about the same time, in response to a necessity created by the internal development of the Buddhism common to both areas;" but it is the Mathurā type, rather than the Gandhāra type, that then became "the main source of the Gupta and later development both in and beyond India."[24] In other words, the Mathurā type emerged independently and subsequently became the primary source for the later distribution of the Buddha image in India and other countries, whereas the Gandhāra type did not play a significant role in this distribution process.

In 1927, Coomaraswamy's pursuit of establishing a systematic theory of the Indian origin of the Buddha image reached a climax, which is marked by the publication of his paper "The Origin of the Buddha Image." This paper is one of the most famous works of Coomaraswamy, and it is also widely regarded as his definitive work and his most important contribution on the issue of

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For more details, see Robert E. Buswell Jr. and Donald S. Lopez Jr., the entry "*dhyānamudrā*," in *The Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism*, 2014.

[21] *Bhūmisparśamudrā* (भूमिस्पर्शमुद्रा) in Sanskrit means "gesture of touching the earth." This gesture "is formed with the right hand touching the ground with extended fingers, usually across the right knee, while the laft hand remains resting in the lap." For more details, see Robert E. Buswell Jr. and Donald S. Lopez Jr., the entry "*bhūmisparśamudrā*," in *The Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism*, 2014.

[22] Ananda Kentish Coomaraswamy, *Introduction to Indian Art* (Madras: Theosophical Publishing, 1923), 44-45.

[23] Ananda Kentish Coomaraswamy, "The Indian Origin of the Buddha Image," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 46 (1926), 165.

[24] Coomaraswamy, "The Indian Origin of the Buddha Image," 165-66.

the origin of the Buddha image.[25] In this paper, he first continued his criticism of the Greek origin theory as he did in his previous works, arguing that "it becomes impossible to treat the phrase 'Greek origin of the Buddha image' as representing anything more than a *rhetorical misuse* of language."[26] Because of too much stress laid upon the significance of the Greek influence, "the way to a clear apprehension of the general development of the art is obscured." Therefore, he reiterated that his object in discussing this issue was "not so much to continue the controversy as to dismiss it."[27] Afterward, he vigorously argued for his Indian origin theory by unfolding six sections. In the first section "What is the Buddha image?" he defined his main research object, namely the Buddha image, by summarizing its common stylistic features, indicating that there are two types of Buddha image to be considered—the seated Buddha with hands resting on the lap or in one of the other positions and the standing Buddha with the right hand raised in *abhayamudrā*[28].[29] The second section "The early representation of deities by means of symbols" mainly deals with the aniconic way of representation in ancient art. In this part, he also pointed out the discrimination between the symbolic method of representing gods that probably belonged to northern Aryans and the anthropomorphic method that might originate from southern aboriginal Dravidians.[30] The third section "The necessity for a Buddha image" demonstrates how the *Bhakti*[31] movements became a generating force to contribute to the emergence of the Buddha image.[32] In the fourth section "Elements of the later anthropomorphic iconography already present in early Indian art," Coomaraswamy elucidated that the iconographic elements that constituted the later anthropomorphic Buddha image were already present in the Jain images of Yaksa and Nāga, which stem from the Indian tradition. These images, probably made of impermanent materials or precious metals, might already exist several centuries before the creation of the Buddha image.[33] In the fifth section "Style and content: differentiation of Indian and Hellenistic types," Coomaraswamy again stressed the distinction between the Indian (Mathurā) types and the Hellenistic (Gandhāra) types in terms of content and

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[25] Rhi Juhyung, "Reading Coomaraswamy on the Origin of the Buddha Image." *Artibus Asiae* 70, no. 1 (2010): 151, 162, 164.
[26] Ananda Kentish Coomaraswamy, "The Origin of the Buddha Image," *The Art Bulletin* 9, no.4 (1927), 324, emphasis added.
[27] Coomaraswamy, "The Origin of the Buddha Image," 288.
[28] Coomaraswamy, "The Origin of the Buddha Image," 289-90.
[29] *Abhayamudrā* (अभयमुद्रा) in Sanskrit means "gesture of fearlessness" or "gesture of protection." This gesture "is typically formed with the palm of the right hand facing outward at shoulder height and the fingers pointing up." For more details, see Robert E. Buswell Jr. and Donald S. Lopez Jr., the entry "*abhayamudrā*," in *The Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism*, 2014.
[30] Coomaraswamy, "The Origin of the Buddha Image," 290-97.
[31] *Bhakti* (भक्ति) in Sanskrit literally means "love, devotion, worship." It refers to a devotion to a god or a represented god by a devotee.
[32] Coomaraswamy, "The Origin of the Buddha Image," 297-301.
[33] Coomaraswamy, "The Origin of the Buddha Image," 301-13.

form in order to reaffirm the mutual independence of Mathurā art and Gandhāra art.[34] In the final section "Dating of Gandhāra and Mathurā Buddhas," the author indicated that the question of the dates of Gandhāra and Mathurā Buddhist art could provide us with the final solution to the problem. Because no matter what we might discover, it cannot alter the fact of the continuity between the earliest Indian Buddha statues and the ancient indigenous art. At the end of this section, he concluded that in the later period Gandhāra type was "Indianized" but Mathurā type experienced an "evolution" from Kusana to Gupta types,[35] which occupies a more significant position in the development of Indian art:

> "The evidence is not sufficiently precise to warrant us in forming a theory as to the priority of either school. I am inclined to presume on general grounds a priority for Mathurā; but that is not evidence. All that we can assert is that the earliest Buddha types in each area are in the local style; and that later on, though some mutual influence was felt, the outstanding character of the development is one of stylistic Indianization in Gandhāra, and one of adherence to the Mathurā type in the Ganges valley, subject to the normal stylistic evolution which marks the transition from Kusana to Gupta types."[36]

Although people always see Coomaraswamy as a steadfast defender of Eastern art in general and Indian art in particular, his viewpoints and assumptions still presupposed the Western thinking mode and the Orientalist conceptions, never being able to exceed the constraints of his time and social environments. His Western background of study and life in both Britain and America can explain this limitation to some extent. He was born in 1877 in Sri Lanka as a man "in whose person East and West came together."[37] His father came from an ancient Tamil family in Sri Lanka, but his mother was from an English aristocratic family.[38] He was brought up in England after his father died in his early age. Then he attended college in the UK and moved to the U.S. after completing his education, becoming a curator and a researcher of Indian and Islamic Art at the Boston Museum of Fine Art.[39] Thus, it is not surprising that his argumentations of the Indian

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[34] Coomaraswamy, "The Origin of the Buddha Image," 313-18.
[35] "Kusana type" means the Kushan art produced during the Kushan Empire from the late 1st century AD to the 3rd century AD in the area of today's north India, Pakistan, parts of Central Asia, and Eastern Afghanistan. "Gupta type" means the Gupta art produced during the Gupta Empire from the 3rd century AD to the 6th century AD in the area of today's north India.
[36] Coomaraswamy, "The Origin of the Buddha Image," 323-24.
[37] Marco Pallis, "A Fateful Meeting of Minds: A. K. Coomaraswamy and R. Guénon," in *The Essential Ananda K. Coomaraswamy*, ed. Rama P. Coomaraswamy (Bloomington: World Wisdom, 2004), 10.
[38] Pallis, "A Fateful Meeting of Minds," 10.
[39] "Ananda K. Coomaraswamy" in "Biographical Notes," in *The Essential Ananda K. Coomaraswamy*, ed. Rama P. Coomaraswamy (Bloomington: World Wisdom, 2004), 299.

origin theory on the issue of the origin of the Buddha image still possess a lot of deficiencies, which were determined by the social and scholarly environment of the Western colonial era.

The deficiencies of Coomaraswamy's argumentations of the Indian origin theory involve three main aspects. First, Coomaraswamy rejected the dominant scholarly discourse which overemphasized the importance of Gandhāra style and its deemed concomitant Western classical influence in Indian art history in general; however, he did not explicitly question the dominant position of the the Western classical influence discourse in the study of Gandhāran Buddhist material culture in particular. In other words, he did not deny the viewpoint that the Western classical influences used to play a crucial, or even an affirmative and dominant role in the formation of Gandhāran Buddhist material culture, but he denied the importance of Gandhāran Buddhist material culture for the distribution of Buddha images and the development of Indian art in general. In his view, Gandhāran Buddhist material culture was merely a brief aberration or a footnote in the general history of Indian art, neither primary nor decisive. His agenda to defend his Indian origin theory is quite clear in his dealing with Gandhāran Buddhist material culture: he binded the Gandhāra style to the Western classical influences and minimized the importance of the Western classical influences in Indian art by devaluating the stylistic expressions of Gandhāra style and the Hellenistic culture:

> "Nothing is more characteristic of the early Indian art than its affirmative force; the Gandhāra style by comparison is *listless*."[40]

Second, his argumentations already hinted at his strong anticolonial nationalist sentiments. As a result, these argumentations were charged with highly ideological meanings. Unlike his European Orientalist contemporaries, Coomaraswamy committed his lifelong pursuit to "recover national pride."[41] His nationalist sentiments originated from his previous research in Ceylon (present-day Sri Lanka). When he did fieldwork in Ceylon for his botanic and geological studies at Wycliffe College and London University, he began to be interested in the traditional arts and crafts of this region. Paying attention to the social conditions under which those arts and crafts were produced, he then "became increasingly distressed by the corrosive effects of British colonialism."[42] In 1906, he founded the Ceylon Social Reform Society, which aimed to preserve and revive the

[40] Coomaraswamy, "The Origin of the Buddha Image," 314, emphasis added.
[41] Rhi, "Reading Coomaraswamy," 151.
[42] Harry Oldmeadow, *Journeys East: 20th Century Western Encounters with Eastern Religious Traditions* (Bloomington: World Wisdom, 2004), 194-202.

traditional arts and crafts of Ceylon as well as the social values and customs behind them. As the manifesto of the Ceylon Social Reform Society indicated, they were dedicated to discourage "the thoughtless imitation of unsuitable European habits and custom."[43] In this way, Coomaraswamy called for a resurgence of pride in the tradition and cultural heritage of Ceylon. Since 1907, he traveled back and forth between India and England, actively engaging in the Swadeshi movement that began in 1905 and continued to the 1910s because of the partition of Bengal.[44] This movement, which aimed to boycott British goods and to revive domestic products and industries, is usually seen as a part of the Indian independence movement based on Indian nationalism. Coomaraswamy thus can also be regarded as an activist in the nationalist movements. Therefore, it is not surprising that he considered the issue of the origin of the Buddha image not merely a scholarly issue but holding considerable political significance. However, the highly charged political concern also weakened the credibility of his argumentations in a sense.

Last but not least, he also followed the assumptions of cultural essentialism, presupposing the conventional conception of cultures as bounded spheres with distinct boundaries. In his view, cultures were clearly distinguished and internally homogenous. It seemed to be inevitable for Coomaraswamy to accept the conceptions of the mutually exclusive cultural spheres because only in this way could he draw a distinct line between the domestic Indian culture and the foreign Hellenistic culture that became the basis for the formulation of the colonial discourses. As a result, Coomaraswamy also became an adherent of the "purity" of cultures, pursuing the exact "origin" of cultural elements and strengthening the boundaries among them. One of the striking theoretical developments at the stage of the systematization of his Indian origin theory in the 1920s is his adoption of the ideas of racial distinction by Josef Strzygowski, a Czech-born art historian of the Viennese school. The idea of Strzygowski that attracted Coomaraswamy most was that of the essential differences between the artistic expressions of the northern and southern races due to the fundamental racial distinctions between them.[45] Inspired by Strzygowski, Coomaraswamy applied this idea to the study of Indian art. He similarly proposed the essential distinction between the northern culture and the southern culture in India, arguing that the Aryans, the northern race, preferred to adopt abstract symbolism to represent their gods,

[43] "Manifesto of the Ceylon Reform Society," quoted by Harry Oldmeadow in his *Journeys East: 20th Century Western Encounters with Eastern Religious Traditions* (Bloomington: World Wisdom, 2004).
[44] Rhi, "Reading Coomaraswamy," 154.
[45] Rhi, "Reading Coomaraswamy," 163.

whereas the Dravidians, the southern race, inclined to apply anthropomorphic iconography for religious representations:

> "Very probably, we may regard the symbolic method as, broadly speaking, Aryan, the anthropomorphic as aboriginal (Dravidian), or as respectively 'Northern' and 'Southern' in Strzygowski's sense."[46]

> "Amongst the elements of Dravidian origin are probably the cults of the phallus and of mother-goddesses, Nāgas, Yaksas and other nature spirits; and many of the arts. Indeed, if we recognize in the Dravidians a southern race, and in the Aryans a northern, it may well be argued that the victory of kingly over tribal organizations, the gradual reception into orthodox religion of the phallus cult and mother-goddesses, and the shift from abstract symbolism to anthropomorphic iconography in the period of theistic and *bhakti* development, mark a final victory of the conquered over the conquerors. In particular, the popular, Dravidian element, must have played the major part in all that concerns the development and office of image-worship […]."[47]

Similarly, Coomaraswamy also applied this idea of the essential distinction of races to the interpretation of Gandhāran Buddhist material culture. Unlike the cultural distance between Aryans and the Dravidians, which was deemed not too large to allow them to influence on each other, the cultural distance between Westerners and Indians seemed to be so large to Coomaraswamy that he believed that the Westerners and the Indians could not even have effectively exerted any impact upon each other:

> "[…], it is obvious to those acquainted with both that the genius of Greek, and the genius of Indian, art are so different that it is difficult, and even impossible, to imagine a dependence of the one upon the other."[48]

By acknowledging and claiming the dissimilarity and incompatibility between Indian art and Greek art, Coomaraswamy attempted to free Indian art from the colonial trap of the Western classical influence discourse. In this way, he endeavored to make Indian art regain its independence, which in turn could serve the agenda of Indian nationalism by providing an

[46] Coomaraswamy, "The Origin of the Buddha Image," 290.
[47] Ananda Kentish Coomaraswamy, *History of Indian and Indonesian art* (London: Edward Goldston, 1927), 5.
[48] Coomaraswamy, "The Influence of Greek on Indian Art."

ideological basis in terms of art history and cultural heritage. To ensure his Indian origin theory to be tenable, he also resorted to the idea of cultural purity and the pursuit of the exact origin of cultural features. Similar to Strzygowski who desperately searched for the "pure expression"[49] of the art of the Aryans,[50] Coomaraswamy always employed the term "purely Indian"[51] to keep the "true Indian art"[52] away from the mixed, such as the art of Gandhāra. The logic of the purity of cultures, as well as that of the cultural/racial distinctions, are two sides of the same coin. The former turns out to be the internal prerequisite and the latter to be the external consequence. They are inseparably interconnected, existing side by side and playing a part together. These logics jointly reveal the presuppositions of cultural essentialism, entailing the traditional concept of cultures that assumes every culture is deemed as distinguished and separated from other cultures.[53] The pursuit of cultural purity and the exact origin of cultural features, which is in line with cultural essentialism, can be perilous. It will entrap scholars in the infinite wild-goose chase to constantly construct boundaries that may not really exist and to desperately press on toward the unattainable goal, although it seems to be typical during the historical period in which Coomaraswamy lived.

Based on our critical reflections upon the essentialist implications of Coomaraswamy's Indian origin theory, we can find that his argumentation is inherently problematic. Coomaraswamy himself seemed not be aware of these inherent problems, not to mention that he did not provide us with reasonable solutions. First, Coomaraswamy used the term "Indian" in his theory to imply the indigenous origin of the Buddha image but he never articulated how he defined "Indian." What can be counted as "Indian"? Should Dravidian or Aryan be counted as "Indian"? If we suppose to accept his assertion that the Mathurā type is "Indian" at this moment, then, why is Gandhāra style "non-Indian," or at least, not "Indian" enough? Only because of the ascribed Hellenistic influence? To what extent is it "Indian" and "non-Indian"? If we define India based on the border of the British Raj territory at that time, the Gandhāra region should be considered "Indian" as well. Then, if the modern boundary of the British Raj is not the basis of the criteria to judge whether the artistic style is "Indian" or not, on what exactly are the criteria based? These seem to be unsolvable problems because the boundaries of India are modernly

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[49] Josef Strzygowski, *Origin of Christian Church Art*, trans. O. M. Dalton and H.J. Braunholtz (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1923), 199.
[50] W. Eugene Kleinbauer, *Modern Perspectives in Western Art History: An Anthology of 20th-century Writings on the Visual Arts* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1971), 23.
[51] Coomaraswamy, *Introduction to Indian Art*, 44.
[52] Coomaraswamy, "The Influence of Greek on Indian Art."
[53] Wolfgang Welsch, "Transculturality: The puzzling form of cultures today." *Spaces of culture: City, nation, world* (1999): 194-213.

constructed. Any efforts to directly impose the modern concepts upon the historical can be problematic and dangerous. It seems that Coomaraswamy was so enthusiastic and urgent in committing his nationalist pursuit that he took the modern concept of "Indian" for granted without refletive considerations.

Second, the pursuit of the exact origin of a particular cultural feature also relies on the construction and the maintenance of boundaries. First of all, we need to define what the cultural feature is. Then, we need to look back at history, to investigate when the cultural feature was formed, and to artificially set some milestones or to make a clear periodization on the historical timeline. The first step defines the inner contents or critical characteristics of this cultural feature, whereas the second step requires more efforts to delineate the circumscribed boundaries of time and space. Thus, another issue will come up: in the course of historical development, to what extent is this cultural feature different enough from its preceding cultural features that it can warrant us to define it as a brand-new cultural feature and to mark a clear point of origin? It is quite common that cultural innovations are always based on the inspirations from existing things. Then, to what extent the newly formed cultural feature is new enough to have its independent identity is another tricky issue that Coomaraswamy has not dealt with.

Despite the shortcomings mentioned above in Coomaraswamy's argumentations, Coomaraswamy's theory was quite remarkable during and after his time in his striving towards an approach that can somehow give some autonomy back to Indian art. Thus, his academic achievements were once significant and inspiring, which inspired many scholars to follow him. Johanna Engelberta van Lohuizen-de Leeuw, the Dutch archaeologist in South and Southeast Asian studies, was one of those scholars. Her views on the origin of the Buddha image were basically based on Coomaraswamy's Indian origin theory.[54] In her work *The "Scythian" period: An Approach to the History, Art, Epigraphy and Palaeography of North India from the 1st Century B.C. to the 3rd Century A.D.*, she touched upon the issue of the origin of the Buddha image, and she clearly pointed out that the Gandhāra style should be regared as originating from "native Indian art":

> "But although opinions differ about the influences that have asserted themselves from the West on the art of North-West India, in our opinion it is beyond dispute that the ideas in this art very often originate from *native Indian art* as we know it from former stages at Bharhut and

[54] Rhi, "Reading Coomaraswamy," 169.

> Sanchi. […] In Gandhāra the Indian idea often was given a Hellenistic appearance, but there are also several examples in which not only the idea, but design and working-out as well of a certain religious scene *were simply copied from ancient national art*."[55]

Van Lohuizen's words here imply the assmuptions of "methodological nationalism," which presupposes that "the nation/state/society is the natural social and political form of the modern world."[56] By applying modern national boundaries to regional divisions of ancient social processes and developments, cultures in ancient times are also likely to be understood in isolated, essentialist terms as if these constructed boundaries are natural and impermeable. In van Lohuizen's eyes, the Indian nation might also become a natural marker for the development of Indian art in South Asia. This may explain why van Lohuizen, as a Dutch archaeologist who might be far away from Indian nationalism, still adopted the peculiar term "ancient national art" to demonstrate the indigenous origin of the Buddha image.

Consistent with her argument outlined above, she was also a supporter of the Mathurā origin theory in the debate between the Gandhāra origin and the Mathurā origin. In her paper "New Evidence with Regard to the Origin of the Buddha Image," she argued that it was Mathurā where the anthropomorphic representations of the Buddha were first made and began to be exported to the Gandhāra region, which replicated the Mathurā type.[57] As Rhi summarized in his review paper "Reading Coomaraswamy," van Lohuizen "never gave up the belief that in the origin of the Buddha image, Mathurā had the initiative not only in the nature of contribution but also in chronological precedence."[58] Although she fully acknowledged the traffic of stylistic ideas between Gandhāra and Mathurā was two-way, she insisted that the influences of Mathurā on Gandhāra were greater than those of Gandhāra on Mathurā. In her paper "Gandhāra and Mathurā: their Cultural Relationship," she admitted that the stylistic influence between Gandhāra and Mathurā was "by no means a matter of one-way traffic" and the exchange of ideas between the two schools was "a matter of continual borrowing from each other."[59] However, she still

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[55] Johanna Engelberta van Lohuizen-de Leeuw, *The "Scythian" period: An Approach to the History, Art, Epigraphy and Palaeography of North India from the 1st Century B.C. to the 3rd Century A.D.* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1949), 80, emphasis added.
[56] Andreas Wimmer and Nina Glick Schiller, "Methodological Nationalism and Beyond: Nation–state Building, Migration and the Social Sciences," *Global networks* 2, no. 4 (2002): 302.
[57] Johanna Engelberta van Lohuizen-de Leeuw, "New Evidence with Regard to the Origin of the Buddha Image," in *South Asian archaeology, 1979: papers from the fifth International Conference of the Association of South Asian Archaeologists in Western Europe held in the Museum für Indische Kunst der Staalichen Museen Preussischer Kulturbesitz Berlin*, ed. Herbert Härtel (Berlin: D. Reimer Verlag, 1981), 377-400.
[58] Rhi, "Reading Coomaraswamy," 169.
[59] Johanna Engelberta van Lohuizen-de Leeuw, "Gandhāra and Mathurā: their Cultural Relationship," in *Aspects of Indian Art: Papers Presented in a Symposium at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art October, 1970*, ed. Pratapaditya Pal (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1972), 43.

insisted that “Mathurā exerted considerable influence on the creation of the Gandhāra” and all the influences between these two schools “obviously tip the balance in favour of Mathurā.”[60] At the end of this paper, she explained the reason why Gandhāra, a region strongly influenced by foreign Hellenistic culture, was still active to absorb the Indian influences from Mathurā. In her view, the original cultural background of both of these two areas was Indian but not foreign. Thus, the influences that Mathurā received from Gandhāra with “a foreign flavor” were “not as readily and easily accepted as” the influences that Gandhāra received from Mathurā.[61]

The British numismatist Joe Cribb held a view similar to that of van Lohuizen. Based on the numismatic evidence, he indicated that the parallel development of Gandhāra and Mathurā was not concurrent, but that “Gandhāra followed the lead of Mathurā.”[62] According to Cribb, even the stylistic feature of the cloak over both shoulders, which was always considered to be the distinctive feature of Gandhāra style, was actually owed to Mathurā influences. As for the impetus to create the first Buddha images at Mathurā, he suggested that it could be linked to the social and cultural changes in Mathurā area due to the Kushan conquest of this region.

