

The Relations between the Sogdians and Gokturks Manifest in the Afrasiab Palatial Murals



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Introduction

The Sogdians, who painted the murals in Afrasiab Palace in Samarkand, Uzbekistan, have been extensively researched as the symbolic agent of the West Regions' (*Xiyu*) cultural transmission in East Asia for a long time.¹ However, as exemplified by the Afrasiab murals, the golden era of Sogdian art was in the 6th-8th centuries, and thus it is not easy to explain the Central Asian elements in ancient Korean art that were already present in fourth-century Anak Tomb No. 3 in North Korea in connection with Sogdian art.

Against this backdrop, the significance of ancient Koreans' image in the 7th century Afrasiab murals and the nature of Central Asian art culture exhibited in ancient Korea and China can be analyzed by means of exam-

¹ Guitty Azarpay, *Sogdian Painting: The Pictorial Epic in Oriental Art* (University of California Press, 1981); Annette L. Juliano and Judith A. Lerner, *Monks and Merchants* (New York: Asia Society, 2001); De La Vaissiere, Etienne, *Sogdian Traders: A History*. Ward, James trans. (Brill, 2005); B. I. Marshak and N. N. Negmatov, "Sogdiana," in *History of Civilizations of Central Asia: The Crossroads of Civilizations, A. D. 250 to 750*, Ahmad Hasan Dani, B. A. Litvinsky ed., (Unesco, 1996): 237-81; Kwon Young-pil 권영필 et al., *Jungang Asia-sok-ui Koguryoin Baljachwi 중앙아시아 속의 고구려인 발자취* [The Footmarks of Koguryo People in Central Asia] (Seoul: Northeast Asian History Foundation, 2008), 13-59.

ining the trends of art culture that had been transmitted east and west along the Uzbekistan region since long before the creation of the Afrasiab wall paintings. Moreover, research on the evolvement of third-fourth century Central Asian reliefs and murals, which had been created shortly before Koguryo tomb murals, reveals that the Central Asian culture of reliefs and murals, as well as the Chinese culture of pictorial stones and murals in the Wei-Jin period, provided abundant cultural resources to inspire Koguryo tomb murals. An investigation of Central Asian-style tomb murals developed in northern regions will help overcome the spatiotemporal limitations of previous analyses of Sogdian art traditions, which are still fixed at the 6th-8th century Afrasiab murals.²

Ascribing the Central Asian influence on Koguryo tomb murals obscurely to the West Regions raises a dilemma while presenting Dunhuang Grottoes' murals and Uzbekistan's Afrasiab murals as evidence of cultural interactions, since the Afrasiab murals including the image of Koreans were painted later than the golden era of Koguryo murals—that is, the fifth-sixth centuries. Important to note here is that the Northern Nomadic Civilization, which gave birth to Koguryo's mural culture, had formed far prior to the fourth-fifth centuries A.D., when Koguryo murals began to appear. The civilization had developed since the 7th-8th centuries B.C. during the time of the Huns and Scythians, upon the foundation of a travel route that had enabled the spread of Scythian culture east and west and human and cultural transmission by the westward and southward movements of the Huns, and then it reached and encompassed Koguryo, which adopted its mural culture.³

The Central Asian culture represented by the Sogdians should be approached on the basis of a comprehensive understanding of Eastern and Western cultures disseminated by the inhabitants and visitors of Sogdiana, not as a dissemination of Sogdian culture. The interpretation of so-called

² Park Ah-rim 박아림, *Koguryo Gobunpyeokhwa Eurasia-lul Punda* 고구려 고분벽화 유라시아 문화를 품다 [Koguryo Tomb Murals Embracing Eurasian Culture] (Seoul: Hakyonmunhwasa, 2015).

³ Ibid.

“Westerners” (*Xiyuren*) and the culture of the Western Regions as a cultural body of a fixed region in a fixed period, cannot reconstruct the spatiotemporal links between Koguryo’s international exchanges and the Central Asian influence displayed on Koguryo murals. However, if the Central Asian culture, often equivocally associated with Sogdian culture, is understood as a continuum of the Central Asian civilization inherited from Scythian and Hun culture, the places and times are connected without any spatiotemporal contradictions.

The Afrasiab murals in Uzbekistan, created in the 7th century, are an accumulated outcome of art cultural exchanges between east and west, which had been led by the Sogdians as a medium and symbol of transmission since Anno Domini. The murals have been also the symbolic monument of the countries involved in the formation of the civilization encompassing the Northern Grasslands and Central Asia, such as Sogdiana, the Gokturk empires, China, and Koguryo.

Two probable routes of exchange between ancient Korea and Uzbekistan have been suggested by previous studies on the Afrasiab palatial murals.⁴ The first one is along the Chinese Oasis Road during the periods of the Northern, Sui, and Tang Dynasties. A variety of artefacts from the periods, such as tomb murals and stone reliefs with Central Asian-style character designs, Central Asian-style accessories and glassware unearthed from tombs, and Sasanian silver coins and Byzantine gold coins, all evince the cultural exchange between east and west from/through ancient Uzbekistan to ancient China.⁵

The second probable route that connected Sogdiana and Koguryo is the Gokturk route, a non-Chinese route through the Grasslands. Although substantial research, based on textual records, has been conducted on ex-

⁴ Kwon Young-pil 권영필 et al., *Jungang Asia-sok-ui Koguryoin Baljachwi* 중앙아시아 속의 고구려인 발자취 [The Footmarks of Koguryo People in Central Asia] (Seoul: Northeast Asian History Foundation, 2008): 13-59.

⁵ Rong Xinjiang, “Sogdians Around the Ancient Tarim Basin,” in Matteo Compareti, Paola Raffetta, Gianroberto Scarcia, *Ērān ud Anērān Studies Presented to Boris Il’ič Maršak on the Occasion of His 70th Birthday* (Cafoscara, 2006): 513-24; Park Ah-rim (2015); Kwon Young-pil et al. (2008): 385-461.

changes between Koguryo and the Gokturks,⁶ a concrete reconstruction of Koguryo's art cultural exchanges with the Gokturks and as far as the Sogdians is not easy, considering the paucity of remains and artefacts from the 6th-8th century Gokturks in the Mongolian region.

