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**Between Image and Space: Deconstructing a History of Art in the Six
Dynasties, 220–589 A.D.**

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Conventions and Abbreviations

B.: Chinese manuscripts from Dunhuang held in the National Library, Beijing

P.: Chinese manuscripts from Dunhuang held in the Pelliot Collection at the Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris

S.: Chinese manuscripts from Dunhuang held in the Stein Collection at the British Library, London

T.: CBETA electronic edition (version 5.2, 5/28/2022) of (with corrections) Taishō shinshū daizōkyō 大正新修大藏經, ed. Takakusu Junjirō 高楠順次朗 and Watanabe Kaigyoku 渡邊海旭 (Tokyo: Taishō issaikyō kankōkai, 1924-1932). Passages are cited by text number, followed by volume, page, register (a, b, or c), and line number(s).

Abstract

This dissertation critically reevaluates the preserved pictorial material in the tombs and grottoes of the Six Dynasties period, with the aim of restoring the original context of the Six Dynasties by clarifying the misconceptions about the relationship between images and space that are prevalent in the discourse of Chinese art history. From the viewpoint of this dissertation, an important reason why some misunderstandings have persisted in the narrative of Chinese art history for a long time is that the concepts of “image” and “space” have not been thoroughly investigated in their original cultural context. Therefore, before analyzing specific pictorial materials from the Six Dynasties period, this dissertation first returns to the original context of the Six Dynasties in the first part to conduct a basic investigation of the concepts of “image” and “space” formed by the people of the Six Dynasties. It attempts to restore some of the basic understanding of image and space at that time.

In Chapter 1, the discussion revolves around the “image” and is based on the original context of the Six Dynasties, examining some special properties attributed to images during this era. The essential differences between different images referred to as “image (*tu* 圖)” in the Chinese context, are delineated. Chapter 2 mainly investigates the basic knowledge about space accumulated by people at that time and their different understandings of it. Chapter 3 focuses on the spatial vocabulary system used during the Six Dynasties period, with particular emphasis on examining how people of this period used these spatial terms in artistic criticism.

The second part of the dissertation delves into the more specific context of Six Dynasties art, building upon the basic restoration of the original context established in the first part. Chapter 4 and Chapter 5 deal respectively with the original context of the tombs and the cave-temples during the Six Dynasties period, with the aim of restoring as far as possible the various relationships between the images and their original users rather than modern viewers. In this more specific context, the relationship between image and space is reexamined, revealing different modes of pictorial expression in different situations.

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Introduction

Between Image and Its Object

The initial aim of this thesis is to investigate what kind of correspondence exists between images and their objects in the Chinese context. Specifically, it is to explore exactly how images from the Six Dynasties period (222–589 A.D.) establish a relationship with space as a specific object. The “image” discussed in this dissertation refers to the graphic pictures produced by people on a two-dimensional plane medium, known as “*tu*(圖)” during the Six Dynasties. The “space” discussed here is regarded as an object that can be represented or symbolized by images of the Six Dynasties period, and in this case simply refers to the physical space in which people understood and lived at this time.

When approaching this seemingly simple question in the context of the Six Dynasties, one first encounters the not-so-simple question of what kind of image was an “image” in the Six Dynasties period. To what extent can this kind of image be regarded as a sign or symbol?

Although some scholars already believe that images can be regarded as a sort of sign, image signs cannot be fully equated with linguistic symbols. Ferdinand de Saussure’s linguistic concept of system inspired many scholars to focus on the whole system in which an image is embedded. Saussure considered most symbols to be “immotivation” “arbitrary” and “opaqueness” in relation to their meaning.¹ That is to say, the symbol itself cannot be directed to the meaning, but must rely on the system to assign a meaning.² Therefore, many scholars who study images often emphasize the “immotivation” and the “opaqueness” of the relationship between images and their objects. That is to say, the relationship between the image and its represented object is considered by many scholars to be “opaque, distorting, arbitrary.” They believe that, like language, the ability of an image to establish some correspondence

¹ “Immotivation” in this context means “lack of motivation.” For example, the onomatopoeic word has a “phonetic motivation.” See Frank Kermode, *The Art of Telling: Essays on Fiction* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1983), 67.

² Ferdinand de Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1969), 65.

with its represented object is determined by the entire external system in which the image is embedded, rather than by the internal characteristics of the image itself.

The “opaqueness” aspect of images (i.e., the way in which they express themselves) is determined by the cultural context in which they are embedded, and has also been emphasized by art historians from a very early stage. Erwin Panofsky, as early as 1927 in his book *Perspective as Symbolic Form (Die Perspektive als Symbolische Form)*, had already clearly explained that perspective as a correspondence between an image and its represented object (including space) is actually a conventional relationship in a specific cultural context. From a semiotic point of view this cultural conventional relationship between an image and its object makes the image a symbol. In this sense, “perspective” can be regarded as a symbolic form.

Panofsky clearly points out:

In order to guarantee a fully rational—that is infinite unchanging and homogeneous—space, this ‘central perspective’ makes two tacit but essential assumptions: first, that we see with a single and immobile eye, and second, that the planar cross section of the visual pyramid can pass for an adequate reproduction of our optical image. In fact these two premises are rather bold abstractions from reality, if by “reality” we mean the actual subjective optical impression. For the structure of an infinite, unchanging and homogeneous space—in short, a purely mathematical space—is quite unlike the structure of psychophysiological space.³

Panofsky also clearly points out that perspective transforms a “psychophysiological space” into a “mathematical space” by ignoring the many discrepancies with reality:

It negates the differences between front and back, between right and left, between bodies and intervening space (‘empty’ space), so that the sum of all the parts of space and all its contents are absorbed into a single ‘quantum continuum.’ It forgets that we see not with a single fixed eye but with two constantly moving eyes, resulting in a spheroidal field of vision. It takes no account of the enormous difference between the psychologically conditioned ‘visual image’ through which the visible world is brought to our consciousness, and the mechanically conditioned ‘retinal image’ which paints itself upon our physical eye. For a peculiar stabilizing tendency within our consciousness—promoted by the cooperation of vision with the tactile sense—ascribes to perceived objects a definite and proper size and form, and thus tends not to take notice, at least not full notice, of the distortions which these sizes and forms suffer on the retina. Finally, perspectival construction ignores the crucial circumstances that this

³ Erwin Panofsky, *Perspective as Symbolic Form*, trans. Christopher S. Wood (New York: Zone Books, 1991), 29.

retinal image—entirely apart from its subsequent psychological ‘interpretation,’ and even apart from the fact that the eyes move—is a projection not on a flat but on a concave surface. Thus already on this lowest, still prepsychological level of facts there is a fundamental discrepancy between ‘reality’ and its construction. This is also true, of course, for the entirely analogous operation of the camera.⁴

In short, the question of how an image represents an object is indeed a culturally determined one. As Richard Wollheim puts it, “What counts as a representation of what, or how we represent things, is a culturally determined matter.”⁵ In Panofsky’s rigorous discourse, it is also pointed out that the discussion of Chinese art requires a different kind of analysis after a careful examination of the cultural context to which it belongs.

However, in past discussions of Chinese art history, there are still many scholars who have overlooked this “opaqueness” of the image. For example, shortly after Panofsky published *Perspective as Symbolic Form*, Ludwig Bachhofer used the criteria of European Renaissance representation art to discuss the history of Chinese art in a 1931 article entitled “The Representation of Space in Chinese Painting during the First Thousand Years of the Christian Era.” In this article, without a thorough examination of the Chinese cultural context, Bachhofer subjectively describes Chinese art during the 1,000-year period of the Han to Tang dynasties as an evolutionary process toward the ultimate goal of producing the three-dimensional spatial illusion on a two-dimensional picture plane. Bachhofer adopts a historical viewpoint similar to the Darwinian model of evolution, using the pictorial material available to him at the time to divide this preconceived process into five phases. The first phase of this evolution, which Bachhofer defines as the period when spatial awareness was not yet formed, is typified by the Han dynasty pictorial carvings of Xiaotangshan Shrine and the Wu Family Shrine because those pictorial carvings are characterized by the predominance of front and profile figures and the lack of overlapping forms.⁶ The works he categorized as the second phase adopted a

⁴ Erwin Panofsky, *Perspective as Symbolic Form*, trans. Christopher S. Wood (New York: Zone Books, 1991), 31.

⁵ Richard Wollheim, *Art and its Objects* (Cambridge University Press, 1980), 14.

⁶ Ludwig Bachhofer, “Die Raumdarstellung in der chinesischen Malerei des ersten Jahrtausends n. Chr.,

“ *Münchener Jahrbuch der bildenden Kunst*, N.F.VIII (1931): 5.

somewhat realistic style, as evidenced by the increasing appearance of half-profile figures and their integration into oblique views as opposed to front or side views. He gives as an example of late Eastern Han “Banquet with Liubo Game” a scene on the seventh stone of the front chamber, Wu Liang Shrine, Jiexiang, Shandong Province. But in his view, “the absence of a base plane upon which to place the figures makes it impossible to establish their mutual spatial relations.”⁷ The pictorial carvings on the Zhu Wei Shrine were recognized by him as an artistic reform and innovation that occurred in the third phase. He considers the “stage-like” scenes here to be suggestive of an early “attempt at three-dimensionality.”⁸ The work that he categorizes as the fourth phase is exemplified by Gu Kaizhi’s “The Admonitions of the Court Instructress to Palace Ladies” from the Eastern Jin Dynasty. He believes that, although the figures and objects in this painting are “drawn in such a manner that there can be no possible doubt as to their spatial relations,” Gu Kaizhi’s “treatment of perspective is not yet fully developed.”⁹ In his opinion, the mural of Western Pure Land of the High Tang period at Dunhuang Mogao caves finally show for the first time the Chinese painter having achieved a “uniform, unconfined, and all-embracing” space and displaying their “purely descriptive attitude towards nature.”¹⁰

Although Bachhofer’s view has long been outdated, there are still many scholars in Chinese art history who insist on espousing it. As a student of the renowned scholar Heinrich Wölfflin, Bachhofer had methodological shortcomings that had an unfortunate impact on the scholarship. After Bachhofer, many scholars who enthusiastically embraced a Darwinian evolutionary model of history followed his opinion to regard Chinese art history along a preconceived scheme of development. They insisted that Chinese art history had been slowly developing towards the ultimate goal of conquering three-dimensional space. For example, Alexander C. Soper, in 1941, described “the Six Dynasties achievement between as a very gradual

⁷ Bachhofer, “Die Raumdarstellung,” 7–8.

⁸ Bachhofer, “Die Raumdarstellung,” 11.

⁹ Bachhofer, “Die Raumdarstellung,” 21.

¹⁰ Bachhofer, “Die Raumdarstellung,” 41–42.

accumulation of means toward the conquest of the third dimension.”¹¹ Moreover, George Rowely and Shih Hsio-yen also hold similar views.¹² Later, Max Loehr, in his division of the history of Chinese art, also regarded the 1485 years between the Han Dynasty and the Southern Song Dynasty (206 B.C–1279 A.D.) as a gradual evolution from the portrayal of isolated images to the portrayal of a succession of visual images situated in a unified space.¹³ These scholars were convinced that there was an evolutionary process in the history of Chinese art that led to a slow development towards the ultimate goal of conquering three-dimensional space, and then to its maturity and decline. Until the beginning of this century, Fang Wen also held similar views, and he proposed a so-called “parallel perspective” concept to analyze Chinese art materials, modeled on the Renaissance concept of perspective.¹⁴ The negative influence of Ludwig Bachhofer is still alive and well in the current scholarship of Chinese art history. To this day there are still Chinese scholars who, ignoring the many voices that refute Bachhofer’s viewpoints, carefully select some pictorial materials from grottoes in different time, and then follow Bachhofer’s 1931 article to link up a sequence of Chinese art history that fits into a preconceived scheme of development, with the title of “Representation of Space in Chinese Art from the Han to the Tang Dynasty.”¹⁵

This overly simplistic and generalized delineation of the course of Chinese art history, which ignores the specific Chinese cultural context, can easily slip through the cracks. First of all, the archaeological facts, revised by archaeologists, unequivocally disprove this evolutionary view proposed by Bachhofer. For example, the Zhu Wei Shrine, incorrectly dated by Bachhofer to the Wei and Jin dynasties, is

¹¹ Alexander C. Soper, “Early Chinese Landscape Painting,” *The Art Bulletin* 23, no. 2 (1941): 141–64; Alexander C. Soper, “Life-motion and the Sense of Space in Early Chinese Representational Art,” *The Art Bulletin* 30, no. 3 (1948): 167–186.

¹² For George Rowely’s views, see George Rowely, *Principles of Chinese Painting* (Princeton University Press, 1947). For Shih Hsio-yen’s views, see Shih Hsio-yen, “Early Chinese Pictorial Style from the Later Han to the Sixth Dynasties” (PhD diss., Bryn Mawr College, 1961).

¹³ Max Loehr, “Some fundamental issues in the history of Chinese painting,” *The Journal of Asian Studies* 23.2 (1964): 186.

¹⁴ Wen Fong, “Why Chinese Painting Is History,” *The Art Bulletin* 85, no. 2 (2003): 272.

¹⁵ Jianyu Zhang, *Hantang Meishu Kongjian Biaoxian yanjiu yi dunhuang bihua wei zhongxin 汉唐美术空间表现研究以敦煌壁画为中心* [Representation of Space in Chinese Art from the Han to the Tang Dynasty: a Study Based on Dunhuang Murals] (Beijing: Renmin University of China Press, 2018).

actually from the much earlier Eastern Han period. Bachhofer interpreted the pictorial carvings of Zhu Wei Shrine as being in the third phase, reflecting a strong attempt to depict three-dimensional space. That is to say, the late Eastern Han dynasty Wu Family stone carvings, which are categorized by Bachhofer as the first stage with their predominantly front and profile figures, and Zhu Wei Shrine which supposedly reflects a stronger attempt at three-dimensionality, are both works from the same period of time. The first and the third phases of what Bachhofer calls the “evolutionary” development of Chinese painting are actually simultaneous rather than progressive styles. The simultaneous existence in the same period of pictorial features that Bachhofer regarded as only appearing in two phases clearly demonstrates the invalidity of his preconceived notion of linear evolution. Another example that contradicts Bachhofer’s evolutionary phases is the Banquet scene from Tomb 1 of the Xi’an University of Technology.¹⁶ The tomb has been dated by archaeologists to the late Western Han Dynasty around the first century B.C.¹⁷ The actual dating of this Banquet scene once again made obsolete Bachhofer’s thesis of stylistic evolutionism.

Similar mistakes made by Bachhofer in his study of Chinese art history have been repeatedly pointed out by scholars elsewhere. For example, the same mistakes were made in his study of Chinese bronzes.¹⁸ Dr. Chen Mengchia corrected Bachhofer’s errors in his article “Style of Chinese Bronzes.”¹⁹ In 1945 Macenchen-Helfen also had a heated debate with Bachhofer about his misdating of some ancient

¹⁶ Xiaoshi Kou, et al. “Xian Ligong Daxue Xihan Bihua Mu Fajue Jianbao 西安理工大学西汉壁画墓发掘简报 [Briefing on the Excavation of the Western Han Mural Tomb at Xi’an University of Technology],” *Cultural Heritage* 5 (2006): 7–44.

¹⁷ Based on the shape of the tomb and the characteristics of the excavated artifacts, archaeologists have comprehensively determined that the tomb should be dated to the late Western Han Dynasty (i.e., from the second half of the first century B.C. to the beginning of the first millennium A.D). Most scholars also agree with this dating, such as Luo Shiping, He Xilin, Huang Peixian and other scholars. See Luo Shiping 罗世平. “Dixia Huajuan: 地下画卷: 中国古代墓室壁画 [Underground Scrolls: Mural Paintings in Ancient Chinese Tombs],” *Art Research*, 2009(3): 20; He Xilin, Li Qingquan. *Zhongguo Mushi Bihua Shi 中国墓室壁画史 [History of Chinese tomb mural paintings]* (Beijing: Higher Education Press, 2009): 21–25; Huang Peixian 黄佩贤, “Handai Bihuamu de Fenqu Yu Fenqi Yanjiu 汉代壁画墓的分区与分期研究 [A study on the zoning and staging of mural-painted tombs in the Han Dynasty],” *Archaeology and Cultural Relics* (2010): 75. A few scholars, such as Huang Houming, believe that the tomb belongs to the Eastern Han period, and no earlier than 70 A.D. See Huang Houming 黄厚明, and Ye Kangning 叶康宁, “Tuxiang Yu Kongjian: 以汉代画像艺术为中心 [Image and Space: Centering on Han Dynasty Portrait Art],” *Chinese Art Research* 1 (2014): 11.

¹⁸ Paul Pelliot, “A propos des bronzes de Sin-Tcheng,” *Toung-Pao*, XXIII, 1924, p. 259; Ludwig Bachhofer, “The Evolution of Shang and Early Chou Bronzes,” *The Art Bulletin* 26, no. 2 (1944): 107–116.

¹⁹ Ch’en Meng-chia, “Style of Chinese Bronzes,” *Archives of the Chinese Art Society of America* 1 (1945): 47.

bronzes.²⁰ But in Bachhofer's subsequent book *A Short History of Chinese Art*, he did not correct his mistakes, and continued to repeat and believe in his previous misinterpretations. As Maenchen-Helfen points out, "he accepts an inscription only if it fits into the typological order and rejects it if it does not."²¹ It has become increasingly clear that Bachhofer's aim in making similar mistakes is to fit into a preconceived scheme of development. This *a priori* framework is subject to a basic conception that Benjamin Rowland has pointed out: "this is no more nor less than the concept of the development of styles of art through periods of growth, maturity, and decay which Geoffery Scott once demolished as the 'biological fallacy.'"²²

Furthermore, European scholars have continued to point out the inherent flaws in Ludwig Bachhofer's view ever since he published it. For example, in the same year, 1931, that Bachhofer put forward the evolutionary view of Chinese art, Benjamin March very keenly pointed out that the method of depicting space in Chinese Han paintings with different spatial concepts and modes of representation are due to choice rather than ignorance, and that "the choice was conditioned by the fact that Chinese painting has been the studio painting of scholar-artists whose pictures were visual poems rather than prose records, translations rather than transcriptions, and who had no taste for the mathematical theorizing necessary to produce a single exact geometrical formula for the universal solution of a general problem, even had such a solution been desirable, which, according to the psychology of the artists, it was not."²³ Later in 1935, Wilfrid H. Wells also wrote "Perspective in Early Chinese Painting," emphasizing once again that the purpose of Chinese painting was not to reconstruct the illusion of three-dimensional space on a picture plane, but rather to convey the specific message that the painter wished to convey through the image on the picture plane.²⁴ Martin J. Powers also followed Benjamin March's view. Powers

²⁰ Otto Maenchen-Helfen, "Some Remarks on Ancient Chinese Bronzes," *The Art Bulletin*, XXVII (1945): 238 f.

²¹ Maenchen-Helfen, "Some Remarks," 239.

²² Benjamin Rowland, "Review of *A Short History of Chinese Art*, by L. Bachhofer," *The Art Bulletin* 29, no. 2, (1947): 139.

²³ Benjamin March, "Linear perspective in Chinese painting," *Eastern Art* no. 3 (1931): 139.

²⁴ Wilfrid H. Wells, *Perspective in Early Chinese Painting* (London: E. Goldston, 1935).

links the pictorial carvings with different styles to the special social groups in the late Eastern Han Dynasty.²⁵ He points out that the “classical style” reflected in the pictorial carvings of Wu Family Shrine was a manifestation of the vintage movement that emerged with the improvement of the social, political, and cultural status of Confucian scholars. And works such as the pictorial carvings of Zhuwei Shrine and the murals of the tomb of Da Hu Ting in Mi County reflected the “descriptive style” that was popular at that time, which emphasized the complexity of visuality and was related to the interests of the court and the eunuchs.

One of the key issues noted by all of these scholars opposed to Bachhofer's view is that the role assumed by the image itself and its purpose constrain the way the image represents its object. Bachhofer, like his teacher Heinrich Wölfflin, “has been unable to realize that the origin of every work of art is in life or in the fulfillment of a particular need and not in a preceding work of art or style of art.”²⁶ Bachhofer regards style as the be all and end all of art history: “style is a kind of sinister autonomous force which in all ages and all climes inexorably induces artists to produce works of art in a certain preordained fashion, usually in an inevitable procession from archaic to Renaissance to Baroque, or from linear to plastic to pictorial expression.”²⁷

Professor Hans Belting has also already pointed out that, since the establishment of the tradition of “formalism” in art history, art has been left with only the aesthetic function of interest, while all pragmatic or semantic assertions about the art work have been rejected.²⁸ The result has been a separation of form and content, and a fragmentation of art history into stylistic criticism and iconography.²⁹ The development of art history as a purely stylistic or formal history has also been explicitly criticized by J. Burckhardt.³⁰ Burckhardt suggests that there is a real

²⁵ Martin J. Powers, *Art and Political Expression in Early China* (Yale University Press, 1992).

²⁶ Benjamin Rowland, “Review of *A Short History of Chinese Art*, by L. Bachhofer,” *The Art Bulletin* 29, no.2 (1947): 140.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ Hans Belting, “Das Werk im Kontext,” in *Kunstgeschichte: eine Einführung*, ed. Hans Belting et al. (Berlin: Reimer, 2008), 231.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ Jacob Burckhardt, Vorwort nr 2. Auflage der Architektur der italienischen Renaissance, *Gesammelte Schriften* 6, S. 304.

necessity to establish a statement of facts and genres outside of the biographical narrative art history of the artist, in order to identify the driving forces behind the artistic creation.³¹ Horst W. Janson therefore advocates that form and content should be reintegrated by studying the function of the artwork and the context in which it was produced.³²

Gombrich has pointed out that around the fourth century B.C., the purpose of Greek artists was to study the laws of perspective and optics, much like the purpose of scientists was to serve the dramatic stage effect of bringing the audience of a play into a convincing space.³³ So was there ever a need for Chinese painters to achieve a realistic simulation of nature for some purpose? In many previous discussions of Chinese art history, this question has not been cautiously addressed. Many art historians have just followed the inertia of thinking and subjectively decided that ancient Chinese art also needed to reproduce nature realistically, and the question of when and for what purpose is often not carefully pursued by these art historians.