To sum up, in the 20th century, associated with the rise of nationalism, the Indian origin theory in the debate on the emergence of the Buddha image greatly weakened the dominant position of the Greek origin theory in the 19th century. With the great influences and the significant inspirations generated by Coomaraswamy, an increasing number of scholars realized that the Greek origin or Gandhāra origin in the creation of the Buddha images could not be taken for granted. In the 1940s and 1950s, the Indian origin theory and the Greek origin theory had always been the most influential and competitive theories in the debate on the origin of the Buddha image. At that time, Coomaraswamy did not put much emphasis on Gandhāran Buddhist material culture in particular but on Indian art in general instead, suggesting that there was no substantial evidence to prove the historical precedence and the aesthetic superiority of the Gandhāra style. In the following decades, some scholars, like van Lohuizen and Cribb, continued to develop the Indian origin theory by focusing on the dispute between the Gandhāra origin theory and the Mathurā origin theory with the help of some recently discovered archaeological sources. They also paid more attention to Gandhāran Buddhist material culture itself than their predecessor Coomaraswamy, clearly indicating that the creation of Gandhāran Buddhist material

[60] Van Lohuizen, “Gandhāra and Mathurā: their Cultural Relationship,” 43.
[61] Van Lohuizen, “Gandhāra and Mathurā: their Cultural Relationship,” 43.
[62] Joe Cribb, “The Origin of the Buddha Image—the Numismatic Evidence,” in *South Asian Archaeology 1981: Proceedings of the Sixth International Conference of the Association of South Asian Archaeologists in Western Europe Held in Cambridge University, 5-10 July 1981*, ed. Bridget Allchin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 243.

culture should be attributed to either the original Indian cultural background (van Lohuizen, 1972) or the Mathurā influences from the inner Indian region (Cribb, 1984). Through their Indian origin theory, they all presupposed a nationalist essentialism to replace the colonialist essentialism that was once dominant in the academic world. The Indian origin theory also inherits the defects of cultural essentialism from its predecessor the Western classical influence discourse. Compared with the three deficiencies of the essentialist Western classical influence discourse summarized in Chapter 1, the defects of Indian origin theory are mainly parralell with the first and the third deficiencies of the Western classical influence discourse. First, Indian origin theory also encourages a reductionist thinking by retaining to either the Orientalist division or to nationalist delimination. Second, Indian origin theory is also vulnerable to be exploited by nationalist political agendas.

2. The Postcolonial Interpretations

Since the 1980s, the interpretations of the origin of Buddha images and the formation of Gandhāran Buddhist material culture have experienced a process of pluralization and regionalization. More scholars proposed alternative interpretations to explain the possible origin of Buddhist anthropomorphic images in particular and the origin of Gandhāran Buddhist material culture in general. These interpretations include the Saka origin theory, the Parthian origin theory, and aggregative interpretations. Although these interpretations have largely broken the Orientalist East-West dichotomy, they retain essentialist assumptions through the employment of the discourse of "influence."

(1) Saka Origin Theory

The Indian historian and archaeologist Awadh Kishore Narain advocated the Saka origin theory, which believes that the Saka (Scythian) people migrating south from Upper Ili regions replaced the Indo-Greeks in the Gandhāra area and subsequently influenced the material forms in this area, playing a significant role in the emergence of Buddha images in this region. Narain supported his theory with two arguments. First, he reasoned that the anthropomorphic images of the Buddha might first have appeared in Karakorum regions by the hands of the Sakas. In his paper "First Images of the Buddha and Bodhisattvas: Ideology and Chronology" in *Studies in Buddhist Art of South Asia* (1985), Narain referred to epigraphs with some sketches and motifs inscribed on the Karakorum rocks that could be dated from the time of Maues, the first-known Saka king in India (reign *circa* 95-75 BC according to Narrain). Here, Narain suggested, that "there is no reason to doubt that the chronology of the earliest attempts to draw

anthropomorphic figures begins from the time of Maues."[63] He followed up with an example to demonstrate the probability of his argument:

> "Of particular importance is the Rock carving No. 81 of Chilas II where the seated figure is surely that of the Buddha/Bodhisattva. The inscription below the figure has been read as *Budhaotasa*, perhaps standing for *Bodhisattvasa*."[64]

Second, he believed that the Sakas migrated south from the Upper Ili regions through the Karakorum regions to the Gandhāra area, which made the Buddha images possible to be introduced into the Gandhāra area. In his earlier work *The Indo-Greeks* (1957), Narain already articulated this argument. Based on the study of the Chinese sources *Ch'ien Han Shu* (前漢書) and *Hou Han Shu* (後漢書), Narain indicated that the Saka people displaced by Yüeh-chih (月氏) in the Upper Ili regions migrated south to seek new lands under the leadership of the Saka princes. They crossed the Pamirs, passed the Karakorum Pass, and ultimately reached Chi-pin (罽賓), here identified as the Swat valley and the adjoining regions of Kashmir.[65] Soon after 100 BC, Maues followed the Indo-Greek rulers in the region of Swat valley and Gandhāra and controlled this region.[66] Ultimately, the Sakas replaced the Indo-Greeks in this area.

Combining these two aspects above, Narain argued that it was the Sakas who influenced the material representations of the Buddha in the Gandhāra region. On the one hand, according to the Karakorum findings, he indicated that the Indo-Greeks did not precede the Sakas in the Karakorum regions. Thus, the earliest anthropomorphic motifs inscribed on the Karakorum rocks should be attributed to the Sakas rather than the Indo-Greeks. On the other hand, according to the numismatic evidence discovered in Butkara and other sites in the Swat valley, the Sakas succeeded the Indo-Greeks in the region of the Swat valley and Gandhāra. Thus, it might be the Sakas who moved through the Karakorum regions that brought the anthropomorphic images of the Buddha to the Gandhāra area, rather than the Indo-Greeks.

Furthermore, he questioned the Mathurā origin theory by showing that the Sakas came to Mathurā later. Thus, "even if some examples date from their times [the Sakas' times in Mathurā]

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[63] Awadh Kishore Narain, "First Images of the Buddha and Bodhisattvas: Ideology and Chronology," in *Studies in Buddhist Art of South Asia*, ed. Awadh Kishore Narain (New Delhi: Kanak Publications, 1985), 5.
[64] Narain, "First Images of the Buddha and Bodhisattvas," 5.
[65] Awadh Kishore Narain, *The Indo-Greeks* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1957), 134-38.
[66] Narain, *The Indo-Greeks*, 142.

that would be later than their preceding career in Kashmir, Udyān and even Gandhāra."[67] In order to strengthen his argument, he re-examined one type of the coins of Maues, which, in his view, provided another proof of the theory that the first Buddha or Bodhisattva images originated from the Saka people. This type of coins depicts on its reverse "a human figure seated cross-legged on a throne or a pedestal (according to some it is a cushion), with both hands meeting on the lap as if meditating."[68] He quoted Longworth Dames's interpretation that the human figure on this type of coin could be a seated Buddha; an image that was very similar to the seated Buddha on Kanishka's coins in the 2nd century AD. Thus, Narain clearly supported Dames's interpretation of the archeological material. Therefore, for Narain, it was not necessary to go into the dispute between the Gandhāra origin and the Mathurā origin of the first Buddha images. If the seated figure on this type of coin is really a representation of a Buddha or a Bodhisattva, as he believed to be, then "it favours neither Gandhāra nor Mathurā but territories north of Gandhāra, where Maues first ruled before entering into the Taxila region."[69] Finally, he concluded as follows:

> "In short, it is the Saka-Sarvāstivādin combination which must be given credit for the production of the first human representation of the Buddha/Bodhisattva and it happened during the time of Maues (*circa* 95-75 BC), north of Gandhāra, in the Swat Valley and Kashmir."[70]

(2) Parthian Origin Theory

Another alternative theory is the Parthian origin theory, which argues that Parthian culture had strongly influenced Gandhāran Buddhist material culture and played a primary role in the creation of the anthropomorphic images of the Buddha. The French art historians Madeleine Hallade and Chantal Fabrègues, as well as the Japanese art historian Katsumi Tanabe were scholars who supported this theory.

In 1968, Madeleine Hallade's *Inde, un millénaire d'art bouddhique* as well as the English translation *The Gandhāra Style and the Evolution of Buddhist Art* were published. In this book, Hallade demonstrated that the formation and the evolution of Gandhāran Buddhist material culture should be attributed to the cultural interactions between India and Persia. In her opinion,

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67 Narain, "First Images of the Buddha and Bodhisattvas," 7.
68 Narain, "First Images of the Buddha and Bodhisattvas," 7.
69 Narain, "First Images of the Buddha and Bodhisattvas," 10.
70 Narain, "First Images of the Buddha and Bodhisattvas," 11.

Buddhist material culture absorbed a lot of Parthian cultural elements due to the enduring close relationship between India and Persia in history. From her point of view, a large number of the specimens of Gandhāran Buddhist material culture were basically "Indo-Sassanian." The intimate interactive relationship between India and Persia also continued to the Gupta and Sassanian periods, causing and promoting the continuous development of Gandhāran Buddhist material culture in the post-Kushan era.[71]

In 1987, Chantal Fabrègues published her paper "The Indo-Parthian Beginnings of Gandhāra Sculpture" in *Bulletin of the Asia Institute*. By identifying the Parthian elements in the proto-Gandhāran material culture that preceded the period of the established Gandhāran material culture, Fabrègues emphasized the contribution of the Indo-Parthians to the inception of Gandhāran Buddhist material culture. Through the stylistic analysis and comparison of a series of archaeological materials like the reliefs and friezes discovered in Butkara and Taxila (today's Pakistan) and Palmyra (today's Syria), she pointed out that Gandhāran Buddhist material culture absorbed many decorative iconographic features and artistic inspirations from Parthian culture. For example, the lion protomae and honeysuckle palmettes on the friezes from the Butkara stūpas may be assigned to the early years of the Parthian period; the typical icon of the eagles on the friezes of stūpa 14 "could have had a Parthian inspiration;" and the representation of Eros standing on a lotus flower might also have been introduced into Gandhāra during the Parthian period.[72] Fabrègues concluded that the Parthian features and motifs recognized in the sculptures probably belonging to the monuments in Butkara indicated that they were completed at the beginning of Parthian domination in Gandhāra; and the proto-Gandhāran sculptures might appear around the moment of the inauguration of Indo-Parthian rule.[73] As for the first Buddha images, from her viewpoint, the gap between the first proto-Gandhāran sculptures and the first Buddha images was not big, and the earliest Buddha images might have been created at the end of the reign of Gondophares (AD 19-46), the founder of the Indo-Parthian kingdom.[74] At the end of her paper, Fabrègues also responded to van Lohuizen's viewpoint. She argued that although the reliefs found in Loriyan Tangai and Butkara that were studied by van Lohuizen possessed many connections with the ancient art of India, "it is clear that their style continues an

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[71] Madeleine Hallade, *The Gandhāra Style and the Evolution of Buddhist Art* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1968).
[72] Chantal Fabrègues, "The Indo-Parthian Beginnings of Gandhāra Sculpture." *Bulletin of the Asia Institute* 1 (1987): 37.
[73] Fabrègues, "The Indo-Parthian Beginnings of Gandhāra Sculpture," 40.
[74] Fabrègues, "The Indo-Parthian Beginnings of Gandhāra Sculpture," 33.

earlier one already in existence in Gandhāra and represented by the proto-Gandhāran sculptures," which appeared under the rule of the Indo-Parthians.[75]

In the 1980s, the Japanese scholar Katsumi Tanabe also expressed his approval of the Iranian origin of Gandhāran Buddhist material culture in his essay "The Iranian Origin of the Gandhāra Buddha and Bodhisattva Images: The Catalytic Contributions of the Kushan Buddhists." This paper was later translated into Chinese and was published with the title "Gandhāra Buddha and Bodhisattva Images Originated in Iran" in the journal *Dunhuang Studies* in 1989. In this paper, Tanabe argued that the currently popular interpretations of the question of the origin of the Buddha and Bodhisattva images, regardless of their adherence to the Greek origin theory, the Roman origin theory, or the Indian origin theory, they all had neglected the decisive role played by the Kushan people who came to India and Pakistan at that time.[76] He particularly criticized the Greek origin theory, indicating that due to their Eurocentric prejudices, the proponents of the Greek origin theory took it for granted that the anthropomorphism could easily combine with Buddhism as long as they were put side by side. However, for Tanabe, these two factors, namely the native Buddhism and the anthropomorphism, could only be combined under special conditions. These conditions were provided by the Kushan people or Kushan Buddhists for the first time. Kushan Buddhists might be regarded as the mediators who helped to introduce the concept of anthropomorphism into the Gandhāra area.[77] Analyzing the relationship between the Kushans and the Iranian customs, Tanabe pointed out that worshipping the spirits of the dead kings or royal members was one of the typical customs of Parthians and Kushans who both adhered to Zoroastrianism.[78] They made anthropomorphic representations of those spirits and placed them at the temples. Therefore, it might be the case that the Kushans deeply influenced by Iranian cultures introduced the anthropomorphic way of representation into the Gandhāra region. Moreover, it also might be the case that the Gandhāran Buddhist reformers adopted Zoroastrian doctrines to transform the ancient Indian Buddhist ideals. By this way, Buddhism could have been able to perfectly meet the expectations of the Kushans and thus earn their

[75] Fabrègues, "The Indo-Parthian Beginnings of Gandhāra Sculpture," 40-41.
[76] Katsumi Tanabe, "Qiantuoluo fo he pusa xiang qiyuan yu yilang" 犍陀羅佛和菩薩像起源於伊朗 [Gandhāra Buddha and Bodhisattva Images Originated in Iran], translated by Tai Jianqun 台建群, *Dunhuang Yanjiu* 敦煌研究 [Dunhuang Studies] 3 (October 1989): 101.
[77] Tanabe, "Qiantuoluo fo he pusa xiang qiyuan yu yilang" 犍陀羅佛和菩薩像起源於伊朗 [Gandhāra Buddha and Bodhisattva Images Originated in Iran], 104.
[78] Tanabe, "Qiantuoluo fo he pusa xiang qiyuan yu yilang" 犍陀羅佛和菩薩像起源於伊朗 [Gandhāra Buddha and Bodhisattva Images Originated in Iran], 106.

patronage.[79] In short, Tanabe believed that the crucial input for the emergence of Buddha images in Gandhāra came from the Iranian cultures through the Kushans as mediators.

(3) Aggregative Interpretations

So far, regardless of the Greek origin theory, the Indian origin theory, the Saka origin theory, or the Parthian origin theory, they all highlight the particular role of one culture that significantly contributed its cultural elements in the formation of Gandhāran Buddhist material culture and the emergence of Buddha images but intentionally or unintentionally ignore the roles of other cultures. However, it seems that the one-sided interpretive framework could never be sufficient enough to provide an unbiased interpretation to explain the formation of such a highly eclectic material culture. Therefore, some other scholars adopted an aggregative approach to incorporate as many principal "contributory influences" as they could to triangulate the existing one-sided interpretations and to to provide a more unbiased explanation. The leading figures of this approach were the British archaeologist Mortimer Wheeler, the Indian scholar Lolita Nehru, and the Australian-born archaeologist Warwick Ball.

In his essay "Gandhāra Art: A Note on the Present Position" in *Le rayonnement des civilisations Grecque et Romaine sur les cultures périphériques* (1965), Mortimer Wheeler used the terms *Ersatz* and *Esperanto* to indicate the eclectic and hybrid property of Gandhāra art:

> "Gandhāra art is specifically Buddhist art. […] Of course it assimilated frankly Hindu elements, and these may have become more emphatic as time went by. That is to say no more than that Buddhism was historically a Hindu concept. It in no way robs Gandhāra art of its Buddhist monopoly. And that art was created by the Buddhists for their new needs, *not* on the basis of any local idiom but as a sort of *Esperanto* compiled artificially from *international borrowings*. […] It was an *Ersatz* or *Esperanto* contrivance."[80]

Here, we can see Wheeler's assumption that in pre-Kushan period Gandhāra local area was in a state of vacuum, which subsequently was filled up by external artistic influences in the later Kushan period. He listed four component elements that went into the making of the *Ersatz* or *Esperanto* art of Gandhāra. Firstly, there was the "over-all *Hindu* element," because Gandhāra art

[79] Tanabe, "Qiantuoluo fo he pusa xiang qiyuan yu yilang" 犍陀羅佛和菩薩像起源於伊朗 [Gandhāra Buddha and Bodhisattva Images Originated in Iran], 106.

[80] Mortimer Wheeler, "Gandhāra Art: A Note on the Present Position," in *Le rayonnement des civilisations Grecque et Romaine sur les cultures périphériques*, ed. Huitième congrès international d'archéologie classique (Paris: Éditions E. de Boccard, 1965), 558, emphasis added.

was specifically Buddhist art, as he indicated above, and Buddhism was "a Hindu manifestation through and through." No matter how alien the settings of Gandhāra could be, the Buddha "remained obstinately a Hindu raja-saint."[81] Secondly, there was the much-advertised *Western Classical* element. Against Foucher who argued for the influence of pure Greek art, Wheeler saw more direct and significant influences from Roman art rather than Greek or Hellenistic art. In his view, it was by now obsolete to regard Roman art as merely a decadent phase of Greek art. Therefore, he preferred to adopt "Graeco-Roman" as a compromise. Thirdly, there was the *Parthian* element, which could be seen in the occurrence of Iranian or Parthian costume and ornament as well as the use of the rigid "frontality" in the visual representations of Gandhāran Buddhist material culture. [82] Finally, there was the *Kushan* element "transplanted by the great Kanishka's dynasty to Gandhāra and its environs."[83] The Kushan Empire, which offered the "international" precondition for the formation of the eclectic and cosmopolitan art, was the formative agent in this creative act.[84] In short, the pre-Kushan artistic "vacuum" was filled by imported influences from "the Indian plains," from "the Graeco-Roman and Parthian West," and from "the Iranian Middle East."[85] In the conclusive part, Wheeler also criticized the one-sidedness of the previously proposed interpretations and called for a more inclusive approach to deal with this highly hybrid and eclectic material culture:

> "In analyzing an art so complex in its origins and, at present, so unordered in its manifestations, we have all of us erred. Or rather, we have none of us been more than half-right. *In our half-truths we have over-emphasized this feature or that, and so falsified our perspective, have got our focus wrong.* Gandhāra art was Graeco-Roman art; it was also Parthian and Iranian art; not least, it was Indian art. But above all, it was *Gandhāra* art, an *aggregate* which transcended the sum of its parts."[86]

Similarly, the Indian scholar Lolita Nehru also took a broad perspective and an aggregative approach to focus on the "contributory influences" to deal with the complex issue of the origin of Gandhāran Buddhist material culture. In her book *Origins of the Gandhāran Style: A Study of Contributory Influences* (1989), a revised and expanded version of her doctoral dissertation, she examined the contribution of different traditions and the fusion process of these traditional

[81] Wheeler, "Gandhāra Art: A Note on the Present Position," 559.
[82] Wheeler, "Gandhāra Art: A Note on the Present Position," 560.
[83] Wheeler, "Gandhāra Art: A Note on the Present Position," 560.
[84] Wheeler, "Gandhāra Art: A Note on the Present Position," 561.
[85] Wheeler, "Gandhāra Art: A Note on the Present Position," 563.
[86] Wheeler, "Gandhāra Art: A Note on the Present Position," 564, emphasis added.

norms that led to the inception of a distinctive and independent Gandhāran style. In the first part of this book, she separately analyzed each of the stylistic traditions that contributed to the formation of the distinctive Gandhāran style: Greco-Roman, Bactrian, Parthian, and the early Indian. In this part, Nehru concluded that Gandhāran Buddhist material culture was inclined to juxtapose the Western classical techniques with other traditional norms, like the Indian and the Parthian norms. In the second part, she examined how the multiple influences were intermingled and crystallized as a result of the assimilation of different strands in the formation of an independent new mode of artistic expression under the Kushan reigns. Finally, she concluded her study by redeeming Foucher's views of the evolution of Hellenistic culture in the East, arguing that it is within the context of Hellenism in the East that Gandhāra art could flourish and obtain its widest perspective.[87]

Besides Nehru, the Australian-born archeologist Warwick Ball was another proponent of the combinative view when considering the issue of the origin of Gandhāran Buddhist material culture. As he demonstrated in his book *Rome in the East* (2000):

> "Most of all, it must be pointed out that the controversies over Graeco-Bactrian versus direct Roman versus Irano-Hellenistic origins for Gandhāran art [are] not in conflict: all hypotheses must be substantially correct. None of the hypotheses so far argued can by themselves account for the unquestionably western character of the style. *But the combination of all forces and influences is the only possible explanation for perhaps the most extraordinary syncretism in art history*. To argue for one hypothesis over the others is to miss the point."[88]

Therefore, Ball also clearly indicated the significance of taking a combinative view to explain the complex question of the origin of Gandhāran art.

(4) Reflections on the Discourse of "Influence"

There is one problem concerning the employment of the discourse of "influence" that has not yet gained sufficient attention. The discourse of "influence" is already noticeable in the earlier Western classical influence discourse and the anticolonial Indian origion theory. However, it is particularly prominent in the postcolonial alternative interpretations, despite the postcolonial attempts to pluralize and regionalized the interpretations of the origin of Gandhāran Buddhist

[87] Lolita Nehru, *Origins of the Gandhāran Style: A Study of Contributory Influences* (Delhi etc.: Oxford University Press, 1989).

[88] Warwick Ball, *Rome in the East* (London and New York: Routledge, 2000), 148, emphasis added.

material culture. Almost all the scholars and their interpretive attempts mentioned above inevitably embraced, indulged, acquiesced, or unconsciously accepted at least, the employment of the term "influence" in their analysis and argumentations. The use of the term "influence," which implies the assumptions of cultural essentialism, remains to be seriously reflected and criticized.

In his monograph *Patterns of Intention: On the Historical Explanation of Pictures* (1985), the British art historian Michael Baxandall provided us with an excursus against the notion of artistic "influence," criticizing its one-way property and the inverted feature:

> "'Influence' is a *curse* of art criticism primarily because of its wrong-headed grammatical prejudice about who is the agent and who the patient: it seems to *reverse* the active/passive relation which the historical actor experiences and the inferential beholder will wish to take into account. If one says that X influenced Y it does seem that one is saying that X did something to Y rather than that Y did something to X. But in the consideration of good pictures and painters the second is always the more lively reality."[89]

Baxandall provided an unquestionably apt criticism of the notion of "influence" in art. If we accept the argument that "X influenced Y," we also automatically receive the assumption without any doubts that X is the active sender, the one who actually takes action, whereas Y is a passive recipient who can *only* rely on the external active agents. Under this assumption, the role of the "influencer" (X) undoubtedly is of more significance than the role of the "influenced" (Y), as if X possesses more agency and initiative; and X is superior to Y in terms of both temporal precedence and the ability to "influence" others. The discourse of "influence" forces the "influenced" (Y) to maintain a state of aphasia. However, according to Baxandall, in the process of artistic production and reproduction, the "influenced" (Y) is always the more active and livelier one rather than the "influencer" (X). Baxandall demonstrated the diversity of the actions that the "influenced" (Y) can take by enumerating a variety of verbs, indicating that there would be much more abundant and "more attractively diversified" vocabularies if we think of the "influenced" rather than the "influencer" as an agent: draw on, appropriate from, adapt, refer to, engage with, copy, absorb, pick up, react to, develop, respond to, distort, misunderstand, resist, promote, transform, etc.[90] However, through the employment of the discourse of "influence,"

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[89] Michael Baxandall, *Patterns of Intention: On the Historical Explanation of Pictures* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1985), 58-59, emphasis added.
[90] Baxandall, *Patterns of Intention*, 59.

the agency of the "influenced" (Y) and the diversity of the actions that the "influenced" (Y) can take are peremptorily simplified, imperiously reduced, or arrogantly ignored. In fact, in the social relation between the "influencer" and the "influenced," the "influenced" always has more space to take, to review, to refer to, to learn from, to reflect, to criticize, to change, and to develop. By shifting our attention from the new vibrant generation of artists to the predecessors who have already established their own styles, the discourse of "influence" distorts our view of time in the timeline of art creation to make us look backwards rather than forwards. The same is true on the issue of causality. If we say "X influenced Y," the causality is quite straightforward: the reason that Y can be acted on is simply that X is "influential"; there is no much need to know the reason from the other side, that is, Y himself. In this sense, the discourse of "influence," which endows the predecessors with more agency and initiative, is a manifest of the conservative and problematic fascination of the established, authority, tradition, and purity. It reveals the power inequality between the "influencer" and the "influenced."