Kageyama Etsuko, who has investigated the influence of Chinese art on the Afrasiab murals, argues that the murals had adopted the idiosyncratic images of foreign envoys in Chinese murals⁷ since those envoys resemble figures in tomb murals and stone statues in the Zhaoling and Qianling Mausoleums of the Tang Dynasty. Boris Marshak, on the other hand, suggests that the Chinese emperor and princess in the Afrasiab murals might have referred to scroll paintings imported along with silk from China.⁸ Matteo Compareti also compares the hunting scene in Afrasiab's north wall painting with Tang's tomb of Li Shou, Han's stone reliefs from Northern Shaanxi, and Sasanian paintings of hunting, while attempting to link the mural's boating scene on the river with China's Dragon Boat Festival.⁹

However, Tang's tomb murals and stone statues in the Zhaoling and Qianling Mausoleums, which are mostly located in Xi'an, Shaanxi, are

⁶ Lee Seong-je 이성제, "Koguryo-wa Tureukeu-gye bukbangseryeok-ui gwangye" 高句麗와 튀르크계 北方勢力의 관계 [The Relationship between Koguryo and Turkic Northern Powers], *Studies on Koguryo and Balhae* 고구려발해연구 52 (2015): 149-71; 이정빈 Lee Jeongbin, "570-nyeondae huban~580-nyeondae jeonban Yoseojiyeok-ui jeongse-wa Koguryo-ui daeogwangye" 570년대 후반~580년대 전반 요서지역의 情勢와 고구려의 대외관계 [The Situations in the Liaoxi Region and Koguryo's Foreign Relations in the Late 570s to the Early 580s], *Journal of Northeast Asian History* 동북아역사논총 (2014): 285-314.

⁷ Kageyama Etsuko 影山悦子, "Samarukando hekiga ni mi rareru Chūgoku kaiga no yōso ni tsuite—Chōsen hito shisetsu wa varukumān-ō no moto o otzureta ka" サマルカンド壁画に見られる中国絵画の要素について—朝鮮人使節はワルフマーン王のもとを訪れたか— [On the Elements of Chinese Paintings Found in Samarkand Murals—Did Korean Envoys Visit King Varkhuman?], *Seinanajia Kenkyū* 西南アジア研究 [Southwest Asian Studies] 49 (1998): 17-33; Kageyama Etsuko, "A Chinese way of Depicting Foreign Delegates Identified in the Paintings of Afrasiab," *Studia Iranica* 25 (2002): 313-27.

⁸ Boris Ulyich Marshak, "Le Programme Iconographique des Peintures de la 'Salle des Ambassadeurs' à Afrasiab (Samarkand)," *Art Asiatiques* 49 (1994): 5-20; Kwon Young-pil et al. (2008), 49.

⁹ Matteo Compareti, "The Paintings Concerning Chinese Themes at Afrāsyāb," *New Elements on the Chinese Scene in the "Hall of the Ambassadors" at Afrāsyāb along with a Reconsideration of "Zoroastrian" Calendar*, Libreria Editrice Cafoscarina (2007): 11-32.

dated close to or later than the Afrasiab murals. Moreover, Ge Chengyong argued that the stone statues in the Zhaoling Mausoleum might have been influenced by the Gokturks.¹⁰

Meanwhile, the configurations of the west and north wall paintings of Afrasiab Palace exhibit noticeable akinness to the pictorial program of Sogdian stone reliefs found in the Northern and Sui of China as well as to the arrangement of stone statues in Gokturk memorial complexes remaining in Mongolia. Thus, it is more plausible to assume that the Afrasiab murals were not simply the product of Tang art's influence on Sogdian art but the outcome of interactions and incorporations with the cultures of the Northern Grasslands and Central Asia, wherein the Sogdians and the Gokturks could have played the role of the principal agents of art exchange between east and west.

The Afrasiab murals may have referred to Tang's art models, but their themes and compositions might well have been influenced by the portraits of Sogdian tomb occupants engraved on stone reliefs during the Northern and Sui Dynasties of China. The designs carved on sarcophagi, which Sogdian tomb occupants must have custom-ordered, seemingly followed the format of Chinese funerary art; however, they actually reveal a conspicuous combination of Sogdian funerary customs, blending of Sogdian and Gokturk cultures, and traits of the northern nomads. The iconography on Sogdian sarcophagi display the art culture of the nomadic tribes in the Northern Grasslands, reflecting the exchange between the Sogdians and the Gokturks, which could not be or have not been found in the original habitats of the Sogdians, yet.

The following sections provide a preliminary investigation of the Sogdian Afrasiab murals, which were created while interacting with or influenced by Tang and the Western Gokturk Khanate, from the perspective

¹⁰ Ge Chengyong (葛承雍) argues that the Six Steeds of Zhaoling Mausoleum, which sculpted Gokturk steeds associated with the Gokturks' high-ranking officer titles, depict the Gokturk funerary customs and religious practices, which were closely linked to the Gokturks' religion of Zoroastrianism (Yu Hyangyang 유헤양 & Chu Gyosun 추교순, *Jungguk Dangdae Hwangjereung Yeongu* 중국 당대 황제릉 연구 [A Study on Tang Emperors' Mausoleums] (Seogyongmunhwa사 서경문화사, 2012): 50-51).

of tripartite exchanges of art culture among the Sogdians, Gokturks, and Chinese. In other words, instead of the view that they were influenced by Chinese paintings and sculptures,¹¹ they are investigated in terms of how the art culture that was transmitted and incorporated via the international network of the Sogdians, the Gokturks, China's Northern and Tang Dynasties, and Koguryo, was manifest in the Sogdian wall paintings. The remains of Gokturk memorial complexes in Mongolia, Sogdian stone reliefs found in China were created before or close to the Afrasiab murals. Ancient Sogdian murals discovered in Uzbekistan were mostly painted in the 7th to 8th centuries, and thus the comparison with the Sogdian relief sculptures in China will help reconstruct the development of Sogdian murals prior to the 7th-8th centuries. In addition, historical records report that Gokturk memorial shrines were decorated with wall paintings of the lives of the deceased, such as victories in wars,¹² but no wall paintings are left there. Therefore, comparisons of the Afrasiab murals, which reveal the relationship between the Gokturks, Sogdians, and Sino-Sogdian stone reliefs, will provide supplementary information for the reconstruction of Gokturk shrines.

Wall Paintings on the North and South Walls in the Afrasiab Palace and Sino-Sogdian Stone Reliefs

As of April 2019, the explanation board for the drawings of the murals in the exhibition room of the Afrasiab Museum specified the horse rider depicted large in the center of the north wall as Emperor Gaozong of Tang (Figures 1 and 2). This specification, however, needs to be reconsidered since the figure is not clearly identifiable due to heavy exfoliation on the relevant part. Moreover, the overall design of the scene matches more with the context of hunting scenes in the Sogdian stone reliefs of the Northern

¹¹ Mao Min 毛民, "The Art of Chinese Influence at the 'Hall of Ambassadors in Afrasiab,'" *Turfanological Research* 吐鲁番学研究, vol. 2, *Tulufan Xue Guoji Xueshu Yantao Hui Lunwen Ji* 吐鲁番学国际学术研讨会论文集 [Proceedings of the International Symposium on Turfan Studies] (Shanghai Lexicographical Publishing House, 2016): 444-50.