In recent years, Wu Hung has been engaged in many fascinating discussions on the topic of space and representation in Chinese art. With his unique vision, Wu Hung has proposed three “alternative representational strategies of three-dimensional space to linear perspective” used in ancient Chinese art, which are respectively referred to as 1. “double screen” or a layered composition that achieves foreshortening and illusionism through the appending of internal frames parallel to the pictorial plane-within the painting;³⁴ 2. “binary imagery” or “front-and-back composition”;³⁵ 3. “mirroring structure” which is self-enclosed and does not interact with the painting’s overall frame and depth.³⁶ The specific examples given by Wu Hung for each of these three representational strategies are: 1. the painting “Double Screen” attributed to Zhou Wenju (c. 907–975) of the Southern Tang Dynasty (collected in the Freer Art

³¹N. Huse, Anmerkungen zu Burckhardts “Kunstgeschichte nach Aufgaben,” Festschrift Wolfgang Braunfels, Tübingen 1977, S.157 f.

³²H.W. Janson, “Form Follows Function, or Does It? Modernist Design Theory and the History of Art,” *Maarsen* (1982).

³³E. H. Gombrich, *Art and Illusion: A Study in the Psychology of Pictorial Representation* (A.W. Mellon Lectures in the Fine Arts, 1956), 127.

³⁴Hung Wu, *Space in Art History* (Shanghai: Shanghai Renmin Press, 2018), 248.

³⁵ Wu, *Space in Art History*, 250.

³⁶ Wu, *Space in Art History*, 251.

Gallery, Washington, D.C.); 2. a stone carving on the Nelson Sarcophagus of the Northern Wei Dynasty which depicts the story of the Filial Son Wang Lin (collected in the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art); 3. the scene of “palace ladies adoring their face” in *The Admonitions Scroll* collected in the British Museum. However, in discussing these examples of representational strategies of three-dimensional space, Wu Hung also failed to examine carefully the question of under what circumstances and for what purpose these images need to reproduce spatial illusion.

Wu Hung also seemed to be intent on avoiding abstract discussions that go beyond image analysis by delving into the original contexts that produced these “alternative representational strategies of three-dimensional space to linear perspective.” He was concerned that art historians may not be capable of doing so, for after all, not all art historians can be expected to be paleographers or ideological historians.³⁷ He also stated that the reason why he did not answer the abstract question of “What is space?” at the beginning of the discussion was because he was afraid of taking the discussion to an abstract metaphysical level of a dialogue with philosophers, thus leaving out the scope of art history and not being able to “discuss the representation of space as concrete, figurative entities.”³⁸

The drawbacks of this avoidance of abstract discussion also quickly became apparent. However, Wu Hung has pointed out that the emergence of “binary imagery or front-and-back composition” is related to a profound change in thought and vision that occurred during the Southern Dynasties.³⁹ This profound change was that writers, painters and calligraphers of the Southern Dynasties attempted to have a perspective that could see both the positive and negative aspects of the world.⁴⁰ However, this kind of interpretation has been pointed out by scholars as being too subjective and over-interpretative⁴¹ because this “binary” perspective originates from a very long

³⁷ Wu, *Space in Art History*, 76.

³⁸ Wu, *Space in Art History*, 279.

³⁹ Wu Hung, “The Transparent Stone: Inverted Vision and Binary Imagery in Medieval Chinese Art,” *Representations* 46 (Spring 1994), 58–86.

⁴⁰ Wu, “The Transparent Stone,” 68.

⁴¹ Pin Yang, “Fanshu Chuantong Fan Zuoshu yu Touming Zhishi de Guodu Chanshi 反书传统、反左书与“透明之石”的过度阐释——《中国古代艺术与建筑中的“纪念碑性”》献疑,” *Nanjing Yishu Xueyuan Xuebao* 南京艺术

tradition of writing Chinese characters, which has already appeared in inscriptions on different mediums since the Shang and Zhou dynasties.⁴² During the Han Dynasty, “transparent stone,” “transparent jade,” and “transparent copper,” written both positively and negatively, appeared in large quantities, not just during the Southern Dynasties.⁴³

So what kind of “alternative representational strategies of three-dimensional space to linear perspective” was generated in the complex context of the Six Dynasties? This question remains to be more intently scrutinized as we delve into the complex context of Six Dynasties. In this dissertation, even at the risk of getting bogged down in abstract discussions, it is still very necessary to delve as deeply as possible into the original contexts in which the images were situated in order to probe clearly into the abstract questions of “What is an image?” and “What is space?” in the Six Dynasties. Because only after clarifying these issues can we more effectively understand how images dealt with space during the Six Dynasties, and then clarify the ways in which images dealt with space differently than a linear perspective.

Additionally, as W.J. Thomas Mitchell points out, many modern studies have argued that “language and imagery are no longer what they promised to be for critics and philosophers of the Enlightenment — perfect, transparent media through which reality may be represented to the understanding.”⁴⁴ However, images are actually different from language signs; the “motivation” between the image and its object actually exists. Just as Mitchell pointed out:

The commonplace of modern studies of images, in fact, is that they must be understood as a kind of language; instead of providing a transparent window on the world, images are now regarded as the sort of sign that presents a deceptive appearance of naturalness and transparency concealing an opaque, distorting, arbitrary mechanism of representation, a process of ideological mystification.⁴⁵

Gombrich has also euphemistically emphasized this point at the end of the final chapter of *Art and Illusion*: “Indeed, the true miracle of the language of art is not that

学院学报(美术与设计版) [*Journal of Nanjing Arts Institute (Fine Arts & Design)*], no.5 (2013): 75–80.

⁴² Yang “Fanshu Chuantong,” 77.

⁴³ Yang “Fanshu Chuantong,” 78.

⁴⁴ W.J. Thomas Mitchell, *Iconology: Image, Text, Ideology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 8.

⁴⁵ Mitchell, *Iconology*, 9.

it enables the artist to create the illusion of reality. It is that under the hands of a great master the image become translucent.”⁴⁶

In other words, when asking the question “What is an image in the context of the Six Dynasties in China?” it is required to take into account not only the aspect of the image as a conventional symbol, but also the aspect of the image as an icon, that is, to consider the image’s “motivation” or “transparency.” Although in Saussure’s linguistics, the main focus is on the conventional symbolic aspect, and the Indo-European languages are used as paradigms to emphasize the “immotivation” and “opaqueness” of the symbols, in Peirce’s semiotics, which is not modeled on Indo-European languages, great attention is paid to the “motivation” of signs, and all kinds of intrinsic connections between the sign and its object are revealed. Thus, semiotics is free from the system.

In the classification of signs given by Peirce according to the relationship between signs and their objects—that is, “icon,” “index,” and “symbol”—two of the signs, “icon” and “index,” are signs with “motivation.” Peirce discusses in detail signs with a certain level of “transparency” and “motivation,” giving different kinds of likenesses. The icons and their objects are connected by “iconicity.”⁴⁷ This iconicity can be not only visual iconicity, but also other kinds of sensory likeness. The range of iconicity is very wide. Peirce gives three different kinds of icons with different likeness, namely, “imaginal icon,” “diagrammatic icon,” and “metaphorical icon.” An imaginal icon is one that resembles an object in appearance. A diagrammatic icon resembles the object not in appearance, but in the relations between its parts. It can be said that this likeness is a constructional iconicity or structural homology. A metaphorical icon is more abstract than a diagrammatic icon. A metaphorical icon simply represents some abstract quality of an object. As for Peirce’s reference to the “motivation” of the index, it means that the index is physically linked to the object to

⁴⁶ Ernst Hans Gombrich, *Art and Illusion: A Study in the Psychology of Pictorial Representation* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1961), 311.

⁴⁷ Charles Sanders Peirce, *Collected Papers* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1931–1958), 3: 362.

form an organic pair.⁴⁸ Examples of an index that Peirce gives are indicative pronouns, relational pronouns, weathervanes, knocks on doors, and names, which merely point to the object without describing it.⁴⁹ The index is connected to the object relying on indicativeness, and such connection relationships include causality, adjacency, and the relationship between part and whole. Peirce also notes that an index is such a sign that if its object is removed, it does not become a sign.⁵⁰ While Peirce points out that a large number of signs have “motivation,” he also points out that there are very few signs that are purely “motivation.” He considered conventionality to be a property that any linguistic symbol needs to ensure the efficiency of representation. Peirce envisioned a perfect sign as one that mixed icon, index, and symbol as evenly as possible.⁵¹

It is Peirce’s careful delineation of the varying degrees of likenesses that inspired this thesis on how to delve into the internal logic of images to further analyze the different images that appeared during the Six Dynasties.

Reconsidering Image and Space in the Six Dynasties

Of course, this dissertation does not have the ambition and ability to accomplish a Foucault-like archaeology of knowledge about “image” and “space.” In the first part, it will only review the basic knowledge about image and space accumulated by the intellectuals who had the opportunity to receive Chinese language education and lived in and around cultural and political centers (including Nanjing, Datong, Luoyang, Changan, Linzhang) in the Six Dynasties period from the perspective of an art historian. This dissertation will use this fundamental context of the Six Dynasties as a base to explore the relationship between image and its object, namely space. It is hoped that it will discover different ways of using images to express space in the original context of this period.

⁴⁸ Peirce, *Collected Papers*, 310.

⁴⁹ Peirce, *Collected Papers*, 310.

⁵⁰ Peirce, *Collected Papers*, 297.

⁵¹ Peirce, *Collected Papers*, 448.

The first part of the thesis begins with a survey of the basic knowledge of “image” and “space” developed during the Six Dynasties period. In the discussion of “image” in the first chapter, the main question of inquiry is: How did the intellectuals who lived in and around the cultural and political centers in the Six Dynasties construct the concept of “image”? What characteristics and connotations were given to the images at this time? In the discussion of “space” in Chapter 2, the main question of inquiry is: What further understanding of the basic knowledge of space accumulated at this time was developed by the people of the Six Dynasties? How did the intellectuals of the Six Dynasties interpret the Han Dynasty’s three theories of heaven? And how did the Buddhist cosmology introduced at the beginning of the fifth century participate in the understanding of space at this time? Chapter 3 discusses in further detail the spatial vocabulary used in the Six Dynasties period. It explores how spatial vocabulary was used in the practice of art criticism during the Six Dynasties. What was the purpose of the spatial vocabulary used by art critics at this time, such as “*yuanjin* 遠近” and “*chongdie* 重疊”? Did art critics at this time develop an interest in talking about spatial illusion on a picture plane, as modern art historians have argued?

The discussion in the second part of the thesis delves further into the specific contexts in which the images were used, namely the burial site (chapter 4) and the grotto site (chapter 5). The questions explored include: What roles were assigned to the images by their users when they were employed in tombs and cave-temples? How did the images that assumed these specific roles actually deal with space? Since most of the authors of these images were categorized as artisan classes that had little access to Chinese language education, to what extent did they comprehend and accept the concepts of image and space constructed by the intellectuals of the upper classes? This is also a question that needs to be examined in depth in specific contexts.

Methodology

This dissertation adopts a sociology of art approach to examine the external contexts in which art is produced and used as an entry point for research. The investigations in this thesis around how images deal with space are conducted within

the basic guidelines of sociological empirical methods. In order to return to the Six Dynasties context to answer the question, the first part of the thesis begins with an examination of the basic cultural context in which the producer side of the image is situated. The second part of the thesis goes into further analysis and investigation of the cultural context in which the images are used on the user's side. An empirical sociological approach is used to verify, in specific contexts, whether the authors of images in artistic practice accept or use the categorization of images and the concepts of space revealed in the literature materials discussed in the first part of this thesis and to investigate how these images actually deal with space in specific places.

Some of the discussions in this thesis also draw on the methods of semiotics. For example, in the first chapter, which investigates the characteristics of images in the Six Dynasties period, the theory of Peirce semiotics is used to analyze the types of images with different titles. Discussions of the semantics and pragmatics of space are also involved in the investigations centered on "space" in Chapter 2 and Chapter 3. The reason why the second part of the thesis juxtaposes the tomb images and the grotto images during the Six Dynasties, rather than arranging them chronologically, is also to develop the study from a synchronic approach. This is also inspired by the concept of synchrony proposed in Saussure's semiotics. However, semiotics is not capable of conducting a historical investigation of the producers, patrons, and recipients of the images at the time. Moreover, it is impossible to objectively study the artist's intention from the inside, so we can only suspend the artist's intention for the time being, and start from the external horizons of sociology, examining the external contexts in which art is produced and used as the entry point of the study, to understand images by placing them in a context of shifting functions.

Part I Image and Space in Their Context

Chapter 1 Images in Six Dynasties

First of all, in this chapter's discussion of images, the basic question to be examined is how did Chinese intellectuals in the Six Dynasties construct the concept of “*image (tu 圖)*.” What special qualities and connotations did they assign to the image at this time?

There were many kinds of images called “*tu 圖*” in the ancient Chinese context, and a large proportion of them have been discussed by previous scholars.⁵² However, there are two other types of pictorial materials referred to as “*tu 圖*” that have not received enough attention during the Six Dynasties: the “*xuanji tu 璇璣圖*” and the “*bianxiang tu 變相圖*.” This chapter will focus on these two types of “*tu 圖*” and discuss some of the basic properties that people in the Six Dynasties ascribed to those images. Although the archaeological materials of diagrams composed of text have drawn many scholars to discuss the relationship between text and image,⁵³ from the perspective of this dissertation, this material actually provides a good opportunity to discuss the properties of images. The characteristics of the image itself—that is, the characteristics that distinguish it from texts—are the focus of this chapter, while the relationship between the image and the text is beyond the scope of this chapter.

1.1 *Xuanji tu* (璇璣圖)

The Six Dynasties is considered to be the period when independent artists and independent works of art began to appear in China. In particular, the period from the fourth to the sixth centuries saw the emergence of a group of highly regarded male artists in the history of Chinese art, namely Dai Mu (ca. 325–396 A.D.), Gu Kaizhi

⁵² Francesca Bray, Vera Dorofeeva-Lichtmann, and Georges Métaillie have already discussed a large range of graphics belonging to the category of “*tu*” (in the broad sense of graphic representations). See Francesca Bray, Vera Dorofeeva-Lichtmann, and Georges Métaillie, eds., *Graphics and text in the production of technical knowledge in China: The Warp and the Weft* (Brill, 2007).

⁵³ Vera Dorofeeva-Lichtmann, “Spatial Organization of Ancient Chinese Texts (Preliminary Remarks),” *History of Science, History of Text* (Dordrecht: Springer, 2004), 3–47.

(346–407), Lu Tanwei (c.424–472), Zhang Sengyou (502–519), Yang Zihua (561–564), and Cao Zhongda (Northern Qi), Jiang Shaoyou. But this dissertation would like to turn its attention here to *Su Hui* (蘇蕙), a female intellectual far less prestigious than the aforementioned male artists, because it is Su Hui’s creation of the “*xuanji tu* 璇璣圖” that provides an important clue to our understanding of the distinction between images and texts in the Six Dynasties period. It is in this “*xuanji tu* 璇璣圖”—which, although named “*tu* 圖” by the ancients, is composed entirely of textual symbols—that we understand an important feature that distinguishes an image from a text. That is, an image allows a viewer to effectively access meaning even in a variety of flexible viewing sequences, whereas a text always requires its readers to follow a standard order written by the author, such as right to left, top to bottom, in order to effectively receive meaning.

It is stated in Cui Hong’s “Spring and Autumn Annals of the Sixteen Kingdoms—Record of the Former Qin” from the late Northern Wei Dynasty (cited in the “*Taiping Yulan* (太平禦覽),” Volume 520 “*Clan Section* (宗親部),” in Wang Yin’s “*Book of Jin* (晉書)” from the Eastern Jin Dynasty, in the “*Preface of the Tapestry Palindrome* (織錦回文詩序)” of the “*Book of Jin*,” which was revised during the Tang Dynasty, as well as Wu Zetian’s “*Narrative of the Xuanji Tu* (璇璣圖敘)” that all records of the “*xuanji tu*” were made by Su Hui. But to this day there are scholars who cannot accept that such an intricate “*xuanji tu*” was made by a young woman, Su Hui, at the beginning of the fifth century.⁵⁴ In addition, although no fifth-century tapestry has yet been found, some scholars have arbitrarily concluded that the intricate tapestry techniques required for the “*xuanji tu*” in tapestry form could not have been accomplished by a young woman in the fifth century.⁵⁵ The fact that Su

⁵⁴ Li Yan, “Huiwenjin zai Zhijin Huiwen Xiqu Zhong de Yangtai yu Gongneng Jian ji Chuanshi Xuanjitu Xianyi” 回文锦在“织锦回文”戏曲中的样态与功能——兼及传世《璇璣图》献疑,” *Zhejiang Yishu Zhiye Xueyuan Xuebao* 浙江艺术职业学院学报 [*Journal of Zhejiang Vocational Academy of Art*] 21, no.1 (2023): 41–54.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

Hui was a young woman is the fundamental reason why scholars question the authorship of the “*xuanji tu*.” This dissertation therefore argues that these scholars’ doubts are not valid.

Two versions of the “*xuanji tu*” created by Su Hui have survived; one version consists of 841 Chinese characters, such as that printed in color in the *Flowers in the Mirror*. The oldest version of the “*xuanji tu*” included in the *Huiwen Leiju*(回文類聚) by the Southern Song Dynasty’s Sang Shichang also consists of 841 Chinese characters (Fig. 1.1a). Qian Xiaoping and others at the Suzhou Silk Museum restored this version of the tapestry “*xuanji tu*” at the beginning of this century, after more than a decade of effort (Fig. 1.1b). Another version of the “*xuanji tu*” consists of 840 Chinese characters, with the character “*xin* 心” missing. Two copies of this version exist, one of which is a copy by Guan Daosheng and is preserved in the British Museum. Another is a copy by Zhu Shuzhen, which is now in the Beijing Library. Part of the anonymous Su Hui’s Xuan Ji Scroll in the style of Qiu Ying in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Xuan Ji Tu is also attributed to the handwriting of Zhu Shuzhen (Fig.1.1c). The “*xuanji tu*” in the Su Hui Xuan Ji Tu scroll, now in the National Palace Museum in Taipei, also consists of 840 Chinese characters (Fig. 1.1d).

“*Xuanji tu*” can be read vertically, horizontally, diagonally, and crosswise in multiple directions, forward, backward, or iteratively, all of which can yield a meaningful and heartfelt poem. It is said that Su Hui originally designed 92 poems hidden in this “*xuanji tu*.”⁵⁶ According to Li Wei’s research over the years, Su Hui’s original work reads as 46 poems in the right direction and another 46 poems in the reverse direction, thus the resulting poems total 92.⁵⁷ This highly ingenious open-ended design has continued to attract future generations of literati to compete with each other in reading more poems in the “*xuanji tu*.” It seems that the more poems

⁵⁶ The poems develop from left to right, and then reverse direction, becoming another poem. For details of Su Hui’s 46 original poems, see Zhao Xian zhang 赵宪章, Zou Guangsheng 邹广胜, *Zhongguo Wenxue Tuxiang Guanxi Shi* 中国文学图像关系史魏晋南北朝卷 [History of Chinese Literary Image Relationships, Wei Jin and North and South Dynasties] (Nanjing: Jiangsu Fenghua Education Publication, 2020), 214–216.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

one can read from it, the more one can show who is more talented. Even until the Tang Dynasty, Wu Zetian in his “*xuanji tu ji*” did not forget to show that she reads out “more than two hundred poems.” Later on, Li Gonglin, a famous painter in the Song Dynasty, Zhu Shuzhen, a poetess in the Song Dynasty who was as famous as Li Qingzhao, Guandao Sheng, a talented woman in the Yuan Dynasty who was renowned for her calligraphy and paintings (and also Zhao Mengfu's wife), Kang Wanmin, a prominent scholar in the Ming Dynasty, and Li Ruzhen, a well-known novelist in the Qing Dynasty, all read poems from “*xuanji tu*” over and over again. Huang Tingjian (1045–1105) of the Northern Song Dynasty wrote a poem claiming that he could read a thousand poems from “*xuanji tu*.”⁵⁸ During the Yuan Dynasty, Guan Dao Sheng said in her “*xuanji tuba* (璇璣圖跋)” that he got 3,518 poems from it. During the Wanli period of the Ming Dynasty, Hou Xiang, a scholar from Anhui Province, deciphered 800 poems from the Xuanjitu and wrote a book called “*Yan Huiwen Shi* (衍回文詩).” During the Ming Dynasty, Taoist Qi Zong claimed to have been able to read as many as 3,752 poems from Xuanjitu.⁵⁹ During the Qing Dynasty, Li Ruzhen, in his famous novel *Flowers in the Mirror* (鏡花緣), used his own way of reading to come up with 2,042 poems from the Xuan Ji Tu.

Considering that the nature of Chinese words and their combining relations are relatively flexible, it leaves a great deal of freedom for users to create.⁶⁰ The combination of Chinese words can be either sequential, diachronic and linear, or coexisting, synchronic and non-linear. “Xuanji tu” makes full use of this characteristic of the Chinese language, and it also takes advantage of visual signifiers that Chinese characters possess. Saussure has already clearly illustrated this characteristic of visual signifiers: “visual signifiers (nautical signals, etc.) which can offer simultaneous

⁵⁸ This poem is contained in the “Daijing Tang shihua 带经堂诗话” Volume 20 and Volume 26.

⁵⁹ Zhao Xian zhang, Zou Guangsheng, *Zhongguo Wenxue Tuxiang Guanxi Shi 中国文学图像关系史魏晋南北朝卷* [History of Chinese Literary Image Relationships, Wei Jin and North and South Dynasties] (Jiangsu Fenghua Education Publication, 2020), 214.

⁶⁰ Some scholars have pointed out that Chinese grammar is not limited by any *a priori* framework. See Shen Xiaolong 申小龙. *Yuwen De Chanshi 语文的阐释* [The interpretation of Chinese language] (Shenyang: Liaoning Education Press, 1992), 450–499.

groupings in several dimensions, auditory signifiers have at their command only the dimension of time. Their elements are presented in succession; they form a chain. This feature becomes readily apparent when they are represented in writing and the spatial line of graphic marks is substituted for succession in time.”⁶¹

The advantage of the visual signifiers of Chinese characters is that “xuanji tu” are equally effective in generating meaning when Chinese characters are organized in a non-linear structure. It is this natural property of Chinese characters that makes it easy to recognize that the non-linear textual arrangement used in “xuanji tu” has earlier prototypes in China.

Images with non-linear textual arrangements existed long before the appearance of the “xuanji tu.” For example, in the Eastern Zhou Period Chu Silk Manuscript dated the middle of the Warring States period (Fig. 1.2)⁶² the entire layout of the manuscript is cardinally oriented, and the central part of the manuscript is occupied by two relatively long textual sections placed upside down with respect to each other; reading the related textual passages requires rotating the manuscript or circular movement by its user.