In addition, if we look at it from the perspective of cultural studies, the discourse of "cultural influence" usually presupposes the cultural essentialism and the conventional concept of single cultures with exclusive boundaries. Let us say "X culture influenced Y" (no matter Y is an individual or a culture that is equivalent to X). If X culture can influence Y, then X culture must be either established, or stabilized, or institutionalized, or purified. Anyhow, X should be essentialized and well-defined. The influence from X culture that can be traced in Y is a hint that leads us to revert our view from Y towards the purified and well-defined culture X. Due to the asymmetry caused by the discourse of "influence," we do not even need to know whether Y is as well-defined as X. It is also the case for religions. We always hear people say that "Christian traditions influenced indigenous beliefs" or "it is the influence from Islamic traditions," as if Christianity and Islam are internally homogenous, unified, and unchanging. In this respect, the discussions of the eclecticism of material cultures are also parallel with those of the syncretism of religions. As André Droogers pointed out in his chapter "Syncretism: The Problem of Definition, the Definition of the Problem," the subjective meaning of syncretism "includes an evaluation of such intermingling from the point of view of one of the religions involved."[91] In other words, the idea of syncretism assumes that one of the religions involved "influences" other religions involved. Thus, the mixing of religious is usually "condemned in this evaluation as violating the essence of the belief system,"[92] or violating the "purity" of religions so to speak. Therefore, the

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[91] André Droogers, "Syncretism: The Problem of Definition, the Definition of the Problem," in *Syncretism in Religion: A Reader*, ed. Anita M. Leopold and Jeppe Sinding Jensen (London: Routledge, 2014), 195.
[92] Droogers, "Syncretism," 195.

idea of syncretism, which presupposes the purity and essence of religions, is in line with the discourse of "influence."

After examining the discourse of "influence," let us turn back to Gandhāran Buddhist material culture. Because of the power of the discourse of "influence," Gandhāra is always seen as a passive recipient of foreign "influences." Due to the uncritical employment of the discourse of "influence," Gandhāra material culture and Gandhāran craftsmen remain in a state of aphasia, even though the Gandhāran sculptures and architectures are already glorious and striking enough. Under the instigation of the discourse of "influence," the eclectic property of Gandhāran Buddhist material culture turns out to be reminiscent of other foreign essentialized cultures, such as Greek, Roman, Indian, Saka, and Parthian cultures, but never makes us seriously consider its own active contribution, initiative, creativity, and innovation. By adopting the discourse of "influence," the academic community would never pay enough attention that they should have paid to the innovative process and mechanism that played out in Gandhāran Buddhist material culture. They would not care too much about how the Gandhāran people referred to the cultural elements that they could touch upon; they would not care too much about to what extent and in which way the Gandhāran people modified and rearranged these elements to form a stylistic expression of their own; and they would also not care too much about the counter effects of Gandhāran Buddhist material culture absorbing other cultural elements on the cultural elements it absorbed. Under the domination of the discourse of "influence," Gandhāran Buddhist material culture lost its subjectivity and can never stand in its own right. It can only be the periphery between those essentialized cultural centers mentioned above. If we would like to resume Gandhāra's agency, we need to dismiss the discourse of "influence."

To sum up, despite the critical impetus, the postcolonial interpretations mentioned above do not transcend cultural essentialism either. They inherited the defects of cultural essentialism from their predecessor, the Western classical influence discourse. Compared with the deficiencies of the essentialist Western classical influence discourse summarized in Chapter 1, the defects of the postcolonial interpretations are mainly parralell with the first and the second deficiencies of the Western classical influence discourse. They also encourage a reductionist thinking and ignore the local agency of Gandhāra through their adherence to the discourse of "influence."

3. Concluding Remarks

In this chapter, I have reviewed both the anticolonial and the postcolonial interpretations that attempt to discard the Eurocentric perspective and the colonial prejudice implied by the Western classical influence discourse. Although the anticolonial Indian origin theory has sharply criticized the colonialist connotations of the Western classical influence discourse, it does not transcend, but instead consolidated, either the Orientalist delimitation between the East and the West or the methodological nationalism, not to mention that it failed to question cultural essentialism. Besides, the strong tint of nationalism behind the Indian origin theory also makes it intrinsically similar to the Western classical influence discourse in terms of the degree of politicization. Although in the postcolonial era, the interpretations of the origin of Gandhāran Buddhist material culture have experienced a process of pluralization and regionalization, they also fail to transcend the cultural essentialism due to their retaining of the discourse of "influence." Both, the anticolonial and postcolonial interpretations possess the deficiencies of cultural essentialism as their predecessor the Western classical influence discourse does. Therefore, we urgently need a new approach to transcend the cultural essentialism and the discourse of "influence," to help us reconsider religious material culture in culturally complex and changing contexts, and to encourage us to reflect upon the essentialist idea of syncretism in religious studies.

Chapter 3: Translocative Gandhāran Buddhist Material Culture: Applying a Transcultural Approach to Gandhāran Cases

In Chapter 1 and Chapter 2, I have reviewed the colonial discourses of Western Classical influence, the anticolonial interpretations of Indian origin theory, and the postcolonial attempts to offer regionalized and pluralized interpretive alternatives on the issue of the emergence of Gandhāran Buddhist material culture. Some theories particularly highlight the role of a single culture or one origin of the "influences" in the formative process of Gandhāran Buddhist material culture; others also try to triangulate various theories to provide more aggregative interpretations to include as many of those "origins of influences" as possible. However, both interpretive attempts are caught in the trap of essentialism. Even if the aggregated views have included various "origins" of the cultural influences into their interpretations instead of emphasizing the role of one particular culture, they still presupposed the Indian culture, Greek culture, Parthian culture, and Kushan culture as essentialist entities, assuming that the differences and boundaries between them are self-evident without sufficient reflections. Due to the reductionist connotation of essentialism, the scholars who take an essentialist view to classify different cultures or those who take the essentialist classifications for granted usually either actively accept or latently assume the projection of stable and unchanging essences onto various categories of cultures. Taking the essentialist classes for granted cannot assist us to eventually achieve the goal of providing an unbiased interpretation of the formative process of Gandhāran Buddhist material culture, despite existing efforts to combine the various essentialist cultural categories together to give a seemingly convincing solution.

In chapter 3 and chapter 4, instead of taking an essentialist view, I suggest taking a transcultural perspective to deconstruct and transcend our essentialist assumptions on the issue of the formation of Gandhāran Buddhist material culture. In Chapter 3, by applying the transcultural approach to the Gandhāran case and taking both the concepts of connectedness and situatedness into account, I argue that the Buddhist material culture in Gandhāra is diversely entangled and highly *translocative*. It is the highly translocative property that lends Gandhāran Buddhist material culture itself to crossing boundaries and simultaneously dwelling in its own locality, absorbing various cultural flows from different localities to facilitate and situate its own innovation, and meanwhile providing resources of cultural inspirations for the adjacent areas and even broader regions by sending its cultural flows outward. Gandhāran Buddhist material culture, as an integral part of a broader entangled network of cultural flows, played an active role in the

constant process of cultural making, re-making, and innovation due to translocative encounters and processes. Furthermore, by showing the Gandhāran case, in Chapter 4, I argue that taking a transcultural perspective can be a more productive heuristic approach in academic investigations and scholarly discussions. Not only can it help us get closer to the historical reality of dynamic cultural interactions and entanglements in a realist manner, but it can also contribute to our theoretical understandings of cultures and religions, as well as open new space for interdisciplinary cooperation and conversation.

1. Transcultural Theory

Before I turn to the case studies of Gandhāran Buddhist material culture, I will first clarify why I choose the term "transcultural," its theoretical assumptions, and what the term "transcultural" here means. Generally speaking, transcultural theory is based on the assumption that cultures are not essentialist entities with exclusive boundaries and stable essences. It aims to challenge and deconstruct the essentialist concept of cultures that presupposes the inner homogenized essences and outer delineated boundaries. Unlike traditional ways of understanding cultures as bounded spheres, a transcultural approach takes cultures as something always in the dynamic process of making and re-making, which is promoted by translocal encounters, interactions, and entanglements.[1] It is appropriate to take a transcultural perspective to study Gandhāran Buddhist material culture, because the essentialist perception of Gandhāran Buddhist material culture—which needs to be questioned and challenged—is still prevalent in both academic and public contexts. To apply the term "transcultural" here means to transcend the essentialist view of Gandhāran Buddhist material culture.

(1) The Concept of Transculturality

Wolfgang Welsch, the German philosopher, is one of the most critical scholars who advocated the transcultural perspective to approach modern cultures. In his essay "Transculturality: The Puzzling Form of Cultures Today," Welsch called for a concept of cultures which, in his view, was the most appropriate and adequate one to describe most cultures today: the concept of transculturality.[2] In order to highlight the validity, feasibility, and appropriateness of the concept of transculturality, Welsch first elaborated on the traditional concept of single cultures and the more recent concepts of interculturality and multiculturality to contrast with his subsequent

[1] Esther Berg and Katja Rakow. "Religious Studies and Transcultural Studies: Revealing a Cosmos Not Known Before?" *Transcultural Studies* 2016, no. 2 (2016): 186.
[2] Wolfgang Welsch, "Transculturality: The Puzzling Form of Cultures Today," in *Spaces of Culture: City, Nation, World*, ed. Mike Featherstone and Scott Lash (London, Thousand Oaks, and New Delhi: SAGE Publications Ltd, 1999), 194.

elaboration of the concept of transculturality. He pointed out that we could characterize the traditional concept of single cultures with three elements: "social homogenization," "ethnic consolidation," and "intercultural delimitation."[3] Thus, this concept of cultures is "unificatory," "folk-bound," and "separatory."[4] He further indicated that this concept "cannot cope with the inner complexity of modern cultures" which have become internally complex to the degree that cultural uniformity is no longer tenable and adequate.[5] In addition, this conventional concept deems cultures as "closed spheres" or "autonomous islands," assigning those cultures to particular geographical territories and linguistic distribution areas. However, in fact, the folk-bound assumptions are always highly imaginary and fictional, leading us to a politically dangerous field. Moreover, the traditional concept of cultures delineates and emphasizes the boundaries among various cultures, strengthening a sense of cultural exclusionism, separatism, and even racism. In political contexts, the exclusive way of thinking and the assumption of cultural purity implied by this traditional concept of single cultures are not only able to promote mutual understanding between various cultures, but on the contrary, might pave the way for cultural conflicts and violence.[6] Subsequently, Welsch analyzed the recent rising concepts of interculturality and multiculturality, arguing that these concepts still conceptually presuppose the traditional conception of cultures as spheres or islands, although both of them "apparently try to overcome some flaws of the traditional concept by advocating a mutual understanding of different cultures."[7] Therefore, instead of continuing to adhere the inappropriate presupposition of the traditional concept and the deceptive description of cultures as spheres or islands, Welsch advocated the new term "transcultural", which possesses great potential to "pass through classical cultural boundaries" to describe today's cultural conditions that are "largely characterized by mixes and permeations" that have crossed over the modern boundaries.[8]

After rethinking the traditional concept of single cultures and the recent concepts of interculturality and multiculturality, Welsch then elaborated the concept of transculturality on both macro-level and micro-level. On the society's macro-level, transculturality is "a consequence of *the inner differentiation and complexity of modern cultures*."[9] Today's cultures have surpassed the traditional separatist idea of culture through "*cultures' external networking*"; thus,

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[3] Welsch, "Transculturality," 194.
[4] Welsch, "Transculturality," 194-95.
[5] Welsch, "Transculturality," 195.
[6] Welsch, "Transculturality," 195.
[7] Welsch, "Transculturality," 196.
[8] Welsch, "Transculturality," 197.
[9] Welsch, "Transculturality," 197, emphasis in the original.

"*hybridization*" has become a general characteristic of today's cultures.[10] On the individual's micro-level, our cultural formation is also transcultural due to the decisive factor of multiple cultural connections. "We are cultural hybrids" and we can have multiple cultural identities.[11] Therefore, Welsch argued that cultural determinants today—no matter if they are on the society's macro-level or on the individual's micro-level—have become transcultural. In his view, the old separatist concept of single cultures misrepresents cultures' actual form. Only the concepts of cultures that take the transcultural constitution seriously can pertain to today's reality about cultures. Finally, compared with the concepts of globalization and particularization, Welsch indicated the advantages of the concept of transculturality:

> "It is able to cover both global and local, universalistic and particularistic aspects, and it does so quite naturally, from the logic of transcultural processes themselves. The globalizing tendencies as well as the desire for specificity and particularity can be fulfilled *within* trans-culturality. Transcultural identities comprehend a cosmopolitan side, but also a side of local affiliation (see Hannerz, 1990). Transcultural people combine both."[12]

Here, Welsch pointed out the potential of the concept of transculturality to reconcile the tension between globalization and localization, cosmopolitan interaction and local affiliation. Within the transcultural framework, homogenization and heterogenization are two sides of the same coin. They are seemingly exclusive but actually interconnected. Homogenization can offer a necessary commonness as a "common ground" or contact zone to encourage cultural encounters and exchanges to promote heterogenization; heterogenization is a local solution to deal with cosmopolitan homogenization and it can also bring more local resources to the development of cosmopolitan interactions.

(2) Transculturality and History

Although, in this paper, Welsch put his emphasis on today's modern cultures to demonstrate how "transcultural" they are, he acknowledged that the concept of transculturality is also applicable when we investigate the past. The interconnectedness of the cultural entanglements that the concept attempts to reveal is not entirely new to the extent that it is only embedded in today's modern cultures. Ancient cultures also possess the feature of cultural interconnectedness. Welsch took the example of European history by quoting Carl Zuckmayer's descriptions of the

[10] Welsch, "Transculturality," 197-98, emphasis in the original.
[11] Welsch, "Transculturality," 198-99.
[12] Welsch, "Transculturality," 205.

hybridity in ancient Europe in *The Devil's General* to show the validity of transculturality as a conceptual tool for us to re-examine ancient history. More importantly, he also noticed that it was the modern establishment of "the nineteenth century's imaginary notion of homogeneous national cultures" that led adherents of the traditional concept of cultures to deny "the factual historic transculturality."[13]

Madeleine Herren, Martin Rüesch, and Christiane Sibille, the historians based in Switzerland, affirmed and supported the application of transcultural perspective and theory to historical studies. In their co-authored monograph *Transcultural History: Theories, Methods, Sources* (2012), they pointed out the reason why the essentialist view of history is still dominant today while only scant attention is paid to a globally extensive historiography. According to them, it is a result of the construction of modern nations in the 19th century. Since the 19th century, the increasingly dominant interest in modern nation-building profoundly shaped the young academic discipline of history: "Nation, nation-building, and national identity established the overarching coherence of the historical narrative."[14] This type of historical narrative was later summarized as a "master narrative."[15] In this period, history as an academic discipline was reduced to a tool to assist in the construction of modern nation-states and national identities. Thus, the modern nation-state has naturally become the underlying motif of history. Taking a linear-progressive and nationalist approach, history in the 19th century very much encouraged a nationally essentialist view of history, largely causing the marginalization and even suppression of the global historical views that pay particular attention to connectivity, interaction, dynamic exchange, and cultural permeability in human history. Taking a critical attitude towards this "master narrative," Herren, Rüesch, and Sibille called for a transcultural history that "introduces a global view of the past by focusing on processes of border crossing."[16]

Therefore, transculturality is a conceptual lens for us to look through to re-examine cultures, regardless of the fact that those cultures are ancient or contemporary. A transcultural perspective, with its potential to cross the national borders to overcome methodological nationalism, and to transcend other kinds of essentialist boundaries, is also applicable to ancient history. Whenever it is applied to ancient history, this concept is able to introduce into discussions a global view that focuses on the dynamic processes of transcultural encounters, interactions, entanglements, and

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[13] Welsch, "Transculturality," 199-200.
[14] Madeleine Herren, Martin Rüesch, and Christiane Sibille, *Transcultural History: Theories, Methods, Sources* (Berlin: Springer, 2012), 17.
[15] Herren, Rüesch, and Sibille, *Transcultural History*, 17.
[16] Herren, Rüesch, and Sibille, *Transcultural History*, 6.

negotiations that cross and transcend the modernly constructed national borders and nationalist historical narratives. Due to its anti-essentialist property, the concept of transculturality also questions the narratives of the imagined authentic origin of cultures in ancient times as well as the national monopolization of ancient cultural heritage, both of which serve as the basis for the construction of national identity and nationalist essentialism.

2. The Limitation and the Applicability of the Term "Transcultural" in the Studies of Gandhāran Buddhist Material Culture

Since "transculturality" as a conceptual tool is suitable to investigate not only modern cultures but also ancient cultures, it seems that we can simply apply the term "transcultural" to the studies of Gandhāran Buddhist material culture without special clarification and instruction. However, although the term "transcultural" has a significant potential to reveal cultural interconnectedness and dynamic interactions, it also has its limitations when it is employed to describe culture-related issues. That also applies when we introduce the concept of transculturality into the studies of Gandhāran Buddhist material culture. This section will discuss the limitation of the use of the term "transcultural" and to what extent it is still valid to be employed in the studies of Gandhāran Buddhist material culture.

Let's first turn back to Welsch's elaboration of the relationship between transculturality and history. The main flaw in his elaboration is that he mingled the *theoretical* function and the *descriptive* function of the concept of transculturality in *both* the studies of contemporary cultures and those of ancient cultures. He took it for granted that "transculturality" is already in history; thus, he assumed ancient cultures can be described as "transcultural" as well. What can be inferred here is that Welsch's original aim to use "transcultural" in history was to deconstruct the essentialist view of ancient cultures taken by some scholars today, but his aim was not to describe the ancient socio-cultural reality *per se* as "transcultural," or to represent the voices of ancient peoples. However, using the term "transcultural" to describe ancient cultures without clarification might lead to some misunderstandings, because the notion of "culture" that the term "transcultural" implies usually automatically hints at essentialized cultures in modern contexts or at least presupposes cultures that are similar or comparable to the modern essentialized cultures. Another problem would be to assume that the ancient people related to the cultures in question had also taken a similar essentialist view of cultures as some of us do today. Here I do not mean that the ancient people would not take any kinds of essentialist view, but that they may not take an essentialist view that is similar to a modern way. Since the term

"transcultural" is usually employed to theoretically challenge the conventional concept of culture that took its form in *modern* contexts, it might be misleading to directly describe ancient cultures. In order to avoid this kind of misunderstandings, I suggest to specify and limit the use of the term "transcultural" by distinguishing its theoretical and descriptive functions in academic studies.

The theoretical function of the term "transcultural" refers to its intrinsic ability to reverse our essentialist view of cultures. No matter if it is ancient cultures or contemporary modern cultures that we are focusing on, this theoretical function can always work properly. It is because usually, neither the ancient cultures nor the modern cultures that we investigate have ever escaped from our essentialist gaze since the 19th century. Therefore, whether it is the ancient cultures or the modern cultures that we are dealing with, the term "transcultural" can always theoretically function well to introduce a new theoretical view of cultures that allows us to see cultures as entanglements.

Although the concept of transculturality is valid in a theoretical sense to deconstruct cultural essentialism, to reverse our essentialist view, and to question the essentialist analytical approach, it also receives critiques due to its deemed internal logic inconsistency. In his paper "From Hybridity to Entanglement, From Essentialism to Practice," Philipp W. Stockhammer admitted that the term "transculturality" cannot be used "without acknowledging the existence of distinct 'cultures' in a container-like understanding of the term."[17] Transculturality can only exist in comparison with the traditional essentialist views of cultures as entities with boundaries. Whenever we discuss "transculturality," we have to accept the previously existing conventional understandings of cultures as externally exclusive but internally homogenized spheres. The contradiction that the concept of transculturality contains seems to be logically inconsistent: the employment of the term "transcultural" has seemingly unconsciously re-introduced the traditional view of cultures as bounded spheres into "transcultural studies," which originally aims to overcome and deconstruct the traditional understandings of bounded cultures. On this point, Stockhammer resignedly acknowledged this seemingly paradoxical "deficiency," arguing that "there is no way out: every scientific aim to transcend borders begins with the acknowledgment of the existence of those borders, confirming the existence of what originally is hoped to be overcome."[18]

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[17] Philipp W. Stockhammer, "From Hybridity to Entanglement, From Essentialism to Practice," *Archaeological Review from Cambridge* 28, no.1 (April 2013): 12.
[18] Stockhammer, "From Hybridity to Entanglement," 12.

However, it is not necessary to accept this deemed contradiction as an unpleasant and disappointing fact. This contradiction seems paradoxical, but actually it is not. For one thing, even if we have to accept the essentialist concept of cultures in some way whenever we use the term "transcultural," what we accept is not the validity of the essentialist perception of cultures in cultural analysis, but the *reality* that the traditional essentialist perception of cultures is still existent and even prevalent so that we need to overcome it with deconstructive conceptual tools. For another, it is quite common that in challenging or rejecting a convention, we always at the same time inevitably deploy it as an underlying base to stand on in order to further accomplish our agenda to refute it. Without this continuity, our audience may not be clear about what we are arguing against. It is precisely the deployment of the traditional concept of cultures in the concept of transculturality that lends itself to its deconstructive subversiveness. Without this reference, the concept of transculturality will lose the foundation of its deconstructiveness. The new concept of transculturality happens to be at the node that connects our traditional views of cultures as bounded spheres and our recently modified views of cultures as dynamic entanglements. It serves as a bridge, which can send us from the traditional essentialist perception of cultures to a new understanding that focuses on mutual entanglements instead of boundary making. Only if the concept of transculturality reflexively relates itself to the old traditional concept can it promote a new way of understanding cultures. After all, the rising of the concept of transculturality is the result of today's critical reflection on the traditional concept of cultures in contemporary socio-historical contexts. In these contexts, due to the growing role of globalization, the cultural flows that can transcend essentialist cultural/national/ethnic boundaries have become active, complex, and entangled to an unprecedented degree. Thus, the traditional concept of cultures that still presupposes the distinct boundaries cannot appropriately perceive today's cultures, as Welsch asserted. Therefore, in the history of our perceptions of cultures, the concept of transculturality inevitably retains the imprint of the contemporary "post-bounded cultures" era, which stands on the preceding "bounded cultures" era, but meanwhile also stimulates us to question and oppose the essentialist thinking of cultures in the previous stage. Only in the context of this historic transition from an essentialist view of cultures to an entangled view can this concept be born. This concept is also a product of history, so it will not be valid for good. When essentialism and the part of social reality caused by it are fully overcome (if overcoming essentialism keeps to be our enterprise in the future and it really represents the historical trend), this concept will automatically lose its deconstructive function. In a word, the seemingly contradictory aspect of the concept of transculturality does not weaken the concept's

theoretical function to refute cultural essentialism, to reveal cultural dynamics, and to encourage border crossing. This seemingly contradictory aspect is naturally possessed by any concept that attempts to promote the historic theoretical transition.