¹² "Tujue chuan" 突厥傳 [The Gokturks], *Zhou Shu* 周書, Book 50; "Tujue chuan" 突厥傳 [The Gokturks], *Sui Shu* 隋書, Book 84.



Figure 1. The Restored Drawing of the Wall Painting on the North Wall of the Afrasiab Palace

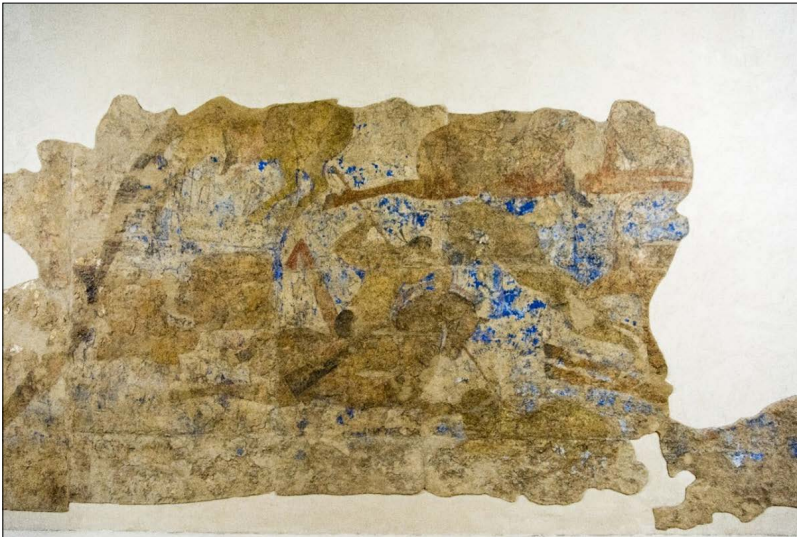


Figure 2. The Wall Painting on the North Wall of the Afrasiab Palace

and Sui Dynasties or scenes of fighting with animals in the Varakhsha murals, rather than with the context of Tang Emperor Gaozong, who bestowed the investiture of Kangju governor on Sogdian King Varkhuman.

There are not many Tang tomb murals with a hunting scene, and the horse rider designated as Emperor Gaozong in the hunting scene of the Afrasiab mural appears more similar to the images of men hunting or fighting with animals carved in the stone reliefs excavated from the tombs of

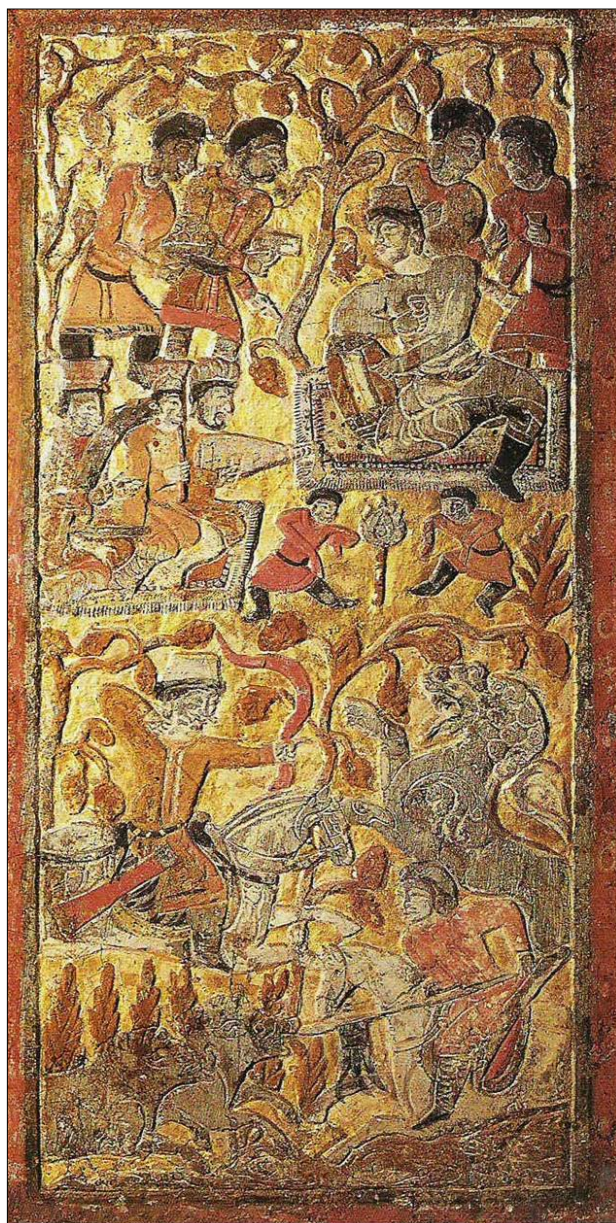


Figure 3. The Hunting Scene in the Tomb of An Qie



Figure 4. The Hunting Scene in the Tomb of Shi Jun

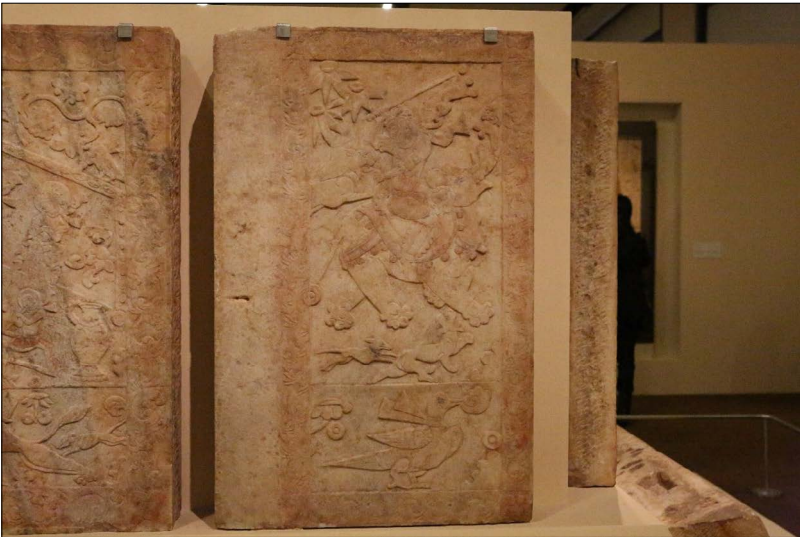


Figure 5. The Hunting Scene in the Tomb of Yu Hong

An Qie (or An Jia), Shi Jun (or Master Shi), and Yu Hong, which display distinct traits of Sogdian culture (Figures 3, 4, and 5). The images of fierce fighting between humans and animals are the main theme of the Varakhsha murals displayed in the State Museum of Art in Samarkand, Uzbekistan and in the Hermitage Museum in Saint Petersburg, Russia (Figure 6).