Moreover, Dorofeeva-Lichtmann also suggests that “the Chu Silk Manuscript might have been inspired by or originated from a nonlinear textual arrangement composed of six bound sets of bamboo slips (or six wooden tablets)—two in the centre placed upside down with respect to each other, framed by four bound sets or tablets with a strip-like textual layout, and, probably, incorporating pictures.”⁶³ Some other scholars also point out that the text strongly resembles the rotating astronomical instruments known as *shi* type, divination boards or cosmographs.⁶⁴ Li ling has

⁶¹ Ferdinand Mongin Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), 70.

⁶² It was excavated in 1942. The dating of this Chu Silk Manuscript is according to the dating of the materials (tripod, dun, and jug pottery) discovered in the same tomb by a scientific excavation in 1973—during the middle of the Warring States period. See He Jiejun 何介钧, Zhou Shirong 周世荣, and Xiong Chuanxin 熊传新. “长沙子弹库战国木椁墓 [The Warring States wooden coffin tomb of Changsha Zidanku].” *Wenwu* 文物 [Cultural Relics], no.2 (1974): 40. For seminal studies of the Chu Silk Manuscript, see Noel Barnard, Michael Loewe, Rao Zongyi, Li Ling, Li Xueqin, Hwang Mingchorng, and Dorofeeva-Lichtmann’s study. For the main problems raised in the studies of the Chu Silk Manuscript, see Thomas Lawton, ed., *New Perspectives on Chu Culture During the Eastern Zhou Period* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 176–183.

⁶³ Vera Dorofeeva-Lichtmann, “Mapless mapping: did the maps of the Shan Hai Jing ever exist?” *Graphics and Text in the Production of Technical Knowledge in China* (Brill, 2007), 243–244.

⁶⁴ *Shi* cosmographs consist of a square board representing the Earth with a round rotating board placed on top

pointed out that the structure of Eastern Zhou Period Chu Silk Manuscript is especially similar to one of the two types of cosmographs, the “*liuren* (六壬)” type (Fig. 1.3a).⁶⁵ There is also a “*liuren*” cosmograph on a bronze disk from the Six Dynasties (Fig. 1.3b). Li Ling has listed the similarities between the cosmographs and the layout of the Chu Silk Manuscript.⁶⁶ Li Ling calls the arrangement of text and pictures of the Chu Silk Manuscript a “*tushi* 圖式 (pictorial cosmograph),” which in Chinese is an inversion of “*shitu* 式圖 (cosmograph design).”⁶⁷

It is worth noting that there is some disagreement among scholars when discussing the roles of text and image in the Chu Silk Manuscript. Li Ling argues that textual passages are incorporated into a “graphic representation”; here text comments on “graphic representation,” the latter playing the major role.⁶⁸ Dorofeeva-Lichtmann, however, argues that “the spatial textual layout of the Chu Silk Manuscript plays as important a role in the diagram as the pictures.”⁶⁹

representing the Heaven. The earliest of the discovered cosmographs date from the Former Han dynasty. For cosmographs, see Donald Harper, “The Han cosmic board (shih),” *Early China* 4 (1978): 1–10; Donald Harper, “Warring states natural philosophy and occult thought,” *The Cambridge History of Ancient China: From the origins of civilization to 221 BC* (1999): 813–884; Michael Loewe, *Ways to Paradise: The Chinese Quest for Immortality* (London: Georges Allen & Unwin, 1979), 75–80; Christopher Cullen, “Some Further Points on the Shih,” *Early China* no.6 (1980): 31–46; Stephen Field, “Cosmos, Cosmograph, and the Inquiring Poet: New Answers to the ‘Heaven Questions,’” *Early China* no.17 (1992): 83–110; Li Ling, “Chuboshu yu ‘shitu’ 楚帛书与式图”; *Jiang Han Kaogu* 江汉考古 no.1(1991): 59–62; Li Ling, *Zhongguo Fangshu Kao* 中国方术考 (Peking: Renmin Zhongguo Chubanshe, 2000 [revision of 1993]), 89–176; John S. Major, *Heaven and Earth in Early Chinese Thought: Chapters Three, Four and Five of the Huai nan zi* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993), 39–43.

⁶⁵ For another type of cosmograph, see the *jiugong* 九宫 type, cf. Fig. 4.14 in Wu Hung’s article. Wu Hung, “Picturing or diagramming the universe,” *Graphics and Text in the Production of Technical Knowledge in China*. (Brill, 2007), 191–214.

⁶⁶ Five similarities are distinguished. The place of the “heavenly” part on the Chu Silk Manuscript is occupied by the main text. In particular, he argues that the central textual sections are placed at the position of the Northern Dipper or Taiyi (pp. 190–5). The frame of pictures corresponds to the bottom board; see Li Ling, *Zhongguo Fangshu Kao* 中国方术考 (Peking: Renmin Zhongguo Chubanshe, 2000), 190–191.

⁶⁷ The outline of the “pictorial cosmograph” *tushu* is part of Li Ling’s discussion of the “cosmograph design” *shitu*. See Li Ling, *Zhongguo Fangshu Kao* 中国方术考 (Peking: Renmin Zhongguo Chubanshe [revision of 1993], 2000), 89–176.

⁶⁸ Li Ling refers the Chu Silk Manuscript to the second type (Li Ling 2000 [rev. of 1993]: 190). Li Ling distinguishes between two types of *tushu* 圖書 (“graphical representation” – “writing”) relationship: 1) “graphic representation” and text are separate from each other, and in this case “graphic representation” complements a text which plays the major role; 2) textual passages are incorporated into a “graphic representation,” and here text comments on “graphic representation,” the latter playing the major role.

⁶⁹ Vera Dorofeeva-Lichtmann, “Mapless mapping: Did the maps of the Shan Hai Jing ever exist?” *Graphics and Text in the Production of Technical Knowledge in China: The Warp and the Weft* (Brill, 2007), 248.

In the view of this dissertation, it is perhaps no longer necessary at this point to view the textual parts as distinct from the pictorial parts. This indicates that the advantage of the visual signifiers of the Chinese character has been fully utilized, and that text can be treated on par with images. The two constitute a single diagram. This cohesion of the manuscript and the structural importance of its textual passages had been realized by some scholars—for example, in Hwang Ming-Chorng’s study.⁷⁰ This suggests that the parts that are called “textual” by modern scholars were regarded as “pictorial” parts during the Eastern Zhou period. Perhaps the art of calligraphy, which flourished during the Wei and Jin Dynasties, can also be viewed as a manifestation of the reutilization and exploitation of the visual signifiers of the Chinese script itself.

In addition, scholars have in recent years begun to pay attention to the non-linear, diachronic spatial structure of the *Itineraries of Mountains and Seas* (*shan hai jing* 山海經). The passages are grouped together in *Itineraries of Mountains and Seas* according to spatial orientation.⁷¹ This is also clearly stated in Dorofeeva-Lichtmann’s study of the Shanhaijing: “The principle underlying their arrangement is primarily ‘spatial,’ and is stated in a clear, straightforward and consistent way in the titles of chapters and sub-chapters.”⁷² The chapters were assembled into a cardinally oriented layout based on the outlines of the textual structure of the *Shan Hai Jing*.⁷³ Therefore, Dorofeeva-Lichtmann puts forward the hypothesis that the reason for the absence of traditional geographical maps of the *shan hai jing* was that the “Shanhaijing” itself was a purely textual map composed according to a co-temporal spatial structure.⁷⁴ He speculates that “the original layout of the text in itself combined a map or spatial (cardinally-oriented) scheme and a terrestrial description, making maps to accompany

⁷⁰ Hwang Mingchorng, “Ming-Tang: Cosmology, Political Order and Monuments in Early China” (PhD diss., Harvard University, 1996), 328–402.

⁷¹ The illustrations of such spatial textual layouts are provided by the reconstructions of some scholars; see John S. Major, “Topography and Cosmology in Early Han Thought: Chapter Four of the *Huai-nan-tzu*” (PhD diss., Harvard University, 1974), 99–100; Riccardo Fracasso, “Teratoscopy or Divination by Monsters, Being a Study on the Wutsang Shan-ching”; Han hsieh yen chiu [Studies in Sinology], no.1 (1983): 660; Suh Kyung Ho, “A study of ‘shan-hai-ching’: Ancient worldviews under transformation” (Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 2013), 306–309.

⁷² Vera Dorofeeva-Lichtmann, “Mapless mapping: did the maps of the Shan Hai Jing ever exist?” *Graphics and Text in the Production of Technical Knowledge in China* (Brill, 2007), 238.

⁷³ Dorofeeva-Lichtmann, “Mapless mapping,” 250.

⁷⁴ Dorofeeva-Lichtmann, “Mapless mapping,” 238.

the text superfluous.”⁷⁵ Dorofeeva-Lichtmann finally points that “In sum, in the case of the SHJ, maps seem simply not to be needed, as the spatial layout of the text would have combined the properties of a *tu* (scheme-map) and elucidation (*shuo*) on this *tu*.”⁷⁶

From the *Eastern Zhou Period Chu Silk Manuscript* (楚帛書) to cosmographs “*shi* 式” and *Shanhaijing*, to *Xuan Ji Tu* in the pre-Qin period of the Six Dynasties, the spatial structure of synchronic and non-linearity has been used continuously. In Su Hui’s time, at the beginning of the fifth century, the advantage of the visual signifiers of Chinese characters was fully exploited, and the non-linear and synchronic structural features were more clearly highlighted. Su Hui’s “*xuanji tu*” is an excellent demonstration of this trend. It is said that Su Hui’s husband was also deeply impressed by this “*xuanji tu*” that Su Hui had crafted for him, and guiltily sent his valentine away, instead making a special effort to personally welcome Su Hui back from the place where he was serving at the time. The place where her husband worked was Dunhuang. Whether a coincidence or not, we should perhaps consider the possibility that the murals in the Dunhuang mogao caves, which also have non-linear compositions, may have been influenced by the non-linear structures of the “*xuanji tu*.” The “*xuanji tu*” by the talented Su Hui has both right-to-left and left-to-right designs. Non-linear structure does naturally arise in cases where the visual signifiers of Chinese characters are utilized.

Previously, however, scholars have preferred to trace the origin of the non-linear structural designs that appear in the murals of Dunhuang Mogao Caves to Indian Buddhist art, rather than suggesting that the non-linear structural designs have a Chinese origin.⁷⁷ Higashiyama Kengo first proposed this idea in his paper on illustrations of the *Syamā Jātaka* presented to the International Conference on

⁷⁵ Dorofeeva-Lichtmann, “Mapless mapping,” 215–294.

⁷⁶ Dorofeeva-Lichtmann, “Mapless mapping,” 261.

⁷⁷ For example, in the “Subjugation Bianxiang” in Cave 12 from the Western Caves of a thousand Buddhas built in Northern Zhou Dynasty, the story develops from left to right on the upper register and then reverses direction on the lower register.

Dunhuangology in 1990. Wu Hung also agreed with this proposal from Higashiyama Kengo.⁷⁸ In Wu Hong's discussion, although he also considers some local Chinese traditions, he only notes the right-to-left pictorial structure used in Gu Kaizhi's Lo Goddess scroll, thus denying that the left-to-right pictorial structure found in Dunhuang's murals has any connection to local Chinese traditions: "It is true that often in a hand-scroll painting various episodes of a story are presented in a linear fashion and accompanied by paragraphs of a text. This sequence differs from the Cave 12 mural, in which the story develops from left to right on the upper register and then reverses direction on the lower register."⁷⁹

The fact that a non-linear structure arises naturally as an advantage of the visual signifiers of Chinese character has indeed been overlooked by scholars. However, the existence of the "*xuanji tu*" reminds us of this non-linear structure naturally possessed in the local Chinese traditions

1.2 What Is "*Bianxiang tu* (變相圖)"

According to the records of painting critics, many famous painters of the fifth and sixth centuries painted a kind of work known as "*bian* 變" or "*bianxiang* 變相" pictures. For example, Yuan Qian in the Liu Song Dynasty (420–479 A.D.) painted "*one scroll of Vimalakīrti Transformation tableau* (維摩詰變一卷)" with one Hundred Things; Zhang Rutong in the Liang Dynasty (502–557 A.D.) painted "*one scroll of Transformation tableau of Baoji* (寶積變相圖一卷)" and Feng Qing painted a layout of "*Transformation tableau of Taoist Sutra* (道經變相)" on the wall of Jinglin palace in the Northern Wei Dynasty; later in the Northern Zhou Dynasty, Dong Boren painted "*one scroll of Transfiguration tableau of Maitreya* (彌勒變相圖一卷)" and "*Transfiguration tableau of the Taoist Scriptures* (道經變相圖)," and

⁷⁸ Hung Wu, "What is Bianxiang? On the Relationship between Dunhuang Art and Dunhuang Literature." *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 52, no. 1 (1992): 146.

⁷⁹ Wu, "What is Bianxiang," 145–146.

Zhan Ziqian (ca. 545–618 A.D.) painted one scroll of “*Transformation tableau of the Lotus Sutra* 法華變相” (see Appendix 1).

Since the 1940s, a lot of scholars have discussed in detail the “transformation tableau (*bianxiang*)” in conjunction with “transformation texts (*bianwen* 變文).” As early as 1947, Zhou Yiliang argued that the “*bianwen*” is the text of “*bianxiang*.”⁸⁰ And Fu Yunzi also explicitly linked “*Bianxiang*” and “*Bianwen*” to each other; he believed that neither of them could be separated from the other.⁸¹ Yet Fu Yunzi does not give sufficient material to demonstrate the mutually supportive relationship between the two when used as tools of Buddhist propaganda. At the end of the last century, after observing twenty types of texts with the title “*bianwen*” in Dunhuang manuscripts, Bai Huawen also believed that the “*bianxiang*” were the painting scroll used to tell about the *bianwen*.⁸²

However, at the end of the 1980s, the American scholar Victor Mair pointed out with great caution that there was not enough material to determine the relationship between “*bianxiang*” and “*bianwen*” after he had made a more detailed examination of transformation texts.⁸³ Only a very small portion of the murals called “*bianxiang*” preserved in the Dunhuang Mogao Caves can be found to correspond to the “*bianwen* (transformation texts),” such as the P.4524 “*The Magic Competition* 降魔變.” And there are still a lot of murals called “*bianxiang*” that cannot be found to correspond to the “*bianwen* (transformation texts).” It is worth noting that Victor Mair finally noted a very important difference between the “*bianxiang*” and “*bianwen*”—that is, the two

⁸⁰ Yiliang Zhou, “Du Tangdai Sujiang Kao 读《唐代俗讲考》 [Reading the ‘Tang Dynasty Popular Lectures’],” *Dunhuang Bian wen Lunwen Lu* 敦煌变文论文录, ed. Zhou Shao-liang (Shanghai: Shanghai Ancient Books Publishing House, 1982), 157.

⁸¹ Yunzi Fu, “Sujiang Xinkao 俗讲新考 [A new examination of popular speech],” in *Dunhuang Bian wen Lunwen Lu* 敦煌变文论文录, ed. Zhou Shao-liang (Shanghai: Shanghai Ancient Books Publishing House, 1982), 147.

⁸² Huawen Bai, “Shenme Shi Bianwen 什么是变文 [What is Bian Wen]” in *Lunwen Lu* 论文录 (上卷) [Proceedings (vol. 1)], 438–439. For the English version, see the translation by Hua-Wen, Pai, and Victor H. Mair. “What is Pien-wen?” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 44, no. 2 (1984): 493–514.

⁸³ Victor H. Mair, *T’ang Transformation Texts: A Study of the Buddhist Contribution to the Rise of Vernacular Fiction and Drama in China*, Vol. 28. (Harvard University Asia Center, 1989); Victor H. Mair, “Records of Transformation Tableaux (pienhsiang),” *T’oung Pao* 72 (1986): 3–43; Victor H. Mair, *TunHuang Popular Narratives* (Cambridge University Press, 1983).

are products of different cultural contexts.⁸⁴ The “*bianxiang*” were products of elite culture, while the “*bianwen*” and its oral antecedents were bred in the folk and popular culture, and the content used for popular discourse is mostly secular.⁸⁵ Although Victor Mair has also deliberately recorded the mural image materials in the Mogao Caves that clearly have the “*bianxiang*” inscription,⁸⁶ his research focuses mainly on analyzing the textual materials related to the “*bianxiang*.”

Later, in his long essay “What is Bianxiang?” Wu Hung also reiterated that “*bianxiang*” is not an illustration of “*bianwen*,” nor is it a “visual aid” for the oral singing of “*bianwen*.”⁸⁷ However, Wu Hong does not choose to discuss the murals collected by Victor Mair that have clear “*bianxiang*” inscriptions—that is, those materials that can be called “*bianxiang*” by the people in the early medieval period. Instead, he chooses a Dunhuang mural that modern Dunhuang scholars of the twentieth century have labelled the “*Subjugation of Demons* (勞度叉聖鬥變),”⁸⁸ which have corresponding complete “*Magic Competition Bianwen* (降魔變文),”⁸⁹ as an example of how to understand the “*bianxiang*.” He argues that the “Subjugation of Demons” in Dunhuang murals is firstly designed according to a symmetrical arrangement, and more than half of the images in the mural paintings belong to the “counter-images.”⁹⁰ At the same time, he argues that this “*bianxiang*” mural is also configured according to a circular structure consisting of a center and a periphery

⁸⁴ Victor H. Mair, “Records of Transformation Tableaux (pian-hsiang).” *T’oung Pao* (1986): 3–43.

⁸⁵ Victor H. Mair, *Painting and Performance: Chinese Picture Recitation and its Indian Genesis* (University of Hawaii Press, 1988); Victor H. Mair, “Records of Transformation Tableaux (pian-hsiang),” *T’oung Pao* (1986): 43.

⁸⁶ Victor H. Mair recorded that during his fieldwork in 1981 and 1983, he found five caves that still contained murals labelled “*bianxiang*” in Dunhuang Mogao cave 112, Mogao cave 156, Mogao cave 98, Mogao cave 420, and Mogao cave 12. Mair recorded that in Mogao cave 112, there is a cartouche at the bottom of a wall painting and identifies it as “Transformation of the Sutra of Paying Back Kindnes 報恩經變”; in cave 156, there is a “Transformation of the Lotus Sutra 妙法蓮花經變.” See Victor H. Mair, “Records of Transformation Tableaux (pian-hsiang),” *T’oung Pao* (1986): 4.

⁸⁷ Wu Hung, “What is Bianxiang? On the Relationship between Dunhuang Art and Dunhuang Literature,” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 52, no.1 (1992): 170.

⁸⁸ The so-called “勞度叉聖鬥變” murals exist in many of the Mogao Grottoes, but none of these murals are clearly marked by the ancients with “*bianxiang*.”

⁸⁹ The “Magic Competition Bianwen”(降魔變文) consists of two parts in the British Museum Collection (S. 5511) and in the National Museum of China, Beijing (prose 1589), translated in Mair, *Tunhuang Popular Narratives*, 31–84; transcribed in Wang Chongming, *Dunhuang Bianwenji*. The Collection of Dunhuang Transformations.

⁹⁰ Hung Wu, “What is Bianxiang? On the Relationship between Dunhuang Art and Dunhuang Literature,” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 52, no.1 (1992): 384.

around the edges.⁹¹ With the assistance of the Dunhuang manuscript “Magic Competition Bianwen,” Wu Hung explains in detail how the mural of the magic competition between Sariputra and Raudraksha constitutes a *bianxiang* within the framework “which tend to be circular, working from the outside boundaries toward the center (like the stupa).”⁹² Ultimately Wu Hung re-emphasizes that there is a close interaction between *bianxiang* murals and *bianwen* text.⁹³ And he emphasizes that it was the paintings that inspired the literature.⁹⁴

At the end of this long article written by Wu Hung in 1992, he concludes that “Generally speaking, Dunhuang Bianxiang can be divided into two groups: ‘Jing Bian’ or ‘Jing Bian Xiang’; and paintings intimately related to Bianwen.”⁹⁵ That is to say, the long scroll that combines both text and pictures of The Magic Competition (P.4524) can also be classified as “*bianxiang*.” However, this painting scroll titled *Bianxiang* does not have the characteristics of a symmetrical composition. In the end, Wu Hong believed that the essential feature of the image titled as “*bianxiang*” is still the close interaction between the image and the text. But the answer to the question of the basic structural features of “*bianxiang*” is still vague.

Later, in Professor Fraser’s further study of the three scrolls and the fifteen layouts of the painting “*The Magic Competition* (勞度叉聖鬥變)” (ca. 860–980), she does not call these paintings “*bianxiang* (transformation tableau),” instead she cautiously terms them “tale’s picture” or “painting.”⁹⁶ She does not believe that the murals in the cave temples were used in monks’ sutra lectures as “didactic props.”⁹⁷ She suggests that “the murals are an index to storytelling activities, tales, and practices that occur outside the cave temple.”⁹⁸ She agrees that the non-coherent

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Professor Fraser has pointed out that this kind of symmetrical composition is widely found in the mode of dualistic thinking of Chinese people. She has also pointed out that this symmetrical composition is based on traditional Chinese conceptions of ritual space. See Sarah E. Fraser, *Performing the Visual: The Practice of Buddhist Wall Painting in China and Central Asia, 618–960* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004), 185.

⁹³ Wu, “What is Bianxiang,” 170.

⁹⁴ Wu, “What is Bianxiang,” 190–91.

⁹⁵ Wu, “What is Bianxiang,” 170.

⁹⁶ Sarah Elizabeth Fraser, *Performing the Visual: The Practice of Buddhist Wall Painting in China and Central Asia, 618–960* (Stanford University Press, 2004), 161.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Fraser, *Performing the Visual*, 162.

linear format of the mural “The Magic Competition” indicates that the artisan did not consult the *bianwen* text when he created it.⁹⁹ She makes it clear that while previous scholars have noted that these murals do not follow a “verbal textual logic,” they have not gone further in revealing the logic that the images themselves follow.¹⁰⁰ Professor Fraser therefore raises some key questions that have not been answered by previous scholars: “Why would artists create largely unreadable paintings, their narrative disjunction so pronounced that they have no visual logic analogous to the verbal logic of the texts? How do the paintings convey meaning? Must we hold paintings to the same narrative standards as verbal texts?”¹⁰¹

Inspired by Professor Fraser, this dissertation also believes that there is a necessity for a more in-depth discussion of “*bianxiang*,” especially in the context of the Six Dynasties period before Tang.¹⁰² Since Victor Mair has already pointed out that the folk cultural context in which the “*bianwen*” was situated was different from the elite realms of the “*Bian Xiang*,” it is then necessary to expand on this path, no longer relying on the folk and popular sources of “*bianwen*” to interpret “*bianxiang*.” It is necessary to shift the scope of investigation of “*bianxiang*” to the elite cultural context in which “*bianxiang*” was produced. Then the first question that needs to be investigated is the meaning of “*bianxiang*” in the records by literati of the Six Dynasties period.

