

## Journeys in the Himalayas

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The following article will give a survey of 19<sup>th</sup> century Western travellers to the Himalayas. It is based on a talk I gave in April 2015, during a symposium at the Bavarian Academy of Sciences and Humanities in Munich that was entitled *The Schlagintweit Brothers' Expedition in the Mirror of Current Research* (*Die Expedition der Brüder Schlagintweit im Spiegel der aktuellen Forschung*). The symposium was held due to the exhibition *Over the Himalaya* (*Über den Himalaya*) in the Museum of the German Alpine Association, which was made possible by the Schlagintweit family who donated their watercolors and other paintings of their ancestors to the Museum.<sup>1</sup>

These watercolors were composed by the Schlangintweits themselves, who documented their travels in 751 watercolors, sketches and several photographs and annotated these documents with remarks like “in a great hurry” (“in großer Eile”) or “a picture was drawn in five hours” (“ein Bild wurde in fünf Stunden gemalt”). They often drew a sketch of the mountains that they had measured with a theodolite, and finished the painting in the valley.<sup>2</sup>

Like these sketches, my article will act as something of a sketch too. The starting and ending points are the brothers Schlagintweit, I will show their various but always close approaches and those of their fellow travelers to the Himalayas during this period. I will describe moments that highlight how despite the lack of modern communications, there was much mutual cultural influence and exchange throughout these 19<sup>th</sup> century journeys. And how, despite the hardship and

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<sup>1</sup>I would like to thank John Bray for his comments and suggestions, and Ruth Gamble for proofreading the article.

<sup>2</sup>Schlagintweit, *Brüder Schlagintweit*, 11.

involves various phenomena and issues of the caves, such as the shapes and content of the caves, owners and benefactors of caves, artists, the sponsoring environment, beliefs, artistic styles, the function of the caves and the inheritance of the past caves and influence on the future caves. The contents of the book are closely related with Dunhuang Grottoes in the Mid-Tang dynasty as follows: the change and innovation of the layout of Dunhuang Grottoes, the variation of the images and its reason, the appearance and popularity of thought of gratitude, eschatology and so on. Many fresh kinds of paintings are introduced into Dunhuang (the picture of Sakyamuni, Buddhist historical paintings, Buddha worship pictures of, Tibetan *btsan po*, pictures of providers in Tibetan costume, Bodhisattva Manjusri, Bodhisattva Samantabhadra, Mammon, Lokapala Statue with tiger furs, the mandala with Vairocana and the Eight great Bodhisattvas), as well as introduction of the Tubo art and its influence, analysis of reconfiguration, the development of Tibetan paintings and Polo art style during the period of Guiyijun's occupation.

The second part concentrates on the construction of Dunhuang Grottoes, such as the building problem, almsgiver, the Sogdians and their art, Tibetans and construction of Dunhuang Grottoes. It involves the following aspects related to the construction of grottoes: 1) studies on the grottoes excavated from the prosperous Tang Dynasty but was unfinished until the mid-Tang Dynasty; 2) studies on the relationship between Cave 158 of Mogao Grottoes and An family (they are Sogdian in Dunhuang in Medieval period); 3) studies on the Cave 359 of Mogao Grottoes and publish the new-found inscription of the Buddha; 4) do textual research on P. 2991 manuscript "Baoren Jixiang zhi Kuji"(报恩吉祥之窟记, Record of the gratitude auspicious caves); 5) a case study on Cave 161 of Mogao Grottoes to prove that it may be the Merit Cave of Vgosh Chos Grub(管·法成), the famous Tripitaka Dharma Master; 6) studies on the images of Cave 93 in details, which preserve typical Tubo characteristics, so as to make clear that some Tibetan might be its owner and their relations to the grottoes; 7) investigate when the Cave 25 of Yulin Grottoes were constructed and the answer might be the years 776-786.