The descriptive function of the concept "transculturality" means the ability of this term to describe or to reveal the reality of the condition or the tendency of cultures, their processes, or their agents to *cross boundaries*, thus to further reveal the entangled property of cultures. In this descriptive sense, this term also presupposes the cultural fact that both transcultural entanglements and cultural boundaries are coexisting at the same time, but that the transcultural entanglements have more potential to reveal the inherent property of cultures than the artificially constructed boundaries do. In terms of this descriptive function, it is usually not that problematic to use the term "transcultural" to describe some modern cultural phenomena. It is because since the 19th century, the modern cultures used to be constructed with distinct boundaries in an essentialist manner. The essentialist conception of cultures has also played a role in this boundary making-process due to its operative potential,[19] which motivates us to take actual actions to treat cultures as container-like spheres, such as to actively set or strengthen boundaries, to separate peoples, and to excluding other cultures. By this way, a reality that is consistent with this essentialist perception has been established: we distinguish people in an essentialist manner in terms of their nationalities, cultures, ethnic backgrounds, races, ideologies, political views, etc. These national, cultural, ethnic, racial, ideological, and political boundaries have formed a part of the reality of modern cultures, coexisting with the transcultural phenomena that cross these boundaries. Thus, it is always reasonable to describe modern cultural phenomena as "transcultural" because the boundaries are also a part of the reality of modern cultures, which needs to arouse our reflections, and to further deflect our attention from boundary-making or boundary-keeping to boundary-deconstructing by using the term "transcultural."

However, to describe ancient cultural phenomena as "transcultural" might cause misunderstandings. When we use the term "transcultural" to describe ancient cultural phenomena, our original aim should be to challenge the *current* reality that the essentialist perceptions of the ancient cultures are still taken for granted in the studies of the cultures that we are investigating, but not to project a kind of fact *onto the past* that assumes the cultures

[19] The operative potential of the conceptions of cultures is also mentioned by Welsch in his paper "Transculturality." In this paper, Welsch argues that the conceptions of cultures are not merely descriptive, but also operative. See Welsch, "Transculturality," 200.

essentialized in a modern way have also appeared in ancient times. The essentialist reality that we are arguing against by using the term "transcultural" primarily belongs to the contemporary era but not necessarily to ancient times. Since the term "transcultural" is usually employed to overcome the modern essentialized concept of culture on a theoretical level, if we insist on using the term "transcultural" to describe ancient cultures, making this description consistent with our theoretical concern, it might cause some misunderstandings that might mislead our audience to automatically assume that ancient cultures are naturally essentialized in a modern-like way. Although the operative ability of cultural essentialism has generated a part of essentialist social reality in modern times, it has never been able to modify the historical reality in the past. Thus, even though this term has its enormous potential to reveal complexly interconnected cultural entanglements, it may not be proper to employ it in all the cases without particular clarification. We should avoid assuming that the processes, factors, and elements involved in the making and remaking of cultures in the past are identical with the ones of our modern times. Thus, if we do not analyze the specific applicability of this term and clarify its use in different situations, the abuse of this term may lead to unnecessary misunderstandings, causing more unnecessary criticism and crusade.

To summarize, when we investigate modern cultures, the use of the term "transcultural" can well function both theoretically and descriptively, challenging the essentialist theory and the concomitant contemporary social reality at the same time. However, when we investigate ancient cultures, the use of this term can only well function theoretically but *not* descriptively. To make the term-use clear and transparent enough, I hereby suggest that whenever we decide to draw upon the concept of transculturality and to use the term "transcultural," we specify our use of this term and avoid its abuse by always clarifying and articulating what kind of essentialist view of cultures it is that we are going to transcend in a theoretical sense, or what the established essentialist part of social reality over there it is that we are going to challenge in a descriptive way.

In the studies of ancient Gandhāran Buddhist material culture, the term "transcultural" is applicable, but this applicability also needs clarification. It is proper to say that we take a "transcultural" perspective to re-examine Gandhāran Buddhist material culture because it is an appropriate term that we can use to theoretically transcend the essentialist view of Gandhāran Buddhist material culture. Under the domination of an essentialist view, enormous attention has been paid to the "contributory influences" that are deemed as being originated from various cultures, such as Greek, Indian, Parthian, and Kushan cultures. All of these cultures are deemed

as internally homogenized and externally bounded cultural spheres. Even today, this essentialist view on Gandhāran Buddhist material culture has not received enough attention and critique. It is the current reality that the essentialist view of Gandhāran Buddhist material culture is still taken for granted by many scholars and the public today. This essentialist view is still prevalent, especially in public history, which is clearly manifested by the essentialist descriptions of Gandhāran Buddhist material culture in contemporary Western museum contexts mentioned in the introduction chapter. It is the essentialist view of Gandhāran Buddhist material culture as well as the contemporary reality that this view is still taken for granted by both academia and the public that we need to challenge, to reverse, and to transcend by drawing upon to the concept of transculturality.

However, we need to be quite cautious when we attempt to describe the ancient cultural phenomena concerning Gandhāran Buddhist material culture as "transcultural," because the historical social reality to which Gandhāran Buddhist material culture belongs may not necessarily embrace the essentialist bounded cultures like those constructed by modern art historians and archaeologists. Those Gandhāran craftsmen, sculptors, aristocrats, commoners, religious believers, Buddhist pilgrims, travelers, merchants, and military people, etc.—who were from diverse ethnic and local cultural backgrounds but jointly created or participated in Gandhāran Buddhist material culture—might not necessarily assume the cultural flows converging in Gandhāra as being originated from various essentialist cultural spheres with modernly constructed distinct boundaries. In this case, if we still want to add the adjective "transcultural" in front of the cultural phenomena that are related to Gandhāran Buddhist material culture, there will be only one reason: to emphasize the dynamic cultural entanglements inherent in the historical *past* that can challenge the *contemporary—but not the historical*—reality of the essentialist problems in Gandhāran Buddhist material culture. This reason leads back to our theoretical mission: it is not necessary to fulfill our theoretical mission by describing the ancient cultural phenomena as "transcultural." Instead, we take a "transcultural" theoretical perspective or a "transcultural" methodological approach to question cultural essentialism. Therefore, in order to avoid unnecessary misunderstandings, I suggest to distinguish the theoretical use of the term "transcultural" from its descriptive use and to only take the theoretical use as valid in the discourses of Gandhāran Buddhist material culture. In this thesis that deals with ancient cultures, I will use the term "transcultural" to refer to the theoretical view or approach that I take to challenge the essentialist understanding of cultures but not to directly describe the cultural phenomena *per se* concerning Gandhāran Buddhist material culture as "transcultural."

3. Translocative Analysis: To Reveal Cultural Entanglements in Gandhāran Buddhist Material Culture

After clarifying the application of the concept of transculturality in the studies of Gandhāran Buddhist material culture, let us turn to the contents of Gandhāran Buddhist material culture to see what previously neglected cultural entanglements can be revealed or emphasized by adopting a transcultural approach. In order to illuminate the cultural entanglements that are disguised by the essentialist gaze, I take the transcultural approach of translocative analysis to identify the possible cultural flows embodied in the material culture in Gandhāra. In this section, I will first introduce the transcultural theoretical background and the method of translocative analysis, and then provide an example of the translocative analysis of the Gandhāran case.

(1) Theoretical Background and Method of Translocative Analysis

Thomas Tweed, the American scholar in religious studies has proposed a theory of religion. By drawing upon aquatic metaphors, this theory aims to "emphasize movement, avoid essentialism, and acknowledge contact,"[20] which is basically a transcultural approach. In his monograph *Crossing and Dwelling: A Theory of Religion* (2006), he defined religions as "confluences of organic-cultural flows that intensify joy and confront suffering by drawing on human and suprahuman forces to make homes and cross boundaries."[21] In his view, each religion is a "swirl of transfluvial currents,"[22] merging both religious and non-religious streams that jointly propel religious cultural flows. Arjun Appadurai initially systematized the concept of "cultural flows." In his paper "Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy," he identified "five dimensions of global cultural flows" to interpret the recent globalizing patterns, each of which was an "imagined world": "ethnoscapes"; "mediascapes"; "technoscapes"; "finanscapes"; and "ideoscapes."[23] These five dimensions respectively illuminate today's transnational cultural flows of peoples, media, technologies, money, and ideas. However, from Tweed's perspective, these five categories "offer little aid in interpreting religions, unless we suggest that religion is nothing more than ethnicity, economy, or ideology."[24] Therefore, based on Appadurai's use of the theoretical terms that describe cultural flows, Tweed introduced another parallel category that is conducive to the analysis of the dynamics of religions. He suggested that we could take religions

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[20] Thomas Tweed, *Crossing and Dwelling: A Theory of Religion* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 2006), 55.
[21] Tweed, *Crossing and Dwelling*, 54.
[22] Tweed, *Crossing and Dwelling*, 60.
[23] Arjun Appadurai, "Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy," *Theory, culture & society* 7, no. 2-3 (June 1990): 296.
[24] Tweed, *Crossing and Dwelling*, 61.

as "sacroscapes."[25] By this, he integrated religions into the discussions and observations of cultural flows, also paying attention to dynamic religious flows. According to Tweed, the term "sacroscapes" is only helpful when we adopt aquatic analogies but not the terrestrial ones. Religions, as confluences of various flows, are never fixed and static. They always move across time and space. Thus, they are spatial and temporal. Here, Tweed particularly emphasized the spatial metaphor, introducing two terms related to space or place—*crossing* and *dwelling* to suggest that religions are spatial practices.[26] Religions help people make homes (dwelling) and cross boundaries (crossing).[27] As for dwelling, religions involve homemaking, "situating the devout in the body, the home, the homeland, and the cosmos," positioning them in both natural terrain and social space.[28] Religions prescribe the social locations of their pious followers, defining who they are and where they are. They help the devotees to "to find a place of their own": to construct their homes, to delineate domestic space, to assert their collective identity.[29] As for crossing, religions "enable and constrain terrestrial, corporeal, and cosmic crossings."[30] They orient their devotees to move spatially and temporally, marking and crossing the boundaries of natural terrain, the limits of embodied life, as well as the ultimate horizon of human life. Hence, religion is about settling in and moving across. Tweed here pointed out that the latter presupposition fits well with his theoretical commitments—to avoid essentialism and "to correct theories that have presupposed stasis and minimized interdependence" by focusing on movement and relation.[31]

Some scholars expressed their suspicions towards Tweed's theory. For example, Manuel Vásquez focused on Tweed's use of aquatic metaphors, questioning that "whether aquatic metaphors taken on their own do not underplay the importance of power and resistance in social analysis."[32] Thus, he suggested that Tweed's emphasis of the aquatic metaphors should be supplemented by notions of "networks and social fields."[33] In this thesis, I will follow Tweed's use of aquatic metaphors to describe the movements of religious/cultural elements but I will also attend to the local agentive actions that engage with the "cultural flows" to take into account local agency and power issues. In addition, Finbar Curtis criticized that Tweed's work was "better understood as a

[25] Tweed, *Crossing and Dwelling*, 61.
[26] Tweed, *Crossing and Dwelling*, 73.
[27] Tweed, *Crossing and Dwelling*, 74.
[28] Tweed, *Crossing and Dwelling*, 74-75.
[29] Tweed, *Crossing and Dwelling*, 75.
[30] Tweed, *Crossing and Dwelling*, 75.
[31] Tweed, *Crossing and Dwelling*, 77.
[32] Ann Taves, "Assessing Theories of Religion: A Forum on Thomas A. Tweed's Crossing and Dwelling: A Theory of Religion." *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 77, no. 2 (2009): 405.
[33] Taves, "Assessing Theories of Religion," 405.

set of 'nuanced and thoughtful strategies' for approaching the fluidity of religious phenomena than as a theory of religion."[34] Although Tweed's insights might not be systematic enough to be called as a theory, his ideas are enough to inspire us to reflect upon the conventional essentialist understandings of religions and cultures and thus to provide us with more space to develop alternative theories.

Some readers of *Crossing and Dwelling* also questioned that Tweed's theory of religion mainly reflected on religions in modernity but not the religions that are not under the conditions of late modernity.[35] Tweed acknowledged that he hoped to make sense of the most prominent conditions of late modernity—like the popularization of modern communication and transportation technologies which lead to the time-space—that have largely impacted the mediation of religions. However, religions in late modernity do not have an exclusively monopoly on the characteristics of movement and relation. The theory of crossing and dwelling is also helpful for us to understand the religions other than the ones under the condition of late modernity. Every religious tradition, including Buddhism, is "a flowing together of currents."[36] With the help of this theory, we can further understand that it is not helpful to take an essentialist eye on Buddhism, seeing it as having an "essence," a fixed, enduring, unchanging, and static core of ideas and practices:

> "What we have come to call 'Buddhism' was always becoming, being made and remade over and over again in contact and exchange, as it was carried along in the flow of things. There is *no pure substratum*, *no static and independent core* called 'Buddhism'—in the founder's day or in later generations."[37]

In addition to its applicability on the studies of Buddhism, the theory of crossing and dwelling of religion is also suitable to study religious material culture in history. Firstly, the use of the terms like "flow" and "confluence" potentially encourages interpreters to pay attention to the movements of *non-human or impersonal forces*, like *artifacts* and institutions. As Tweed admitted, this inclination can be a blind point. Some scholars also suggested replacing the term "flow" with "movement" because the term "flow" does not seem to arouse our attention to the personal agents. Tweed also stressed that we need to keep our eyes on the human forms. Anyway, even

[34] Taves, "Assessing Theories of Religion," 405.
[35] Thomas Tweed, "Theory and Method in the Study of Buddhism: Toward 'Translocative' analysis," *Journal of Global Buddhism* 12 (2011): 22.
[36] Tweed, *Crossing and Dwelling*, 60.
[37] Tweed, "Theory and Method," 23, emphasis added.

though the use of these terms has shortcomings to reveal the role of human actors and human-thing relations, it cannot hide the fact that the terms like "flow" and "confluence" are particularly favorable to describe the movements of material culture, its production techniques, and visual characteristics. Secondly, the analysis of cultural flows is also compatible with the studies of religious material culture *in the past*. Religions will generate effects and leave traces when they move across time and space.[38] Undoubtedly, historical material culture is also part of the traces that the relevant religious flows have left. Lastly and also most importantly, Tweed's spatial metaphor of crossing and dwelling is not only applicable to the actors of religious practices, but also to the religious flows themselves, which contain both human and non-human factors at the same time. It is not only humans but also non-human actors that are crossing and dwelling in religious processes. Religions are also entangled processes between humans and things. Indeed, religions help people cross and dwell. However, in religious processes, the relation between humans and things cannot be simply neglected. In this dynamic religious framework, when people are making home or feeling at home, the non-human factors—like religious material cultures—are also localizing, anchoring, and dwelling themselves in specific "chronotopes."[39]

Projecting this theory of religion onto the methodological plane, Tweed also showed its methodological implications. He suggested following the translocative flows wherever they lead, asserting that "to study the historical or contemporary expressions of Buddhism is to trace the flow of people, rituals, artifacts, beliefs, and institutions across spatial and temporal boundaries."[40] Meanwhile, we should also pay attention to how these flows dwell in various localities, anchoring themselves in particular local sacroscapes, situating devotees in particular positions in terms of self-associated identity. In this way, this theory does not only help to study the migration and transmission of religious traditions, but also helps to interpret the *mixing* of religious traditions. Thus, this method turns out to be appropriate to reveal the highly complex cultural entanglements of Gandhāran Buddhist material culture that mediate various localities, space, time, or the configuration of space and time, namely "chronotopes".

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[38] Tweed, *Crossing and Dwelling*, 62.

[39] The concept "chronotope" was first taken up by the Russian scholar Mikhail Mikhailovich Bakhtin to refer to "the intrinsic connectedness of temporal and spatial relationships that are artistically expressed in literature." For more details, see Mikhail Mikhailovich Bakhtin, "Forms of Time and of the Chronotope in the Novel: Notes toward a Historical Poetics," in *The Dialogic Imagination*, ed. Michael Holquist, trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981), 84-258. Tweed also adopted the concept "chronotope" in his theory to refer to the configuration of space and time.

[40] Tweed, "Theory and Method," 23.

In order to crystallize his method for a translocative analysis, Tweed enumerated five axioms to instruct us to conduct translocative religious studies:[41]

1) *"Follow the flows."*

   To attend to the kinetics of crossing and dwelling of the religious flows, which means to "follow the flows of people, artifacts, institutions, and practices that have transformed indifferent space into familiar place."

2) *"Notice all the figures crossing."*

   To attend to all the figures who "are present" and crossing boundaries. This axiom emphasizes the human components of the entangled flows.

3) *"Attend to all the senses and all religion's components."*

   To attend to the role of sensorial practices in the kinetics of crossing and dwelling, the role of the senses in the process of homemaking and the construction of social identity, as well as the way in which the senses generate propulsion to help devotees to cross boundaries.

4) *"Consider varying scales."*

   To extend our study's temporal span and geographical scope; to not to confine ourselves within a particular default scale, like the scale of the modern period and the scale of the nation-state.

5) *"Notice how flows start, stop, and shift."*

   To attend to the "institution structures" that control, manipulate, block, constrain, compel, or propel the flows. This axiom focuses on the role of power, institutions, legal system, and moral standard in the flowing process of the flows.

(2) Case Study: Visual Representation of *Vajrapāni* in Gandhāran Buddhist Material Culture

With the help of these methodological tips, we can further continue to focus on case studies of Gandhāran Buddhist material culture. In the case of the visual representation of *Vajrapāni* in Gandhāran Buddhist material culture, with the help of chronological periodization and geographical positioning of material culture supported by the archaeological excavation data, we can roughly trace the flows of some particularly typical and striking visual characteristics represented in the archeological evidences as well as the ideas conveyed by them. Although we cannot entirely rely on the stylistic analysis due to its speculative property sometimes, the stylistic similarities of some distinctive and iconic visual features between different objects do have the

[41] Tweed, "Theory and Method," 24-26.

potential to partially reveal the traces of the dynamic religious flows that connect various localities, times, or chronotopes in ancient Gandhāra.

Vajrapāni, a Buddhist protective deity, is usually regarded as the guardian or bodyguard of Gautama Buddha.[42] In Sanskrit, Vajrapāni literally means "*vajra* in [his] hand," the paraphrase of which is "the holder of the *vajra*." Etymologically, *Vajra* means "adamant," "diamond," or "thunderbolt" in Sanskrit. In the context of the word *Vajrapāni*, vajra refers to a magical weapon used as a ritual object that symbolizes overwhelming power, indestructibility, and immutability.[43] Vajrapāni is commonly depicted in Gandhāran sculptures and reliefs, standing next to the Buddha and holding his vajra. In the iconographic repository of Gandhāran Buddhist material culture, the deity Vajrapāni is sometimes represented as a semi-nude muscular man wearing a lion skin, usually with a beard as well. Since semi-nudity is not that usual in Gandhāran Buddhist material culture, and the resemblance of the Gandhāran depiction of Vajrapāni to the Classical iconography of Heracles in ancient Greece is so striking, it is not surprising that some scholars would regard Heracles as the prototype of the Gandhāran Vajrapāni in terms of visual representation.[44] Indeed, because the features of Heracles' visual presentation are very iconic and distinctive, it is difficult to deny the possible connection between the depiction of Vajrapāni in Gandhāran Buddhist material culture and that of Heracles in Classical Greek material culture. However, to what extent we can state that Vajrapāni in Gandhāra is a modified version of Heracles remains to be examined. In order to trace the flow of the figural characteristics of Heracles, let us first see how the flow started in history.

§ Heracles: The Source of the Flow

Heracles (in ancient Greek: Ἡρακλῆς, known to the Latins as Hercules) is one of the most popular demi-god heroes in Classical mythology. According to Greek mythology, Heracles once achieved a series of great labors that primarily aimed to rid the world of a certain number of

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[42] See Hsing I-tien 邢義田, "Helakelisi zai dongfang: qi xingxiang zai gudai Zhongya, Yindu, yu Zhongguo zaoxing yishu zhong de liubo yu bianxing" 赫拉克利斯在東方——其形象在古代中亞、印度與中國造型藝術中的流播與變形 [Heracles in the East: The Diffusion and Transformation of His Image in the Plastic Arts of Ancient Central Asia, India, and China], in *Zhongwai guanxi shi, xin shiliao yu xin wenti* 中外關係史——新史料與新問題 [History of Sino-Foreign Relations: New Historical Materials and New Issues], ed. Rong Xinjiang 榮新江 and Li Xiaocong 李孝聰 (Beijing: Kexue Chubanshe, 2004), 28; and Ladislav Stančo, *Greek Gods in the East: Hellenistic Iconographic Schemes in Central Asia* (Prague: Charles University in Prague, Karolinum Press, 2012), 139, 145, 227, 232, 251.

[43] Robert E. Buswell Jr. and Donald S. Lopez Jr., the entry "vajra," in *The Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2014).

[44] See Finbarr Barry Flood, "Herakles and the 'Perpetual Acolyte' of the Buddha: Some Observations on the Iconography of Vajrapani in Gandharan Art," *South Asian Studies* 5, no. 1 (1989): 25; and David L. Snellgrove, ed. *The Image of the Buddha* (Paris: UNESCO, 1978), 179.

monsters.[45] According to the authoritative list of the Twelve Labors that was established by the mythographers of the Hellenic Age, Heracles' first labor was to kill the Nemean lion.[46] During his first labor, Heracles fashioned his club—which later became his most distinctive weapon—by himself in Nemea. In some other versions of the myth, it is also mentioned that he cut the club from the trunk of a wild olive tree.[47] After the Nemean lion was killed, he skinned it and draped himself with its skin. Thus, the impenetrable loin skin became his armor and the lion's head became his helmet.[48]

Consistent with the mythological descriptions, most visual representations of Heracles in ancient Greek material culture have faithfully represented the hero's most typical characteristics—the club and the lion skin. In Greece, since the 6th century BC, Heraclean iconography has developed rapidly and become increasingly popular.[49] Also in the same period, the club and the lion skin became a portion of the defining characteristics of the visual representations of Heracles. These features have appeared on thousands of Greek antiques, as well as Roman antiques in the later period, including ancient coins, vases, reliefs, bronze statues, and marble sculptures.[50] In his paper "Heracles in the East," Hsing summarized a few features of Heracles' iconography in Classical material culture that are particularly noteworthy:[51]

1) Hercules is often depicted as a naked and bearded man with strikingly muscular and well-developed physique.[52]
2) The complete lion skin, which is not only with the head attached but also the paws and even the tail, is either draped over him or grasped in his hand. Sometimes he is seen wearing only the lion head helmet; sometimes he is only wearing the lion skin without wearing the lion head helmet.
3) The most striking feature of the club made of wild olive wood is that the handle end is thin but the other end is much thicker. The surface of the club is not smooth. There are many stubs left on the surface after the tree branches have been cut off.
4) The images of Heracles of the Roman era generally modeled on Greek works. In some cases, Heracles carries the club on his shoulder; in others, his body leans slightly to one

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[45] Pierre Grimal, *The dictionary of classical mythology*, trans. A. R. Maxwell-Hyslop (Oxford: Basil Blackwell Publisher, 1986), 196.
[46] Grimal, *The dictionary of classical mythology*, 196.
[47] Grimal, *The dictionary of classical mythology*, 196.
[48] Grimal, *The dictionary of classical mythology*, 196.
[49] Stančo, *Greek Gods in the East*, 137.
[50] Hsing, "Helakelisi zai dongfang" 赫拉克利斯在東方 [Heracles in the East], 17.
[51] These features are translated and summarized from Hsing's "Helakelisi zai dongfang" 赫拉克利斯在東方 [Heracles in the East], 18.
[52] There are also samples of not being naked or not wearing a beard.

side, supported by the club that stands on the ground. The most noteworthy change is that the lion helmet became the formal attire of the standard-bearers of the Roman legions in the first and the second centuries.