Most of the early scholars who studied the meaning of “*bianxiang*” thought that “*bian*” was the abbreviation of “*bianxiang*.” Therefore, a detailed study of “*bian*” has been carried out, and more than a dozen meanings have been found for “*bian*.” For example, at the beginning of the last century, Fu Yunzi believed that the word “*bian*” in the phrase “*bianxiang*” or “*bianwen*” referred to the Buddha’s “*divine transformations of the preachings* 說法神變.” What he called the “divine

⁹⁹ Fraser, *Performing the Visual*, 164.

¹⁰⁰ Fraser, *Performing the Visual*, 165.

¹⁰¹ Fraser, *Performing the Visual*, 164.

¹⁰² Victor H. Mair once accumulated the data of the Tang dynasty to deduce what Tang writers and artists meant when they use “*bianxiang*.” See Victor H. Mair, “Records of Transformation Tableaux (*pienhsiang*),” *T’oung Pao* 72 (1986): 3–43.

transformations of the preachings” was one of the “three divine transformations 三種神變” mentioned in Volume 86 of the *Mahāratnakūṭa Sūtra* (大寶積經) translated by Bodhiruci in the Tang Dynasty, which were “*preach* 說法” “*ordination* 教戒” and “*divine transformations* 神通.”¹⁰³ Fu Yunzi therefore argues that the meanings of “*bianxiang tu*” and “*bianwen*” are the same, except that the methods of expression are different, one in the form of paintings and the other in the form of texts.¹⁰⁴ Zhou Shaoliang and Zheng Zhenduo also hold a similar view, that the “*bianxiang*” is a kind of image transformed by the content of the Buddhist sutra.¹⁰⁵ This understanding of the “*bian* 變” has been adopted by most scholars of Dunhuang scholarship, and most of the murals preserved in the Mogao Caves at Dunhuang are named after the “*bian* 變.”¹⁰⁶

Besides, Zhou Yiliang, writing in 1947, suggested that the word “*bian* 變” could be derived from the Sanskrit word “*Citra* (colorful painting).”¹⁰⁷ Subsequently, Guan

¹⁰³ The original text in 《大寶積經》 Vol 86: 「佛告天子：「我以三種神變調伏眾生：一者說法，二者教誡，三者神通。云何名為說法神變？所謂如來無礙大智，見未來世一切眾生心行差別，於三寶所有信不信，及業果報皆悉了知。如佛所說，若現在世所行惡因當墮惡趣，隨業受報決定無差。若彼眾生善業因緣誓願力故，從惡趣出生入天中，或以聲聞辟支佛乘及以大乘而得解脫，經爾所劫受苦受樂當得涅槃，當得值遇若干諸佛，如是等業決定無差。若彼眾生善業因緣誓願力故，當生欲界色界無色界，經爾所劫以如是乘而得解脫，以如是行當得見佛承事供養。如是一切上中下品善不善業，乃至一念，如來悉知而為說法，是名說法神變。云何名為教誡神變？若如是教誡持戒者，是應作是不應作，是應信是不應信，是應親近是不應親近，是法雜染是法清淨，乃至攝受一切功德善道資糧，行如是道得聲聞乘辟支佛乘、行如是道成就大乘，非法應離、如法應住，如佛所教決定無差。是地獄業、是傍生業，是餓鬼業、是人天業，不善應捨、善法應修，此是聖道應如是學。此等眾生人天往返漸入涅槃，如是示教終不空過，是名教誡神變。云何名為神通神變？若為調伏憍慢眾生，或現一身而作多身，或現多身而作一身，山崖牆壁出入無礙，身上出火身下水，身下水身上出水，入地如水履水如地，日月威德以手捫摩，或現大身至於梵世乃至廣大遍覆三千大千世界。隨所應現調伏眾生，是名神通神變。」」 (CBETA 2023.Q3, T11, no. 310, pp. 492b29-493a1)

¹⁰⁴ Yun-zi Fu, “*Sujiang Xinkao* 俗讲新考[A new examination of popular speech],” *Dunhuang Bian wen Lunwen Lu* 敦煌变文论文录, ed. Zhou Shao-liang (Shanghai: Shanghai Ancient Books Publishing House, 1982), 154.

¹⁰⁵ Zheng-duo Zhen, *Zhongguo Su Wenxue Shi* 中国俗文学史 (Beijing: Zuoja Chubanshe, 1954); Shao-liang, Zhou, “*Tan Tangdai Minjian Wenxue* 谈唐代民间文学,” *Dunhuang Bianwen Lunwen Lu* 敦煌变文论文录 ed. Zhou Shao-liang (Shanghai: Shanghai Ancient Books Publishing House, 1982), 405.

¹⁰⁶ This understanding of “*Bian Xiang*” has also been adopted by most scholars in Dunhuang scholarship, such as Shi Pin-ting. Pin-ting Shi, “*Dunhuang Jingbian Hua* 敦煌经变画,” *Dunhuang Yanjiu* 敦煌研究 [Dunhuang Research], no. 05 (2011): 1–13, 125–129.

¹⁰⁷ Yi-liang Zhou, “*Du Tangdai Sujiang Kao* 读《唐代俗讲考》 [Reading the ‘Tang Dynasty Popular Lectures’],” in *Dunhuang Bian wen Lunwen Lu* 敦煌变文论文录, ed. Zhou Shao-liang (Shanghai: Shanghai Ancient Books Publishing House, 1982), 157.

Dedong questioned Zhou Yiliang's view that the transcription of the word “*bian* 變” is similar to the pronunciation of the word “*citra*.” However, Guan still followed this phonological argument, and gave the idea that the Chinese pronunciation “*biantu* 變圖” is close phonologically to “*mandala* (mantu 曼荼).”¹⁰⁸ Later on, Xiang Da questioned the views of Zhou and Guan, and proposed some directions for further exploration.¹⁰⁹ He argues that the solution to the problem of the origin of the word “*bian*” requires the identification of the Sanskrit etymology of the word “*Bian*” in the words “*great divine transformation* 大神通變” and “*hell transformation* 地獄變” from the Tibetan version of the *Genben Shuo Yiqie Youbu Pinaiye zashi* (根本說一切有部毗奈耶雜事).¹¹⁰

Victor Mair also disagrees with Guan Dedong. He does not think that “*Bian Xiang*” and “*mandala*” can be treated equally. He gives some differences between the two:

pien-hsiang (Bian xiang) connotes a narrative moment, event, place, or sequence of moments, events, or places pictorially or sculpturally represented. A mandala, on the other hand, is an object or icon, usually having a circular arrangement, intended to serve as the focus of worship or meditation. Narrative content may be present in a mandala, but that is not the chief desideratum. Still, it is impossible to make any wholly binding distinction between pien-hsiang and mandala because their usual functions may overlap in practice.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁸ Dedong Guan, “Du Tandai Sujiang Kao de Shangque 读《唐代俗讲考》的商榷[Readings from the Tang Dynasty Popular Lectures],” in *Dunhuang Bian wen Lunwen Lu* 敦煌变文论文录, ed. Zhou Shao-liang (Shanghai: Shanghai Ancient Books Publishing House, 1982), 168.

¹⁰⁹ Xiang Da, “Bushuo Tangdai Sujiang Ersan Shi Jianda Zhou Yiliang Guan Dedong Liang Xiansheng 补说唐代俗讲二三事——兼答周一良、关德栋两先生[Supplementing the Tang Dynasty Popular Lectures in Two or Three Ways—An Answer to Mr Zhou Yiliang and Mr Guan Dedong],” in *Dunhuang Bian wen Lunwen Lu* 敦煌变文论文录, ed. Zhou Shao-liang (Shanghai: Shanghai Ancient Books Publishing House, 1982), 174.

¹¹⁰ 《根本說一切有部毗奈耶雜事》卷 17: 「長者! 於門兩頰應作執杖藥叉, 次傍一面作大神通變, 又於一面畫作五趣生死之輪, 簷下畫[4]作本生事。佛殿門傍畫持鬘藥叉, 於講堂處畫老宿苾芻宣揚法要, 於食堂處畫持餅藥叉, 於庫門傍畫執寶藥叉, 安水堂處畫龍持水瓶著妙瓔珞, 浴室火堂依天使經法式畫之, 并畫少多地獄變, 於瞻病堂畫如來像躬自看病, 大小行處畫作死屍形容可畏, 若於房內應畫白骨髑髏。」 (CBETA 2023.Q3, T24, no. 1451, p. 283b2-10)

¹¹¹ Victor H. Mair, “Records of Transformation Tableaux (pienhsiang),” *T'oung Pao* 72 (1986): 3

He does not believe that “*Bian*” in the data used by Guan Dedong should be rendered in the Buddhistic sense of “transformational (representation).”¹¹² He argues that the meaning of “*Bian*” in the title of the image collected by Guan Dedong should refer to “variation.”¹¹³ Victor Mair also believes that Zhou Yiliang’s discussion is inappropriate. He argues, based on the material he has gathered, that “the word *pian* (變) in them is unrelated either to Buddhism or to pictorial representation and therefore has no relationship to the subject of our inquiry.”¹¹⁴ Victor Mair ultimately considered “*bianxiang*” as narrative art, and the subject matter of *Bianxiang* was usually based on “supernatural transformations of Buddhist saints and deities (though not always from canonical sources).”¹¹⁵

Later on, Rao Zongyi considered the word formation process of the word “*bian* 變” in the Chinese context in light of the Chinese translations of Buddhist scriptures, and gave an alternative semantic argument. According to Rao Zongyi’s study, the meaning of “*bian*” comes from “incarnation 化身,” the Sanskrit name for painting, namely “*māna*,” and the Sanskrit name for incarnation, namely “*nirmāna*.” Both have the same meaning of measuring, so it is clear that the Chinese translators have translated the Sanskrit word “*māna*,” which means painting, as “*bian* 變” which is a very standard translation based on its meaning.¹¹⁶ In short, whether translated phonetically or semantically, “*bian* 變” has the meaning of picture.

It is worth noting here that Rao Zongyi pointed out that “*bian* 變” is not an abbreviation for “*bianxiang*,” but rather came first and “*bianxiang*” came later.¹¹⁷ This is a very important point, which means that we cannot assume that all “*bian*”

¹¹² Mair, “Records of Transformation Tableaux (*pianhsiang*),” 6.

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Mair, “Records of Transformation Tableaux (*pianhsiang*),” 5.

¹¹⁵ Mair, “Records of Transformation Tableaux (*pianhsiang*),” 43.

¹¹⁶ Zongyi Rao, “Cong Shanbian Lun Bianwen yu Tuhui Zhi Guanxi 从‘睽变’论变文与图绘之关系 [From ‘Shan Bian’ to Discuss the Relationship between Bianwen and Pictures],” in *Fanxue Ji* 梵学集 [Sanskrit Studies] (Shanghai: Shanghai Ancient Books Publishing House, 1993), 319.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

necessarily mean “*bianxiang*.” It is only a pity that Rao Zongyi did not continue to trace the subsequent derivation of the term “*bianxiang*.”

From the data collected in this dissertation (see Appendix 1), the derivation path of the term “變相” as the title of a painting genre is as follows: “*bian* 變,” “*bianxiang* 變相” / “*bianxiang tu* 變相圖,” “*xiang* 相.” The earliest record of a painting named “*bian*” in a painting critic is by Yuan Qian in the Southern Dynasty.¹¹⁸ The remaining thirty-seven layouts of murals titled “*bian*” were painted by artists of the Sui, Tang and Song dynasties on the walls of monasteries (see Appendix 1.1). In Volume 17 of the *Genben shuo Yiqie youbu pinaiye zashi* (根本說一切有部毘奈耶雜事) translated by Yi Jing of the Tang Dynasty, it recorded that several kind of murals that were allowed to be painted in Buddhist temples are also titled as “*bian* 變,” namely the “*da shentong bian* 大神通變” and the “*diyu bian* 地獄變.”¹¹⁹ Zhou Yiliang originally gave an interesting speculation, based on the contents of this sura as well as the *Genben Shuo Yiqie Youbu Pinaiye* (根本說一切有部毘奈耶), that the “*bianxiang* 變相” is different from the “*xiang* 像,” and he hypothesized that the subject matter of the “*xiang* 像” is a person, while the subject of the “*bianxiang* 變相” is an event.¹²⁰

¹¹⁸ The original text is : “《维摩诘变》一卷，百有餘事，运思高妙，六法备呈，置位无差，若神灵感会，精光指顾，得瞻仰威容，前使顾陆知惭，后得张阎骇叹。” See Zhang Yanyuan 张彦远, *lidai Minhua Ji* 历代名画记[A Record of the Famous Painters of all the Dynasties], Vol.6.

¹¹⁹ The original text in 《根本說一切有部毘奈耶雜事》Vol 17: 「給孤長者施園之後作如是念：「若不彩畫便不端嚴，佛若許者我欲莊飾。」即往白佛，佛言：「隨意當畫。」聞佛聽已，集諸彩色并喚畫工，報言：「此是彩色，可畫寺中。」答曰：「從何處作？欲畫何物？」報言：「我亦未知，當往問佛。」佛言：「長者！於門兩頰應作執杖藥叉，次傍一面作大神通變，又於一面畫作五趣生死之輪，簷下畫[4]作本生事。佛殿門傍畫持鬘藥叉，於講堂處畫老宿苾芻宣揚法要，於食堂處畫持餅藥叉，於庫門傍畫執寶藥叉，安水堂處畫龍持水瓶著妙瓔珞，浴室火堂依天竺經法式畫之，并畫少多地獄變，於瞻病堂畫如來像躬自看病，大小行處畫作死屍形容可畏，若於房內應畫白骨髑髏。」是時長者從佛聞已禮足而去，依教畫飾。」(CBETA 2023.Q3, T24, no. 1451, p. 283a26-b11)

¹²⁰ Yiliang Zhou, “Du Tangdai Sujiang Kao 读《唐代俗讲考》[Reading the ‘Tang Dynasty Popular Lectures’],” in *Dunhuang Bian wen Lunwen Lu* 敦煌变文论文录, ed. Zhou Shao-liang (Shanghai: Shanghai Ancient Books Publishing House, 1982), 163.

This dissertation has compiled a total of ninety-two records of the images of “*bian* 變,” “*bianxiang* 變相,” “*bianxiang tu* 變相圖” and “*xiang* 相” that appeared in Chinese painting reviews from the Six Dynasties to the Tang and Song dynasties (see Appendix 1). Comparing Appendix 1.1 and Appendix 1.2, it is clear that in Chinese painting circles “*bian*” usually means “*bianxiang* 變相.” For example, in the Tang Dynasty, Zhang Yanyuan records that Yuan Qian of the Southern Song Dynasty painted “Vimalakirti Transformation 維摩詰變” while in the Northern Song Dynasty, Huang Xiufu records that Zuo Quan of the Tang Dynasty painted “Vimalakirti transformation tableaux 維摩詰變相.” This shows that in the narrative habit of the painting critics, the term “*bian* 變” usually refers to the type of painting called “*bianxiang* 變相.” *Bian* was rendered in the sense of “transformational representation” in the painting critics of the medieval China.

Nevertheless, it should be noted that in the records of the Buddhist monks of the 5th century, the “*bianxiang* 變像” in the form of a sculpture is also called “*bian* 變.” According to Duan Chengshi’s *Records of the Temple Pagoda* (寺塔記) he wrote that sculptures made before the Liang Dynasty were called “*bian* 變.” Examining the materials recorded by the monks, the earliest appearance of the “various scenes from scriptures executed in inlaid stone 細鏤雜變石像” is found in the *Chu Sanzang Jiji* (出三藏記集) compiled by Seng Yu (445–518 A.D.).¹²¹ Later, in the *Liang Biographies of Eminent Monks* (梁高僧傳) compiled by Hui Jiao (497–554 A.D.), there is similar record that Yao Xing (ca. 394–416 A.D.), the ruler of the Later Qin Dynasty, presented the Buddhist master Huiyuan with a gift of “various scenes from

¹²¹ The original text in 《出三藏記集》 Vol 15: 「姚略欽想風名嘆其才思。致書慙歎信餉歲通。贈以龜茲國細鏤雜變石像。以申欵心。又令姚嵩獻其珠像。」 (CBETA 2023.Q3, T55, no. 2145, p. 110b3-5)

scriptures executed in fine embroidery (細縷雜變像)” from Kucha.¹²² These two similar records indicate that the term “*bianxiang* 變像” is a shortened form of “*bian shixiang* 變石像.” It means that the term “*bianxiang* 變像” could refer to a kind of stone relief at the time. According to the above-mentioned records of the Liang monks Huijiao and Sengyou, there was indeed a kind of meticulously carved stone sculpture called “*Bianxiang*.” Therefore, it could be assumed that Duan Chengshi’s reference to “*Bian*” in sculpture form should be an abbreviation for “*bianxiang* 變像.” There is no information showing that “*bianxiang* 變像” in the Liang dynasty was the same as the “*bianxiang* 變相.” Therefore, it is not possible to assume that “*bianxiang* 變相” was an artistic genre including both sculpture and painting during Six Dynasties.

Therefore, this dissertation believes that when discussing “*bianxiang* 變相” in the context of the Six Dynasties, it is still necessary to distinguish it from “*bianxiang* 變像,” otherwise there will be many obstacles to the in-depth study of “*bianxiang* 變相.” In the past, lots of scholars have used the materials of “*bianxiang* 變相” “*bianxiang* 變象” and “*bianxiang* 變像” indiscriminately when discussing “*bianxiang* 變相.” As a result, some misunderstandings are inevitable. In addition, the meanings of the three homophones “*xiang* 相,” “*xiang* 像,” and “*xiang* 象” in the context of the Six Dynasties are all different. Further discussion also needs to be based on the differentiation of the three homophones “*xiang* 相,” “*xiang* 像,” and “*xiang* 象.” And given that the data collected in this dissertation indicate that the

¹²² The original text in 《高僧傳》 Vol 6: 「秦主姚興欽德風名，歎其才思，致書慰勸，信餉連接，贈以龜茲國細縷雜變像，以申欵心，又令姚嵩獻其珠像。」 (CBETA 2023.Q3, T50, no. 2059, p. 360a22-24) Zürcher translates this text as follows: “The ruler of Ch’in, Yao Hsing 姚興 revered his fame and virtue and admired his talents and (power of) thought. He sent him a letter in which he exhorted him; letters and presents in kind (came) without interruption. He furthermore gave him various scenes from scriptures executed in fine embroidery from Kucha in order to express his feelings of sincerity, and he also ordered Yao Sung 姚嵩 to present him with a statue set with pearls in the latter's possession.” See Zürcher, *The Buddhist Conquest of China*, 2 vols. (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1959), 249.

evolutionary path of “*bian* 變” – *bianxiang* 變相” / “*bianxiang tu* 變相圖” – “*xiang* 相” it also suggests that “*xiang* 相” is a keyword that cannot be ignored in further understanding of the “*bianxiang* 變相.” While previous scholars have paid a lot of attention to the study of “*bian* 變,” there has not been much research on “*xiang* 相.” Therefore, this dissertation will pay special attention to the meaning of “*xiang* 相.” In particular, what is the special meaning of “*xiang* 相” in the term “*bianxiang* 變相” in the discourse of the art commentary of the Six Dynasties? What exactly is the difference between “*bianxiang* 變相” and “*bianxiang* 變象” or “*bianxiang* 變像”?

First, let us examine the literature that records “*bianxiang* 變象.” We have not yet found the term “*bianxiang* 變象” in the records of painting critics. The first time the term “*bianxiang* 變象” appeared in Buddhist literature was in the *Biographies of Eminent Monks (Xu Gaoseng Zhuan 續高僧傳)* compiled by Dao Xuan in the Tang Dynasty.¹²³ Of the literature written before the 6th century, almost all of it containing “*bianxiang* 變象” belongs to non-Buddhist texts. Some scholars who interpreted the word “*bian* 變” in “*bianxiang* 變相” to mean “extraordinary, variant” quoted extensively from non-Buddhist literature from the Han Dynasty in which the word “*bianxiang* 變象” appeared. Checking the records in these non-Buddhist texts, the term “*bianxiang* 變象” indeed mostly refers to extraordinary, mutable phenomena in nature. For example, in the *Book of Han*, it reads, “When human affairs are out of order down below, the extraordinary phenomenon will appear on the sky (人事失於下, 變象見於上).” In the *Book of Han*, the *Records of the Grand Historian*, and the

¹²³ The original text in 《續高僧傳》Vol 10: 「及至舍利還飛向前。往還迅速。眾莫不怪及登岸上。鳥便行望。相從飛空同至塔所。識者以為山神眷屬之變[21]象故也。願以瑞聞。帝大嗟賞。」 (CBETA 2023.Q3, T50, no. 2060, p. 504c5-8)

Book of the Later Han, the term “*bianxiang* 變象” mostly refers to a special and unusual natural phenomenon. No material has been found to prove that the Six Dynasties painters’ the “*bianxiang* 變相” refers to the “*bianxiang* 變象” here. There is also no proof that the meaning of “*bianxiang* 變象” can be equated with “*bianxiang* 變相.” Therefore, it is not suitable to use the material in which the “*bianxiang* 變象” appears to deduce the meaning of the “*bianxiang* 變相” painted by the artists of the Six Dynasties.

In these writings from before the 6th century, the term “*bianxiang* 變象” is used to refer to a changed natural phenomenon. There is a reason why the word “*xiang* 象” is used here instead of “*xiang* 相.” According to *Shuowen Jiezi*, the character for “*xiang* 象” was derived by homophony from that for “*elephant* 象.” The initial meaning of “*xiang* 象” refers to a concrete object (i.e., “*elephant* 象” in Chinese) as “elephant” was the largest mammal existing on land at that time. That is to say, the “*xiang* 象” existed essentially as a kind of visible object, and because its existence itself had a meaning, it did not need to be viewed and perceived by human beings in order to obtain a certain meaning. In other words, the “*xiang* 象” here is different from man-made images, and it is not an image that needs to be artificially given a special meaning in order to exist. The “*xiang* 象” itself exists as an objective object in nature, not as an object that needs to resemble something in order to gain value. The “*xiang* 象” is not an icon that exists by imitating something that resembles it.