The Sogdian stone reliefs in China, whose major themes were a banquet or hunting, were created from the late 6th to early 7th centuries, hence earlier than the Afrasiab murals. Originally, the designs of Sogdian pictorial stones had developed blending native Sogdian culture, Chinese funerary culture, and Northern Nomadic culture,¹³ and thus it is probable that blended and incorporated mixtures of those three cultures were present when the Afrasiab murals were painted during the period in which Kangju was under the influence of the Western Gokturk Khanate and Tang.

The Sogdian tombs that have been discovered in China include the Tombs of Shi Jun and An Qie in Xi'an, Shaanxi; the Tomb of Yu Hong in Taiyuan, Shanxi; the Shi family cemetery in Guyuan, Ningxia; and Tomb No. 3 in Yanchi, Ningxia.¹⁴ The tomb occupants belonged to so-called

¹³ Rong Xinjiang 荣新江, "Su te yu tujue yi su te shiguan tuxiang de xin yinzheng" 粟特与突厥—粟特石棺图像的新印证 [New Evidence on Sogdian and Turkic Sarcophagus Images], *Zhongguo Zhongguo Yu Su Te Wenming* 中古中国与粟特文明 [Medieval China and Sogdian civilization] (三联书店, 2014), 373.

¹⁴ Xi'an shi wenwubaohukaoguyanjiuyuan bian 西安市文物保护考古研究院 编, *Beizhoushijunmu* 北周史君墓, Wenwuchubanshe 文物出版社, 2014; Shanxisheng Kaoguyanjiusuo 山西省考古研究所, *Taiyuansuiyuhongmu* 太原隋虞弘墓, Wenwuchubanshe 文物出版社, 2005; Shanxisheng Kaoguyanjiusuo 陕西省考古研究所, *Xi'an Beizhouanjiamu* 西安北周安伽墓, Wenwuchubanshe 文物出版社, 2003; Ningxiahuizuzizhiqu Bowuguan 宁夏回族自治区博物馆, "Ningxia yanchitangmufajuejianbao" 宁夏盐池唐墓发掘简报, *Wenwu* 文物, no. 9, 1988; Annette L. Juliano, Judith A. Lerner, *Monks and Merchants: Silk Road Treasures from Northwest China* (Harry N. Abrams, 2001); Jung Wanseo 정완서, "Jungguk-eseo balgyeondeon sogeudeuin mudeom misul jaegochal—sogeudeuin seokjanggu dosang-ul jungsim-uro" 중국에서 발견된 소그드인 무덤 미술 재고찰—소그드인 석장구 도상을 중심으로 [Reexamining Sogdian tomb art in China with a Focus on the Images on Sogdian Sarcophagi], *A Study on Central Asia* 중앙아시아연구 15 (2010): 327-50; Park Ah-rim 박아림, *ibid.*, 354-70; Annette L. Juliano, "Chinese Pictorial Space at the Cultural Crossroads," Matteo Comparati, *ibid.*, 293-315; Park Ah-rim, "Jungguk Yeonghahoejokjachiigu-ui gowonsudangmyo-wa yeomjidangmyo byeokhwa-ui seokgak yeongu" 중국 영하회족자치구의 고원수당묘와 염지당묘 벽화와 석각연구 [The Wall Paintings and the Stone Reliefs of the Sui-Tang Tombs in Guyuan and the Tang Tombs in Yanchi in the Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region of China], *The History of Asian Art* 동양미술사학 8 (2019): 93-119.



Figure 6. Hunting Scene, Red Hall, Varakhsha, The State Museum of Art in Uzbekistan

“Nine Sogdian Surnames (昭武九姓),” which had originated from Anguo (currently Bukhara, Uzbekistan), Shiguo (Kesh or Shahr-i Sabz, Uzbekistan), Kangju (Samarkand, Uzbekistan), and Heguo (Kushania, Uzbekistan). Exotic non-Chinese themes and designs of banquets, hunting, and Zoroastrian funerary rituals were engraved on house-shaped stone sarcophagus, and stone beds. Similar images of the hunting scene on the painting of the north wall of Afrasiab Palace can be found among the Sogdian stone reliefs of the Northern Dynasties of China, particularly on the tombs of An Qie, Shi Jun, and Yu Hong.

An Qie was from Wuwei, Gansu and settled in Xi’an. He worked as a *sabao* (萨宝) or a caravan leader who managed Sogdian immigrants, and died in 579. Shi Jun was also a *sabao* in Lanzhou, Gansu, and died at 85 in 579. His wife, whose surname was Kang, is assumed to be an immigrant from Samarkand. He is known only for his last name since his Chinese given name has been erased in the tomb epitaph. Yu Hong was from the city of Yuhelin, Yugu. Although he was not a Sogdian, under the order of

the Khan of Rouran, he traveled to Persia, Tuyuhun, and the Northern Qi as an envoy, and settled in the Northern Qi, which was later incorporated into the Sui. He worked as a *sabao* till his death in 592, aged 59.

The An Qie Tomb used a stone bed surrounded by a screen, while the Yu Hong Tomb and the Shi Jun Tomb used a house-shaped stone sarcophagus. Although their shapes imitated traditional Chinese timber-framed buildings and furniture, the engraved images on the stone surfaces exhibit entirely exotic traits of Central Asian art culture.

The An Qie stone bed in the Shaanxi History Museum has pictorial carvings on the back, left, and right sides of the stone screen. The back side of the screen consists of 6 pictorial stone panels, while the left and right have 3 panels each. From left to right, the carved images show a procession of horse riders and an oxcart, hunting, and an outdoor banquet on the left-side panels; then an outdoor banquet, a party at a vineyard and hunting, a man and a woman having a banquet, a scene of an oath of allegiance, an outdoor banquet, and another outdoor banquet on the back side of the screen; and finally, hunting, an outdoor banquet, and an outing on an oxcart on the right-side panels.¹⁵ On the left of the banquet scene with the man and woman—who are tomb occupants—and on the bottom of the vineyard party, there is an image of the Sogdian tomb occupant overwhelming a ferocious wild beast with an arrow, which is similar to the hunting design on Sasanian silverware. The scenes of outdoor parties and an oath of allegiance indicate vibrant relations between the Sogdians and Gokturks.¹⁶ Interestingly, the oath scene, in which Sogdians and Gokturks are having a meeting on horses, is an almost identical representation with the royal investiture ceremony on Sasanian reliefs. Above the roof of the house where the Sogdians and Gokturks gather is carved the Zoroastrian symbol of the sun and moon.

The house-shaped stone sarcophagus of the Shi Jun Tomb (or the Tomb of Master Shi or the Tomb of Wirkak) in the Xi'an Museum has the

¹⁵ Jung Wanseo 정완서 (2010), 332.