The third part is based on case study on the meaning of the appearance of Jingbian painting, the painted sculpture art and caves, the original and representative images from the perspective of iconology. Specifically, this part includes the following aspects: 1) to analyze the historical and religious reason for the initial appearance of the "Jin Guangming Zuishengwang Jingbian"(金光明最胜王经变, Golden Light Sutra Recitation) in the grottoes; 2) to illustrate why the image—the illustration of Raudraksa's battle with Sariputra(劳度叉斗圣变) did

Wilhelm IV of Hohenzollern (1795-1861). The first attempt to mount the project had failed, as it was criticized as being too expensive and regarded as too interdisciplinary; these were the days of the development of the single sciences. Later in 1854, however, under this patronage Hermann and Adolph set off on their expedition to India, accompanied by their younger brother Robert as an assistant. He had just received his doctorate in geography from the University of Jena.

The three departed Europe via Southampton in England, travelled across the Mediterranean Sea to Alexandria, and then across the Indian Ocean to Bombay. They traveled in India for more than two years, either together or separately, through the Himalayas, and got as far as Kashmir and Ladakh. Disguised as merchants or herdsmen, Hermann and Adolph tried several times to reach Tibet. Hermann and Robert, for example, once organized a caravan from Leh, presumably traveling to Yarkand, with eighteen horses. They themselves followed disguised as locals with 50 people and 30 horses.<sup>7</sup>

In 1855 they did manage to enter western Tibet, but were taken prisoner and had to negotiate with a Tibetan administrator (*drung yig*). With the donation of some rupees and some drinks of brandy and sherry they were able to negotiate their release and were allowed to cross Tibet but protected by soldiers.<sup>8</sup> While traveling they were finally able to visit places they originally have not been allowed to.

Hermann and Robert were among the first Europeans to cross the Karakoram from North to South and to travel through the Kunlun Mountains. They were also among of the first explorers to use photography, especially in the high mountains of northern India. They were awarded several prizes and in 1859 King Maximilian II of Bavaria ennobled Hermann and Adolph for their research merits.<sup>9</sup>

They were not, however, alone in their explorations. About the same time, in 1853, two missionaries from Herrnhut in the east of Germany traveled from Europe and reached the Himalayas: these were Eduard Pagell, a skilled stonemason and Wilhelm Heyde, a plumber. They were both missionaries from the *Herrnhuter Brüdergemeine*, the Moravians of eastern Germany. The years from 1850 to 1950 were the zenith of the Western Christian missionary movement, not only in Asia

<sup>7</sup> Schlagintweit, *Brüder Schlagintweit*, 12.

<sup>8</sup> The name of the *drung yig* is not given in the document, he is called '*drim* (r. *kebrims*) *zhabs rin po*'; see von Brescius, *Humboldt'scher Forscherdrang*, 66. In Nepal, Hermann felt pursued by the local troops who accompanied him "teils in der Funktion als Führer, jedoch besonders, um meine Aktivitäten genau zu beobachten". In Leh, they were followed everywhere by a "guard of honour"; von Brescius, *Humboldt'scher Forscherdrang*, 53-55.

<sup>9</sup> Regarding the circumstances of this ennoblement and other merits, see Körner, *Brüder Schlagintweit*, 67.

but in the whole world. The two men had at first planned to travel through Czarist Russia to Mongolia, but they had to abandon this route as they were not allowed to travel through Russia. Instead, they made their way through India until they reached the border with Tibet, where they were stopped and not allowed to cross. In consequence, they changed their mind and decided to found their missionary station in Kyelong or Kyelang in Lahoul in northern India: this was the first missionary station of Protestants from Herrnhut in the western Himalayas. Later on, the *Herrnhuter Brüdergemeine* sent them a scholar: His name was Heinrich August Jäschke (1817-1883), and he was appointed to the post of mission superintendent.