According to Peirce’s semiotic, icons are clearly distinguished from symbols.¹²⁴ His

¹²⁴ Peirce writes: “An icon is a sign which would possess the character which renders it significant, even though its object had no existence, such as a lead-pencil streak as representing a geometrical line... A symbol is a sign which would lose the character which renders it a sign if there were no interpretant. Such is any utterance of speech which signifies what it does only by virtue of its being understood to have that signification” (1940: 104). Quoted in John Lyons, *Semantics*, vol. 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1977), 102.

definition of symbol rests upon the conventionality or arbitrariness of relationship between the sign and its signification.¹²⁵

In the above uses the term “*xiang* 象” does not refer to a mimetic representation or picture. This point was also made extremely clear in the *Han Feizi* 韩非子 (ca. 280–233 BC) explaining “*xiang* 象” as follows: “Men rarely see a living elephant, but they can see the bones of dead elephants. On the basis of this representation (*tu* 图) the naturally revealed patterns of writing they think of what it was in life. Therefore the means by which people are able to have an idea of or think about something are all called ‘elephants/images 象.’ Although the Way cannot be heard or seen, the sage grasps its visible functions to fix a vision of its ‘form.’ Therefore the *Dao de jing* (道德经) says, “The formless form, the ‘thingless’ image.”¹²⁶

However, people in the Han Dynasty attached other meanings to the natural object “*bianxiang* 變象.” These meanings attached to the “*bianxiang* 變象” by the people of Han Dynasty were only effective for the people in this cultural context. That is to say, the heavenly meaning of the so-called “*bianxiang* 變象” was agreed upon in the specific cultural background of the Han Dynasty, and was designated by a large cultural system rather than being generated by some kind of likeness relationship between the symbols and the object. Therefore, “*bianxiang* 變象” was regarded as a symbol used to indicate a particular meaning by the Han Dynasty people. The “*bianxiang* 變象” is very close to what Peirce calls the “index” rather than the “icon.” Index simply points to objects without depicting them.¹²⁷ Peirce defines an index in this way: “An index is a sign such that if the object is removed, it does not become a

¹²⁵ Lyons, *Semantics*, 100.

¹²⁶ The original text: “人希见生象也，而得死象之骨，案其图以想其生也，故诸人之所以意想者皆谓之象也。今道虽不可闻见，圣人执其见功以处见其形，故曰：‘无状之状，无物之象’。” See Chen Qi-you 陈奇猷, *Han Feizi Jishi* 韩非子集释 (Shanghai: Shanghai Renming Chubanshe, 1974), 368.

¹²⁷ Charles Sanders Peirce, *Collected Papers* vol. 2 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1931–1958), 310.

sign.”¹²⁸ This also explains why the “*xiang* 象” in “*bianxiang* 變象” is also the “*xiang* 象” of the objective “*object* 對象” in Chinese.

The following is an examination of the records of the “*bianxiang* 變像.” In the writings of Six Dynasties period, the term “*bianxiang* 變像” is only found in the records of the two Buddhist monks mentioned earlier, namely, Seng You and Hui Jiao. The term “*bianxiang* 變像” does not appear in the records of painting criticism.

According to Xu Shen’s *Shuowen Jiezi*, “*xiang* 像” having more parts “*ren* 人” than “*xiang* 象” emphasizes that “*xiang* 像” itself requires the intervention of a human being. This emphasizes the fact that “*xiang* 像” itself also requires the intervention of a human being in order to exist. In other words, “*xiang* 像” belongs to the category of artificial matter, not natural objects that can exist independently by themselves.

The chapter “*xiangshe* 像設” of *Rizhi Lu* (日知錄)¹²⁹ records that in the Warring States period, the “*xiang* 像” used in the funeral ceremony was a substitute for the original corpse of the deceased who were worshipped in funeral ceremonies. It was due to the abolition of the “corpse ritual 尸礼” that people used pictures or statues as a substitute to represent the dead. In the Zhou ritual, there were corpses in the temple, so the Chu slips called them “*xiang* 象.”¹³⁰ To the Jin Dynasty, Zhi Daolin wrote that the “Shakyamuni Buddha statue praise and preface 釋迦文佛像贊並序” mentioned it was because the “*xiang* 象” of the Buddha, which was the objective object of the

¹²⁸ Peirce, *Collected Papers*, 297.

¹²⁹ The original text: “宋玉《招魂》始有‘像设君室’之文。尸礼废而像事兴，盖在战国之时矣” See Gu Yanwu 顾炎武, *Ri Zhi Lu* 日知录 (Shanghai: Shanghai Ancient Books Publishing House, 2006), 849; Liangfu Jiang, *Chuci Tonggu* 楚辞通故, 3 Vols (Jinan: Qilu Shushe, 1985), 477.

¹³⁰ Xinfang Liu, “Zhaohun Xiangshe Junshi yu Chu Jianbo Zhi Xiang 《招魂》‘像设君室’与楚简帛之象[The Invocation of the Spirit: ‘Like Setting Up a King’s Room’ and the ‘Elephant’ of Chu Jianbo,” *Yunmeng Xuekan* 云梦学刊[Journal of Yunmeng] 32, no. 1 (2011): 45.

Buddha, no longer exists that the “*xiang* 像” of the Buddha was made.¹³¹ In the Eastern Jin Dynasty, Huiyuan wrote “*Inscription of Buddha Images* (佛影銘)” in the eighth year of the Yixi era (义熙八年 412 A.D.), in which he investigated the situation of the “*images of the Buddha* 佛影” in India from the Zen master, Saṃghadeva and Fa Xian, and drew a picture of the image of the Buddha together with some people. The word “*xiang* 像” is also used many times in his inscriptions of those pictures.¹³² The word “*xiang* 像” was also used in the Jin Dynasty’s Yin Jinan (殷晉安)’s “*Praise of Manjushri’s Image* 文殊像贊” and the translation of *Buddha’s Sutra on the Merits and Virtues of Creating Buddha Images* (佛說造立形像功德經).

From the Han Dynasty to the Six Dynasties, there are still some magical stories about the ability of “*xiang* 像” of people to “feel the gods and communicate with the spirits,” and the painters involved were all quite important at that time, including Zhang Heng of the Eastern Han Dynasty, Xu Miao of the Cao Wei Dynasty, Cao Buyu of the Sun-Wu Dynasty, Wei Xie of the Jin Dynasty, Gu Kaizhi of the Liang Dynasty,¹³³ Zhang Sennyou of the Liang Dynasty,¹³⁴ and Yang Zihua of the Northern Qi.¹³⁵

Moreover, in the records of Dunhuang manuscripts, it also refers to portraits based on the appearance of the deceased when he or she was once alive as “*xiang*

¹³¹ The original text: “象罔不存。谁与悟机。镜心垂翰。庶覩冥晖。”

¹³² The original text: “淡虚写容，拂空传像，”“迹以像告，理深其趣。”

¹³³ In *Shishu Xinyun*, it is written that Gu Kaizhi was so pleased with a neighbouring woman that he drew her on the wall and nailed her heart to the wall. The neighbouring woman suffered from heart pains, which were cured when Kai Zhi pulled out the nails. In the Record of Famous Paintings of All Ages (pp. 319–320), it records that Gu had deposited a painting of a kitchen at Huan Xuan’s place, but it was stolen by Xuan, and Kai Zhi thought that the painting was wonderful and divine, and flew away as if a person were ascending to immortality.

¹³⁴ In *A Record of Famous Painters of all the Dynasties*, Vol. 9, it records that Zhang Sengyao “又画天竺二胡僧，因侯景乱散坼为二。后一僧为唐右常侍陆坚所宝，坚疾笃，梦一胡僧告云：我有同侣，离坼多时，今在洛阳李家，若求合之，当以法力助君。陆以钱帛果于其处购得，疾乃愈。”

¹³⁵ In *A Record of Famous Painters of all the Dynasties*, Vol. 8, it records that Yang Zihua “尝画马于壁，夜听蹄齧长鸣，如索水草。”

像。”¹³⁶ The existence of these “*miaozhen xiang* 邈真像” is also related to funeral rites. For example, Dunhuang manuscripts P. 3556 titled “*Fan Fugao Heshang Miaozhen Zan Bingxu* 汜福高和尚邈真贊並序,” P.4638 titled “*Cao Liangcai Zan Bingxu* 曹良才贊並序,” P.4660 titled “*Yizhou Cishi Linzi Zuogong Zan* 伊州刺史臨淄左公贊,” and P.3720 titled “*Qian Dunhuang Pini Zang Zhu Shi Ping Ying Lv Bo Zhen Yi Zan* (伊州刺史臨淄左公贊).” All of those manuscripts refer to “*miaozhen* 邈真” as “*zhenyi* 真儀,” which means the real look of the dead used in the ceremonial place of worship.¹³⁷

The above materials show that a “*xiang* 像” is a painting or sculpture that uses a specific object as a reference. There is a relationship of imaginal likeness between the image and the object. The meaning of “*bianxiang* 變像” is also based on this basic nature of “*xiang* 像.” It can therefore be argued that “*bianxiang* 變像” at this point also belongs to the category of “imaginal icon” in the context of the Six Dynasties.

Finally, let us look at the meaning of the word “*bianxiang* 變相” in the context of the Six Dynasties. First, let us look at the meaning of the word “*xiang* 相” in the context of the Six Dynasties. In the *Shuowen Jiezi*, the meaning of “*xiang* 相” is interpreted as the verb “to scrutinize.” Since “*xiang* 相” is a compound ideograph, we can understand its meaning from its configuration. The character “*xiang* 相” consists of two parts: “*wood* 木” and “*eye* 目”. The reason for the inclusion of the part “*eye* 目”, which represents the eye, is to emphasize the meaning of “to examine, scrutinize,” an action that requires the eyes to be close to the object for close scrutiny.

¹³⁶ For example, P.2991 recorded “病颜转炽，去世非遥。倏迹倾移，虑恐难旋礼成。遂命门人上首，歿后须念师情。邈像题篇，以表有为之迹。” P.3726 also records: “今晨呈像，法律言薨。” Moreover, P.3718 records “乃召匠伯，预写生前。丹青绘像，留影同先。”

¹³⁷ Boqin Jiang, “Dunhuang de Xiezhen Miaozhen yu Xiaoxiang Yishu 敦煌的写真邈真与肖像艺术[Dunhuang’s Xiezhen Miaozhen and the Art of Portraiture],” in *Dunhuang Yishu Zongjiao yu Liyue Wenming* 敦煌艺术宗教与礼乐文明 [Dunhuang Art, Religion, and Ritual Civilization] (Beijing: China Social Science Press, 1996), 84–85.

Based on this meaning, “*xiang* 相” as a noun also has the meaning of thinking carefully. In other words, the viewing involved in “*xiang* 相” is the result of deeper in-depth perception and thinking.

It also means that the image named “*xiang* 相” can be regarded as an “icon” with rationality. And the relation of likeness between it and its object is not a kind of superficial imaginal iconicity, but closer to a deeper diagrammatic iconicity, which, in Peirce’s words, “resembles the object not in its form, but in the relations between its parts.”¹³⁸ The relationship between its internal parts and the object forms a deep abstract “structural homology” relationship. Therefore, the **determination** of the structure is also a crucial part of the “*bianxiang* 變相.”

It is noteworthy that “*xiang* 相” appears in a large number of Chinese translations of Buddhist texts before the 6th century. According to CEBTA’s statistics, the word “*xiang* 相” appears 91,452 times in Chinese translations of Buddhist texts during the Six Dynasties. The most common use of “*xiang* 相” is to refer to the appearance of Buddha as “*xiang* 相” — for example, the Buddha’s “*thirty-two characteristics* 三十二相” (*dvātriṃśan mahā-puruṣalakṣaṇāni*). Perhaps it is also because in the Buddhist cosmology, there is a deep structural similarity between the form of the Buddha and the structure of the universe.

According to the paintings critics collected so far, the “*bianxiang* 變相” as a type of painting is clearly recorded under the names of painters of the Six Dynasties period. At least five master painters of the 5th to 6th centuries painted “*bianxiang* 變相.” Yuan Qian, Zhang Rutong, Feng Qing, Dong Boren, and Zhan Ziqi (see Appendix 1).

¹³⁸ Charles Sanders Peirce, 1931–1958. *Collected Papers*, Vol. 3. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press), 362.

The earliest record of the artist Yuan Qian in the Liu Song Dynasty (420–479 A.D.), who painted a scroll of “Vimalakīrti Transformation,” has not yet been found in the form of a definite physical remains. There are no images of “Vimalakirti Transformation” with clear inscriptions in the cave remains of the Northern and Southern Dynasties. Only the northern region of the same period has preserved some stone-carved images identified by modern scholars as “Vimalakīrti Transformation.” For example, there is a stele with “Vimalakīrti Transformation” currently in the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art (Fig. 1.4), whose inscription clearly records that the stele took ten years to complete: “The construction of the stele took place in the third year of the reign of Yongxi of the Great Wei Dynasty (534), until it was completed in the eighth month of the second year of the reign of Wuding (543).” The previous scholars who have discussed the “Vimalakīrti Transformation” here have chosen only part of the debated scene between Vimalakirti and Manjushri (Fig. 1.4-b) but have neglected two other parts of the stele that are connected to this debated scene of the whole image, one above and the other below. The scene above the debated scene on this stele consists of a Buddha that sits in a columned niche attended by two bodhisattvas and guardians (Fig. 1.4-a). The scene below the debated scene is constituted by two rows of twenty donor figures (Fig.1.4-c); one of the donors, Helian Ziyue (ca. 501–573), is shown kneeling right of center in the upper row of figures (Fig.1.4-d). If the images of the scene on this stele are read together as a whole, it can be seen that the scene follows the vertical structure of Buddhist cosmology, with the scenes in the three regions from top to bottom corresponding to the events that take place in the realm of formlessness, the realm of form, and the realm of desire.

However, Zhan Ziqian’s painting of the “*Transformation tableau of the Lotus Sutra* (*fahua bian* 法華變)” has not yet been preserved in the cave temples of the Six Dynasties period. But in the Tang Dynasty caves of the Mogao Grottoes, there are still murals of the “Transfiguration tableau of the Lotus sutra” by Dunhuang painters of the Tang Dynasty. In cave 12 of the Mogao Caves of the Tang Dynasty, there is a

mural with the inscription “transformation tableau of the Lotus Sutra” (Fig. 1.5). This mural may serve as an indirect clue to the understanding of Zhan Ziqian’s “Transfiguration tableau of the Lotus Sutra.” The configuration of this *bianxiang* from Mogao Cave 12 with the explicit inscription “transformation of Lotus Sutra” has some similarities with the configuration of the carving images on the back of a stone stele, numbered WSZ48, from the Wanfo Temple in Chengdu in the Liang Dynasty (Fig. 1.6).¹³⁹ The common point between the configuration of the “transformation of Lotus Sutra” on the back of the WSZ48 stone statue stele and the configuration of the “*Transformation tableau of Lotus Sutra (fahua bian 法華變)*” in Mogao Cave 12 is that the layout can be divided into the three realms of desire, form, and formlessness, from top to bottom. This configuration of images is based on the basic vertical structure of space of the Buddhist cosmology. The images are framed by the spatial structure under this basic Buddhist cosmology and are arranged into the three spatial realms delineated by Buddhism.

The above pictorial material of “*bianxiang 變相*” could indicate that the composition of the “*bianxiang 變相*” by painters of the 5th to 6th centuries can be well understood from the fact that the nature of “*xiang 相*” is close to the nature of a “diagrammatic icon.” The explicitly titled “*bian 變*” in the Mogao Caves may well have been thoughtfully organized according to a Buddhist concept that they already understood. It is likely that these Dunhuang painters’ understanding included the basic Buddhist cosmology of space and time. Eric Huntington has revealed the prevalence of the Buddhist cosmology of space and time in the 4th and 5th centuries. He points out that, “While cosmological thought remains a major factor in religious texts from the ṚgVeda onward, cosmological models became a major subject of scholastic

¹³⁹ Jingfen Wang, Chunping Guo. “四件四川佛教石雕和净土图像在中国的起源 [Four Sichuan Buddhist Stone Sculptures and the Origins of Pure Land Images in China].” *Dunhuang Yanjiu 敦煌研究 Dunhuang Research* no.2 (2002): 81–86; Yuqun Li, “Shilun Chengdu Diqu Chutu de Nanchao Fojiao Shi Zaoxiang 试论成都地区出土的南朝佛教石造像 [Study on the South Dynasty Buddhist stone statues unearthed in Chengdu].” *Wenwu 文物* [Cultural Relics], no.2 (2000): 64–76; Shengliang Zhao, “Chengdu Nanchao Fudiao Mile Jingbian yu Fahua Jingbian Kaolun 成都南朝浮雕弥勒经变与法华经变考论,” *Dunhuang Yanjiu 敦煌研究* [Dunhuang Research] no.1 (2001): 36–37.

attention more than two millennia later. In the fourth to fifth centuries, a cultural shift seems to have prompted commentators in all traditions to organize knowledge in new ways, composing entire chapters of encyclopedic treatises on the shape and function of the world (although presumably adapting their work from previous sources that no longer survive).¹⁴⁰ The “*bianxiang* 变相” from fifth-century Chinese painters may likewise be the result of this cultural shift in acceptance, using the Buddhist cosmic structure to organize the images in a painting.

This also means that drawing the “*bianxiang* 變相” requires a deep understanding of the content of the sutra and a thoughtful integration of the many elements into a non-linear configuration rather than having the image directly follow the linear developmental sequence of the oral and written narratives of the Bianwen or sutras. In recent years, scholars have also begun to point out that the narrative structure of many sutras follows the structure of Buddhist cosmology.¹⁴¹ Therefore, if a person who has not read the Sutra holds the text in his hand and reads the “*bianxiang* 變相” carefully in accordance with the narrative order of the Sutra text, he will certainly feel confused and unable to understand the order in which the images are organized. However, if a person who is already familiar with the content of the sutra, and understands its overall structure, puts aside the text and directly follows his own grasp of the overall structure of the sutra and looks at the “*bianxiang* 變相,” he will find that all the images of the “*bianxiang* 變相” are in a reasonable position. This is precisely because he is able to see the perfect similarity between the positional distribution of these images and the narrative structure shown in the sutra. The reason why there were no murals with the clear title “*bianxiang* 變相” in the Mogao Caves of the Northern Dynasties may also be due to the fact that at this time “*bianxiang* 變相” was still emerging in the elite cultural circle, and only a few master painters were able

¹⁴⁰ Eric Huntington, *Creating the Universe: Depictions of the Cosmos in Himalayan Buddhism* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2019), 21.

¹⁴¹ Daniel Ryan Tuzzeo, “Crafting Cosmologies: Buddhist Cartography and the Spatial Imagination in Medieval China” (PhD diss, Stanford University, 2020).

to paint it for the literati. At this time the illiterate artisans employed by the ordinary patrons of the Mogao Grottoes were incapable of drawing “*bianxiang* 變相.”

So far, the above “*bianxiang* 變相” material suggests that organizing images by synthesizing some kind of deep cognitive thought structure was probably the basic mode of construction of the “*bianxiang* 變相” painted by the artists of the 5th and 6th centuries. There is a relationship of structural similarity between “*bianxiang* 變相” and its object. Based on this basic approach to painting “*bianxiang* 變相,” it is easy to understand how Yuan Qian, during the Liu Song Dynasty (420–479 A.D.), managed to paint “a hundred things” in a single spread of “*Vimalakirti Transformations* 維摩詰變.” Perhaps it is because of the basic spatial structure of the Buddhist cosmology as the basic framework of the painting that the hundreds of narrative episodes in the *Vimalakirti Sutra* can be organized into a single painting.

From this point of view, “*bianxiang tu* 變相圖” are in a way like “*xuanji tu* 璇璣圖”, in that they can be read in any order to effectively generate meaning as long as a reasonable structure is established. The meaning is not limited by the order in which they are read. In a very similar way, meaning can be generated by embedding words related to the main idea in the carefully organized structure of the *xuanji tu* 璇璣圖 by Su Hui. Here the rationality of the structure is far more important than the order of visual presentation.

In summary, this chapter ultimately argues that “*bianxiang* 變相,” “*bianxiang* 變像” and “*bianxiang* 變象” are completely different types of images. The nature of the “*bianxiang* 變象” is close to what Peirce called an “index,” indicating an objective object that exists in nature and is not artificially generated. “*Bianxiang* 變像” could belong to the category of “imaginal icon” which is an artificial image according to a certain objective object, and there is an appearance likeness between the image and its

object. The “*bianxiang* 變相” could belong to the category of the “diagrammic icon.” The relationship between the “*bianxiang* 變相” and its object is not a kind of likeness regarding appearance, but a kind of abstract likeness regarding the structure.¹⁴² There is a structural homology between the “*bianxiang* 變相” and its object.

An interesting phenomenon that emerges at this point in this chapter is the emergence of a textual “non-linear structure” that is referred to as a “*tu* 圖” as well. This phenomenon suggests that one of the key features of the “*tu* 圖” as it was conceived at this time is this “non-linear structure.” The “*xuanji tu* 璇璣圖” and “*bianxiang tu* 變相圖” that appeared at this time also emphasize this “non-linear structure.” The relationship between the image called “*bianxiang tu* 變相圖 / *bianxiang* 變相” and its object is a deep structural similarity rather than a superficial image similarity. It is this deep structural likeness that essentially distinguishes “*bianxiang* 變相” from “*bianxiang* 變象” or “*bianxiang* 變像.”

¹⁴² Charles Sanders Peirce, 1931–1958. *Collected Papers* (3 vols.) (Cambridge: Harvard University Press), 362.

Chapter 2 Spatial Knowledge in the Six Dynasties

In the ensuing discussion of space, the first question to be examined is what basic knowledge of space had already been accumulated by the Chinese intellectuals of the Six Dynasties, and what kind of understanding of this basic spatial knowledge was developed at the beginning of the fifth century when the Buddhist cosmology was introduced that was different from that of previous eras.

Despite the fact that the knowledge about space accumulated by the Chinese intellectuals before the sixth century was already so widely known, it is nonetheless necessary to review here the basic framework that constituted this spatial knowledge at this time and how it was understood at this time. This will prevent misunderstanding and underestimation of this basic knowledge of space, which did occur from time to time.

2.1 Basic Knowledge of Space and Time

I will first review some of the basic knowledge about spatial knowledge acquired by the Chinese intellectuals before the sixth century. People were informed about time by observing the regular motion of the stars in space. Specifically, the Chinese chose to observe the changing positions of the North Star and its surrounding arching constellations to subdivide and measure time. This method of identifying time by observing the positions of these different stars in the southern midheaven is known as the “*hun-dan method of observing the stars in dusk or morning* (昏旦中星觀象授時法).”¹⁴³ This method resulted in an equatorial astronomical coordinate system based on the twenty-eight constellations and the North Pole. People observe the twenty-eight constellations in the southern mid-heaven at dusk every day, recording those stars that appear in the southern mid-heaven at dusk during different seasons of the year.

¹⁴³ The word “*Hun* 昏” refers to the time of dusk, and the word “*Dan* 旦” refers to the morning. The “*Zhong Xin* 中星” refers to the star on the southern meridian. “昏旦中星觀象” refers to the observation of the star in the middle of the meridian in the morning and at dusk.