¹⁶ Refer to Rong Xinjiang (2014, 373-78) on the lively exchange between the Sogdians and Gokturks depicted on Sogdian stone carvings.

images of the following densely carved on its exterior and base: the main deity of Zoroastrianism (Ahura Mazda), hunting, banquet, outing, caravan, ritual, and ascension to heaven. On the exterior wall of the chamber is depicted the tomb occupant's ascension to heaven as he crosses the Zoroastrian Chinvat Bridge over a flower-blooming river. This image is comparable to the boating scene over the lotus-blooming river in the Afrasiab north wall painting.¹⁷ The front and back of the base are decorated with various monsters, and each edge has carvings of spread-winged angels. The left and right sides of the base have various hunting scenes, either on foot or on horse. In particular, in the hunting scene on the left side, where a caravan is also depicted, two horse riders are aiming at a ferociously attacking tiger and lion from left and right, a reminder of beast-fighting scenes on the stone reliefs of the Yu Hong Tomb.

Yu Hong's sarcophagus at the Shanxi Provincial Museum has the carvings of horse-riding, outdoor party, horse-riding party, hunting, vineyard party, and ritual ceremony. The back and right sides have three hunting scenes, in which Sogdians and Gokturks riding elephants or camels are suppressing predators such as a lion with swords or bows and arrows. Under the scene of the tomb occupant couple having a banquet, there is a scene of two men fighting with two lions, each of which is swallowing the head of the man in the front. While such a brutal depiction of hunting was rare in China, similar hunting images were frequent on Sasanian silverware, which suggests that the tomb occupant, who had visited Persia as an envoy, zealously adopted the Central Asian-style designs, including those of the Sasanians.

The main figure in the hunting scene on the Afrasiab north wall, which has been restored in a drawing, differs from Tang's hunting images in terms of the iconography and arrangement of surrounding figures; it is more similar to the images on Sogdian stone reliefs in the Northern and Sui Dynasties, which emphasized the ferocity of animals and the movement of hunters. The Afrasiab murals' dynamic portrayal of hunting is also quite

¹⁷ Mao Min 毛民 (2016), 444-50.



Figure 7. The Wall Painting on the North Wall of the Afrasiab Palace



Figure 8. The Right Side of the House-Shaped Stone Sarcophagus from the Tomb of Shi Jun

different from the famous Sogdian hunting image in the Panjikent wall paintings,¹⁸ in which the posture of the horse rider and the horse is relatively static. Thus, Afrasiab's north wall hunting scene could be an incorporation of Tang-style attire and revived Sasanian hunting image or could be a result to a certain extent of influence from the Sogdian stone reliefs of the Northern and Sui Dynasties, which might have been reintroduced to Sogdiana, perhaps through China.

The bridge-crossing scene on the right side of the stone chamber in the Shi Jun Tomb can be compared with the boating scene of a lady in Chinese garments on the lotus-blooming river (Figures 7 and 8). The bridge of the Shi Jun Tomb has been interpreted to be Chinvat Bridge, which the deceased is believed to cross after death in Zoroastrianism. If the lady in the boating scene on the Afrasiab north wall was not a portrayal of a real Chinese princess, then the scene could be actually depicting a rite of passage that Zoroastrianism assumes that the deceased would undergo. All of the murals in the Afrasiab Palace are generally analyzed as depictions of Zoroastrian funerary rituals and the Nauruz festival;¹⁹ however, it is difficult to clearly explain the reasons for having the figures on the north wall wear Chinese attire and for arranging hunting and boating scenes on the same wall.

A procession and a ritual shrine painted on the south wall of Afrasiab are frequent themes of Sogdian stone reliefs in China. Here it is necessary to pay attention to the configurational resemblance between Sino-Sogdian stone reliefs and the Afrasiab murals. Parade images on Sino-Sogdian stone reliefs often include exotic animals such as elephants and camels, not just commonly seen horses. Also, a chief priest wearing a padam (i.e., a white mouth veil that a Zoroastrian priest wears) performing a rite at a Zo-

¹⁸ Davide Ciafaloni, Geri Della Rocca de Candal, "Sasanian Traditions in Sogdian Paintings: Hunting and Fighting Scenes" *Parthica*, 13 (2011): 111-29; Matteo Comperti, "The Painted Vase of Merv in the Context of Central Asian Pre-Islamic Funerary Tradition," *The Silk Road* 9 (2011): 26-41.

¹⁹ Frantz Grenet, "What was the Afrasiab Painting about?," *Royal Nauruz in Samarkand: Proceedings of the Conference Held in Venice on the Pre-Islamic Paintings at Afrasiab*, *Rivista degli studi orientali Nuova Serie* 78, Supplemento no. 1 (2006): 43-58.

roastrian altar can often be found on those pictorial stones. In addition, three figures carved on the right side of the house-shaped stone sarcophagus of the Yu Hong Tomb are holding funerary utensils toward a building that appears to be a tall altar. Likewise, in the south wall painting of Afrasiab, a shrine with a tall altar, where three figures are standing, is painted on the far left; a priest wearing a padam is in the center of the parade; and the parade has people riding elephants and camels. The image of the Zoroastrian priest and fire altar in the An Qie and Shi Jun Tombs are similar to the Zoroastrian fire altar as well as the priest and the worshiper in the Sogdian painting (6th-7th centuries) in the Bukhara Museum, which indicates the practice of Zoroastrian rituals in China at that time. The seated figures at the Zoroastrian fire altar scene in the Bukhara painting are wearing glamorously-patterned garments and swords and displaying similar characteristics to the figures depicted in the banquet scenes of Sogdian murals in Uzbekistan and the stone statues found in Gokturk memorial complexes in Mongolia.

The images in Sogdian tombs of the Northern and Sui Dynasties in China are estimated to have been created by local Sogdian artists who had the 'Sogdian painting copies' of the images.²⁰ However, the murals remaining in southern Uzbekistan and northern Tajikistan, which were the original lands of the Sogdians, were created mostly in the 7th-8th centuries, and thus the subjects and depictions of prior Sogdian wall paintings can be reconstructed by investigating the funerary art established by Sogdian immigrants to China, who had continuously communicated with their native Sogdian land. This approach to Sogdian art will help shed light on the intricate cultural transmissions between the East and the West at that time.

Wall Painting on the West Wall in the Afrasiab Palace and Stone Statues in Gokturk Memorial Sites

The west wall painting of Afrasiab draws different interpretations from

²⁰ Kwon Young-pil et al. (2008), 21.

scholars depending on the restored copies of the exfoliated part on the upper center.²¹ According to one of the reconstructions of the scene in which the damaged part is restored as portraits of Sogdian King Varkhuman and the Khan of the Western Gokturk Khanate, the west wall painting can be interpreted as a portrayal of a banquet hosted by King Varkhuman and the Western Gokturk Khan and the reception of foreign envoys. The north and south walls of the Afrasiab Palace have depictions of hunting and procession. The procession scene on the south wall can be interpreted as a funerary procession toward the Sogdian shrine on the left while the horse rider in the center of the north wall painting is often viewed as Tang Emperor Gaozong and the lady on the boat on the left as a Chinese princess.