5) The club and the lion skin are the most important marks of Heracles. However, they do not always appear on a single image at the same time. With the help of the depicted contexts, we can usually identify Hercules with one of the marks that appear in the image.

Figure 1 Attica amphora

Figure 2 Heracles on the amphora (from one side)

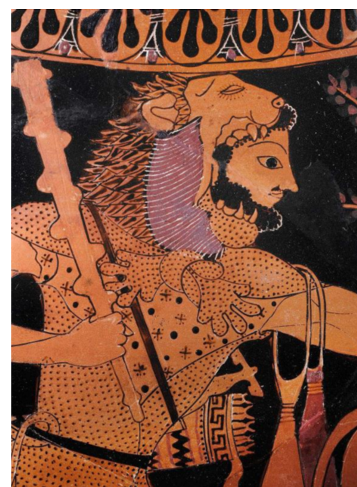

Figure 3 Heracles on the amphora (from another side)

Two examples of the images of Heracles in Classical material culture realistically reflect some of the characteristics that Hsing has summarized. The first object is a two-handled jar (*amphora*) manufactured in Attica (Figure 1), which can be dated back to 525-520 BC. Both sides of the amphora depict Heracles driving a bull to sacrifice.[53] One side is in Black Figure style and the other in Red Figure style. On this amphora, Heracles is wearing the lion skin, including the lion head helmet. The lion skin is complete from its head to paws. The front paws of the lion are knotted in front of his chest. In addition, he is also holding the olive-wood club with his right hand. The protruding stubs left on the surface of the club after the branches being trimmed are clear and legible, especially in the image on the side in Black Figure style (Figure 2).

[53] This amphora is from the collection of the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston. The image sources (figure 1, 2, and 3) are from the official website of the museum: https://collections.mfa.org/objects/153401/twohandled-jar-amphora-with-herakles-driving-a-bull-to-sa?ctx=473be760-3eb5-4670-8e64-1e84ab063aeb&idx=0.

Figure 4 Farnese Heracles (Heracles at rest)

Another object is the large marble statue *Heracles at rest* (Figure 4)[54] at the National Archaeological Museum of Naples. This colossal sculpture, which was discovered at the Baths of Caracalla in Rome, is an enlarged copy of a lost bronze sculpture created by Lysippos in about 320 BC in Greece.[55] Lysippos' original work, known as *Weary Heracles*, was a masterpiece that had provoked considerable imitations across the Hellenistic and Roman worlds.[56] This marble statue in Naples is one of the over eighty surviving copies of Lysippos' work.[57] It was copied and signed by Glykon of Athens at the end of the 2nd century or the beginning of the 3rd century AD. Since it was also in the collection of the Farnese family in Naples, the sculpture is also referred to as the Farnese Heracles; and the type of the pose of the Farnese Heracles is referred to as Farnese type.[58] This statue depicts a heavily bearded Heracles, exaggeratedly muscular but weary, leaning on his club to take a rest after the exhausting labors. In the representation of this statue, the naked Heracles is neither wearing the pelt of the Nemean lion nor the lion head helmet, but draping them over the club that is propped under his arm. Therefore, this is another sample that represents the most typical features of the visual representations of Heracles—the club and the lion skin (with the lion head helmet)—at the same time. Although this copy is not the original piece that was made in the 4th century BC in the Hellenic Age, it should have inherited the iconic features of the original work—like the Farnese type pose, the naked body, the muscular physique,

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54 The source of the image is from the website of the National Archaeological Museum of Naples: https://www.museoarcheologiconapoli.it/en/baths-of-caracalla/.
55 See the official description of the statue *Heracles at rest* on the website of the National Archaeological Museum of Naples: https://www.museoarcheologiconapoli.it/en/baths-of-caracalla/; and Diana E. E. Kleiner, *Roman sculpture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 338.
56 Mary Beard and John Henderson, *Classical Art from Greece to Rome* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 199.
57 Beard and Henderson, *Classical Art*, 199.
58 Kleiner, *Roman sculpture*, 338.

and the club partially covered by the lion pelt with the lion head helmet—which are also shared by other copies. Through this sculpture, we can still delineate the original contour of the Hellenic work, the source of the iconographic flow.

§ Political, Military and Commercial Factors: The Propulsion of the Flow to Cross Boundaries

It is almost undeniable that the expedition of Alexander the Great and the widely established Alexandria cities throughout the East significantly fostered the cultural interaction, exchange, integration, and innovation between Asia and Europe.[59] Along with the infiltration of political and military forces caused by the military expedition and political governance, plenty of cultures, practices, and ideas from the Greek region—the homeland of Alexander the Great—were brought into Central Asia, merging into the streams of the local cultures. The figural characteristics of Heracles are one part of these cultures that were either introduced or strengthened by Alexander's political and military campaign.

The relationship between Alexander the Great and the demi-god hero Heracles is particularly close. Alexander revered the ancient heroes—Heracles and Achilles—as his ancestors. He believed that on his father's side he was a descent of Heracles, whereas on his mother's side a descendant of Achilles.[60] Feeling the blood of Heracles flowing in his veins, he longed to equal the fame of Heracles as well.[61] Alexander committed himself throughout his whole life to emulate and surpass his ancestors.[62] The German Alexandrian scholar Ulrich Wilcken also saw Alexander's wish to emulate and surpass his ancestors as a significant impetus for his political and military achievements, asserting that "this deeply-rooted and vivid conception of his personal affinity with these heroes is one of those non-rational and instinctive motives."[63]

In order to give prominence to the close affinity between himself and Heracles, Alexander often appeared as an "avatar" of Heracles in material culture. For example, he depicted himself like Heracles on coins, also wearing the lion head helmet.[64] In the Hellenistic period, the Alexander image even merged with the image of Heracles.[65] This merging means that the veneration of

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59 Hsing, "Helakelisi zai dongfang" 赫拉克利斯在東方 [Heracles in the East], 19.
60 Ulrich Wilcken, *Alexander the Great*, trans. G. C. Richard (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1967), 56.
61 Arrian, *The Campaigns of Alexander*, trans. Aubrey de Sélincourt (New York: Penguin Books, 1971), 151.
62 Hsing, "Helakelisi zai dongfang" 赫拉克利斯在東方 [Heracles in the East], 19.
63 Wilcken, *Alexander the Great*, 56.
64 Hsing, "Helakelisi zai dongfang" 赫拉克利斯在東方 [Heracles in the East], 20.
65 Kazim Abdullaev, "Reutilization of Old Images for New Iconographic Generations: The Question of the Destiny of Greek Images in the Post-Hellenistic Period," *East and West* 52, no. 1/4 (December 2002): 62.

Alexander could directly encourage the local people to know and to venerate Heracles. Due to the overwhelming effect brought by Alexander's military conquest and the ruling of himself and his successors, the merged iconography of Alexander-Heracles became significantly popularized in the Hellenistic world. In the period after Alexander, Alexander also became an object of emulation and adoration by many emperors and kings, regardless if they were the Roman emperors in Europe or the kings of Bactrians, Scythians, or Kushans in Asia. As a result, the popularity of Alexander's image due to political and military factors also significantly prompted certain features of Heracles' representations to flow throughout Greece, Western Asia, and Central Asia, as well as to be deeply implanted into local soil within this vast geographical area.

In addition to the political and military factors, commercial activities also have effectively promoted the flow of specific cultural elements between Europe and Asia, including the flow of the iconographic features of Heracles. In ancient times, since the 2nd century BC till the 16th century AD, the mercantile activities had greatly connected East and West, meanwhile promoting far-reaching exchanges of religious beliefs and cultural practices.[66] In 1877, this route network was christened by the German scholar Baron Ferdinand von Richthofen as the "Silk Road."[67] Von Richthofen depicted this trade route as a trunk route, stretching for thousands of kilometers across the Eurasia continent, connecting China and Europe in Roman times.[68] More recently, scholars like Valerie Hansen criticized the prevailing view of the Silk Road as a relatively straight and well-traveled actual "road" directly linking China and Europe, arguing that the Silk Road is actually a network, which consisted of a stretch of shifting and unmarked paths. Even so, they cannot deny the fact that the Silk Roads (not a single trunk road) in history did play a significant role in promoting cultural exchanges and interactions throughout Eurasia.[69] Although there was no clearly recorded and deliberately paved road directly connecting China and Rome, and the amount of cargo transported along the Silk Roads was not large at all,[70] these "drifting trails" and "unmarked footpaths" did connect Asia and Europe in a fragmented manner.[71] Drawing an analogy that might not be appropriate enough, we can say that people from various localities along the Silk Roads transmitted goods and cultures in a similar way that the speed-runners pass the baton in a relay. In history, the Silk Roads mainly served to transfer raw

[66] "Silk Roads: The Routes Network of Chang'an-Tianshan Corridor," World Heritage List, UNESCO, https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1442.
[67] Valerie Hansen, *The Silk Road: A New History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 6.
[68] Hansen, *The Silk Road*, 7.
[69] Hansen, *The Silk Road*, 5.
[70] Hansen, *The Silk Road*, 5-9.
[71] Hansen, *The Silk Road*, 8.

materials, foodstuffs, and luxury goods.[72] However, it was not only goods that were transferred along the Silk Roads, but also beliefs, religious practices, and relevant artistic aesthetics and crafts. Archeological evidences have attested that the flows of Buddhism, Hellenistic religions, Zoroastrianism, Manichaeism, and later Nestorianism spread along the Silk Roads to a wider geographical scale. Within the network of the Silk Roads, the area of Central Asia was undoubtedly active in commodity exchanges and cultural interaction. As the picture below shows (Figure 5),[73] the main routes of the Silk Roads were densely intertwined in Central Asia. Gandhāra area was also one of the most important nodes in the expansive commercial and cultural network.

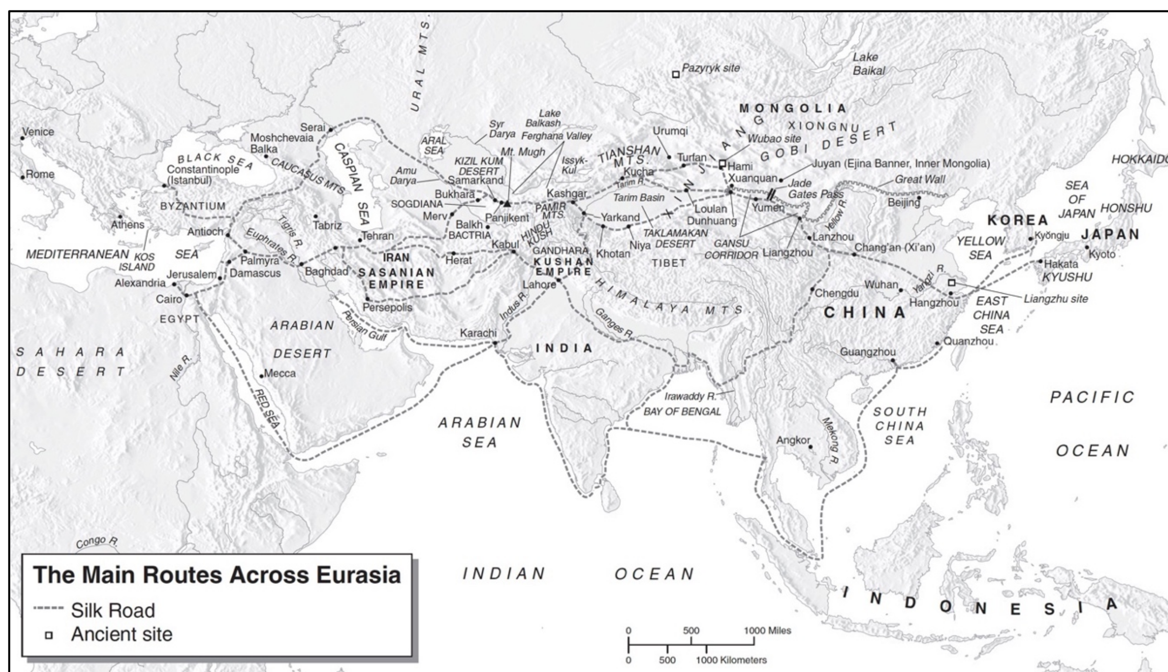

Figure 5 The main routes of the Silk Roads

Some rare archaeological evidences have also shown the facilitating role of commodity exchanges in the flowing of Heracles' iconographic features. A small terracotta figure in the Tokyo National Museum (Figure 6),[74] which probably depicts baby Heracles, is a testimony of the East-West trade in Central Asia. It was discovered by the Otani mission in Khotan in 1910. This figure was made from molds and imported to Khotan from the West—most likely Egypt—through long-distance networks of commercial and cultural exchanges.[75] According to representation of this clay figure, Heracles was depicted as a plump and joyful baby loosely

[72] UNESCO, "Silk Roads."
[73] The picture is from Hansen, *The Silk Road*, 6-7.
[74] The picture is from the official website of the Tokyo National Museum: https://webarchives.tnm.jp/imgsearch/show/C0070803.
[75] Marylin Martin Rhie, *Early Buddhist Art of China and Central Asia*, vol. 1 (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 265.

holding the club in his right hand. There seems to be a piece of animal skin being draped over his left shoulder and a pillar or altar next to his left leg.[76]

Figure 6 Baby Heracles

To sum up, both the political and military factors and the mercantile activities once served as the propulsion of the flow of Heracles' images across Eurasia. The military conquest and political governance of Alexander the Great and his Hellenistic successors contributed to the popularization of the image of Heracles and Alexander-Heracles; and the distantly expansive commercial networks also significantly promoted the flow of Heracles' image to cross the geographical barriers, flowing from Greece to the farther East.

Before we move forward to the analysis of the image of Vajrapāni that is regarded to incorporate Heracles' figural features in Gandhāran Buddhist material culture, let us conclude the section of tracing the flow which later merged into the repertoire of Gandhāran Vajrapāni by showing a map (Figure 7)[77] and a list of the relevant archaeological evidences that indicate how the flow of the image of Heracles traveled across Eurasia, being absorbed into local iconographic landscapes. The flow of Heracles' figural features did not directly insert into Central Asia but continuously moved through the vast territory between Mediterranean Europe and Central Asia, generating various localized images in different localities along the way. As the map demonstrates, we can roughly see that from the 4th century BC to the 3rd century AD, Heracles' image widely spread across Western Asia and Central Asia.

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[76] Rhie, *Early Buddhist Art*, 1: 266.
[77] I drew this map based on the content in Stančo's *Greek Gods in the East.*

Figure 7 The map of the geographical distribution of the relevant archaeological evidences

Discovered Location	Items	Time	Description
(a) Myriandrus (in today's southern Turkey)	Coins	Arrived in this area since 325 BC.	The coins depict a bust of beardless Heracles wearing the lion's scalp on his head.[78]
(b) Seleucia (in today's Iraq)	Terracotta figures	Hellenistic era (323 BC-31 BC) Parthian era (143 BC-69/70)	Some figures depict Heracles in Farnese type; others depict Heracles leaning against a tree trunk.[79]
(c) Nisa (in today's Turkmenistan)	Metopes	From the turn of 3rd and 2nd century BC	The metopes depict the head of Heracles with the club and a lion's head.[80]
(d) Behistun (in today's Iran)	Rock relief	148 BC	This rock relief depicts a naked Heracles lying on a lion skin. The club is placed beside his legs.[81]
(e) Zartepa (in today's southern Uzbekistan)	Terracotta heads	1st century AD	These terracotta heads depict Heracles' head with heavy beard.[82]
(f) Charsada (in today's northern Pakistan)	Fragment of a stone sculpture	1st century AD	This torso of a standing figure as a fragment from a stone sculpture depicts Heracles holding a lion.[83]
(g) Dilberjin (in today's northern Afghanistan)	Fragment of a clay sculpture	2nd-3rd century AD	This is a fragment of a clay sculpture on the wooden core. It depicts a naked standing Heracles.[84]

Table 1 The list of the relevant archaeological evidences

[78] Stančo, *Greek Gods in the East*, 139, also see Fig. 199 on page 147.
[79] Stančo, *Greek Gods in the East*, 137-38.
[80] Stančo, *Greek Gods in the East*, 138.
[81] Callieri Pierfrancesco, "Hellenistic Art on The Iranian Plateau: Movement of Objects, Movement of People," *Проблемы Истории, Филологии, Культуры* 1, no. 47 (2015): 15, also see Fig. 1 on page 15.
[82] Stančo, *Greek Gods in the East*, 146, also see Fig. 227 and Fig. 228.
[83] Stančo, *Greek Gods in the East*, 144, also see Fig. 230 on page 156.
[84] Stančo, *Greek Gods in the East*, 145, also see Fig. 234 on page 157.

§ Similar Representation Features, Different Referred Figures: Dwelling of Heracles' Figural Characteristics in Gandhāra

Although, driven by political, military, and commercial factors, the image of Heracles was widely distributed across the Eurasian continent, the contents and the effects of the flow of Heracles' figural features were not static. Different localities had their own way to adopt, absorb, adapt, have recourse to, pick up, engage with, react to, emulate, remodel, reconstitute, develop, or transform Heracles' figural features, which were introduced from other localities. The flow of Heracles' figural features moved through different localities, bringing certain fresh materials and ideas to certain localities to serve as the inspiration resources of local cultural integration, reproduction, and innovation. At the same time, the flow also took certain new meanings that were made in different localities through the encounters with farther localities, generating more opportunities and possibilities for cultural reproduction and innovation. As Kazim Abdullaev pointed out in his paper "Reutilization of Old Images for New Iconographic Generations" when he analyzed the transformation of Heracles' image in Bactria, Heracles in Central Asia "existed and developed, losing certain features and gaining new ones"; and it is also possible that "it changed also in meaning and was adapted by the local population to suit its own mythology and cults."[85] This is not only the case in Bactria in the Hellenistic era but also in Gandhāra in the Kushan period. In Gandhāra, the most distinctive iconographic features of Heracles—like the lion skin and the lion head helmet—still existed, but had already detached from the prototype Heracles, merging into the visual representation of a local Buddhist deity. Many examples in Gandhāran Buddhist material culture can reflect this transformation. Here I only enumerate two of them.

The first example is the fragment of a relief (2nd-3rd century AD) kept in the British Museum (Figure 8).[86] Only the right half of the rectangular relief remains, which contains the figures of four persons. All four figures are gazing toward the central part of the relief—a part probably with a sitting Buddha—that has not been preserved.[87] The figure of Vajrapāni is in the left lower corner of this fragment, standing in a relaxed posture with his body slightly inclined toward his right. The most striking resemblance of the figure of Vajrapāni to the image of Heracles is the lion skin worn by him. In this relief, Vajrapāni is also wearing the lion-skin headgear with the paws knotted in front of his chest, which is reminiscent of the Heracles image on the Attica

[85] Abdullaev, "Reutilization of Old Images," 63.
[86] The digital picture is requested from the British Museum.
[87] Stančo, *Greek Gods in the East*, 232.

amphora (Figure 2 & Figure 3). Besides, some figural characters of Heracles are also retained in the representation of Vajrapāni's muscular physique, which is revealed in his naked upper body, exposed muscles, and V-shaped torso. The most striking difference that differentiates the representation of Vajrapāni on this relief from the typical iconography of Heracles is that Vajrapāni carries a vajra in his right hand and a long sword in a Kushan type in his left instead of holding a Heraclean club.[88] Another noteworthy difference is that Vajrapāni in this image no longer wears a thick beard like Heracles, but only a moustache like an Indian.[89]

Figure 8 Gandhāran Vajrapāni

Another example is the sculpture of "Heracles-Vajrapāni" (4th century AD) discovered in a niche at the ruins of the Buddhist monastery of Tapa Shotor in Hadda in eastern Afghanistan in 1974, which was probably destroyed by Taliban in the Kabul Museum in 2001 (Figure 9).[90] This unique image represents Vajrapāni sitting on a rock next to the Buddha with his left leg stretched and right leg bent. His right hand is resting on the vajra which rests on the tip of his right knee. The resemblance between this image and the typical Heraclean iconography is primarily reflected in his face, his physique, and the lion skin. His heavily bearded face with tired expression is

[88] Flood, "Herakles and the 'Perpetual Acolyte' of the Buddha," 17.
[89] For the detailed art historical analysis and the description of this work, see Hsing, "Helakelisi zai dongfang" 赫拉克利斯在東方 [Heracles in the East], 30; Stančo, *Greek Gods in the East*, 232; and [89] Flood, "Herakles and the 'Perpetual Acolyte' of the Buddha," 17.
[90] This figure is quoted from Stančo, *Greek Gods in the East*, 233.

reminiscent of the Farnese type of Heracles (Figure 4). His naked muscular torso is realistically represented and carefully executed. The lion's scalp hangs on his left shoulder. The rest of the lion skin droops down from his back and reappears on his upper thighs, being tied around his waist with one of the paws falling outside his left thigh.[91]

Figure 9 Heracles-Vajrapāni

However, merely identifying the retained Heracles' characteristics that were accommodated in Gandhāran Buddhist material culture is not sufficient for us to reach a more comprehensive understanding of the aspect of homemaking of religion in Kushan Gandhāra. We also need to investigate the reason why the figural features of Heracles were accepted, chosen, exploited, and remodeled by Gandhāran sculptors or religious believers to particularly depict the Buddhist deity Vajrapāni, as well as to what extend the exploitation of Heracles' figural features was a conscious or an intentional action. In order to deal with this question, we need to pay more attention to the character of Vajrapāni *per se*.

The most typical attribute of Vajrapāni is the vajra he is holding in his hand. This weapon originally belonged to the Hindu god Indra, who is seen as a thunder-god, a rain-bringer, and the most powerful warrior in Vedic times.[92] According to ancient Buddhist texts, such as the *Vinaya* of the Mūlasarvāstivādins and *Lalitavistara* as well as their translated Chinese versions, Indra is said to be one of the guides who have guided the young prince Siddhārtha to depart from the

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[91] For detailed description and more images of this work in the archaeological site report, see Zémaryalaï Tarz, "Hadda à la lumière des trois dernières campagnes de fouilles de Tapa-é-shotor (1974-1976)," *Comptes rendus des séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres* 120, no. 3 (1976): 394-96. For the detailed art historical analysis of this work, see Hsing, "Helakelisi zai dongfang" 赫拉克利斯在東方 [Heracles in the East], 28-29; and Stančo, *Greek Gods in the East*, 232.