This correspondence between star motions and time from the vision of the human naked-eye is clearly recorded in the *Shang Shu* (尚書) compiled during the Jin Dynasty (266–420 A.D.).¹⁴⁴ It is recorded that during the legendary period of Emperor Yao, he ordered the brothers Xi (羲) and He (和) to observe the days when the four stars “*niao* 鳥、*huo* 火、*xu* 虛、*ang* 昂” were in the southern mid-heaven at dusk to determine the spring equinox, summer solstice, fall equinox, and winter solstice, which served as the standard for the division of the four seasons of the year.¹⁴⁵ This specific method of determining the four seasons by observing the stars is as follows. When the length of the day was medium, the stars appeared in the southern mid-heaven at dusk; one could see that the “vermilion bird” asterism was located in the southern midheaven, and this was the “spring equinox 仲春” (Fig. 2.1). This is what the *Yao Dian* (堯典) says,¹⁴⁶ When the day is at its longest, if one sees the fourth star of the *canglong* (蒼龍) asterisms, “*anuradha* (房宿),” in the southern mid-heaven at dusk, then the season is summer solstice (Fig. 2.2). This is what is stated in *Yao Dian*.¹⁴⁷ When the length of day and night are equal, if one see the fourth star of the *xuanwu* (玄武) asterism, “*xuxing* 虛星,” in the southern mid-heaven at dusk, the season one is in is autumn equinox (Fig. 2.3). This is what is stated in the *Yao Dian*.¹⁴⁸ When the day is at its shortest, if one looks at southern mid-heaven at

¹⁴⁴ The original *Shangshu* 尚書 was written during the Spring and Autumn period (772 BC–476 BC), and differences between the original and the previously known *Shangshu* were found in the bamboo slips of Tsinghua, which scholars later concluded were in fact only a compilation of Jin Dynasty’s transcriptions and compilation.

¹⁴⁵ The original text in the section of Yao Dian of *Shangshu* 尚書: 「昔在帝堯，聰明文思，光宅天下。將遜於位，讓於虞舜，作《堯典》。曰若稽古帝堯，曰放勳，欽、明、文、思、安安，允恭克讓，光被四表，格於上下。克明俊德，以親九族。九族既睦，平章百姓。百姓昭明，協和萬邦。黎民於變時雍。乃命羲和，欽若昊天，歷象日月星辰，敬授人時。分命羲仲，宅嵎夷，曰暘谷。寅賓出日，平秩東作。日中，星鳥，以殷仲春。厥民析，鳥獸孳尾。申命羲叔，宅南交。平秩南訛，敬致。日永，星火，以正仲夏。厥民因，鳥獸希革。分命和仲，宅西，曰昧谷。寅餞納日，平秩西成。宵中，星虛，以殷仲秋。厥民夷，鳥獸毛毳。申命和叔，宅朔方，曰幽都。平在朔易。日短，星昴，以正仲冬。厥民隩，鳥獸氄毛。帝曰：」咨！汝羲暨和。朞三百有六旬有六日，以閏月定四時，成歲。允厘百工，庶績鹹熙。」

¹⁴⁶ The original text in *Yao Dian* is 「日中星鳥，以殷仲春。」

¹⁴⁷ The original text in *Yao Dian* is 「日永星火，以正仲夏。」

¹⁴⁸ The original text in *Yao Dian* is 「宵中星虛，以殷仲秋。」

dusk and sees the “*pleiades* 昴星,” the fourth star of the *White Tiger* (白虎) asterism, in the south, then the season is winter solstice (Fig. 2.4). This is what is mentioned in *Yao Dian*.¹⁴⁹

It can be assumed that the Chinese had already established a relatively accurate calendar system as late as the time when the original *Shangshu* was written, namely from the 8th to the 5th century BC.¹⁵⁰ Although according to the calculations of modern astronomers, the date that corresponds to this astrological movement described in the *Shang Shu Yao Dian* should be around 2000 BC, there are also archaeological sources that seem to trace Chinese astronomical recording activities back to earlier times. For example, the rich astronomical records in the oracle bone inscriptions unearthed in Yinxu, Anyang, Henan Province, show that the ancient Chinese had already begun to carry out astronomical observation in an organised manner in 24th-century BC during the era of Emperor Yao (2356 BC–2255 BC). Some other archaeological discoveries also date the occurrence of astronomical recording activities in China to more than 8,000 years ago. For example, there are also astrological worship rock paintings at General Cliff in Lianyungang, Jiangsu Province¹⁵¹ and pottery inscriptions of the sunrise unearthed in Lixian, Shandong Province.¹⁵² However, the academic community currently has reservations about the information revealed by these early archaeological data.

According to the literature, the Chinese mastered basic astronomical knowledge in 11th century B.C. at the latest and applied it to guide agricultural production and daily life. During the Western Zhou Dynasty (1046 BC–771 BC), the *Classic of Poetry* (Shi Jing 诗经) contains many folk songs about determining seasonal changes based on the positions of the stars. Moreover, in Gu Yanwu’s *Ri Zhi Lu* 日知录,

¹⁴⁹ The original text in *Yao Dian* is “日短星昴，以正仲冬。”

¹⁵⁰ Miansun Ding, *Zhongguo Gudai Tianwen Lifa Jichu Zhishi* 中国古代天文历法基础知识[*Basic Knowledge of Ancient Chinese Astronomy and Calendars*] (Tianjin: Ancient Books Publishing House, 1989), 1–4.

¹⁵¹ Shengyun Du, “Lianyungang Yanhua Tianwen Yiyi de Tantaoyao 连云港岩画天文意义的探讨,” *Beijing Shifan Daxue Xuebao* 北京师范大学学报(自然科学版) [*Journal of Beijing Normal University (Natural Science)*], no.1 (1986): 57–60.

¹⁵² Shengyun Du, “Shandong Juxian Shiqian Tianwen Yizhi 山东莒县史前天文遗址” *Kexue Tongbao* 科学通报 [Chinese Science Bulletin] no.9 (1986): 677–678.

Volume 30, “Astronomy,” he also notes that, in the days of Yao, Shun and Yu, children and women at this time were already familiar with these folk songs. This seems to reflect the reality that for people in the 11th century B.C., the astronomical knowledge of observing the stars to obtain seasonal information was already common at that time.

However, it has been shown that knowledge of space and astronomical calendars was only available to the upper ruling class in the 3rd century B.C. At that time, specialised institutions for observing astronomical phenomena were set up only for emperors and lords, and it was forbidden for commoners to gain astronomical knowledge privately. Successive rulers attached great importance to astronomical calendars and monopolized the right to promulgate calendars, and new calendars had to be promulgated at the time of dynastic changes. For example, the “*Ruisuo Calendar* 瑞璣歷” was promulgated at the beginning of the establishment of the Qin Dynasty, the “*Taichu Calendar* 太初歷” was promulgated during the time of Emperor Wu of the Han Dynasty, and the “*Daming Calendar* 大明歷” was promulgated during the Northern and Southern Dynasties.

By the time of the Six Dynasties, the ruling class gradually compromised on the phenomenon of the learning of astronomy by citizens. Instead of imposing the death penalty on those who learned astronomy privately, these people were integrated and controlled in special institutions under the management and supervision of the ruling class. It can be considered that during the Six Dynasties period, the most basic “*hundred method of observing the stars in dusk or morning* (昏旦中星觀象授時法).” was already part of people's basic common sense. People were already skilled in using the figurative names given by the ancestors for these stars to memorise the correspondence between their changing positions and the time. Because this basic astronomical knowledge about the stars of the Dragon and Tiger has been romantically organized by literary figures since the Han Dynasty to form a variety of romantic stories of the heavens already known to the public, it was integrated into

everyday life to help people remember the changing positions of the stars in the sky so that they could know the changing of the seasons.

In the actual compilation of “*Yaodian Zhengyi* 堯典正義” in Shangshu compiled at the Jin Dynasty, it is clearly written:

The Four Celestial Animals, namely the Dragon, Tiger, Bird, and Turtle, are present in the starry sky. Each of the four cardinal directions has its own set of seven constellations, forming distinct shapes. In the eastern direction, they form the shape of a Dragon. In the western direction, they form the shape of a Tiger. In the southern direction, they form the shape of a Bird. In the northern direction, they form the shape of a Turtle. All of them face westward with their tails pointing eastward.¹⁵³

This shows that people in the Jin Dynasties (265–420 A.D.) still used this basic four-star division system, that is, dividing the starry sky near the celestial equator and the ecliptic into four regions, each with seven constellations for a total of twenty-eight constellations. Among them, the shape of the seven asterisms “Citrā (Caitra), Svāti, Viśākhā (Vaiśākha), Anurādhā, Jyeṣṭha (Jyaiṣṭha), Mūla, and Pūrvāṣādhā (Āṣādhā)” together is regarded as the image of the Blue Dragen (Fig. 2.5).¹⁵⁴ The shape of the seven asterisms “Uttar āṣādhā, Abhijit, Śravaṇa (Śrāvaṇa), Dhaniṣṭhā, Śatabhiṣaj, Pūrvabhādrapadā (Bhādrapada), and Uttarabhādrapadā” together is regarded as the image of the Xuanwu (Fig. 2.6). The shape of the seven asterisms “Revatī, Aśvinī (Āśvina), Bharanī, Kṛttikā (Kārttika), Rohiṇī, Mṛgaśīrṣa (Mārgaśīra), and Ārdrā” together is regarded as the image of the White Tiger (Fig. 2.7). The shape of the seven asterisms “Punarvasū, Puṣya (Pauṣa), Aślesā, Maghā (Māgha), Pūrvaphālgunī, Uttaraphālgunī (Phālguna), and Hasta” together is regarded as the image of the Vermilion Bird (Fig. 2.8). These twenty-eight constellations are so close in shape to the four animals—the Blue Dragen, Xuanwu (turtle and snake together), White Tiger, and Vermilion Bird—that they can be regarded as replications of the natural images presented by the four quadrantal constellations. In this most basic spatial knowledge,

¹⁵³ Guangsheng Liu, “《古文尚书》真伪公案再议[A Reconsideration of the Authenticity of Guwen Shangshu].” *Lishi Yanjiu* 历史研究 [Historical Research] no.4 (2020): 198–218+224. The original text: 「是天星有龍、虎、鳥、龜之形也；四方皆有七宿，各成一形，東方成龍形，西方成虎形，南方成鳥形，北方成龜形，皆西首而東尾。」

¹⁵⁴ See the richly annotated entry in DDB, [http://www.buddhism-dict.net/cgi-bin/xprddb.pl?4e.xml+id\(%27b4e8c-5341-516b-5bbf%27](http://www.buddhism-dict.net/cgi-bin/xprddb.pl?4e.xml+id(%27b4e8c-5341-516b-5bbf%27).

the four quadrantal constellations surrounding the Big Dipper are in constant movement.

In addition, since the position of the seven stars of the Big Dipper, which are located at the center, is relatively stable compared to the other stars around it, and only the pointing of the handle of the Big Dipper changes regularly over time, this characteristic of the Big Dipper is often compared to the ruler's governance. In the “*Wei Zheng 為政*” of *Analects of Confucius* the North Star (namely the “Bei Chen”) is also used as an analogy: “To govern with virtue is like the Big Dipper, which resides in its place while all other stars bow towards it.” In Sima Qian's *Records of the Grand Historian* (史記 天官書) it reads, “The Big Dipper serves as the emperor's chariot, moving in the center and overseeing the four directions. It divides Yin and Yang, establishes the four seasons, balances the five elements, controls the changes of celestial bodies, and sets the various calendars. All of these are connected to the Big Dipper (鬥為帝車，運於中央，臨製四鄉。分陰陽，建四時，均五行，移節度，定諸紀，皆系於鬥).”¹⁵⁵ The circle of stars closest to the Big Dipper is known as the “Three Walls,” namely, Ziwei, Tianshi, and Taiwei, and the reason for their name is that they are imagined to be the three walls surrounding the palace of the emperor. The group of stars which is relatively far away from the Big Dipper is known as the “*twenty-eight asterisms (ershiba xiu)*,” and the reason they are called “*xiu (宿)*” is that these groups of stars are imagined as surrounding the emperor's officials.

That is to say, the four groups of stars, namely the Blue Dragon, the White Tiger, the Vermilion Bird and the Xuanwu, which are constantly changing their positions, are not fixedly associated with the four directions of east, west, north and south. The Blue Dragon in the east, the White Tiger in the west, the red phoenixes in the south, and the Black Tortoise and serpent in the north only appear in the twilight of the vernal equinox every year (Fig. 2.1). At this time, the image of the Canglong (Dragon), composed of the seven asterisms “Citrā (Caitra), Svāti, Viśākhā (Vaiśākha),

¹⁵⁵ Qian Sima, *Shiji 史记*, (Beijing: Zhonghua Shubai, 1982), 1291–1292.

Anurādhā, Jyeṣṭha (Jyaiṣṭha), Mūla, and Pūrvāṣādhā (Āṣāḍha) (角、亢、氏、房、心、尾、箕),” began to appear at the eastern horizon; the image of the Vermilion Bird composed of the seven asterisms “Punarvasū, Puṣya (Pauṣa), Aślesā, Maghā (Māgha), Pūrvaphālgunī, Uttaraphālgunī (Phālguna), and Hasta (井、鬼、柳、星、张、翼、轸)” appeared in the southern mid-heaven in its entirety; and the image of the White Tiger composed of the seven asterisms “Revatī, Aśvinī (Āśvina), Bharanī, Kṛttikā (Kārttika), Rohiṇī, Mṛgaśīrṣa (Mārgaśīra), and Ārdrā” had half of its image already disappeared into the western horizon; at this time, the image of Xuanwu, composed of the seven asterisms of the “Uttarāṣādhā, Abhijit, Śravaṇa (Śrāvaṇa), Dhaniṣṭhā, Śatabhiṣaj, Pūrvabhādrapadā (Bhādrapada), and Uttarabhādrapadā (鬥、牛、女、虛、危、室、璧)” is still in the area below the northern horizon and does not appear in the night sky seen by those in the northern hemisphere at this time.

That is to say, with the change of seasons, the four animals, namely the Green Dragon, the Vermilion Bird, the White Tiger and the Xuanwu, would constantly change their positions. According to this basic astronomical knowledge, those changing positions of the four animals’ images appearing in the tombs actually indicate different times, not representing a fixed spatial orientation. The common saying “East Green Dragon, West White Tiger, South Vermilion Bird, North Xuanwu” is a misleading and inappropriate suggestion. The four animal-shaped star clusters themselves are not used to indicate the fixed four spatial directions of south-east, west, and south, but rather the changing positions of the four animal-shaped star clusters are used to indicate the changing time of day.¹⁵⁶

After all, knowing the time is a very important thing for both the living and the dead. If the living did not sow and plough according to the time, the direct consequence would be that they would not be able to harvest food and would die. For people in the Six Dynasties period, it was also necessary to choose the right time for

¹⁵⁶ Ling Li, *Zhonguo Fangshu Zhengkao* 中国方术正考 (Beijing, Zhonghua Shuju, 2006), 112–113.

their daily lives, and to follow the instructions given in the time orders to avoid calamities. There is also a passage “*Taizu Xun* (泰族訓)” in the *Huainanzi*,¹⁵⁷ which indicates that a virtuous person must be in harmony with heaven and earth, yin and yang, the five elements, and the four seasons in order to be prosperous and successful. This concept is widely recognised in social life. For the dead, it is also important to be in harmony with time. Related discourses are found in Sima Yan’s *Liuja Yaozhi* (六家要指).¹⁵⁸

Moreover, according to the idea of reincarnation brought about by the introduction of Buddhism into China, there is a transitional stage, “*antarabhava* (中陰),” between death and rebirth, and people in this stage need to wait for the right time to be able to be reborn. Therefore, time is also particularly important for those who want to be reborn after death. According to Buddhism, the waiting period for reincarnation is limited to seven days and can last up to seven times—that is, within forty-nine days the deceased will be able to find a place to be reincarnated by virtue of the karma of his or her previous life. During this period, the family of the deceased can hold a fast every seven days to accumulate good karma for the deceased’s chance of reincarnation.¹⁵⁹ “*Bei Shi* (北史)” also records that after the death of Hu Guozhen, who believed in Buddhism, his family also held a seven-seven day abstinence ceremony.¹⁶⁰ Setting up a fast on the hundredth day had also appeared during the Northern and Southern Dynasties, thus showing the importance of time for the dead. Later on, Buddhism absorbed the rituals of Confucianism and added three fasts in addition to the seven, namely, the “*Hundred Days’ Fast* (百日齋)” held on the

¹⁵⁷ The original text: 「故大人者，與天地合德，日月合明，鬼神合靈，與四時合信。」

¹⁵⁸ The original text: 「嘗竊觀陰陽之術，大祥而眾忌諱，使人拘而多畏；然其序四時之大順，不可失也。……夫陰陽四時，八位、十二度、二十四節各有教令，順之者昌，逆之者不死則亡，未必然也，故曰『使人拘而多畏』。夫春生夏長，秋收冬藏，此天道之大經也，弗順則無以為天下綱紀，故曰『四時之大順，不可失也。』」

¹⁵⁹ Stephen F. Teiser, *The Scripture on the Ten Kings and the Making of Purgatory in Medieval Chinese Buddhism* (Honolulu: University of Hawai i Press, 1994), 11–12.

¹⁶⁰ *Beishi* 北史[History of the Northern Dynasties], Vol. 80.

hundredth day, the “Lesser Auspicious Fast (小祥齋)” held on the first year anniversary, and the “Greater Auspicious Fast (大祥齋)” held on the third year, constituting the Ten Fasts. In the Northern and Southern Dynasty period the hundred days of fasting also appeared. For example, in the late Tang Dynasty, the *Ten Kings Sutra* (the full name of which is “The Sutra of the King of Yanluo on the Preliminary Cultivation of the Four Sectors for the Seven Rebirths in the Pure Land”) added three more rebirth time periods, namely, one hundred days, one year, and three years after the death of a deceased person in addition to the seven rebirth time periods.¹⁶¹ During each of these ten time periods, a corresponding king assesses the good and bad karma accumulated by the deceased in previous lives to determine whether the deceased will be given the opportunity to be reborn.¹⁶²

There are still objects with time markings in tombs discovered since the Han Dynasty. Even in Jin tombs, where there are no images of the “four animals” indicating time, objects indicating time have been found. In this case, a brush dipped in vermilion or ink-coloured pigment was used to write the time directly on the “ceramic bottles.” And the first sentence of the so-called “tomb-suppressing text (鎮墓文)” unearthed at Dunhuang’s Fojiamiao Bay, M30 and M72, states the time (see Fig. 2.9).¹⁶³ Moreover, the bottles with the time of the deceased’s death were carefully placed very close to the body, one at the head and one at the foot.

In addition, it is worth noting here that archaeologists have also found a large number of four-petal flower-shaped gilt-bronze pieces inlaid with images of the four animals, namely the Green Dragon, White Tiger, Vermilion Bird, and Xuanwu, in Eastern Han tombs in Jiangsu, Gansu, and Chongqing areas (Fig. 2.10a, b, c, d, e, f).

¹⁶¹ In Dunhuang manuscripts, Tian. 4532, B. 8259, P.2055 volume is the best example of the Ten Fasts.

¹⁶² Stephen F. Teiser, *The Scripture on the Ten Kings and the Making of Purgatory in Medieval Chinese Buddhism* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 1994).

¹⁶³ Hui Wang, Guoke Chen, XiaoDong Yue et al. “Gansu Dunhuang Foyemiao Wan Xindiantai Muqun Caowei Suitangmu Erlingyiwu Nian Fajue Jianbao 甘肃敦煌佛爷庙湾—新店台墓群曹魏、隋唐墓 2015 年发掘简报 [Briefing on the 2015 excavation of Cao Wei, Sui and Tang Dynasty tombs in the Fojimiaowan-Xindiantai tomb complex in Dunhuang, Gansu],” *Wenwu* 文物[Cultural Relics] no. 760 (2019): 25–43.

Previous archaeological reports have categorized them as coffin decorations.¹⁶⁴ The image of Blue Dragon, White Tiger, Vermilion Bird and Xuanwu also appears here at the same time. The shape of the flower-shaped gilt-bronze piece is similar to the pattern of four-petal flowers representing the four directions on the bronze mirror of the Warring States period, as pointed out by Professor Li Lin(see Fig.2.11).¹⁶⁵ Professor Li Lin has argued that this once again emphasizes the significance of this four-petal flower-shaped gilt-bronze pattern as a symbol of the four directions.¹⁶⁶ He has also suggested that the correct name for this four-petal flower should be the “*Fanghua* (方华),” marking the four directions, rather than the “*Persimmon Pattern* (柿蒂纹).” This is based on the fact that the four-petal flower on the two Warring States bronze mirrors is accompanied by an inscription (Fig. 2.12, Fig. 2.13). The inscription reads: “Fang Hua (vine) grows, the name of this is Chang 方華 (蔓) 長, 名此曰昌.” (Fig. 2.14)¹⁶⁷

However, given that the images of the “Four Animals” were embedded in this four-petalled flower shape, if understood according to the spatial knowledge of the people at this time, it might be possible to consider that the “Fanghua” inlaid with the images of the “Four Animals” formed a time dial with a clear scale. When it was placed in a tomb, it was probably originally intended to indicate time. This four-petalled flower “dial” with the image of the “Four Animals” is always found at the top of stone coffins in archaeological discoveries, as if to indicate the time for the

¹⁶⁴ Weihong Xu, “先秦时期葬具的装饰[The Decoration of Pre-Qin Burial objects],” *Wenbo* 文博[Relics and Museology] no. 5 (2000): 17–21; Xu Weihong and Liu Qun, “论先秦时期葬具附饰品的使用[On the Use of Accessories in Pre-Qin Burial Objects],” *Wenbo* 文博[Relics and Museology] no. 2 (2002): 22–28; Weihong Xu, “Lun Han Zangju Shang de Siye Dixing Jinshu Zhuangshi 论汉葬具上的四叶蒂形金属装饰[On the Four-Leafed Metal Decoration on Han Burial Objects],” *Wenbo* 文博[Relics and Museology] no. 2 (2003): 54. Qiao Zhuojun 乔卓俊, “Liangzhou Shiqi Zhongyuan Diqu de Guanshi Yanjiu 两周时期中原地区的棺饰研究[Study on the Coffin Decoration in the Central Plains during the Zhou Period]” (MA thesis. Shandong University, 2009).