If all of the Afrasiab murals are analyzed as the pictorial program consisting of banquet and reception as well as hunting and parade, then they are similar to the typical funerary pictorial program in Koguryo and in the Chinese Han, Wei, Jin, and Northern Dynasties. The common themes and iconography that appear in most sarcophagi of the Sogdian tombs from the Northern and Sui Dynasties were an outdoor banquet, an outing on horses, man and woman at a banquet, hunting, and a memorial ritual as well.

The Gokturks are also recorded as having had funerary art traditions, in which they would the deceased by painting his life events, such as a battle scene, on the interior walls of the shrine in the memorial site. However, no Gokturk shrine building has been left in any of the memorial complexes. One possible way to reconstruct Gokturk shrines is by referring to the Afrasiab palatial murals by the Sogdians, who had close relations with the West-

²¹ Albaum, *New Afrasiab Paintings* (Strany i narody Vostoka, X, Moscow, 1971); Albaum, *Afrasiab Painting* (Tashkent, 1975); Azarpay, *The Sogdian Painting: The Pictorial Epic in Oriental Art* (Berkeley, 1983); Belenitsky, Bentovich, and Bolshakov, *The Medieval Town of Central Asia* (Leningrad, 1973); Boris I. Marshak, "The Miho Couch and the Other Sino-Sogdian Works of Art of the Second Half of the 6th Century," *Bulletin of Miho Museum*, no. 4 (2004): 16-31; Guitty Azarpay, "The Afrasiab Murals: A Pictorial Narrative Reconsidered," *Silk Road* 12 (2014): 49-56; Boris Y. Stavisky, "Once more about Peculiarities of the Sogdian Civilization of the fourth-tenth Centuries," Matteo Compareti (2006): 571-82; Sergey A. Yatsenko, "The Late Sogdian Costume," Matteo Compareti (2006): 647-80.

ern Gokturk Khanate at that time. Currently, the only remaining painting from Gokturk shrines is of the horse rider on a roof tile from Bilge Kahn's shrine.

The investigation of the remaining Gokturk memorial sites and stone statues in Mongolia, Altai, Tuva, Kazakhstan, and the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region of China reveals that the configuration of their memorial complexes and stone statues transformed and developed from the First to the Second Turkic Empire.²² The remaining memorial complexes and stone statues built during the First Gokturk Empire are the Bugut Memorial Complex in Bugut Sum, Arkhangai Aimag in Mongolia (circa. the 580s), and the Xiaohongnahai Stone sculpture in Zhaosu County, Xinjiang (circa. 599-604). Those remaining from the Second Gokturk Empire are the Shiveet-Ulaan Memorial Complex (assumed to be the tomb of Ilterish Khan [r. 682-92]) in Orkhon Sum, Bulgan Aimag; Bilge Tonyuquq Memorial Complex (720); Kul-Tegin (r. 684-731) Memorial Complex (732) in Khosho Tsaidam, Arkhangai Aimag; Bilge Kahn (r. 716-34) Memorial Complex (735); Kul-Chur Memorial Complex at Ikh Khushuut in Delgerkhaan Sum, Tuv Aimag; and Ongiin Gol Memorial Complex (731-32) in Uyanga Sum, Uvurkhangai Aimag.

The Bugut Stele, which was moved from the original memorial complex to the Tseterleg Museum in Arkhangai Aimag, is assumed to have been constructed during the reign of Taspar Khan (r. 572-81).²³ The stele, supported by a tortoise-shaped platform, is a mixture of Sogdian and Gokturk cultures, having Sogdian inscriptions on its body, and a wolf, a symbol of the Gokturk founding myth, carved on its top. The Bugut Memorial

²² Park Ah-rim 박아림, Nancy S. Steinhardt, and L. Erdenebold, "6-8 segi mongol chowon-ui jesayujeok-gwa seokinsang yeongu," *Central Asian Studies* 중앙아시아연구 23, no. 2 (2018): 143-68; Amartuvshin Ch. and Badma-oyu B., *Stone Statues of Mongolia* (2016): 35-158 & 160-61; Toshio Hayashi, "On the Origin of Turkic Stone Statues," *International Journal of Eurasian Studies* 歐亞學刊 1 (商務印書館, 2011): 181-98; Ren Baolei 任宝磊, "Xinjiang diqu di tujue yicun yu tujue shi di yanjiu" 新疆地区的突厥遗存与突厥史地研究 [A Study on Turkic Relics and History in Xinjiang] (PhD diss.m, Xibe University 西北大學, 2013).

²³ Cengiz Alyilmaz, "On the Bugut Inscription and the Mausoleum Complex," *Matteo Compareti* (2006), 51-60.