[92] Katsumi Tanabe, "Why Is the Buddha Śākyamuni Accompanied by Hercules/Vajrapāni? Farewell to Yakṣa-theory." *East and West* 55, no. 1/4 (2005): 366.

royal city Kapilavastu.[93] There is no guard or guide named Vajrapāni being mentioned in these literary sources. Moreover, in pre-Kushan Indian Buddhist material culture, there is no extant example that can be related to the figure "Vajrapāni."[94] This figure did not appear in Buddhist material culture until the Kushan period. Compared with the Buddhist material culture of the Indian subcontinent, it is only in Gandhāra that Vajrapāni became highly popular and was commonly depicted.[95] Therefore, Tanabe speculated that "the figural image of Vajrapāni was first invented by Gandhāran sculptors and was later adopted by the Buddhist Samgha and incorporated into the literature containing the life story of the Buddha Śākyamuni."[96]

Why did the Gandhāran sculptors invent the figure of Vajrapāni and depict him in a similar way of depicting Heracles? Tanabe argued that Gandhāran sculptors intentionally replaced Indra by Heracles in visual representation due to Indra's personal imperfections.[97] Indra is not a good traveler nor a reliable protector. As Étienne Lamotte mentioned in his essay "Vajrapāni en Inde," Indra is neither strong nor very intelligent, and his defects are numerous. He has not transcended beyond the circle of transmigration. He is shy and subject to panic. He often runs away.[98] However, Heracles is a famous traveler who has traveled around the world to search for the golden apples of Hesperides (the eleventh labor) and also a mighty warrior who has slayed monsters. Thus, in the views of the Gandhāran sculptors and Buddhist believers, Heracles might be regarded as "the most appropriate Greek hero-god to be employed as the guide and guard of Śākyamuni, who also traveled over the Jambudvipa to preach his Law."[99] Therefore, Gandhāran sculptors were open to choose the way usually taken to depict Heracles—another figure who is much stronger, mightier, more reliable, and more apotropaic than Indra—to represent the guide and the bodyguard of the Buddha.

There is another indicator that suggests that the Gandhāran sculptors' choice to depict Vajrapāni in a Heraclean way was a conscious one: the Gandhāran sculptors intentionally chose Heracles out of other available divine figures, like Hermes, to be the figural prototype of the Gandhāran Vajrapāni. Hermes is considered the guide that escorts the souls of the dead traveling to the Other World. He is always depicted together with Heracles. In Gandhāran Buddhist material

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[93] Tanabe, "Why Is the Buddha Śākyamuni Accompanied by Hercules/Vajrapāni?", 370-71.
[94] Tanabe, "Why Is the Buddha Śākyamuni Accompanied by Hercules/Vajrapāni?", 367.
[95] Tanabe, "Why Is the Buddha Śākyamuni Accompanied by Hercules/Vajrapāni?", 367.
[96] Tanabe, "Why Is the Buddha Śākyamuni Accompanied by Hercules/Vajrapāni?", 368.
[97] Tanabe, "Why Is the Buddha Śākyamuni Accompanied by Hercules/Vajrapāni?", 371.
[98] Étienne Lamotte, "Vajrapāni en Inde," in *Mélanges de sinologie offerts à Monsieur Paul Demiéville*, ed. Paul Demiéville (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1966): 116.
[99] Tanabe, "Why Is the Buddha Śākyamuni Accompanied by Hercules/Vajrapāni?", 372.

culture, both the images of Heracles and Hermes were exploited as the guide of the prince Siddhārtha.[100] However, considering that the psychopompos function of Hermes is rather provisional but that of Heracles is external, the role of Heracles was regarded as more suitable than that of Hermes to serve as the Buddha's guide. As Tanabe indicated:

> "This difference between Hermes and Hercules was fully understood by Gandharan sculptors and eventually Hercules was preferred and employed by them in so many episodes of the Śākyamuni's life story while Hermes was confined to the Donation of the Four Bowls by the Four Lokapālas and the Great Departure."[101]

It is worth clarifying that Tanabe's opinion that Gandhāran sculptors replaced Indra by Heracles does not mean that they replaced the deity Indra *per se*, but only his appearance, his image and the represented personality and temperament. In Gandhāra, Vajrapāni is not Indra anymore, nor is he Heracles. He is a newly invented figure, who inherited Indra's vajra and discarded Heracles' club. Unlike the imperfect Indra, Vajrapāni is as reliable, mighty, muscular, and apotropaic as Heracles. Vajrapāni served as a bridge or a "middle ground" that well linked Indra and Heracles, but he also had his own subjectivity. The vajra in his hand warrants his image a suitable position in the whole picture of the local Buddhist narratives without causing too much sense of peculiarity, even if he also bears Heracles' figural characteristics. The lion skin, the lion's head, as well as the muscular torso clearly emphasize his strength, mightiness, and reliability that are equivalent to Heracles. Through this combination, a part of Heracles' figural features merged into Gandhāran repertoire to serve a Buddhist purpose, being accommodated in Gandhāran Buddhist iconography.

For the people in Gandhāra, the image of Vajrapāni might be both familiar and unfamiliar. The concept of familiarity may have the potential to reveal how the translocative Buddhist material culture played a role in helping translocative people make a common home in Gandhāra. By absorbing cultural flows that moved through various localities, Gandhāran Buddhist material culture formed a "middle ground" which is perceivable, understandable, or attractive to as many people as possible. As I mentioned above, Gandhāra was one of the most important and bustling trade nodes in the network of the Silk Roads; thus, the translocative population movement should have been relatively intense and frequent. People from different localities who had various cultural backgrounds and identities gathered in Gandhāra for commercial, religious,

[100] Tanabe, "Why Is the Buddha Śākyamuni Accompanied by Hercules/Vajrapāni?", 376.
[101] Tanabe, "Why Is the Buddha Śākyamuni Accompanied by Hercules/Vajrapāni?", 376.

or other purposes. Considering this cosmopolitan social-historical context, one can reasonably speculate that Gandhāran Vajrapāni might have played a role in linking the people who welcomed the image of Heracles, those who had a devout Buddhist faith, and those who were familiar with both, contributing to the construction of a collective home for both of them. The people who welcomed Heracles' image might be familiar with Heracles' mighty and reliable character; whereas the Buddhist devotees who were familiar with the escort role of Indra mentioned in the Buddhist literature might easily recognize the vajra in Vajrapāni's hand. Through this combination and innovation, Gandhāran Buddhism might also have earned more possibilities to make it understood to the people as culturally diverse as they might have been in Gandhāra. In this process, the novelty caused by the unfamiliarity might have also played a role in setting off the feeling of familiarity, driving more potential people to cross beyond their own feelings of familiarity towards a collective transcendental Buddhist home, which equally welcomed the people from diverse cultural backgrounds and brings them together to dwell.

§ Further Crossing: Gandhāran Vajrapāni as the Resource of Flow Dwelling for Farther Localities

The flow of Heracles' figural features did not end when it dwelled well in Gandhāra. When the mixed visual representation of Vajrapāni was established in Gandhāra, it did not isolate itself from the constant process of crossing. As a result, the visual representation of Vajrapāni, taking along its localized Gandhāran characteristics and certain features of Heracles, merged again into the cultural flows promoted by commercial activities along the Silk Roads, becoming the resources of inspiration for further processes of localization in farther localities along the Silk Roads, such as the oasis city in ancient Qiuci in Chinese Central Asia, today's Xinjiang (新疆) and Maijishan (麥積山) in Gansu (甘肅), inner China.

The largest Buddhist grotto group in the ancient state of Qiuci (龜茲)—the Kizil grotto group—is located between Kuche County (庫車縣) and Baicheng County (拜城縣) in modern-day Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Regio, China. A Vajrapāni figure found in the mural in the central hall of cave 175 (Figure 10), which is dated to the period between 395-530 AD, is very similar to the figure on the relief fragment in the British Museum (Figure 8).[102] The Kizil Vajrapāni in cave 175 wears a lion-skin headgear that is very similar to that of the Vajrapāni in the British Museum. He holds a vajra in his right hand and a ring-like religious object in his left hand. According to

[102] The picture is from the Internet: https://new.qq.com/omn/20190220/20190220B0ZIJ9.html.

the coloring of the mural, the Kizil Vajrapāni exposes his upper body, only wearing the ornament crossing in front of his chest and the ribbons around his neck.[103]

Figure 10 Kizil Vajrapāni in the cave 175

Moreover, by the time of Northern Zhou (北周) (561-581 AD), the characteristics of the lion-skin headgear had also reached eastward to Maijishan grottoes in Gansu in China proper. A Vajrapāni figure is depicted on the bas-relief on the main wall of the front hall of the cave 4 in Maijishan grottoes (Figure 11).[104] He is wearing a lion-skin headgear with the angry face clearly depicted, but there is no paw attached to the headgear being knotted around his neck. He is not naked anymore, but wearing armor. His left hand is damaged, but from the lower part of the image one can still roughly see that this figure is holding a sword with the end resting on the ground.[105]

103 Hsing, "Helakelisi zai dongfang" 赫拉克利斯在東方 [Heracles in the East], 30-31.
104 The picture is from the Internet: http://www.sohu.com/a/194121097_653164.
105 Hsing, "Helakelisi zai dongfang" 赫拉克利斯在東方 [Heracles in the East], 31-32.

Figure 11 Vajrapāni from the Maijishan grotto cave 4

It is also noteworthy that the flows of Heracles' image did not only form a single "runway" of flows but multiple "runways" that connected Asia and Europe. These "runways" jointly constituted a highly complex and entangled cultural and religious network involving an extensive spatial range and a broad temporal span. It seems that the farther Heracles' image traveled eastward, the more iconographic features of him were dropped or modified. For example, as the image of Vajrapāni reveals, in Gandhāra, Heracles lost his club; in Kizil, he lost his highly muscular torso and he first started wearing the ornament in front of his chest and the ribbons around his neck instead of being completely naked; in Maijishan, he almost lost all the distinguishing iconographical features except the lion-skin headgear. However, in fact, it is only one of the chains of the crossing and dwelling of Heracles' image across Eurasia, which is *only* suggested by the figure of Vajrapāni. The most distinctive iconographical features of Heracles, such as his club and his lion-skin headgear with knotted paws—sometimes complete, sometimes scattered—still clearly appeared elsewhere in Buddhist material culture.[106] For example, the mural painters in Kizil adopted the iconographic features of Heracles' club to depict the cowherd Nanda (Figure 12) instead of Heracles and Vajrapāni. The remnant mural from cave 77 of Kizil grottoes (ca. 500 AD), which is housed in the Museum of Indian Art in Berlin, depicts the cowherd Nanda listening to the Buddha explaining the dharma.[107] In this image, Nanda is standing with both his hands resting on a club. The handle end of this club is thinner but the

[106] Hsing, "Helakelisi zai dongfang" 赫拉克利斯在東方 [Heracles in the East], 32.
[107] Herbert Härtel and Marianne Yaldiz. *Along the Ancient Silk Routes: Central Asian Art from the West Berlin State Museums: An Exhibition Lent by the Museum Für Indische Kunst, Staatliche Museen Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Berlin, Federal Republic of Germany* (New York: Metropolitan museum of art, 1982), 66-67. The picture is also quoted from this item on page 66.

other end resting on the ground is thicker. The surface of the club is also gnarled, with many stubs attached to it. This kind of visual representation of the club is reminiscent of Heracles' club that appeared on the Attica amphora (Figure 3).

Figure 12 Nanda from the Kizil grotto cave 77

4. Concluding Remarks

Based on the deconstructive transcultural thinking that aims to overcome cultural essentialism, I adopted a transcultural perspective to re-examine Gandhāran Buddhist material culture through the application of the method of translocative analysis. I adopted the term "transcultural" in order to draw upon its deconstructive potential in a theoretical sense but not to directly describe Gandhāran Buddhist material culture as "transcultural." Instead, I described it as "translocative." It is translocative in the sense that it depended on the extensive interconnectivity between various localities based on a micro local level but not on the deemed more static categories of Greek, Indian, or other essentialized cultures. From the case of Gandhāran Vajrapāni, we can see that the figural characteristics of Heracles have crossed geographical boundaries, spreading in an extremely vast geographical range. From Attica in Greece (6th century BC), through the Hellenistic outposts in Western and Central Asia (4th-1st century BC), to Gandhāra (2nd-3rd century AD) and Hadda (4th century AD) in today's Pakistan and Afghanistan, and toward the farther localities such as Kizil and Maijishan in China, Heracles' figural characteristics traveled

through these "nodes" to reach farther localities in the broad network but also dwelled in these localities. Some traditions were retained, but some fresher streams from the localities where the flow passed through were also incorporated into the larger flow, being carried together with those older traditions by the larger flow to move towards farther areas. Therefore, with this case, it is reasonable and sufficient to say that the figure of Gandhāran Vajrapāni and its visual representation are highly *translocative*.

I need to acknowledge that Vajrapāni's image in Gandhāra cannot represent Gandhāran Buddhist material culture as a whole. This case about Vajrapāni's image in Gandhāra is only one of the typical cases that are able to reveal the translocative property of Gandhāran Buddhist material culture and Gandhāran Buddhism. The translocative property is not only borne by Gandhāran sculptures and reliefs, but also by Gandhāran architecture and other sorts of Buddhist objects found in the Gandhāra area, such as the incense burner. Besides, the transformation and diffusion of Heracles' suggested by the image of Vajrapāni is only one of the "runways" of flows in the larger network. The flow of Heracles' image also generated other "runways" in Buddhist material culture beyond the representation of Vajrapāni. Moreover, the localities that had somehow connected to Gandhāra are not limited to the localities mentioned in this case. For example, although van Lohuizen-de Leeuw particularly highlighted the preponderance of Mathurā's "influences" on Gandhāra over those of Gandhāra on Mathurā, her study has the potential to reveal the translocative cultural interaction between Mathurā in India proper and Gandhāra.[108] In addition, in her paper "A Buddhist Incense Burner from Gandhāra," Elizabeth Rosen Stone revealed how a Buddhist incense burner from Gandhāra, which was made in the 1st century AD, incorporated the cultural flows from Taxila, Achaemenian Persia, Etruscan Italy, and some specific localities like Tuch el-Karamus in Egypt and Tarentum in southern Italy, but at the same time kept its own right in terms of its local Buddhist stylistic expression.[109] Due to limited scope, this thesis cannot exhaust all the cases worthy of discussion in the studies of Gandhāran Buddhist material culture. After all, Gandhāran Buddhist material culture is a huge cultural treasure house with extremely rich content, which has the potential to reveal an enormous translocative network that almost covers the geographical space of half of the globe and the time span of more than one thousand years. Even though the case of Gandhāran Vajrapāni is very limited to reveal the whole picture of the translocative Gandhāran Buddhist material culture, we can still "measure Hercules from the foot." The Gandhāran

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108 Van Lohuizen-de Leeuw, "Gandhāra and Mathurā: their Cultural Relationship," 27-43.
109 Elizabeth Rosen Stone, "A Buddhist incense burner from Gandhara," *Metropolitan Museum Journal* 39 (2004): 69-100.

Vajrapāni case is sufficient to provide us with some rough ideas about the translocative property of Gandhāran Buddhist material culture and Gandhāran Buddhism. It also has enough potential to challenge the essentialist understanding of Buddhism and Buddhist material culture.

Although, the flow of Heracles' figural features—which contributed to the religious cultural innovation of the figure Vajrapāni in Gandhāra—moved out from Greek area, we cannot simply regard the emergence of Vajrapāni in Gandhāra as a result of the Greek or classical "influences." For one thing, in Gandhāra, the dwelling or the localization of Heracles' figural features cannot be separated from the agency of local Buddhist devotees and sculptors. It was the conscious accepting and intentional selecting that facilitated the formation of the mixed image of Vajrapāni. They did not accept and adopt Heracles' image unreservedly or unselectively. Rather, based on the understanding of the characters and personality traits of Heracles as well as the perceived commonality between the image of Heracles and that of Vajrapāni, they consciously retained some of Heracles' figural features (Heracles' lion-skin headgear and naked muscular torso) but abandoned the other (Heracles' club) to shape their own Buddhist deity. At that time, Heracles' image was only a part of the iconographical resources at hand for local Gandhāran people to formulate their own religious iconography, artistic style, aesthetic experience, and local identity. They were not passively "influenced" by the flow, but actively domesticated it with possible negotiation for their own religious purpose. The emergence of the representation of Gandhāran Vajrapāni—which is similar to that of Heracles—is not an accidental incident. For another, when Heracles' image served as the resource of inspiration for the local people in Central Asia or Eastern Asia to formulate their own visual expression, it did not appear in the form of the part of a "pure" or essentialist Greek culture. It was the cultural flow that had incorporated Gandhāran elements that flowed into the local iconography of Kizil, but not the "pure" flow directly received from Greece. In the crossing trajectory of the cultural flows, the cultural flows always incorporate new elements from different localities they moved through, taking them along with the retained elements to move toward farther areas. The cultural flows are never to be static and essentialist. They are constantly reacting with the localities that they moved across, being diluted or concentrated, discarded or retained.

Chapter 4: Productiveness and Potentiality of the Transcultural Approach through the Study of Gandhāran Buddhist Material Culture: Further Theoretical Discussion

Based on the case study elaborated in Chapter 3, I will pursue further theoretical discussions to expound the productiveness and potentiality of the transcultural approach in Chapter 4. Firstly, I will theorize the translocative framework of religious or cultural interactions/entanglements and discuss its relationship with the transcultural perspective. Secondly, I will analyze the doubleness of the concept "translocality" in theoretical thinking and its relationship with Tweed's theory of crossing and dwelling. Finally, I will explore the link between the translocative framework, the debates in the field of religious studies, as well as other theories to reveal its potential to advance theoretical discussions.

1. Translocative Framework

Transcultural thinking is a theoretical means to counter the conventional essentialist thinking of religions and cultures, which confines us within the rigid center-periphery framework, deliberately classifying cultures and religions, projecting cores or essences onto them, and constructing or strengthening distinct boundaries. It encourages us to attend to and to value the relational and itinerant attributes of religions and cultures. In contrast to a more biased and reductionist essentialist approach, transcultural theoretical thinking is able to *resume* our perception of the interconnectivity and the mobility of religions and cultures through its deconstructive potential. Concomitantly, the translocative framework of religious or cultural entanglements—which I propose in this chapter—can be considered to be a re-constructive gain on the premise of the initial deconstructive transcultural thinking. Once the concept of "transculturality" is used to theoretically deconstruct the essentialist views of religions and cultures along with their constructed boundaries and cores, the concept of "translocality" can be used to further re-construct our perceptions of religions and cultures. In this chapter, I propose two concepts, namely *localization* and *fluidization* to reveal the dialectical dynamics between mobility and locality. The processes of localization and fluidization of cultural flows, along with their successive following processes of re-localization and re-fluidization, play a central role in the transcultural-translocative framework. By theorizing the translocative framework, I argue that this framework is able to reveal and analyze the relationality and permeability of religions and cultures. It especially highlights religious or cultural relations, interactions, exchanges, and confluences. But it does not neglect the anchored aspect of local cultures that helps to keep

cultural idiosyncrasies on a local level and relates to the processes of localization and homemaking, as well as the agentive formation of local identities and stylized local expressions.

Based on the case study in Chapter 3, a translocative framework, which is applicable to describe both religions and cultures, can be theorized as follows:

1) Specific religious or cultural elements move through a series of localities in the form of flows, crossing space and time.
2) In the process of moving and crossing, these flows are either controlled, manipulated, propelled, compelled, constrained, or blocked by powers, institutions, or commercial activities.
3) *Localization*: Taking agentive local action, the people in a particular locality (*A*) (in both spatial and phenomenological sense) consciously choose, adopt, absorb, adapt, have recourse to, pick up, engage with, react to, emulate, remodel, reconstitute, develop, or transform the religious/cultural elements brought about by the flows moving through the locality. In this way, these elements are accommodated to a particular locality (*A*), merging into the local social landscape, contributing to local process of homemaking as well as the formation of local identity and local expressive schemes.
4) *Fluidization*: After being localized in a particular locality, the elements from the flows have become part of local entanglements, being internalized through local actions, reactions, adaptions, and innovations. The localized (and thus transformed) elements take the shape streams containing fresher local elements, which move out of the locality (*A*) through the channels provided by the larger network, serving as the resources for the processes of localization and homemaking in *other* localities (*B*, or *C*, *D*, *E*, etc.).
5) *Re-localization*: In other localities (*B*, or *C*, *D*, *E*, etc.), which encounter the flows that continuously absorb fresh local elements from the localities they have passed through (*A*), new processes of localization happen. These re-localization processes in *other* localities lead to the making and remaking, formation and reformation, configuration and reconfiguration of their *own* local identities and stylized local expressions.
6) *Re-fluidization*: The new local elements from the various processes of agentive localization once again move out of the localities (*B*, or *C*, *D*, *E*, etc.) through the channels provided by the larger network, providing resources for the processes of localization and homemaking in *farther* localities again. These new local elements can move back and forth between different localities embedded in the network. For example, they can—but not necessarily—flow back to the locality (*A*) where flows once passed through, promoting

the process of remaking and remodeling of local identities and local expressive schemes in locality (*A*); they can also flow back and forth among other localities (from *B* to *C*, from *C* to *B*, from *D* to *B*, etc.).

7) This framework reveals a repeatable and sustainable cycle: localization, fluidization, re-localization, re-fluidization, re-re-localization, re-re-fluidization…
8) It is noteworthy that localization, fluidization, re-localization, and re-fluidization are a series of processes that can generate multiple "runways" of flows but are not limited to a single "runway." When a stream of flow passes through a locality, it *can* be divided into several currents that are—but not necessarily—equivalent to the former flow in terms of stream discharge, moving out of this particular locality, with the cultural elements of the former flow being scattered or completely retained and taken away by various other currents. The newly merged local elements can move together with the scattered or completely retained elements through the multiple "runways" of the flows to move farther and farther.
9) A single stream of flow usually happens chronologically;[1] but different streams in the large network can happen either simultaneously or chronologically.

2. The Doubleness of the Concept "Translocality"

The concept of "translocality" intrinsically possesses a nature of doubleness. The term "translocality" consists of two minimal meaning units, namely the root word "locality" and the prefix "trans-." These two meaning units respectively refer to two conditions or processes, namely the formation, maintenance, or remodeling of a locality and the transgression of the locality. Thus, the concept of "translocality" ironically relates these two seemingly opposite components together, reflecting a dialectical unity. In addition, these two components respectively correspond to the processes of dwelling and crossing in Tweed's theory. In this section, I will elaborate on these two opposite components in the single concept of "translocality," revealing the relationship and the dynamic tension between them.

(1) The Root Word "Locality"

The concept of "translocality" acknowledges the anchoring aspect of local cultures in the broader dynamic translocative structure, which is reflected by the employment of the concept of "locality." This anchoring aspect can be seen as the result of the process of the dwelling of religions or cultures in specific spatial or social contexts. It is reflected in the formation of the

[1] To recognize a single flow depends on the specific concerns of our research.

identities on the local level, the maintenance of cultural differences compared to other localities, as well as the formation, maintenance, and remodeling of stylized local expressions. This anchoring aspect by no means implies that local cultures or religions *themselves*, as well as their stylized local expressions, are rigid, static, and essentialized. Rather, they are in the continuous process of being made and remade in a similar way as the highly fluid cultural flows are. It is the highly fluid property of cultural flows that the anchoring property of local cultures is compared with. This anchoring property tells the local people who they are, where they live, and where the cultural representations that make them different from the people in other localities are exactly located. Compared with the highly fluid cultural flows, localities need to be anchored in specific spatial or social contexts, because people need to know who they are, where they live, and what makes them different. In this sense, the concept of "locality" is not merely a spatial concept—as Tim Oakes and Louisa Schein indicated in the introduction of *Translocal China* (2006), "typically assuming a site of relatively limited scale"[2]—but also a phenomenological one. As Arjun Appadurai enunciated, locality can be seen as a complex phenomenological quality, "constituted by a series of links between the sense of social immediacy, the technologies of interactivity and the relativity of contexts."[3] Therefore, a locality is also an imagined shared social space that is phenomenologically perceived by local people. This phenomenological quality "expresses itself in certain kinds of agency, sociality and reproducibility."[4] The subjective property of the concept of "locality" lends the concept itself sufficient space to discuss the issues about the role of the local agency as well as the formation of subjectivity in the translocative processes. To briefly summarize it, localities need to be relatively stable in terms of the kinetic structure of cultures. They are usually anchored in specific geographical or social contexts in contrast with the crossing flows that pass through various localities. However, in terms of the cultural content of localities and the stylized local expressions that represent localities (in both spatial and phenomenological sense), localities can be as changeful, mutable, and active as the cultural flows. Both localities and cultural flows are part of continuous transformative processes.