¹⁶⁵ Lin Li, “Shuo Yunwen Wadang Jianlun Zhanguo Qinhan Tongjing Shang de Sibanhua 说云纹瓦当——兼论战国秦汉铜镜上的四瓣花[Saying Cloud Patterned Wadang—Another Essay on Four-Petaled Flowers on Bronze Mirrors of the Warring States, Qin and Han Dynasties],” *Shanghai Wenbo Luncong* 上海文博论丛[Shanghai Literature and Museum Series] no. 4 (2004): 65.

¹⁶⁶ Lin Li, “Fanghua Manchang Minci Yue Chang Wei Shidiwen Zhengmin ‘方华蔓长,名此曰昌’——为‘柿蒂纹’正名,” *Zhongguo Guojia Bowuguan Guankan* 中国国家博物馆馆刊[Journal of National Museum of China],no.7(2012):39.

¹⁶⁷ Li, “Fanghua Manchang Minci Yue Chang Wei Shidiwen Zhengmin,” 35–41.

deceased lying in the coffin. For example, this pattern, similar to the “Fanghua” pattern, is found on the top of the sarcophagus in the Maliuwan Cliff Tomb in Luzhou City (Fig. 2.15). There are also similar patterns on the top of the lid of the sarcophagus of the No. 3 Brick Chamber Tomb in Changshunpo, Nanxi County (Fig. 2.16). A similar pattern appears on the top of the lid of the sarcophagus of the No. 1 Tomb in Dayiba, Luzhou City (Fig. 2.17), and similar patterns appear on the top of the lid of the No. 1 sarcophagus of the No. 1 Tomb in Guihuacun, Jiang’an County (Fig. 2.18).

Therefore, if we follow the basic knowledge of ancient Chinese astronomy, it is very likely that the four animal-shaped star clusters that appeared in the tombs, which were believed to be used to indicate spatial orientation when combined together, were actually meant to indicate time. An example is the Xishuipo tomb (3300 BC) in the Puyang, Yangshao cultural area (Fig. 2.19).¹⁶⁸ The mussel shells surrounding the deceased in this tomb are usually regarded by scholars as “animal emblems of the West and East.”¹⁶⁹ But if one considers the images of dragons and tigers molded in mussel shells around the deceased, together with the image of the North Star, one realises that the intention of the people at this time was probably only to indicate a special moment by means of the change in the relative positions of the star clusters. For the people of that time, when the celestial sky, consisting of the star constellations of the Blue Dragon and White Tiger, moved to an east-west orientation, and the Vermilion Bird and Xuanwu moved to a north-south orientation, what was received was the information about the time shown by this astrological phenomenon: the vernal equinox. There is also a series of more detailed diagrams showing the arrangement of the stars in the sky on a lacquered vessel from the tomb of Zeng Houyi in the Warring States period (Fig. 2.20), in which the position of the twenty-eight constellations in which the “*Sui Star* 歲星” of the year is located; the pointing of the Big Dipper can

¹⁶⁸ Dexuan Sun, “Henan Puyang Xi shui po yizhi fajue jianbao 河南濮阳西水坡遗址发掘简报,” *Wenwu* 文物 [Cultural Relics] no. 3 (1988), 1–6; Qingxian Ding, and Xiangmei Zhang, “Yijiubaba Nian Henan Puyang Xishuipo Yizhi Fajue Jianbao 1988 年河南濮阳西水坡遗址发掘简报,” *Kaogu* 考古 [Archaeology] no. 12 (1989): 1057–1066.

¹⁶⁹ Mark Edward Lewis, *The Construction of Space in Early China* (State University of New York Press, 2006), 247.

also be deduced by computer to indicate the exact time of February 11, 433 B.C. at the hour of the day. This deduction of time based on astrological positions is also consistent with the dates given by archaeologists for the burials.

Moreover, in an Eastern Han mural tomb excavated by the Shaanxi Provincial Institute of Archaeology in a Han Dynasty tomb complex in Qushu Trench, Jingbian County, Shaanxi Province, an astronomical mural painted on the ceiling of the tomb was also found that completely depicted the star shapes, number of stars, images and inscriptions of the twenty-eight star constellations.¹⁷⁰ It is worth noting that in the astrological image located on the ceiling of the tomb (Fig. 2.21), the constellations of the Green Dragon and the White Tiger were drawn on the north and south sides of the tomb ceiling, while the constellations of the Vermilion Bird and the Xuanwu were drawn on the east and west sides of the tomb ceiling.¹⁷¹ This means that four groups of animal-shaped star clusters on the tomb ceiling did not form a fixed correspondence with the four directions of east, west, south, and north at this time. The time indicated by the shifting positions of the Green Dragon, White Tiger, Vermilion Bird and Xuan Wu at this time is mid-summer. This means that at least during the Eastern Han period, when this tomb was built, the positions of the Green Dragon, White Tiger, Vermilion Bird, and Xuanwu in the tombs were not fixed, and it was through this variation in position that the specific time information was shown.

The archaeological materials mentioned above continue to show that space is only an intermediary through which people mark time. The knowledge of space gained from the initial observation of space was ultimately aimed at knowing time. In

¹⁷⁰ Yi Duan, et al. "Shanxi Jingbian Xian Yangqiao Pan Qushuhao Donghan Bihua Mu Fajue Jianbao 陕西靖边县杨桥畔渠树壕东汉壁画墓发掘简报[Briefing on the Excavation of the East Han Mural Tomb at Dushu Trench, Yangqiaoside, Jingbian County, Shaanxi]," *Kaogu yu Wenwu* 考古与文物[Archaeology and Cultural Relics] no. 1 (2017): 3–28+2+131.

¹⁷¹ Xuan Liang, "Shanxi Jingbian Qushuhao Donghan Bihua Mu Tianwen Tu Zhong de Xing yu Xiang 陕西靖边渠树壕东汉壁画墓天文图中的‘星’与象[Stars and Elephants in the Astronomical Diagrams of the East Han Mural Tomb at Qushu Trench, Jingbian, Shanxi]," *Xingxiang Shixue* 形象史学[Image Historical Studies] no. 1(2022): 115–147; Wang Yu, "Zhishi Chuanshuo yu Zhizuo Shanxi Jingbian Qushuhao Donghan Bihua Mu Xingxiang Tu de Jige Wenti 知识、传说与制作：陕西靖边渠树壕东汉壁画墓星象图的几个问题[Knowledge, Legend, and Production: A Few Issues on the Astrological Maps of the East Han Mural Tomb at Qushu Trench, Jingbian, Shaanxi]," *Meishu Yanjiu* 美术研究[Art Research] no. 5 (2020): 52–59; Jiabi Wu, "Shanxi Jinbian Qushu Hao Bihua Tianwen Tu Zhong de Huangdao 陕西靖边渠树壕壁画天文图中的黄道、日月及其重要意义[Ecliptic, Sun and Moon and Their Significance in the Astronomical Chart of the Dushu Trench Mural in Jingbian, Shaanxi]," *Kaogu yu Wenwu* 考古与文物[Archaeology and Cultural Relics] no. 1 (2019): 62–71.

these archaeological data, it can already be seen that the Green Dragon, White Tiger, Vermilion Bird and Xuanwu do not always correspond to the four directions of east, west, north and south. Based on the basic knowledge of Chinese ancient astronomy, the image of each of the “four animals” does not represent a definite spatial orientation, and they only have a referential function when they are combined, indicating the concept of changing time. When they are separated, each of them no longer has this meaning.

The scattered “Four Animals” images would participate in other narratives unrelated to space and time, carrying new meanings assigned to them in that new system. For example, in tombs, the green dragon and white tiger or pairs of them appear on both sides of the coffin or on both sides of the door of the tomb, having become sacred objects to ward off evil spirits and protect the tomb. Because the words “left dragon and right tiger to ward off bad luck (左龍右虎辟不祥)” often appear in the Han Dynasty bronze mirror inscriptions, the Green Dragon, White Tiger, Vermilion Bird and Xuanwu that appeared in the tombs represent auspicious images with some mysterious power. Some of the green dragons and white tigers that appear in the murals of tombs also work together with Fang Xiangshi to subdue the tombs. Or they appear above the tomb passage with various other magical animals to become members of the world of immortals and participate in more fantastic literary narratives and imaginations.

It is true that in many tombs there are large images of the green dragon and white tiger on the east and west sides of the tomb, and the vermilion sparrow on the wall of the sealing door at the south end of the tomb, such as that of Princess Ru Ru of the Eastern Wei Dynasty, found in Maguxian County, Hebei Province.¹⁷² These images have become very programmed, just like the images of words that have been fixed by people’s writing habits for a long time, and do not need to be altered or created in a

¹⁷² Quansheng Zhu, and Chi Tang, “Hebei Cixian Dongwei Ruru Gongzhu Mu Fajue Jianbao 河北磁县东魏茹茹公主墓发掘简报,” *Wenwu* 文物[Cultural Relics], no. 4 (1984): 1–9; Lianxiang Liu, “Dong Wei Qixian Wugao Wang lúfuren Ruru Gongzhu Muzhi Kaoshi 东魏齐献武高王闾夫人茹茹公主墓志考释,” *Huaxia Kaogu* 华夏考古[*Huaxia Archaeology*], no. 2 (2016): 67–73.

new form by the painter. From this point of view, it can even be said that the Green Dragon, White Tiger, Vermilion Bird and Xuanwu later became more a kind of ornate symbol, which can correspond to the concepts of east, west, north and south respectively. The complete image of the Green Dragon, White Tiger, Vermilion Bird, and Xuanwu has not yet been found in the burial murals of the Six Dynasties period in the Chinese region. Only in the Goguryeo region of the 6th century tombs did a number of magnificent images of the Green Dragon, White Tiger, Vermilion Bird, and Xuanwu appear, and in the geographical distribution of the four walls of the burial chamber, they are located in accordance with the following directions: east — the green dragon, west — the white tiger, south — the vermilion bird, north — the Xuanwu. Perhaps these images of the four animals in these tombs have been given the meanings of their respective spatial orientations. However, it is still impossible to exclude an explanation based on the basic knowledge of ancient Chinese astronomy, which is that when the images of the four animals appeared together in the tombs, it was possible to use the specific location of the four together to indicate a particular time as well.

2.2 Different Understandings of Spatial Knowledge

The following section is to review some of the different theoretical systems that the upper intellectual elites established for this basic spatial knowledge; this review will allow an examination of the ways that Chinese intellectuals perceived the space. The Chinese intellectual class had already established three different schools of thought to explain the phenomenon of celestial movement during the Han Dynasty. As the astronomer Cai Yong (蔡邕, 132–192 A.D.) in the late Eastern Han Dynasty mentioned in his *Shuo Fang Shang Shu* (朔方上书) in 178 A.D.,

There are three schools of thought on celestial bodies: the first is the ‘*Zhou Bi school*’, the second is the ‘Infinite Empty Space school (*Xuanye Shuo*)’, and the third is the ‘Celestial Sphere school (*Huntian Shuo*).’ The teaching of the Infinite Empty Space cosmology has been interrupted and there is now no master in it. As for the ‘*Zhou Bi*’ school, although its methods and

computations still remain, it proved incorrect and lacking in many ways when tested in explaining the structure of the heavens. Only the Celestial Sphere school approximates the truth.¹⁷³

The *Zhou Bi* (周髀) school here was called the “Heavenly Cover (*Gaitian* 盖天)” school by *Zu g èng* (祖暅, 456–536 A.D.) in his *Astronomical Records* (*Tian wen lu* 天文录) at the end of the fifth century, and later was also used to call the *Zhou Bi* school the “Heavenly Cover.” In the post-Han period, people also derived various views based on these three major doctrinal systems.

In the period of the Northern and Southern Dynasties, some scholars proposed the “Dome of Heaven Theory (穹天論)” and the “Sumeru Mountain Theory (須彌山說)” based on the “Heavenly Cover” school. Emperor Liang Wudi, Xiao Yan (ca. 464–549 A.D.) also proposed the “*Vajra Mountain Doctrine* (Jingang Shan Shuo 金剛山說)” based on the “Heavenly Cover” school and the cosmology brought by Buddhism.¹⁷⁴

By the Six Dynasties, people were already aware of the most essential differences between these three major doctrines. In the early sixth century, Cui Lingen held the view that “the Celestial Sphere school and the Heavenly Cover school are one and the same (以渾、蓋為一焉).”¹⁷⁵ In the preface to his book *Sishu Zhoubi Zong* (四術周髀宗), Xin Dufang of Northern Qi also explained this division in detail.¹⁷⁶ This shows that Xin Dufang has realized that whether one looks up or down, it is in fact an internal point of view (intrinsic approach) that is located between heaven and earth. Thus, the Huntian doctrine can be grouped with the Gaitian doctrine.

¹⁷³ The original text: 「言天體者有三家：一曰周髀，二曰宣夜，三曰渾天。」

¹⁷⁴ In Volume 19 of the *Sui Shu* (隋書), it is recorded that the Heavenly Cover (Gai Tian) school was officially adopted by Emperor Wu of Liang Xiao Yan around 525 A.D.

¹⁷⁵ See “Cui Ling'en 崔灵恩” in *Liangshu* 梁書, vol. 48.

¹⁷⁶ The original text: 「渾天覆觀，以《靈憲》為文；蓋天仰觀，以《周髀》為法。覆仰雖殊，大歸是一。古之人製者，所表天效玄象，（信都）芳以渾算精微，術機萬首，故約本為之省要，凡述二篇，合六法，名曰《四術周髀宗》。」 See Yanshou Li, *Bei Shi* 北史 [History of the Northern Dynasties] (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1974).

According to the idea of “unification of Hun and Gai (渾蓋合一)” proposed by Xindoufang, we can indeed find many common points between the Huntian school and Gaitian theory. For example, in both the Gaitian and Huntian systems, a celestial body is imagined to revolve on a fixed axis, and the sun, moon and stars are attached to this celestial body and rotate together. The only difference is that the Gaitian theory imagines the shape of this celestial body as an umbrella, while the Huntian theory imagines it in the shape of an eggshell.

Since the theoretical model of the Celestial Sphere school (*Hun Tian* 渾天) and the Heavenly Cover school (*Gai Tian* 蓋天) are both based on a naked-eye perspective of people on Earth, it is very convenient to explain the general pattern of astrological movements seen by people on earth. Those stars that do not follow this pattern were interpreted as “*anomalies or unusual phenomena (yixiang 異象)*,” with some mysterious and suggestive meaning.

The “unification of Hun and Gai” view of Xindoufang in the Northern Qi also implies the existence of another viewpoint that is opposite the Hun and Gai viewpoint, or what might be called an “external viewpoint” from a third-person perspective. It is this hypothetical celestial body with a fixed axis of rotation that is completely abandoned in the Xuangye school, suggesting that the sun, moon and stars have their own central axis of rotation, and are not dependent on any one rotating celestial body for their movement. Thus, while the Celestial Sphere school (*Huntian shuo* 渾天說) and the Heavenly Cover school (*Gaitian shuo* 蓋天說) can be grouped together according to their internal viewpoint, the Infinite Empty Space school (*Xuanye shuo* 宣夜說) can be classified as the exact opposite viewpoint.

During the Six Dynasties period, the ideas of Infinite Empty Space school (*Xuanye shuo*) were gradually understood and accepted by more and more people, and even the Celestial Sphere school (*Huntian shuo*) and the Heavenly Cover school

(Gaitian shuo) that circulated at this time absorbed some of the ideas of the Infinite Empty Space school (Xuanye shuo). At a time when observation was only possible with the human naked eye, the viewpoint of the Infinite Empty Space school (Xuanye shuo) was valuable in that it allowed for a more independent discernment that, in turn, allowed for a grand field of view beyond the constraints of observation at the time. Although the intellectual potential of this grand field of view was not understood and adopted by the ruling class at that time like the Hun and Gai school, the power of the highly discursive core of the Infinite Empty Space school (Xuanye shuo) doctrine easily resonated with the equally discerning literati and artists of the time. What will be elaborated below is how the way of understanding space offered by the Infinite Empty Space school (Xuanye shuo) differs from the Hun and Gai theory and what is so valuable about it.

First of all, one of the valuable points of the Infinite Empty Space School (xuanye shuo 宣夜說) is that it takes the position of the viewer into account. This is unlike the Hun and Gai school, which only considers the astral movements within the terrestrial viewer's field of vision, and only summarizes the laws from the terrestrial viewer's position, as well as classifies the unusual phenomena that do not conform to this law as "discrepancies," which could be seen as a special indication from the heavens. In contrast, the Xuanye theory takes into account the observation horizon outside of the human's terrestrial location, and considers what kind of different patterns would be derived if the astral movements were observed outside of the human's terrestrial view. Thus, the astral changes that cannot be explained by the Hun and Gai school, called "discrepancies," are not considered by the proposer of the Xuanye school as special indications from the heavens but as reasonable phenomena standing outside our terrestrial domain. Although the observational data required for the Xuanye school were not available due to the limitations of the observational conditions at the time, the proposer of the Xuanye school relied on another set of calculations to process the data obtained from terrestrial observation points. This calculation method is a different set of calculation methods from *Zhoubi Arithmetic*,

which is called “*Zhui Shu* 綴術,” and is the mathematical research result of Zu Chongzhi (429–500 A.D.) and Zu g èng (456–536 A.D.). Although this book was lost in the Song Dynasty, no one knows its specific algorithm. But at least for the elite intellectuals of the fifth to sixth centuries, there were still some intellectuals who were able to analyze the data in terms of relative motions in such a way as to arrive at a more lucid understanding of the order of the heavens.

Second, another valuable point that distinguishes Xuanye school from the Hun and Gai school is that Xuanye school is courageous enough to query what the human eye sees in space. This can be clearly shown in the statement of Xi Meng’s teacher on the Xuanye school as recorded by Xi Meng. His records are as follows:

the heavens were empty and void of substance. When we look up at it we can see that it is immensely high and far away, having no bounds. The (human) eye is (as it were) colour-blind, and the pupil short-sighted; this is why the heavens appear deeply blue. It is like seeing yellow mountains sideways at a great distance, for then they all appear blue. Or when we gaze down into a valley a thousand fathoms deep, it seems somber and black. But the blue (of the mountains) is not a true color, nor is the dark color (of the valley) really its own. The sun, the moon, and the company of the stars float (freely) in the empty space, moving or standing still. All are condensed vapour. Thus the seven luminaries sometimes appear and sometimes disappear, sometimes move forward and sometimes retrograde, seeming to follow each a different series of regularities; their advances and recessions are not the same. It is because they are not rooted (to any basis) or tied together that their movements can vary so much. Among the heavenly bodies the pole star always keeps its place, and the Great Bear never sinks below the horizon in the west as do other stars. The seven luminaries all fall back (lit. move) eastwards, the sun moves one degree a day and the moon moves thirteen degrees, each with its own pace. Their speed depends on their individual natures, which

shows that they are not attached to anything, for if they were fastened to the body of heaven, this could not be so.¹⁷⁷

In the early records of Xuanye school, it is very obvious that the ancient Chinese, at the latest in the early Eastern Han Dynasty, were already aware of the need to consider the phenomenon of optical illusions caused by the limitations of the human eye when they relied on their naked eye to perceive everything in space. Two examples of optical illusions are also given in the discourse of Xuanye school. One is that the human eye sees the distant Yellow Mountain as green, but the green is not its true color. Another example is that what appears dark to the human eye is not solid; for example, the bottom of a valley is dark, but in reality the darkness is still a thousand feet deep.

The Jin Dynasty's *Shu Xi* (束皙) also used the “confusion of the human eye (人目之惑)” to explain some of the visual illusions in everyday life.¹⁷⁸ Jiang ji (姜岌 active in ca. 400 AD) considered changes in the colour and shape of the sun to be caused by the action of the Earth's atmosphere.¹⁷⁹

It is because of the above visual illusions that the Xuanye school noted that “the heavens were empty and void of substance.” The proponents of the Xuanye school reject the hemispherical shape of the heavens assumed by the Gaitian school, as well as the spherical egg shape of the heavens assumed by the Huntian school. However,

¹⁷⁷The original text in (Tang) Fang Xuanling 房玄齡《晉書 誌第一 天文上》:「天了無質, 仰而瞻之, 高遠無極, 眼瞶精絕, 故蒼蒼然也。譬之旁望遠道之黃山而皆青, 俯察千仞之深谷而窈黑, 夫青非真色, 而黑非有體也。日月眾星, 自然浮生虛空之中, 其行其止皆須氣焉。是以七曜或逝或住, 或順或逆, 伏見無常, 進退不同, 由乎無所根系, 故各異也。故辰極常居其所, 而北鬥不與眾星西沒也。攝提、填星皆東行, 日行一度, 月行十三度, 遲疾任情, 其無所系著可知矣。若綴附天體, 不得爾也。」

¹⁷⁸The original text in *Sui Shu* 隋書, Volume 19, Astronomy 天文上:「晉著作郎陽平束皙, 字廣微, 以為傍方與上方等。傍視則天體存於側, 故日出時視日大也。日無小大, 而所存者有伸厭。厭而形小, 伸而體大, 蓋其理也。又日始出時色白者, 雖大不甚, 始出時色赤者, 其大則甚, 此終以人目之惑, 無遠近也。且夫置器廣庭, 則函牛之鼎如釜, 堂崇十仞, 則八尺之人猶短, 物有陵之, 非形異也。夫物有感心, 形有亂目, 誠非斷疑定理之主。故仰遊雲以觀月, 月常動而雲不移; 乘船以涉水, 水去而船不徙矣。」

¹⁷⁹The original text in *Sui Shu* 隋書, Volume 19, Zhi XIV, Astronomy 天文上:「余以為子陽言天陽下降, 日下熱, 束皙言天體存於目, 則日大, 頗近之矣。渾天之體, 圓周之徑, 詳之於天度, 驗之於晷影, 而紛然之說, 由人目也。參伐初出, 在旁則其間疏, 在上則其間數。以渾檢之, 度則均也。旁之與上, 理無有殊也。夫日者純陽之精也, 光明外曜, 以眩人目, 故人視日如小。及其初出, 地有遊氣, 以厭日光, 不眩人目, 即日赤而大也。無遊氣則色白, 大不甚矣。地氣不及天, 故一日之中, 晨夕日色赤, 而中時日色白。地氣上升, 蒙蒙四合, 與天連者, 雖中時亦赤矣。日與火相類, 火則體赤而炎黃, 日赤宜矣。然日色赤者, 猶火無炎也。光衰失常, 則為異矣。」

after the Xuanye school suggested that there was no physical celestial canopy, the question arose as to how to explain the dynamics of the sun, moon, and stars rotating without a celestial object to cling to.