Jäschke's name later became famous in Tibetan Studies as he composed a Tibetan-German dictionary—it was printed in 1871—and ten years later, translated it into English. It is still used today as a reference book.<sup>10</sup> When he arrived in the Himalayas, he was greeted by Pagell and Heyde in Simla, and they guided him to Kyelang. When Jäschke arrived, he rejected what he considered to be the missionaries' indulgent living conditions and their lifestyle: the brothers Pagell and Heyde possessed two horses and, according to Jäschke, this had seduced them into behaving like "sahibs". He urged them to sell their horses. They followed his advice and sold the horses to none other than Adolph Schlagintweit, who purchased them during his second visit to the missionaries in that year, 1857.<sup>11</sup>

1857 was also the year of the Indian Rebellion that led to the dissolution of the East India Company a year later, when Adolph was on his way to Kashgar. Only in a footnote to the Missionary Journal the following information was given: "On the 27th of May, the famous traveler who has bought two horses from the missionaries set out further on his journey to Yarkand through Gulab Singh's states".<sup>12</sup> But Adolph was arrested by the region's ruler, Wali Khan, who suspected him of being a British spy, and without trial, beheaded him on the 26<sup>th</sup> of August. Adolph's body was never found, but thanks to his Indian companion Mohammad Amin, who garnered support from Lord William Hay (1826-1911), a senior official in Simla, Adolph's manuscripts and paintings were located. Later, the missionaries received news of Adolph's death from passing merchants.<sup>13</sup> His death was only

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<sup>10</sup> H. A. Jäschke: *Handwörterbuch der Tibetischen Schriftsprache*, Gnadau, Unitätsbuchhandlung 1871 was translated in 1881 into English: *A Tibetan-English Dictionary with special reference to the prevailing dialects*, London and Henley.

<sup>11</sup> Meier, Heinrich August Jäschke, 15-16, Schiel, Hochzeit, 33-34.

<sup>12</sup> Friedl, *Europäische Forscher*, 81, my translation from German.

<sup>13</sup> Schiel, Hochzeit, 37. Some of his companions were also killed, others put into the dungeon or were sold as slaves, see von Brescius, *Humboldt'scher Forscherdrang*, 81-82.

made known to the Bavarian Academy of Sciences and Humanities in 1869, through a letter from his brother.<sup>14</sup>

### *Dangerous journeys*

Adolph Schlagintweit was not the only traveller who died a violent death in 19<sup>th</sup> century India. Another well-known case of a traveller's death was that of the French explorer Jules-Léon Dutreuil de Rhins (1846-1894), who encountered a similar destiny to Adolph Schlagintweit. In 1876, he was the commandant of an artillery boat on the Mekong River and intended to draw a map of its river course up to its source in Tibet. Although he was transferred to Africa, in the Congo, he was able to publish his material. Thereafter, the Ministère de l'Instruction Publique de Paris granted him 34.000 Francs to organize an expedition to Tibet. Together with the linguist Joseph-Fernand Grenard (1866-1942), he was then able to travel for about two years in Central Asia.

In August 1893, they set off for Tibet, starting from Cherchen in the southern edge of the Tarim Basin with a caravan of 61 camels and horses, 13 locals and seven tons of luggage. The journey was arduous, leading through deserted regions; horses fell to their deaths; hail and snow storms impeded the journey; and they walked for about three months without meeting any other person. When they finally did encounter locals, they were disappointed, as the locals refused to give them any support. To the north-west of Lhasa, they were finally stopped and not allowed to continue. Instead, they walked towards the north-east, bought new pack animals as many had died, and after several months reached the town of Jyekundo (sKye dgu mdo) in eastern Tibet, where they were also not welcomed by the locals who started to steal their supplies.

Following this setback, they continued their journey but were attacked and Dutreuil was shot; his corpse too was never found.<sup>15</sup> Grenard, however, made it all the way home with a spectacular collection of geological and archaeological samples, photographs and maps, astrological, and barometrical and other data, which he was able to publish.

By the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the missionary couple Petrus (1866-1898) and Susanna (1868-1908) Rijnhart,<sup>16</sup> were traveling in eastern Tibet and China. Susanna, a physician, was born in Canada and Petrus was a missionary of the China Inland Mission. They made their way to Kumbum Monastery in eastern Tibet, where they

<sup>14</sup> Kreutzmann, *Great Game*, 101.

<sup>15</sup> Taylor, *Mythos Tibet*, 147-155; see also Rijnhart, *With Tibetans*, 316, 329, 358.

<sup>16</sup> Susanna Rijnhart reports their adventures in *With the Tibetans in Tent and Temple*.