Figure 9. The Head of Kul-Tegin Stone Statue

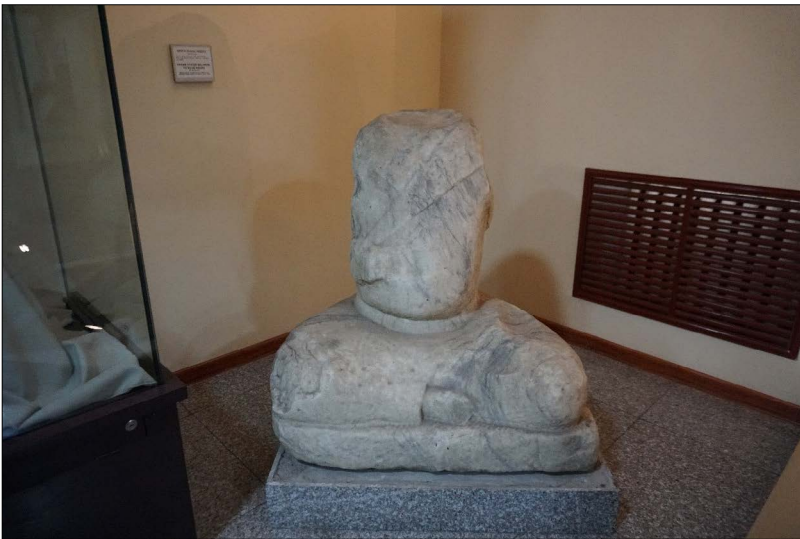


Figure 10. Bilge Khan Stone Statue, National Museum of Mongolia

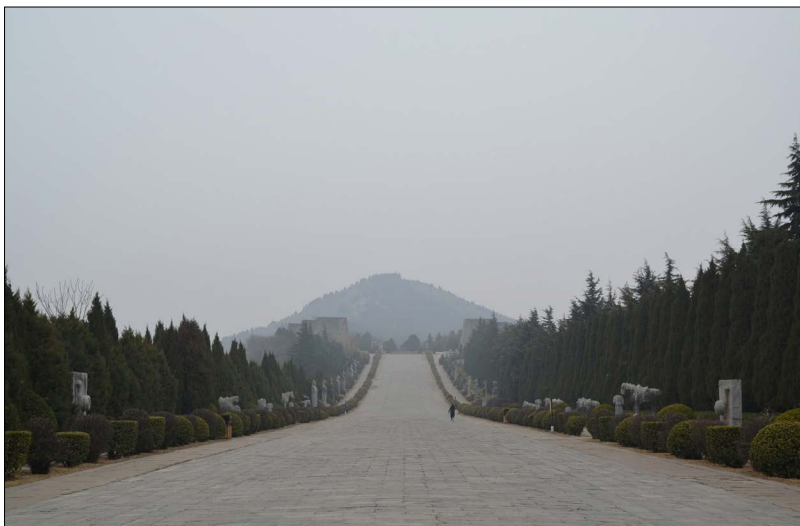


Figure 11. Stone Statues in the Spirit Path at Qianling, Xi'an, China

Complex has many “balbals” (i.e., a Turkish word for anthropomorphic menhirs) erected inside and outside the earthen ramparts, but no stone statues have been discovered so far. Xiaohongnahai Stone Man, which is presumed to be the statue of Nili Khan (r. 587-99) of the Western Gokturk Empire, is wearing a sun-moon-decorated hat and a belt with his chalice-holding hand close to his chest. While his back is engraved with eight waist-long queues of braids (辮髮), his legs have twenty lines of Sogdian inscription. Like this statue, the Gokturks depicted on Sino-Sogdian stone reliefs, the statues of Gokturk *fanchen* (藩臣) (i.e., vassals of different ethnic stock) in the Zhaoling and Qianling Mausoleums, and the Gokturks in the Afrasiab murals are all portrayed with a similar style of hair and hat. The transition of languages can be also noticed in the inscriptions of Turkic stone stele: Sogdian letters were inscribed in the memorial stele and stone statues created in the late 6th century, whereas Gokturk tamgas were used in the 7th century stele, and Chinese letters in the 8th century stele. The close relationship between the Sogdians and the Gokturks, displayed by the use of the Sogdian language in Gokturk memorial stele, is also confirmed

by the late 6th century Sogdian stone reliefs with Gokturk figures unearthed in China.

Compared with those of the First Gokturk Empire, the memorial complexes of the Second Empire have a consistent structure: a shrine in the center, a sarcophagus built with four panels in the back, and a stone stele on a tortoise-shaped platform in the front. Inside the shrine, there are seated statues of the commemorated couple (man and woman), while its outside is occupied by rows of standing or seated men and women statues. At the entrance of the shrine, animal statues such as lions or sheep were also erected. The entire memorial complex is surrounded by earthen ramparts and moats. Gokturk-particular balbals were usually erected in front of the east gate in a several-kilometer-long row, although some are found inside the complex. On the stele, balbals, and stone statues can be found tamgas that represented Gokturk tribes.

The Shiveet Ulaan Memorial Complex has 11 stone humans, 8 stone lions, 4 stone sheep, and a stele. The smaller than life-size stone humans are mostly wearing Gokturk attire and holding some objects in their hands (e.g., a chalice). Most of them have lost their heads or legs, thus making it difficult to identify their entire shapes accurately. In Bilge Tonyuquq's Memorial Complex, there are 8 stone humans and 289 or more balbals (in a stretch of 1.3 km). Stone sculptures in the Memorial Complex of Kul-Tegin consist of 10 human figures, either seated or standing, two stone lions, two stone sheep, and a large number of balbals. In addition, the head sculpture of Kul-Tegin (42.4 cm in height) and the face of his wife's head sculpture have been found (Figure 9). Bilge Khan's Memorial Complex has been found with 8 stone humans, 2 stone lions, 2 stone sheep (86.5 cm high x 52 cm long; 64 cm high x 72 cm long), and a number of balbals. Bilge Khan's statue (95 cm high x 95 cm wide) and his wife's statue without their head parts are currently on display in the National Museum of Mongolia in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia (Figure 10). Kul-Chur's Memorial Complex in Delgerkhaan Sum, Tuv Aimag hosts 8 stone humans, 2 stone lions, 2 stone sheep, and 165 balbals (in a stretch of 1 km). Meanwhile, the largest number of stone statues have been found in the Ongot Memorial

Site in Altanbulag Sum, Tuv Aimag with a total of 28 statues.²⁴

With stele forms having distinct dragon-shaped head parts and tortoise-shaped platforms and with human and animal statues arranged at the façade, the Gokturk memorial complexes that have been discovered so far appear to follow the style of Chinese mausoleums. However, they differ from contemporary Chinese mausoleums built in the Northern Dynasties and the Tang Dynasty (Figure 11), especially in the following aspects: the placement of decoratively patterned sarcophagi behind shrines; smaller sizes of human and animal statues at the façades of shrines than those of the contemporary Tang's; different numbers of each type of statues; and the existence of seated human statues, which Chinese mausoleums did not have. The iconic image of a seated figure holding a chalice was also expressed in Gokturk rock carvings and reliefs and has been considered a stylistic portrayal of a Central Asian in Sino-Sogdian stone reliefs and in the murals from the Northern Dynasties, which demonstrates that this characterization of Central Asians, shared by both Gokturk and Sogdian art cultures, was passed down and became manifest in the stone statues in the Gokturk memorial complexes.

The similarities in terms of a human figure representation among the stone sculptures of Gokturk memorial complexes, the Afrasiab murals, and Sino-Sogdian stone reliefs are as following: mixing both standing and seated figures, the posture of sitting on the ground either by crossing legs or kneeling, the way of holding the chalice with two fingers, and splendid patterns on the garments of important seated figures.

The human stone statues on the façades of Gokturk memorial complexes are either seated or standing, but since most of them have been moved from their original places and have damaged heads or legs. Thus, it is difficult to restore their original arrangements. Tang's stone statues of civil and military officials in 18 mausoleums, including Zhaoling and Qianling, are life-size or larger-than-life and arranged in line on both sides of the passage to the tomb, whereas Gokturk human statues are smaller and

²⁴ Toshio Hayashi (2011), 221-40.

less imposing. Most human stone statues remaining in the Shiveet Ulaan Memorial Complex are holding various objects in their hands, and each of their collars was designed slightly differently, which indicates that they portray subjects or attendants serving the shrine master or tomb occupant. The main figures are seated inside the shrine while a group of seated or standing statues are placed outside the shrine, which differs from the way that human stone statues are arranged in the spirit path in front of the mausoleums of the Northern, Sui, and Tang Dynasties of China. Rather, this arrangement reminds us of Afrasiab's west wall painting, in which Gokturks and foreign envoys are sitting or standing in rows in front of a seated King Varkhuman and Western Gokturk Khan.