More importantly, the processes of formation, maintenance, and remodeling of localities are inseparable from the role of cultural flows. The being of localities very much relies on highly fluid cultural flows. On the one hand, as the British geographer Doreen Massey put in her monograph *Space, Place, and Gender* (1994), "the identity of a place does not derive from some

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[2] Tim Oakes and Louisa Schein, ed., *Translocal China: Linkages, Identities, and the Reimagining of Space* (London: Routledge, 2006), 18.
[3] Arjun Appadurai, "The Production of Locality," in *Counterworks: Managing the Diversity of Knowledge*, ed. Richard Fardon (London: Routledge, 1995), 208.
[4] Appadurai, "The Production of Locality," 208.

internalized history. It derives, in large part, precisely from the specificity of its interactions with 'the outside.'"[5] In this sense, the being of localities and local identities is only possible through encounters, which are largely facilitated by cultural flows. On the other hand, cultural flows continuously provide new resources and materials available for the dynamic local processes of formation, maintenance, and remodeling of localities, enriching the contents of local cultures, and reconfiguring the internal structures of localities. Therefore, an increase in cultural interactions is able to "to generate more identity production around places."[6] Cultural flows can also strengthen the anchoring aspect of localities, accommodating in localities and becoming a part of localities.

Both the concept of "locality" and the conventional concept of essentialized cultures recognize the anchoring aspect of cultures. However, compared with the conventional concept of cultures as bounded spheres, the concept of "locality" has more advantages, which demonstrate that the anchoring aspect of local cultures does not necessarily need to take an essentialist form with distinct boundaries and static cultural cores. Firstly, the concept of "locality" deliberately blurs and confuses the boundaries of local cultures. It starts from an idiographic strategy, a place-based strategy, highlighting "the importance of local-local connections."[7] It encourages us to view local processes based on the scale of local place, rather than the scales of the nation, race, essentialized religion, or any other essentialized conceptions (either spatial or phenomenological). In this way, it has great potential to avoid attributing additional characteristics to the localities, the characteristics, which are imposed onto the localities based on the problematic essentialist generalization. Besides, it also has the potential to transcend the essentialist assumption that cultural "centers" influence or even dominate cultural "peripheries." Secondly, the concept of "locality" can become a scale-transcending concept when it is employed to refer to the shared meanings, histories, experiences, and practices. Since a locality is not only an actual geographical site on a relatively limited scale but also an imagined local community, it consists of a series of shared social relations of local histories and experiences. Starting from a micro level, we can also connect these shared social relations to more extensive geographical histories and processes, transcending the scales of the county, city, province, and nation. We are thus not necessarily limited to the micro local scale.[8] Thirdly, due to its subjective property, the concept of "locality" also encourages us to attend to the agency and the subjectivity of local people in the dynamic

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[5] Doreen Massey, *Space, Place, and Gender* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994), 169.
[6] Oakes and Schein, *Translocal China*, 2.
[7] Katherine Brickell and Ayona Datta, "Introduction: Translocal Geographies," in *Translocal Geographies: Spaces, Places, Connections*, ed. Katherine Brickell and Ayona Datta (Surrey: Ashgate Publishing, 2011), 3.
[8] Brickell and Datta, "Introduction," 3.

processes of formation, maintenance, and remodeling of localities that are fostered by the dynamics of cultural encounters and interactions. Unlike essentialist conception of cultures, the concept of "locality" does not assume that the local people are merely the people living in the peripheries of certain cultures, passively receiving the cultural influences that emit from the centers of these cultures. Therefore, the concept of "locality" is able to transcend the over-emphasized boundaries of essentialist conceptions and to prompt us to attend to the agency and the subjectivities of local people and local things.

(2) The Prefix "Trans-"

The prefix "trans-" in the term "translocality" highlights the mobility and connectedness of cultural flows in the translocative framework. According to Walter W. Skeat's etymological dictionary of the English language (1980), the etymology of the prefix "trans-" is the Latin verb *trāre*, which means "to pass over"; thus, the prefix "trans-" means "beyond," "across," or "over."[9] Therefore, to put the prefix "trans-" in front of the concept of "locality" means "to move beyond/across locality" or "to transgress locality." In this way, the concept of "translocality" significantly "draws us to images of connectedness, flows, networks, rhizomes, decenteredness, and deterritorialization."[10] It strikingly highlights the role of cultural flows in connecting, communicating, and entangling with various localities. Due to this connective property, the concept of "translocality" has the potential to reveal extensive entangled networks, which transcend any fixed scales. This perspective of connections advocated by the concept of "translocality" can greatly expand our horizons and reveal the "global-local synergy."[11] In this way, localities are not necessarily confined within the relatively limited geographical or social scale. Instead, they can dialogue with global forces through the expansive entangled networks that connect with them. They can "connect to wider geographical histories and processes."'[12] Starting from the micro scrutinization in the local scale, the concept of "translocality" can lead us to expand our discussions into a more extensive scale through the connections of the networks. Thus, it can also contribute to nomothetic theoretical discussions, although it starts from idiographic investigations. Hence, the fluidity, mobility and extensive connectivity of cultures and religions revealed by the concept of "translocality" endow this very concept with unquestionable ability to transcend any essentialist conceptions.

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[9] Walter W. Skeat, the entry "Trans-,"in *A Concise Etymological Dictionary of the English Language* (New York: Perigee Books, 1980), 568.
[10] Oakes and Schein, *Translocal China*, 1.
[11] Michael Burawoy, et al. *Global Ethnography: Forces, Connections, and Imaginations in a Postmodern World* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2000), 346.
[12] Brickell and Datta, "Introduction," 3.

The fluidity of cultural flows is also inseparable from the anchoring aspect of localities. If there is no such thing that is relatively anchored or fixed and everything is absolutely fluid, there is no fixity existing and we do not need to discuss either fluidity or fixity anymore. The mobility of cultural flows can only become noticeable and observable by the contrast of anchored localities. Only when localities are relatively anchored, the mobility of cultural flows through localities can be observed. If there is no relatively anchored locality to transgress, there is no effort of transgressing localities, not to speak of the transgression of localities that can generate or mark meaning. If there is no subjectivity and relative autonomy of localities that help localities keep in a relatively anchored state, there is no dynamic tension between localities and translocative cultural flows, and then, there will never be diversified and contextualized ways that localities take to engage with the cultural flows that pass through them.

(3) The Dialectical Unity of Locality and Mobility in the Concept of "Translocality"

By putting the root word "locality" and the prefix "trans-" together, the concept of "translocality" dialectically unites the two seemingly opposite conditions—mobility and fixity. In *Translocal China* (2006), Oakes and Schein rightly pointed out the doubleness of the concept of "transculturality":

> "Translocality deliberately confuses the boundaries of the local in an effort to capture the increasingly complicated nature of spatial processes and identities, yet it insists on viewing such processes and identities as place-based rather than exclusively mobile, uprooted, or 'traveling.'"[13]

Thus, through the concept of "translocality," we pay attention not only to the mobile cultural flows but also to the anchored localities. Taking this doubleness into consideration, we "focus our attention simultaneously on mobility and locality."[14] As I have discussed above, fluid cultural flows and relatively anchored localities seem to contradict each other, but in fact, neither of them can exist independently from the other. Localities need to be produced, maintained and renewed through constant encounters caused by the cultural flows; meanwhile the cultural flows also need the relatively anchored localities to serve as a kind of frame of reference to contrast with their mobility.

[13] Oakes and Schein, *Translocal China*, 20.
[14] Oakes and Schein, *Translocal China*, xii.

Moreover, the translocative framework resonates well with Tweed's theory of religion. The mobility and locality that are dialectically united by the concept of "translocality" nicely correspond to the crossing and dwelling in Tweed's theory. In his book *Crossing and Dwelling* (2006), Tweed proposed the two aspects as central to the spatial practices of religions, but he did not elaborate much on the mutual relationship between these two aspects. Here, the concept of "translocality" can complement the theoretical discussion on the relationship between crossing and dwelling. Tweed distinguished two sets of metaphors when he elaborated his theory, namely the spatial metaphors (dwelling and crossing) and the aquatic metaphors (confluences and flows).[15] However, these two sets of metaphors can be employed together to describe religious or cultural elements brought about by the flows at the same time without necessary contradiction. These religious or cultural elements can both dwell in specific localities as confluences and move beyond localities as flows.

In the processes of dwelling, localities first encounter the new cultural elements brought by the flows moving through, consciously adopting, selecting, or transforming them to form their own local expressions. Different localities usually have their own ways to deal with the same stream of a cultural flow. This kind of difference between the respective local ways of engaging with cultural flows will then inevitably lead to certain kinds of local cultural idiosyncrasies among different localities, which usually serve as the constructive basis of local identities. Thus, dwelling is a process, in which the cultural flows moving in from the outside crystalize in specific localities, and subsequently brings about cultural idiosyncrasies, cultural differences, local subjectivities, and identities among various localities. Based on these cultural differences, dwelling distinguishes the Self and the Other, which inevitably involves the making and the maintenance of certain kinds of boundaries. However, these boundaries delineated through dwelling also paradoxically rely on crossing. They are there *in order to be transgressed and challenged* by the cultural flows. Only in the dynamic tension between dwelling and crossing can localities take their relatively anchored form. And only through the challenge and transgression by crossing can these boundaries declare the meaning of their existence. Hence, these boundaries are intrinsically challengeable, permeable, penetrable, and changeable. They constantly shift with the change of their constructive basis, namely the cultural idiosyncrasies that lend the localities themselves subjectivities and autonomies.

[15] Tweed, *Crossing and Dwelling*, 59.

It is worth noting that these cultural differences between different localities do not necessarily have to be the constructive foundations for the essentialist classes or categories. Indeed, these differences might result in certain boundaries. However, these boundaries do not have to be solidified or strengthened to the extent that they can be implied by the essentialist framework. These boundaries can be compared with the mobility of religions and cultures, but not necessarily with the established and solidified cores that the boundaries enclose. They should not be taken as simple barriers or distinct borders, but just the relatively opposite part of the cultural flows. They can be flexible, elastic, and scale-transcending.

Let us continue taking the Gandhāran Buddhist material culture as an example to demonstrate that these boundaries based on certain cultural idiosyncrasies can transcend the scales and become flexible. In the study of translocal visual culture, cultural idiosyncrasies in different localities are generally embodied through the different visual expressions that are stylized in different ways. These idiosyncrasies take their shape (changeable but not fixed) through the continuous inspiration or stimulation facilitated by the encounters with the cultural flows from the outside. Reflected in the study of Gandhāran Buddhist material culture, this kind of local cultural idiosyncrasies is usually embodied through what we often call the "Gandhāran style." The distinctiveness and the recognizability of Gandhāran Buddhist material culture once made a considerable number of scholars in the relevant fields tend to understand "Gandhāran style" in an essentialist manner. As Wannaporn Rienjang and Peter Stewart indicated in the preface of *The Geography of Gandhāran Art* (2019), we are used to talking about the sculptural traditions and the relevant traditions represented by other media in Gandhāra as if "they are straightforwardly a unified phenomenon."[16] Sometimes we take the limitations of "Gandhāran style" for granted, assuming that "its definition is established."[17] This perspective can make sense if we only consider the overall distinctiveness of Gandhāran material culture, the special religious and social forces in Gandhāra that brought about it, as well as the common Buddhist thematic narrative it unfolded, etc. However, if we consider the formative aspects of Gandhāran Buddhist material culture, such as the exact ways of executing visual representations, the techniques, and the materials that were adopted, we will find "the apparent consistency and coherence of Gandhāran art is accompanied by significant diversity."[18] In the broader scale of Gandhāra, different localities usually had their own ways to engage with the flows traveling from the Mediterranean coast, the Indian subcontinent, the Central Asian grassland, and the Iranian plateau, etc. The

[16] Rienjang and Stewart, "Preface," ix.
[17] Rienjang and Stewart, "Preface," ix.
[18] Rienjang and Stewart, "Preface," ix.

local diversity in the execution of Gandhāran Buddhist material culture is recognizable through "differences in the rendering of the same motifs, variations in incidental elements, different levels of detail and skill."[19] These locally diversified differences constitute a variety of characteristics of the complex and inventive "Gandhāran style*s*."

Indeed, these "Gandhāran style*s*" generated certain nuanced idiosyncrasies on the micro local level, but these idiosyncrasies do not necessarily conflict with the general distinctiveness of the "Gandhāran style." In recent research, a growing number of scholars have also begun to notice "the paradoxical tension between the homogeneity and recognizability of Gandhāran art in general and the diversity of specific works," also questioning the traditional understanding of the "Gandhāran style" that is usually covered with an essentialist hue.[20] I agree with these scholars that we should not take "Gandhāran style" for granted in an essentialist manner. When our specific concerns in the study of Gandhāran Buddhist material culture are different, the shared relations, histories, and practices involved will be different, and the networks we draw out will also be different in terms of the contents and the scales. "Gandhāran style" can be employed to refer to either the stylistic *commonality* among the archaeological materials discovered in multiple different Buddhist sites in the Gandhāran area or the stylistic *particularity* of the archaeological materials excavated in a particular locality in the Gandhāran region. In the latter case, the "Gandhāran style" can be diversified to become the "Gandhāran styles." Therefore, "Gandhāran style" can be flexibly employed to refer to different scales of Gandhāran Buddhist material culture. It can refer to the Gandhāran Buddhist material culture as a whole to mark a permeable, penetrable, and shifting boundary between the alleged "Gandhāran style" and the "Mathurān style," for example. It can also be employed to reveal the diversity of the cultural idiosyncrasies in a local scale within the region of Gandhāra. Considering that, taking a micro strategy to attend to the "micro-geography"[21] of Gandhāran tradition within a region that is relatively small is as important as taking the Gandhāran tradition as a whole. Therefore, the term "Gandhāran style" can be scale-transcending, and the boundaries it implies do not necessarily need to take an essentialist form.

In the processes of crossing, usually, the religious or cultural elements moving along with the flows are there in order to dwell and to be anchored in specific localities. Only through the

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[19] Rienjang and Stewart, "Preface," ix.
[20] Wannaporn Rienjang and Peter Stewart, "Preface," in *The Geography of Gandhāran Art: Proceedings of the Second International Workshop of the Gandhāra Connections Project, University of Oxford, 22nd-23rd March 2018*, ed. Wannaporn Rienjang and Peter Stewart (Oxford: Archaeopress Publishing, 2019), ix.
[21] Rienjang and Stewart, "Preface," ix.

diverse processes of localization in various localities on a micro level can the flows spread to a wider range. And only through the ways of absorbing the local innovations that are brought by the diverse processes of dwelling in different localities can the flows receive more "fresh blood" to make themselves flow farther and farther. In this respect, the moving religious or cultural flows also need the fresher elements that they take along with to further dwell in farther localities. Only when the localities agentively act upon the flows can the diverse idiosyncrasies take their shape on a local level. And only through these local idiosyncrasies—which serve as a lens or mediation through which new elements can be made to be felt "familiar"—can the religious or cultural elements moving along with the flows be more likely to be accepted, perceived, understood, adopted, and received by the people from the farther adjacent localities. The wider acceptance of these elements also facilitates the mobility of the flows.

Therefore, both dwelling/locality and crossing/mobility are indispensable in the translocative processes of religions or cultures. These two seemingly mutually opposite aspects jointly constitute a dynamic dialectical unity in the translocative framework. In such a dialectical unity, their respective existences are inseparable from each other's identification and definition. They are indeed against each other, but at the same time also dependent on each other. They are enriching, supplementing, and completing each other. If there is no crossing, there is no dwelling; conversely, if there is no dwelling, there is no crossing as well. This dialectical and interdependent relationship between dwelling and crossing might be able to shed some light on both social affairs and academic theoretical comprehension. As for the social affairs, this dialectical relationship might encourage people to realize the importance of the balance between dwelling and crossing, thus to arouse further reflections on how to deal with boundaries, cultural diversity, cultural innovation, religious freedom, and so on. However, discussions of these issues might have extended beyond the scope of academic analysis into the field of social politics. Thus, here I put more emphasis on the academic theoretical comprehension instead, arguing that we should pay equal attention to the processes of both dwelling and crossing when we observe, investigate, interpret, and theorize religious or cultural phenomena. It is the dynamic and dialectical balance between crossing/mobility and dwelling/locality that we are supposed to pay more attention to instead of over-emphasizing boundaries (like cultural essentialism) or completely deconstructing boundaries on a theoretical level. On the one hand, if we over-emphasize the fixity of cultures, our attention to the relationality of cultures might be reduced. On the other hand, if we put too much emphasis on the mobility and fluidity of cultures, we might not be able to pay enough attention to the formation of the relatively fixed local

expressions and cultural idiosyncrasies. Therefore, any over-emphasis of either one of these two kinds of processes in academic discussions might lead to a tendency to make our interpretations and theorizations one-sided.

3. The Translocative Framework in Religious Studies

In the introduction, I have indicated that the religious aspect is inseparable from Gandhāran Buddhist material culture. Thus, we can already get some clue of the translocative property of Gandhāran Buddhism from its translocative material culture. However, the conceptual tool of translocality is not limited to revealing and describing the eclectic traits of Gandhāran Buddhist material culture *per se*. It might also reveal the relational aspect of Gandhāran Buddhism or even religions in general. In Gandhāran Buddhism, this relational aspect is particularly reflected by its eclectic traits and its missionary potential. As I have discussed in Chapter 3, the dialectical tension between the sense of familiarity and that of unfamiliarity simultaneously aroused by the eclectic Gandhāran Buddhist material culture has its potential to make a common home for the people inhabited in or migrated to Gandhāra from diverse cultural backgrounds. Thus, this dialectical tension between the sense of familiarity and that of unfamiliarity contributed to the missionary potential of Gandhāran Buddhism. Let me put this hypothesis more concretely. Firstly, the eclectic traits of Gandhāran Buddhist material culture might imply an anchored but translocally relational common local identity in Gandhāra. On the one hand, certain visual traits might have a stronger connection with certain localities where they came from or passed through because these very traits might have played a certain role in the local processes of the formation or remodeling of the corresponding localities. In this sense, these traits might have been embedded in some local entanglements, serving as one of the relatively typical symbols of the corresponding local identities. Thus, these visual traits might be able to evoke the identification of the people who recognize these traits and accept or embrace the corresponding local identities based on their sense of *familiarity*. That being so, the organic integration of the visual traits flowing from other areas or localities in Buddhist material culture might imply the organic confluence of different local identities in Gandhāran Buddhism, which leads to a new identity, namely the Gandhāran identity. On the other hand, the sense of *unfamiliarity* aroused by the visual traits that the people from certain localities cannot well understand or recognize might have served as an attractive force for them to try to make sense of these very traits (and perhaps also the people who can understand these very traits), propelling them to transgress or transcend their previously held identities towards a new identity of Gandhāra and Gandhāran Buddhism. Thus, both the sense of familiarity and that of unfamiliarity—which were simultaneously aroused

by the eclectic Gandhāran Buddhist material culture and dialectically united together—might be able to jointly contribute to the formation of the new common identity of Gandhāra. Secondly, the eclectic traits of Gandhāran Buddhist material culture might be an embodiment of the missionary aspect of Gandhāran Buddhism. As Rhi indicated in his paper "Early Mahāyāna and Gandhāran Buddhism," Gandhāran art, which would inevitably reflect the religion, "tends to represent certain segments or aspects of religious ideas and practices."[22] Thus, based on the inherent connection between Gandhāran material culture and Gandhāran religion, one can take a further step to tentatively speculate that the eclectic traits of Gandhāran Buddhist material culture might have played a role in the spread of Buddhism, encouraging further missionary activities. However, this issue still remains to be examined based on more detailed, rigorous, and substantial scrutinization. Whatever, no matter whether the eclectic traits of Gandhāran Buddhist material culture were really relevant to the missionary aims, Gandhāran Buddhist material culture might have been able to create critical conditions for attracting as many people as possible to accept, embrace, and patronize local Buddhism in Gandhāra; and Gandhāra Buddhism might also have become a translocative "middle ground" for the people from different cultural backgrounds to accommodate together, playing an important role in the production and maintenance of the Gandhāran local identity.

Certainly, we still need more substantial studies based on the relevant archaeological and textual studies to examine this hypothesis in the future. However, if it is the case in Gandhāran Buddhism, this hypothesis might be able to contribute to our understandings of the missionizing religions—such as Christianity and Islam—by encouraging us to pay attention to the sense of both familiarity and unfamiliarity on a micro local level stimulated by the dynamic processes of localization and fluidization of religious flows caused by their missionary practices or strategies. Since missionary religions usually tend to be understood and accepted by as many people as possible. They might adopt strategies that simultaneously stimulate familiarity and unfamiliarity in the process of localization on a micro local level in an attempt to make itself spread to the wide geographic range as widely they can. By attending to the diversified processes of localization, this transcultural-translocative approach can also question our conventional essentialist understandings of these missioning religions. If we take Islam as an example, indeed, we might find certain similarities between certain localities in the Islamic world, but these similarities might be not so consistent and coherent to the extent that they can be universally applied to all the localities in the Islamic world. These similarities might be only consistent and

[22] Rhi Juhyung, "Early Mahāyāna and Gandhāran Buddhism: An assessment of the Visual Evidence," *The Eastern Buddhist* 35, no. 1/2 (2003): 154.

coherent in a limited range of geographical/social scope and can never warrant us to universally essentialize Islam as a homogenous and unchanging entity. Here, what we can admit is that Islam, like other missionizing religions, is relational. The localities in the Islamic world are embedded in an extensive network of Islam. A particular locality in a religious network usually has more intimate relationships with certain localities that are somehow adjacent to it (not only in a geographical sense but a social or phenomenological sense), but might have more indirect or less obvious connections with further localities. These connections usually depend on the mediatory role of certain localities that serve as "middle grounds." Therefore, missionizing religions are extensive and expansive but meanwhile inherently heterogeneous. Anyhow, either the translocative theoretical lens or the hypothesis derived from the Gandhāra case has the potential to challenge the conventional essentialist understandings of religions by revealing the relational aspect of religions.

4. The Translocative Framework and Other Theories

Not limited to the field of religious studies, the translocative framework can also dialogue with other theories, resonating with each other and completing each other. The theory of anchoring innovation proposed by Ineke Sluiter and the theory of human-thing entanglement proposed by Ian Hodder are two typical theories among them.

