

## Shui-Xian Temple/ Chiayi County, Taiwan

### ■ Conservation of wallpaintings and reliefs

#### Description of the property

Shui-Xian temple is located outside the small city of Beigang next to a river. It contains two main shrines where people can worship the gods of Quanti and Mazu as well as many others.

As typical for Taiwanese temple architecture the building includes several courtyards and halls. Furthermore it has beautifully decorated roofs with formed roof tiles and shaped in glass-mosaic sculptures.

The wallpaintings in Shui-Xian Temple are arranged parallel along the north and side walls of the building.

Most of them are *frescos*, which means the pigments were applied on moist plaster. The 3 dimensional heads are prefabricated and later applied. The relieved bodies are sculptured in situ. Coloured glass stones are inserted in the plaster. Their ornamented frames are made in a run in situ stucco technique. Above most doors there are small reliefs with little figures in porcelain.



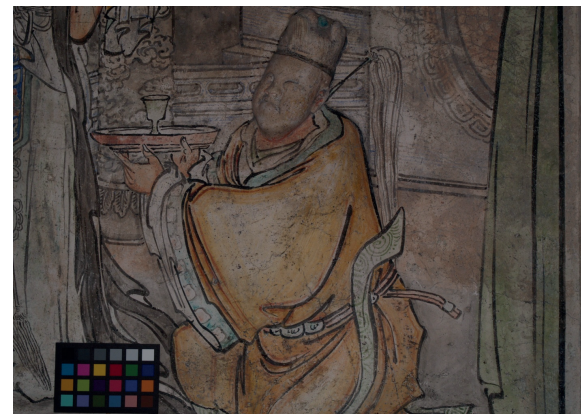
Detail of a wallpainting before treatment

#### Background

In 2009 Taiwanese government and Tainan National University of the Arts (TNNUA) started a conservation project including painted wood constructions, wallpaintings and reliefs in Shui-Xian Temple. Since the part of the wallpaintings conservation was too much work to be carried out only by the wallpaintings class of Prof. Barbara Beckett a team of German conservators was asked for help.

The condition of the wallpaintings varied depending on the exposure to water and the the high usage of incense sticks. Some surfaces were covered with a brown layer of dirt and soot. Other areas show washed out colours, microbiological growth, flaking paintlayers or severe plaster damages.

Due to weather conditions in the south of Taiwan the air can become very hot in the summer and quite humid during the rainseason. It is very common that typhoons including smaller earthquakes cross the country.



Detail of a wallpainting after cleaning, consolidation and retouching

#### Treatment

Dusting and removing of cobwebs from the surface as well as wet cleaning treatment of the paintings was carried out.

Treatment with ammonium carbonate in demineralised water and final cleaning with ion exchange resin in some areas.

Consolidation of powdering plasterstructure with an aqueous silica acid dispersion and plaster repairs with lime mortar

Reconstruction of damaged noses of the figures.

Retouching in Tratteggio technique.

Documentation inkl. mapping.

#### Client

Tainan National University of the Arts (TNNUA), Prof. Dr. Chun-mei Lin

#### Department of Cultural Heritage

Headquarter Administration of Cultural Heritage Council for Cultural Affairs / No.362, Sec. 3, Fuxing Rd., South Dist., Heritag

#### Team of conservators

Tainan National University of the Arts (TNNUA) Prof. Barbara Beckett, Dipl.-Rest. Ya-Lan Wu, Student, Ching-Mei Kao, Student, Heng-Yi Lee, Student, Christiane Maier M.A., Dipl.-Rest., Hamburg, Germany, Dana Weinberg, Dipl.-Rest., Meuselbach, Germany, Annett Baack, Student of FH Potsdam, Germany, Susanne Nitsch, Student of FH Potsdam, Germany



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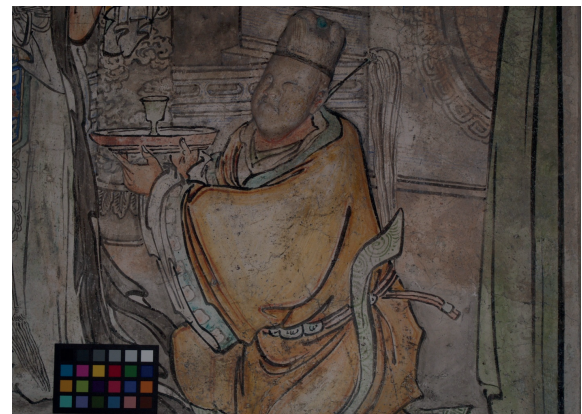
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