The posture of sitting on the ground with crossed legs or kneeling and the manner of holding a chalice in the right hand or both hands are the important characteristics identifying Gokturk stone statues. In particular, the manner of using the thumb and the index finger to hold a chalice resembles the finger posture of Buddhist statues, which suggests the influence of Sogdian Buddhism.²⁵ Hayashi Toshio claims that the hand and leg posture of Gokturk human stone statues resulted from the influence of human images in Sogdian wall paintings.²⁶ This chalice-holding posture is similar to human figures depicted in banquet scenes of Sogdian and Epthtalian murals and silverware. In addition, they are similar to the banquet image in Loulan tomb murals in Xinjiang from the Wei-Jin period and the seated portrait of the tomb occupant in the lacquer coffin painting in Guyuan, Ningxia. It is assumed that the portraits of tomb occupants in the Loulan and Guyuan paintings were influenced by the Central Asian type of human figures. A similar depiction of a human figure is also found on the west niche of the front chamber in Koguryo's Gamshinchong Tomb (the

²⁵ Dovdoïn Baiār, *Mongol Seokinsang-ui Yeongu* 몽골석인상의 연구 [A Study on Mongolian Stone Statues]. Park Won-gil 박원길 trans. (Seoul: Hyeon, 1992), 34-41.

²⁶ Hayashi Toshio, "Sogdian Influences Seen on Turkic Stone Statues Focusing on the Fingers Representations," *Matteo Compareti* (2006), 245-59; Hayashi Toshio 林俊雄, "Sogdian Influence on the Stone Statues of the Old Turks: Focusing on the Fingers Representations" 突厥石人に見られるソグドの影響—とくに手指表現に焦点を当てて—, *Soka University Jinbun Ronsyu* 創価大学人文論集 5 (1993): 27-44.

Niche Sprit Tomb), and thus this iconic design of human figures can be concluded to be a product of cultural exchanges between east and west. The reason for the earlier appearance of this iconography in China and Koguryo than in Sogdian murals and Gokturk stone statues is probably that the expression of a human figure portrait of royals and nobles developed from the Kushan Empire, which had already occupied the extensive territory including the south of Uzbekistan in the beginning of Anno Domini, were inherited by Sogdian artists. Then this Central Asian-style of human representation could have evolved and transformed during the Han Dynasty and spread to Loulan and Datong regions in the Wei-Jin and Northern Wei periods of China.

The tomb occupants or shrine masters, exquisitely sculpted in the round and placed in the shrines of Gokturk memorial complexes, are hard to find as a sculptural form in the funerary art of the Wei-Jin, Northern, Sui, and Tang Dynasties of China. A round-sculpted head of a tomb occupant is discovered in Kul-Tegin's Memorial Complex while the body part without a head is found in Bilge Khan's. Although no statue of the tomb occupant has been found at the Shiveet Ulaan site, it is possible that there used to be one, considering that a seated statue of a commanding figure wearing a splendid flower-patterned costume with a chalice in hand has been discovered at similar topographical sites—the Shiveet Tolgoi and Khugnu Tarni Memorial Complexes.

The Shiveet Tolgoi Memorial Complex in Khashaat Sum, Arkhangai Aimag used to have an intact stone man with his head still attached (160 cm tall), but it has disappeared from the site.²⁷ Judging from the remaining photograph, the stone man was holding a chalice in his right hand and had floral patterns carved on his entire body like the sculpture at the Khugnu Tarni site. The Khugnu Tarni Memorial Complex in Burd Sum, Uvurkhangai Aimag has a seated statue of a man in a splendid flower-patterned garment in front of a stone-mound tomb.²⁸ Like those stone statues from both

²⁷ Amartuvshin Ch. and Badma-oyu B. (2016), Figure 17.

²⁸ Amartuvshin Ch. and Badma-oyu B. (2016), Picture 126.

sites, Gokturk stone statues sculpted in the round are likely to be portrayed as wearing glamorously patterned garments as are the figures in the Afrasiab murals, although such splendid decorations have been abraded and have nearly disappeared.

A portrait of a tomb occupant is often found either in wall paintings or in relief sculptures of Chinese funerary art, but erecting a round-sculpted statue of the main figure in an exquisitely patterned garment in front of a sarcophagus or a stone-mound tomb was uniquely Gokturk. Placing a number of seated or standing statues in front of that main statue is another difference from Chinese mortuary architecture. Furthermore, arranging numerous balbals, which is often in the form of human statues with only simplified faces and hands, in memorial complexes seem to have inherently developed in Gokturk culture, which might have been derived from the deer stone tradition of the Northern Grassland nomads. It is probable that the overall pictorial program of the west wall painting of the Afrasiab Palace which is composed of the portraits of a Sogdian king and a Gokturk king as well as the Sogdians, the Gokturks, and the foreign envoys surrounding the kings might have foreshadowed or represented a unique format of stone sculptures at a Gokturk ritual complex in the Northern Grasslands.

Conclusion

As has been investigated and presented so far, the Afrasiab murals represent not simply Sogdian culture but a comprehensive art culture created by mutual exchanges of cultures among the Sogdians, Gokturks, and Sino-Sogdians. The components of the entire Afrasiab murals are similar to those of Sino-Sogdian stone reliefs, while their depiction of people, as well as Gokturk stone statues, particularly in terms of seated figures and hand postures, is similar to the iconic characterizations of Central Asian people that were shared by Koguryo and the Wei-Jin, Northern, Sui, and Tang Dynasties of China. The significance of the Afrasiab murals can be reassessed if the focus is laid on their relationship with Gokturk art. If more Gokturk memorial sites and stone statues are discovered in the future and, hence, reveal a clear picture of the Gokturks' culture of art and architecture, then research on art

cultural exchanges among the Gokturk states, Sogdiana, China, and even Koguryo will be further advanced. In this regard, it is essential to study Gokturk art in relation to the Sogdians since the Sogdians from West Turkestan dominated the Silk Road stretching from China in the east to the Byzantine Empire and Sasanian Dynasties in the west, in cooperation with the ruling class of the Gokturks. Therefore, the themes and designs of the Afrasiab murals at Samarkand and the Varakhsha murals at Bukhara in Uzbekistan as well as the Pendjikent murals in Tajikistan must be closely investigated and compared with the Gokturk art and the Sino-Sogdian art as considering the spacial configuration.