(1) The Translocative Framework and the Theory of Anchoring Innovation

The Dutch classicist Ineke Sluiter based in Leiden University has proposed a theory—the theory of anchoring innovation—to reveal the intrinsic relationship between innovation and tradition. She argued that innovation—what is perceived as new—usually needs to be connected with what is considered "familiar," "known," or "already accepted."[23] "Innovations may become acceptable, understandable, and desirable when relevant social groups can effectively integrate and accommodate them in their conceptual categories, values, beliefs and ambitions."[24] That is, innovations are and need to be "anchored."[25] As Sluiter defined, anchoring is "the dynamic through which innovations are embedded in and attached to what is (perceived as) older, traditional, or known."[26] While "anchors" are "the concrete phenomena or concepts that are perceived or experienced as the stable basis for innovation."[27] Anchoring can be either a process

[23] Ineke Sluiter, "Anchoring Innovation: A Classical Research Agenda," *European Review* 25, no. 1 (2017): 23.
[24] Sluiter, "Anchoring Innovation," 23.
[25] Sluiter, "Anchoring Innovation," 23.
[26] Sluiter, "Anchoring Innovation," 32.
[27] Sluiter, "Anchoring Innovation," 32.

or an activity, either of which involves "agency and conscious activity."[28] It is usually the anchoring that largely lends the innovation itself "acceptance and successful adoption."[29]

Sluiter's theory of anchoring innovation resonates well with the translocative framework. In the translocative framework, the stylized local expressions brought about through the dynamics of encounters can be also considered to be innovations. However, these innovations are not formed out of thin air. Rather, the people who innovate always draw upon the *existing* traditions *at hand* as foundations and references of their innovations. Anchoring can also imply the process of homemaking. If we theorize "the home" in an emic manner, "the home" can be the place that can make the relevant social groups feel a sense of safety, security, belonging, reliability, and familiarity. In this sense, the existing traditions adopted by the innovations are able to generate a sense of "home." Thus, the anchored innovation is a bridge that links the familiar and the unfamiliar, guiding the target groups to travel from the familiar to the unfamiliar and to dwell in a new place. It provides people with the necessary sense of familiarity, comprehensibility, and security (dwelling) at the same time when it opens up a broader possibility for the target groups to step into the future (crossing).

The theory of anchoring innovation can make our understanding of the translocative framework more comprehensive. The process/activity of anchoring innovation highlights the relations between the newly formed/reformed localities (*A*) and the other localities (*B*) which provide a certain amount of inspirations and resources for the formation/reformation of these very localities (*A*) in the translocative framework. It also appeals our attention to the source or the provenance of the elements carried by the cultural flows in the translocative framework. It reveals the role of the other localities that connect a particular locality through the entangled networks in the formation, maintenance, and remodeling of this very locality. Taking the case of the Gandhāran Vajrapāni as an example, we can say that the Heracles' lion-skin headgear and muscular physique as well as Indra's vajra are the "anchors"—which were based on different traditions—that traveled from either the localities in Central Asia or those in India proper. All the "anchors" can generate a sense of familiarity in Gandhāra for those who accept, recognize, or welcome the corresponding tradition. Hence Gandhāran Vajrapāni is an anchored innovation. Gandhāran sculptors or craftsmen consciously drew upon the existing visual traits at hand—no matter where they were from—to formulate their own stylized iconographical expressions.

[28] Sluiter, "Anchoring Innovation," 32.
[29] Sluiter, "Anchoring Innovation," 30.

Conversely, the translocative framework can also complement the theory of anchoring innovation. In her elaboration on the anchoring innovation theory, Sluiter put more emphasis on the vertical/temporal dimension of the anchoring innovation. She particularly highlighted the transitional property of anchoring innovation that links the tradition and the future. However, the translocative framework can encourage us to also pay attention to the spatial/horizontal dimension of anchoring innovation. It can help us unfold large supportive spatial networks behind the relevant anchoring innovations. It can reveal the multi-directionality of the channels that bring the "anchors" together to jointly formulate an innovation. In other words, it can reveal the diversity of the "anchors" and the multi-faceted property of the source of the "anchors." Thus, translocative framework has the potential to explain the eclectic traits of the cultural innovation.

Moreover, the translocative framework may also be able to respond to questions about how to promote innovations. Having accepted Sluiter's theory, we acknowledge that innovations always need necessary "anchors" to make themselves easier to be accepted and adopted. Thus, to allow or to encourage the cultural elements—which might become the "anchors" in the future innovations—to cross and dwell translocatively is able to generate more possibilities for those elements to interact with specific local elements and agencies, which might further promote innovations. Although to enrich or to diversify the cultural elements that might become the foundations or references of the future innovations does not promise the actual happening of cultural innovations, it can at least provide a suitable and enabling environment for the emergence of cultural innovations.

(2) The Translocative Framework and the Theory of Human-Thing Entanglements

The translocative framework is applicable not only to the human actors but also to the non-human agents. As Oakes and Schein asserted in *Translocal China* (2006), "translocality does not only mean people; it is crucially constituted as well by the circulation of capital, ideas and images, goods and styles, services, diseases, etc."[30] Appadurai also revealed in his essay "Grassroots Globalization and the Research Imagination" that not only people are in motion but things are so as well.[31] In this sense, it is also valuable to explore the relationship between humans and things in the translocative process, which relates the translocative framework to Ian Hodder's theory of human-thing entanglements.

[30] Oakes and Schein, *Translocal China*, 1.
[31] Arjun Appadurai, "Grassroots Globalization and the Research Imagination," *Public culture* 12, no. 1 (2000): 5.

The British archaeologist Ian Hodder proposed a theory to reveal the complexly interconnected relationships between humans and things, namely the theory of human-thing entanglements. In his monograph *Entangled: An Archaeology of the Relationships between Humans and Things* (2012), Hodder defined "entanglement" as the sum of four types of relationships between humans and things: "humans depend on things" (HT), "things depend on other things" (TT), "things depend on humans" (TH), and "humans depend on humans" (HH). Thus, "Entanglement = (HT) + (TT) + (TH) + (HH)."[32]

The theory of entanglement can enrich our theoretical discussions of the translocative framework by encouraging us to pay attention to the role of dynamic interaction between humans and things in the processes of crossing and dwelling in the translocative framework. Especially in the case of the translocative Gandhāran Buddhist material culture, the perspective of human-thing entanglement might be necessary for us to understand the ancient people and society through the extant objects. With the help of the human-thing entanglement framework, we might be able to achieve a more comprehensive understanding of Gandhāran Buddhism and the Gandhāran society. At the formative stage of the stylized Gandhāran material culture, humans and things depended on each other. The formation of the eclectic material culture depended on humans' conscious actions that selected, adopted, or transformed the relevant iconographical features traveling with the flows, which imply the process of dwelling and the activity of anchoring innovation discussed above. Conversely, humans' action of selecting, adopting, or transforming visual characteristics also depended on the crossing or the moving of the relevant material elements that brought about the possibilities of encounters. After the formative stage, the stylized Gandhāran material culture could also react on humans, stimulating the sense of familiarity and that of unfamiliarity simultaneously to contribute to the maintenance of the Gandhāran local identities, promoting the acceptance and the understanding of Gandhāran Buddhism.

In turn, the translocative framework also has the potential to complement Hodder's theory of human-thing entanglements. As Graham Harman criticized, Hodder "drifts back toward the modernist dichotomy" by treating things and humans as "two taxonomically different types."[33] In this respect, Hodder's point still perpetuates the human-thing dualism and may thus reiterate

[32] Ian Hodder, *Entangled: An Archaeology of the Relationships between Humans and Things* (West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 88.
[33] Graham Harman, "Entanglement and relation: A response to Bruno Latour and Ian Hodder," *New literary history* 45, no. 1 (2014): 44.

the very distinction we aim to criticize. However, the dialectic logic of translocality might be able to shed some light on this conundrum. If we broaden the range of meaning of the concept "locality" beyond the geographical or the phenomenological sense to the extent that any agential places that can either actively send or selectively receive the impact flows can be considered localities, then both humans and things can be seen as localities. That being so, the complex human-thing interaction can be seen as translocative. Both humans and things are relationally produced through the dynamic connection of the operative impact flows. With the intervention of the translocative perspective, the humans' status in the entanglement can be relatively decentralized, the human-thing relations can be highlighted, and the human-thing boundaries can be relatively loosened through the emphasis of the relational impact flows while at the same time retaining the relative autonomy of both humans and things.

5. Concluding Remarks

Taking the transcultural theoretical thinking as a first step, we start questioning, challenging and deconstructing the conventional essentialist understanding of Gandhāran Buddhist material culture as well as the essentialist notion of religions and cultures. Based on the actual scrutinization of the archaeological material, we can reconstruct and re-theorize the cultural/religious interaction and interconnectivity through a translocative framework. Taking "translocality" as a conceptual tool, we attend to the dynamically dialectical unities between fixity and mobility, between localization and fluidization, and between dwelling and crossing in the processes of cultural interaction, innovation, production, and reproduction. Furthermore, the translocative framework takes an idiographic strategy by attending to the micro nuances among different localities on a micro local scale in order to obtain concrete understandings, but meanwhile it does not deny the possibility to show a more monothetic image of cultural/religious interactions and interconnectivity by revealing a broader network that connect the particular cases together. Moreover, the dynamically dialectical logic implied by the concept of "translocality" also has the potential to contribute to our understanding of the dialectical unity between the crossing and the dwelling in religions. Finally, it can also play a positive role in the dialogue with other theories, such as Sluiter's theory of anchoring innovations and Hodder's theory of human-thing entanglements.

Conclusion

In this thesis, I argue that taking a transcultural approach is more productive and heuristic than taking the conventional essentialist approach in the studies of Gandhāran Buddhist material culture in particular and in those of religions and cultures in general. In the first two chapters, I have revealed the assumptions of cultural essentialism and their deficiencies in the preceding studies of Gandhāran Buddhist material culture. Since the 19th century, the essentialist approach has become prominent and even dominant in Gandhāran studies. With the tint of Orientalism, the essentialist discourses of the Western classical influences on Gandhāran culture largely neglected the complexity of the social practices of cultural interactions behind Gandhāran Buddhist material culture. The Western classical influence discourse reduced Gandhāra to a passive recipient of foreign "influences," causing its own agency and subjectivity to be largely neglected by academic studies. In addition, this discursive formation was usually exploited by the British colonial authorities and served as a foundation for them to justify their colonial mission and agenda in South Asia. Although anticolonial and postcolonial interpretations emerged in the following period, they did not succeed in transcending the assumptions of cultural essentialism due to either retaining to the Orientalist East-West division or adhering to the discourse of "influence." These anticolonial and postcolonial interpretive attempts also possess the deficiencies of cultural essentialism as their predecessor Western classical influence discourse does.

To sum up, the essentialist approach has three deficiencies. First, it largely simplifies the complexity of cultural or religious exchange, interaction, and integration processes in social-historical reality. Scholars of Gandhāran Buddhist material culture who took an essentialist approach usually attribute the eclectic traits to other, deemed "pure," cultural spheres, such as Greek, Roman, Indian, Parthian, and Scythian cultures. In other words, the essentialist view is inclined to reduce the intricately entangled network behind the cultural interactions in Gandhāra to the simple relationships between several clearly distinguishable cultural spheres. It also ignores the significant cultural diversity on a micro local level brought about by the distribution and localization of the cultural elements that are deemed as parts of the essences of some "pure" cultures. In Gandhāran studies, the scholars taking an essentialist approach usually tend to neglect the cultural idiosyncrasies on a micro local level between the sites that lay either inside the Greater Gandhāra region or outside of it but were culturally related to it. Second, it makes the so-called "impure," "mixed," and "hybrid" cultures lose their subjectivities and agencies.

They are reduced to the periphery between different influential cultural centers, being the passive recipients that are passively influenced by other "pure" cultures as active influencers. According to the logic of the pure-impure binary, "pure" things exist prior to the "impure." Cultural purity is seen as the precondition of cultural mixing, which is a secondary stage that assumes the prior existence of "pure" cultures. Third, due to the fact that the classification of distinct boundaries usually serves a certain purpose, the essentialist approach is more likely to make the relevant academic discussions vulnerable to be exploited by certain political agendas. The differences between the deemed self-evident essences provide a necessary foundation for the justification of the political differential treatment. Based on the classification of the different cultural "essences," cultural essentialism is also able to generate some pernicious effects, such as imposing additional political or ideological meanings onto cultures, which subsequently serves as the theoretical basis or ideological foundation for cultural colonialism, cultural chauvinism, and cultural racism. Thus, the academic interpretations are more likely to be reduced to the ideology-charged discourses serving for particular political interests. In Gandhāran studies, the academic discussions concerning the inception of Gandhāran Buddhist material culture have long been charged with political implications. As Michael Falser put it in his "The Graeco-Buddhist style of Gandhara – a 'Storia ideologica', or: how a discourse makes a global history of art," Gandhāran Buddhist material culture has been "(re)invented by Western colonial regimes and postcolonial nation-states alike to politically justify and culturally stabilize their own changing identities."[1] In the colonial era, Gandhāran Buddhist material culture was appropriated to justify the "civilizing mission" of the British imperialism in India.[2] Subsequently, with the rise of the Indian independence movement, Gandhāran Buddhist material culture was redefined to meet with the Indian nationalist agenda.

Instead of following an essentialist approach, I adopt a transcultural approach in this thesis to re-examine Gandhāran Buddhist material culture. Taking the transcultural theoretical thinking as a first step, I question and challenge the essentialist notion of cultures and religions. In order to not ignore and reduce the inherent complexity of religious and cultural processes, I take an idiographic strategy to pay attention to the local processes on a micro level by taking the method of a translocative analysis, which is derived from Tweed's theory of crossing and dwelling. Based on the concern of the local idiosyncrasies, this method also has the potential to reveal a non-idiographic framework by drawing out a more extensive entangled network behind the micro

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[1] Michael Falser, "The Graeco-Buddhist style of Gandhara," —a 'Storia ideologica', or: how a discourse makes a global history of art." *Journal of Art Historiography* 13 (December 2015): 3.
[2] Falser, "The Graeco-Buddhist style of Gandhara," 9-10.

local idiosyncrasies. Applying this method to the study of Gandhāran Buddhist material culture, I take the case of the visual representation of Gandhāran Vajrapāni to trace the cultural /religious flows of Heracles' figural characteristics, revealing how these features were fluidized, localized, re-fluidized, and re-localized in Mediterranean area, Western Asia, Central Asia, Gandhāra, and China. Based on the analysis of this case, I further attempt to re-construct a theory of cultural interactions and entanglements by theorizing the cultural processes in the case with what I call the translocative framework. In this framework, the continuous processes of fluidization, localization, re-fluidization, and re-localization play a central role, promoting the diversification, innovation, and reproduction of cultures.

To summarize, the transcultural approach possesses three advantages that correspond with the three deficiencies of the essentialist approach. First, the transcultural approach can offer an alternative and more nuanced way to represent cultural diversity by attending to the local idiosyncrasies on a micro level. Thus, it reveals cultural diversity without reducing or neglecting the complexity of processes of cultural interactions, integrations, and innovations in certain social-historical contexts. The transcultural approach takes an idiosyncratic strategy by focusing on the connections between various localities (in both the geographical sense and the phenomenological sense) on a micro local level in order to observe cultural diversity instead of attributing cultural diversity to different clearly distinguishable essentialist cultural spheres in a simplistic manner. Based on the scrutinization of the cultural idiosyncrasies on a micro local level, the transcultural-translocative framework is also able to extend our attention to a much broader range of time and space by tracing the intricate connections within larger networks.

This advantage can also respond to Said's challenge to his successors to "find alternative and ever more nuanced ways of representing cultural diversity to replace those founded upon a simplistic and oppositional logic of 'Occident vs. Orient.'"[3] Said challenged and criticized the essentialist Orientalist opposition between "the East" and "the West," but he did not invest too much on establishing a coherent alternative theoretical approach that allows his successors to observe, comprehend, and represent cultural diversity as a kind of socio-historical reality that used to be misrepresented through an essentialist oppositional lens. That being so, Said was also criticized by some scholars due to perceived theoretical inconsistencies in his account. These critics argued that Said, on the one hand, challenged the constructed image of 'the Orient' in Western imagination but, on the other hand, at the same time presupposed that there was a real

[3] Richard King, "Orientalism and the Study of Religions," in *The Routledge Companion to the Study of Religion (Second Edition)*, ed. John R. Hinnells (London: Routledge, 2010), 294.

Orient 'out there' by attacking Western misrepresentations of the East.[4] Said was reluctant to offer an alternative representation of 'the Orient' because he firmly believed that the division between "the East" and "the West" should be dismissed.[5] In this respect, Said was undoubtedly right not providing a "correctly" represented "Orient" because any attempt to achieve that would be an ironical action that consolidates the East-West division that we aim to overcome. However, it does not mean that the social-historical realities that the images of 'the Orient' are meant to represent are also imaginary and thus they are not worthy of being revealed.[6] The social-historical realities that used to be misrepresented by the images of 'the Orient' might be 'out there' but might not appear as 'the Orient' or any other unified entities. Said thus left his successors a great challenge to represent the complex and heterogenous social-historical realities of cultural diversity that used to be distorted by the rigid division between "the East" and "the West." However, the translocative framework, which can be seen as a reconstructive gain suggested in this thesis that is based on the deconstructive transcultural thinking, can respond to Said's challenge. It can try to represent the complex and heterogenous social-historical realities of cultural diversity by attending to the cultural idiosyncrasies on a micro local level without attributing cultural diversity to the Orientalist categories of "the East" and "the West" as well as to any simplistic essentialist categories other than the Orientalist ones.[7]

Second, the transcultural-translocative framework avoids sticking on the discourse of "influence" and thus is able to resume the agencies and subjectivities of micro localities embedded in larger entangled networks. It does not regard localities as the passive recipients of foreign influences but sees them as agents actively engaging with the processes of dwelling and crossing, of making and remaking of cultures, and of cultural innovations. Thus, it transcends the rigid center-periphery model by adopting an alternative model that allows us to pay more attention to the nuanced relationality reflected through the intricate entanglements of religions and cultures.

[4] King, "Orientalism and the Study of Religions," 294.
[5] King, "Orientalism and the Study of Religions," 294.
[6] King, "Orientalism and the Study of Religions," 294.
[7] In this sense, the transcultural enterprise to represent cultural diversity implies an implication of realism. Unlike positivism that assumes a single and concrete reality and constructivism that assumes the existence of multiple realities, realism "concerns multiple perceptions about a single, mind-independent reality" (Krauss, 2005, 761). Realists accept and believe that there is a single autonomous reality independently existing "out there" waiting to be discovered; however, there is no single research or interpretation can perfectly apprehend and represent the "real" reality (Healy and Perry, 2000). In the academic enterprise to represent cultural diversity, the complexity of cultural diversity can be considered a social-historical reality "out there," and the multiplication of our transcultural-translocative interpretations, which can complement and triangulate with each other, can be seen as a realist attempt to get closer and closer to the social-historical reality of cultural complexity that exists independently of the researchers.

This advantage can also complement Inden's criticism of the essentialist tendency in Indological studies. Instead of supporting an essentialist perspective in Indology, Inden proposed an emphasis upon "the historical agency of indigenous Asians."[8] He suggested that this approach "would avoid the tendency to conceive of the Orient as an unchanging and timeless realm—as if Asian cultures and peoples were *subject to* rather than *agents of* historical change."[9] Some critics clearly expressed their worries that Inden's appeal to indigenous agency would be easily appropriated by right-wing Hindu groups in contemporary India; they feared it would foster 'internal colonialism' in a nationalist manner in India.[10] Although the transcultural-translocative framework encourages us to attend to the local agency as Inden's appeal does, it can avoid being trapped in the awkward situation of being exploited by nationalism and 'internal colonialism'. It is because the transcultural-translocative framework attends to the cultural idiosyncrasies on a micro local level instead of presupposing any nationalist entities. Therefore, on the one hand, the transcultural-translocative framework is in line with Inden's appeal for the local agency; on the other hand, it can somehow lighten those critics' worries that this appeal would be exploited by nationalism, internal colonialism, and cultural chauvinism.

Third, the transcultural approach can help us reflect upon the preceding politicalized discourses, trying to provide a relatively unbiased interpretation. On the one hand, it can help us challenge the colonial discourses and the colonialist implications behind them. On the other hand, it can also help us reflect upon the anticolonial discourses and their nationalist assumptions. By attending to the cultural idiosyncrasies on a micro local level, this approach aims to revert agency and subjectivity to micro localities but not to any essentialist entities such as "the East" or "the West," nations, or essentialist cultural spheres. Moreover, at the same time, it does not disregard the larger extensive networks on which these micro localities are embedded. The agencies and subjectivities of micro localities also depend on their interactions with other localities through the connectivity of the larger networks on which they are embedded. Thus, their agencies and subjectivities are not absolute. Therefore, this approach has great potential to develop a "coherent paradigm for an unbiased interpretation" in the studies of Gandhāran Buddhist material culture, as suggested by Filigenzi.[11]

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[8] King, "Orientalism and the Study of Religions," 295.
[9] King, "Orientalism and the Study of Religions," 295.
[10] King, "Orientalism and the Study of Religions," 295.
[11] Anna Filigenzi, "Orientalised Hellenism versus Hellenised Orient: Reversing the Perspective on Gandharan Art." *Ancient Civilizations from Scythia to Siberia* 18 (2012), 112.

Furthermore, in Chapter 4, I argue that the reconstructive gain—a translocative framework based on deconstructive transcultural thinking—also possesses more potential to contribute to theoretical discussions. Thus, the theoretical discussions in Chapter 4 have extended beyond the particular case of Gandhāran Buddhist material culture into discussions productive for studying religions and cultures more broadly. First, the translocative framework encourages us to pay attention to the dialectical relationship between mobility and locality in religious/cultural interactions and entanglements. Both dwelling/locality and crossing/mobility are indispensable in the translocative processes of religions or cultures. Both sides deserve equal academic attention. Second, through the Gandhāran case, the translocative framework can contribute to our understandings of religions, especially for the missionizing religions, by revealing their relational aspect. Furthermore, it can also complement other theories. It can complement Sluiter's theory of anchoring innovation by encouraging us to also pay attention to the spatial/horizontal dimension of anchoring innovations. It can also contribute to Hodder's human-thing entanglements by reconciling the human-thing dualism through the dialectical property of the concept of "translocality."

The transcultural approach is also productive and heuristic in helping us understand religious material cultures and more broadly, religions. As I have mentioned above, the transcultural-translocative framework is able to reveal the relational aspect of religions and thus to overcome and transcend the conventional essentialist views that take religions as essentialist entities with unchanging essences encapsulated. Moreover, the transcultural-translocative framework can help us reconsider religious material culture in culturally complex and changing contexts, thus avoiding the tendency to see eclectic religious material cultures as simple superimpositions of various layers of features derived from different religious or cultural essences. Finally, the transcultural approach can also keep us alert to the idea of syncretism in religious studies by revealing the inherent essentialist assumptions behind this very idea.

Last but not least, taking a transcultural perspective as a starting point also has the potentiality to open up space for interdisciplinary cooperation in the studies of Gandhāran Buddhist material culture in particular and in those of cultures and religions in general. For example, the transcultural perspective might be able to inspire archaeologists and art historians to rethink their stylistic analyses, a lot of which used to be conducted through an essentialist theoretical lens. The transcultural approach might also be helpful for archaeologists and art historian to further reflect upon some concepts that they commonly use to describe the eclectic materials in question, such

as “hybridity,” Mestizaje,” and “creolization,” which also usually presuppose the purity of cultures existing prior to the mixture of cultures. In addition, the transcultural perspective is also likely to shed some light on the fields of museum curating and public history in terms of how to represent and display highly eclectic material cultures. As I have pointed out in the introduction, the tendency of cultural essentialism reflected in the museums’ explanatory notes stems from prevalent academic views of the colonial era and cunningly escaped the postcolonial criticism, hiding in the explanatory notes at the corner of the museums around us in the contemporary world. However, the transcultural perspective might be able to help us be aware of, reflect upon, criticize, and overcome the endurance of such lingering cultural essentialism in museum contexts.

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