The solution of XuanYe to this problem was to introduce a particularly important concept, namely “gas (Qi 气),” into its explanatory system: “The sun, moon and stars naturally float in the void, and their movements and stops require qi. This is the reason why the seven yao may pass away or live, or may be obedient or adverse, and the vastness of the vision is different, because there is no root system, so they are different.”¹⁸⁰ In the era when only the human naked eye could carry out observation activities, the proponents of the Xuanye school were the first to take into account the medium that was invisible to the human eye: “gas (Qi).”¹⁸¹ Everything in space works on its own in different orbits by the action of this medium “Qi,” so that it does not need to be attached to a unified celestial body with an axis of rotation in order to move. When the stars are no longer attached to a unified celestial body, it is possible to explain why the stars move eastward at different speeds; for example, the moon travels 13 degrees per day, the fastest, the sun travels one degree per day, and the five stars, Mercury, Venus, Mars, and Saturn, move in a variable manner.

Although the idea that “the heavens were empty and void of substance” was already proposed in the Han Dynasty, it was not until the Jin Dynasty that this view was more widely embraced and accepted by the intellectual class. For example, Emperor Wu of Liang, Xiao Yan, also incorporated this idea of Xuangyan in his “Vajra Mountain Theory (金剛山說).” The Yu brothers, the proposers of the “Dome of Heaven Theory (穹天說),” also incorporated the ideas of the Xuangye theory. In the story of the “wolfish man who worries about the sky (杞人憂天),” written in the

¹⁸⁰ The original text in “Astronomy 天文” of *Jin Shu* 晋书, compiled by Fang Xuanling of Tang Dynasty: 「日月眾星，自然浮生虛空之中，其行其止皆須氣焉。是以七曜或逝或住，或順或逆，伏見無常，進退不同，由乎無所根系，故各異也。故辰極常居其所，而北鬥不與眾星西沒也。攝提、填星皆東行，日行一度，月行十三度，遲疾任情，其無所系著可知矣。若綴附天體，不得爾也。」

¹⁸¹ In the minds of ancient Chinese, Qi permeates both the cosmos and the human body, qi is the key cue to understand the ancient Chinese view of life and cosmos.

Jin Dynasty, the theory of the relief of the “worrier” is also based on this idea that the sky and the sun, moon and stars are all made of qi.¹⁸²

The fact that the cosmos is a gas-filled space, as held by Xuanye theory, is particularly noteworthy because this space is completely different from the abstract space of Euclidean geometry. Euclidean geometric space is a vacuum. In other words, it is a completely empty space in which no medium exists. It is a homogeneous, isotropic, static, abstract, ideal mathematical space hypothesized by mathematicians. While the space that Xuanye theory discussed is a real space, it is not an empty space. It is an anisotropic, shifting real space filled with an indeterminate medium, “gas (Qi 气).” Therefore, a completely empty space is different from a real-world space filled with indeterminate medium “Qi.”

The space constructed by perspective in Renaissance painting is merely an isotropic, unchanging, static, purely mathematical abstract space without a medium. Only if space is always treated as a stable and qualitatively undifferentiated space, static and stable at all times in front of the viewer, will the space in front of the viewer be the same, no matter how the viewer changes direction. This space can then be abstracted uniformly as a purely mathematical ideal geometric space. Only such an ideal space can obey a particular law of variation. Such an ideal space can be reproduced, for example, by using the laws of perspective.

The space discussed in the Xuanye theory is a heterogeneous space made up of “Qi” in an unhomogeneous medium, which is in motion at all times. In this space, when the viewer changes direction, he or she is confronted with a non-uniform, non-homogeneous space that is heterogeneous in all directions and therefore cannot be equated and then merged together. In such a heterogeneous space, which is in constant flux, there is no single law that can be generalised. It is therefore impossible to reproduce it exactly according to one law.

¹⁸² The original text: 「杞國有人,憂天地崩墜,身亡所寄,廢寢食者。又有憂彼之所憂者,因往曉之曰:天積氣耳。亡處亡氣,若屈伸呼吸,終日在天中行止,奈何憂崩墜乎?其人曰:天果積氣,日月星宿不當墜邪?曉之者曰:日月星辰亦積氣中之有光耀者,只使墜,亦不能有所中傷。其人曰:奈地壞何?曉者曰:地積塊耳,充塞四虛,亡處亡塊,若躡步跳蹈,終日在地土中行止,奈何憂其壞。其人舍然大喜,曉之者亦舍然大喜。」

Such a heterogeneous space as revealed by Xuanye theory seems to be closer to the space that the artists of medieval China were trying to express. Perhaps it can be understood that the Chinese painters of the medieval ages were too fully and faithfully considering these characteristics of real, perceived space to be able to go against reality and reduce it to a kind of Euclidean geometry, and therefore could not choose to use the law of Renaissance perspective to depict the space they perceived in their paintings. So, they have tried to create other ways of drawing. In this way, the representation of space is not based solely on a visual perception system fixed at a point, but also on a variety of factors, including different points of view and the different perceptions obtained by different organs of the body.

2.3 Space and Time in the Viewpoint of Buddhism

Erik Zürcher in his 1972 preface to his book *The Buddhist Conquest of China* pointed out that

The fact should also be noted that around 400 AD we find the beginning of what might be called ‘Chinese Buddhist sub-culture’, notably in the field of cosmology, cosmography, and ideas concerning the physical world. It marked the beginning of a remarkable dichotomy in Chinese proto science: the Indian ‘four great elements’ operating alongside Yin Yang and the Five Elements; the ‘Four Continents’ versus traditional Chinese notions dating from Han times; the conception of cosmic periods and of the periodic destruction and reintegration of the universe versus the Chinese idea of an unbroken cyclic movement; the Buddhist plurality of inhabited worlds and world-systems and the Chinese earth-centered worldview, etc.¹⁸³

Erik Zürcher’s view is based on a comparison between the Buddhist cosmology and the cosmology of the “Hun Gai School (渾蓋說),” which has been adopted officially since the Han Dynasty in China. However, the content of the “Xuan Ye school” actually already shows a perspective that not looking at the universe from an Earth-centered viewpoint. This dissertation finds particularly valuable the Buddhist cosmology attempts to go beyond the limitations of the human eye to make bold conjectures about that vast space of infinite flux. In this dissertation it is considered

¹⁸³ Erik Zürcher, *The Buddhist Conquest of China: The Spread and Adaptation of Buddhism in Early Medieval China* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), xi.

that at least the following two aspects of the cosmology brought about by Buddhism should be given special attention.

First of all, in the Buddhist cosmological thinking, what is most remarkable is the order of magnitude it assigns to this universe. The infinity of space is further emphasized and attended to. at the same time, there is an emphasis on the limitations of human vision and direct experience. Especially, in the fourth to fifth centuries, numerous Buddhist texts repeatedly emphasize the infinity of that cosmic space which is invisible to the human eye. Detailed depictions of an infinite universe that cannot be seen by the human eye can be found in the Hindu Purāṇas, Jain sources, Pāli sources (Nikāyas and Buddhaghosa's *Path of Purification*), and Vasubandhu's *Treasury of Abhidharma*.

In the Hindu Purāṇas,¹⁸⁴ the axial mountain, Meru, is located in the central pericarp of the universe. Meru is surrounded by small mountains that are shaped like the stamens of a flower. Four continents, Bhārata, Ketumāla, Kuru and Bhadrāśva, arrayed in the cardinal directions around the Meru mountain, are shaped like the petals of a flower (Fig. 2.22-a). In Purāṇas, Meru is also described as being in the center of the Jambudvīpa (南瞻部洲), which is a circular landmass. And there are more circular continents around the Jambudvīpa: Plakṣadvīpa, Śālmalidvīpa, Kuśadvīpa, Krauñcadvīpa, Śākadvīpa, Puṣkaradvīpa. These seven continents are again surrounded by circular island, mountains and oceans. It is noted that “there are thousands of types of islands but they come under the purview of the main seven islands; it is not possible to describe the entire universe in detail.”¹⁸⁵ The cosmology of the Purāṇas provide a cosmos model which is like an onion structure (Fig. 2.22-b). In this model, human beings are confined to the southern region of Bhārata on the

¹⁸⁴ According to Eric Huntington's research, “The Purāṇas, as a body of literature, can be difficult to historicize, since various texts given the designation purāṇa (ancient) were composed over an extended period of at least one thousand years. Several important Purāṇas date to the fourth to fifth centuries, around the same time as the Path of Purification and the Treasury.” See Eric Huntington, *Creating the Universe: Depictions of the Cosmos in Himalayan Buddhism* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2019), 21.

¹⁸⁵ Matsya Mahāpurāṇa Joshi, 1:367. cited in Eric Huntington, *Creating the Universe: Depictions of the Cosmos in Himalayan Buddhism* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2019), 23.

continent of Jambudvīpa, close to the center of the entire cosmic system, surrounded by numerous expansive continents.¹⁸⁶

According to “Lotus Repository World” in the *Flower Garland Sūtra* (*Mahāvaiṣṭya Buddhāvataṃśaka Sūtra*, *Dafang Guangfo Hua Yan Jing* 大方广佛华严经), translated into Chinese by Buddhahadra (East Jin, 418–420 A.D.), the universe was also described as a lotus flower.¹⁸⁷ The universe contains layers of wind circles and the great lotus flower that blooms on them (Fig. 2.23). The great lotus flower called banner of fragrance, whose stamens emit various kinds of illumination, contains the Lotus Repository World.¹⁸⁸ The land of this Lotus Repository World is located in the center of the great lotus (Fig. 2.24).¹⁸⁹ The fragrant ocean in the center of the great lotus is called Boundless Light of Wonderful Flowers. The world system in this ocean is called Blazing Jewel Light Illuminating the Ten Directions.¹⁹⁰ In this world system, twenty worlds exist along the vertical axis through the center of the world system, and each of these worlds is surrounded by countless worlds (Fig. 2.25). The Buddha in the lowest of these twenty worlds is called “Omnipresent Illumination of Supreme Light,” and it is again surrounded by worlds “as numerous as the atoms in one Buddha-field.”¹⁹¹ The thirteenth world in this series is called “Saha” which is “our” world.¹⁹² There are worlds in all of them, with their Buddhas and countless Bodhisattvas.¹⁹³ The Lotus Repository World was made by the Vairocana Buddha.¹⁹⁴

¹⁸⁶ Eric Huntington, *Creating the Universe: Depictions of the Cosmos in Himalayan Buddhism* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2019), 24.

¹⁸⁷ Akira Sadakata, *Buddhist Cosmology: Philosophy and Origins* (Japan: Kosei Publishing Co. 1997), 144.

¹⁸⁸ Sadakata, *Buddhist Cosmology*, 146.

¹⁸⁹ There is a contradiction here in that, as scholars have pointed out, “There is mention of a lotus flower brought forth from each of the fragrant oceans in the center and in the east, and a world system rests on each of these lotus flowers.” Akira Sadakata, *Buddhist Cosmology: Philosophy and Origins* (Japan: Kosei Publishing Co. 1997), 207, note 3.

¹⁹⁰ Sadakata, *Buddhist Cosmology*, 147.

¹⁹¹ Sadakata, *Buddhist Cosmology*, 147–149.

¹⁹² Sadakata, *Buddhist Cosmology*, 149.

¹⁹³ In Chapter 1 of the *Flower Garland Sūtra* “The vast fields that the Buddha has adorned are equal in number to all atoms. Pure children of the Buddha fill these lands and cause to fall the rain of the finest, mysterious dharma [teaching]. As we see the Buddha sitting at this assembly, we see the Buddha sitting in the same way in all atoms. The body of the Buddha neither departs nor comes but all the same is manifested clearly in all the realms.” Akira Sadakata, *Buddhist Cosmology: Philosophy and Origins* (Japan: Kosei Publishing Co., 1997), 151–152.

¹⁹⁴ As the element “roc-” has the same derivation as the Latin “lux” (light), the word “Vairocana” means “illuminating all places.” In Chinese Vairocana was translated as “*Da Ri Ru Lai* 大日如来.” See Sadakata, *Buddhist Cosmology*, 151–152.

According to the Mahāyāna Vinaya (precepts), the *Sūtra of the Perfect Net* (*Brahmajāla Sutta*), translated into Chinese by Kumārajīva (344–413 A.D.) also describes the science of a world which rests upon the lotus. It describes Vairocana Buddha sitting upon a great thousand-petaled lotus, each petal of which supports a world (Fig. 2.26).¹⁹⁵ It records that,

He (Vairocana Buddha) incarnates into one thousand Sākyamuni Buddhas, one for each of the worlds. On each petal, in each world, there are ten billion Mount Sumeru worlds. The Sākyamuni Buddhas each incarnate into ten billion Sākyamuni Bodhisattvas, who dwell within each of these Mount Sumeru worlds. The Sākyamuni Buddhas each incarnate into ten billion Sākyamuni Bodhisattvas, who dwell within each of these Mount Sumeru worlds. We therefore have a total of one Vairocana Buddha, one thousand Sākyamuni Buddhas, and ten trillion Sākyamuni Bodhisattvas.¹⁹⁶

The Jain sources also emphasize a spatial and numerical expansion beyond other systems.¹⁹⁷ Firstly, they use a different unit of measure for length, *rajju* (also *rāju*), which is defined as the distance travelled by a god in six continuous months at the rate of 2,057,152 yojanas per second. Thus, the Jain system's cosmos can be portrayed on a significantly more extensive scope (Fig. 2.27). There are innumerable continents, the circular continent (Jambudvīpa) with Meru at its center, and the outer continents that also have their own Meru along an east-west axis.¹⁹⁸ Moreover, the entire universe is embedded in the body of a cosmic man who is fourteen *rajjus* tall.¹⁹⁹ Our middle world is at the waist of this cosmic man, the hells descending toward its feet, and the heavens rising toward its crown.²⁰⁰ In addition, the innumerability of the continents and the immensity of Jain cosmology also served multiple purposes in Jain philosophy.²⁰¹

¹⁹⁵ Sadakata, *Buddhist Cosmology*, 153.

¹⁹⁶ Sadakata, *Buddhist Cosmology*, 153-154.

¹⁹⁷ Eric Huntington, *Creating the Universe: Depictions of the Cosmos in Himalayan Buddhism* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2019), 25.

¹⁹⁸ Julia A. B. Hegewald, "Images of the Cosmos: Sacred and Ritual Space in Jaina Temple Architecture in India," in *Heaven on Earth: Temples, Ritual, and Cosmic Symbolism in the Ancient World* (Chicago: The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 2012), 60.

¹⁹⁹ Huntington, *Creating the Universe*, 26.

²⁰⁰ Phyllis Granoff, ed. *Victorious Ones: Jain Images of Perfection* (New York: Rubin Museum of Art, 2009), 35–39.

²⁰¹ For example, this Jain system highlights the rare opportunity of human birth within the vastness of the cosmos, so as to comfort the practitioner that the universe is large enough to allow multiple enlightened teachers to exist simultaneously. See Phyllis Granoff, ed., *Victorious Ones: Jain Images of Perfection* (New York: Rubin Museum of Art, 2009), 43–45, 86.

In Pāli sources, Pāli Nikāyas mentions cosmic geography primarily in relation to the various beings that dwell within the hierarchically arranged realms, without explaining the structure of the universe systematically.²⁰² Buddhaghosa's *Path of Purification* dates from the fourth to fifth century, and describes a disc-shaped world 1,203,450 yojanas across, composed of successively denser layers of matter (Fig. 2.28).²⁰³ The Sineru, a mountain located at the centre, is surrounded by several mountain rings and oceans. Buddhaghosa notes that “our disc-shaped world is not unique but rather one of an infinite number of similar worlds adjacent to one another in the flat plane of space.”²⁰⁴ The Path of Purification provides a concise overview of the geographical cosmos without delving into every detail of this infinite world. This is because the features and workings of the world hold less significance than what they represent in terms of the journey towards achieving true liberation.²⁰⁵ As Eric Huntington points out, “In general, Buddhaghosa used cosmology as a way of characterizing the knowledge of the Buddha, not the world.”²⁰⁶ Buddhaghosa attempts to guide the reader to think of the “world's end” as a soteriological goal rather than a navigational one.²⁰⁷ At the turn of the fifth century, Vasubandhu makes a similar claim about the multiplicity of worlds in the *Treasury of Abhidharma* (*Skt. Abhidharmakośa* 阿毗達摩俱舍論)²⁰⁸ but in the section on the three *dhātus* (realms) rather than the section on geographic cosmology. As Eric Huntington points out, “This distinction is important because the claim is raised in the context of the innumerability of beings in the three realms and the indistinguishability of similar

²⁰² Rupert Gettin, “Cosmology and Meditation: From the Aggañña Sutta to the Mahāyāna,” *History of Religions* 36, no. 3 (1997): 186.

²⁰³ Huntington, *Creating the Universe*, 29.

²⁰⁴ *The Path of Purification*, 7.44. Cited in Eric Huntington, *Creating the Universe: Depictions of the Cosmos in Himalayan Buddhism* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2019), 29.

²⁰⁵ Huntington, *Creating the Universe*, 30.

²⁰⁶ Huntington, *Creating the Universe*, 30.

²⁰⁷ In *The Path of Purification* 7.36, “Tis utterly impossible to reach by travel the world's end; But there is no escape from pain until the world's end has been reached. It is a sage, a knower of the worlds, who gets to the world's end, and it is he whose life divine is lived out to its term; He is at peace who the world's end has known and hopes for neither this world nor the next.” See Eric Huntington, *Creating the Universe: Depictions of the Cosmos in Himalayan Buddhism* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2019), 29.

²⁰⁸ Chen Zhendi (陈真谛, 499–569 A.D.) translated *Treasury of Abhidharma* (阿毗达摩俱舍论 *Abhidharmakośa*) into Chinese, and Tangxuanzang (唐玄奘) was ordered to retranslate another Chinese version later. “The Treasury of Abhidharma is actually two works: a root text and the author's auto-commentary (bhāṣyam) on his own composition.”

states of existence between different universes — essentially a claim about the infinity of sentient existence rather than of the Buddha’s knowledge.”²⁰⁹

A picture called “map of the three realms and nine lands (三界九地之圖)” based on the *Treasury of Abhidharma* is preserved in Dunhuang Manuscripts, P. 2824 (Figure 2.29).²¹⁰ This map, while clearly showing the horizontal spatial view (a cross-section representing Mt. Sumeru, seven rings of mountain ranges, islands, seas and the cakkavala ring), clearly shows the vertical dimension. A series of heavens are superimposed on top of each other, beginning at the level of Mount Sumeru and extending upwards to the very farthest point of the universe. Mount Sumeru towers in the very center surface of the golden earth layer. The vertical stack of heavens are arranged in three parts : (1) “*Caturmahārājakāyika* (四大王天)” and “*Trāyastriṃśa* (忉利天)” located in Mount Sumeru, both belonging to the realm of desire (*kamadhatu*)²¹¹; (2) “The eighteen heavens (色界—十八天)” belonging to the realm of form (*Rūpadhātu*) which are divided into four levels of meditation realms (*dhyāna*): “the first *dhyana* (初禪三天),” “the second *dhyana* (二禪三天),” “the third *dhyana* (三禪三天),” “the fourth *dhyana* (四禪九天)”; (3) The uppermost of these eighteen heavens of the *Rūpadhātu* is the four heavens of formless realm (*Ārūpyadhātu*). There are four heavens of the formless realm. They are “Neither Consciousness nor Not-Consciousness,” “Realm of Nothingness,” “Infinity of Intellect,” “Infinity of Space.”

²⁰⁹ Huntington, *Creating the Universe*, 240.

²¹⁰ In the Dunhuang documents, in the preservation of this “three worlds and nine places of the map,” some scholars, according to the list of the title of the text, speculate that it is likely to be based on the Tang Xuanzang translation of the *Treasury of Abhidharma* and drawing is the Xuanzang disciples preaching the doctrine of the Kusha used as a kind of illustration of the lecture. See Tongqing Hu, “P.2824 《三界九地之圖》內容考證[An Examination of the Contents of the P.2824 Chart of the Three Realms and Nine Lands,” *Dunhuang Yanjiu* 敦煌研究 [Dunhuang Research], no. 4 (1996): 53-63.

²¹¹ The *Caturmahārājakāyika* gods located in the four terraces (*parisanda*) extend halfway up Mount Sumeru. The *Trāyastriṃśa* is located atop Mount Sumeru, and the ruler of the *Trāyastriṃśa* is Indra, who inhabits “the Palace of Victory (*Vaijayanta*).”

This “Map of the Three Realms and Nine Lands” also shows that the universe is a continuous mass without empty space. After all, the emptiness of the self (*atmasunyata*) is at the center of Hinayanist philosophy.²¹² While in the perspective of Mahayana cosmology, the universe has gaps and empty space (*Ākaśa*),²¹³ in this “Map of the Three Realms and Nine Lands” the formless realm at the very top is no longer represented by an architecture in Chinese style indicating its spatial location. The geographic location of the formless realm is also not given in the *Abhidharmakośa*, which considers the formless realm to be spatially undefined. In the eighth volume of *Abhidharmakośa*, it notes that these four heavens of formless realm (*Ārū pyadhātu*) are not abodes.²¹⁴ Akira Sadakata once concluded that the concept of the realm of formlessness is detached from the concept of space but it is not beyond the reach of time.²¹⁵ It means that the realm of formlessness transcends all geographical notions, which is not to say that the realm of formlessness is above the realm of form.²¹⁶ The way to attain “Four Formless Abodes” is through the corresponding kind of Samadhi.²¹⁷ “For example, when one has attained the *Āk āsa-ānantya-āyatana samādhi*, one dwells in the abode of the infinity of space. To enter this abode means that all thoughts of the realm of form are eliminated, and only infinite space remains.”²¹⁸ In this “Map of the Three Realms and Nine Lands,” the cosmic space that cannot be seen by human eyes is infinitely imagined and represented. The space reproduced in this map of the three realms and nine lands is actually the human beings’ subjective experience of the space. This map might be used to guide mediation.²¹⁹

²¹² W. Randolph Kloetzli, *Buddhist Cosmology: Science and Theology in the Images of Motion and Light* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1983), 45.

²¹³ Ibid.

²¹⁴ The original text in 《阿毘達磨俱舍論》卷8〈3分別世品〉：「無色界中都無有處，以無色法無有方所，過去未來無表無色不住方所，理決然故。但異熟生，差別有四：一[37]空無邊處、二[38]識無邊處、三[39]無所有處、四[40]非想非非想處，如是四種名無色界。此四非由處有上下，但由生故勝劣有殊。」(CBETA 2023.Q1, T29, no. 1558, p. 41a25-b1)[37] Ākāśānantyāyatana. [38] Vijñānānantyāyatana. [39] Ākiñcanayāyatana. [40] Naivasamjñānāsamjñāyatana.

²¹⁵ Akira Sadakata, *Buddhist Cosmology: Philosophy and Origins* (Japan: Kosei Publishing Co. 1997), 76.

²¹⁶ Sadakata, *Buddhist Cosmology*, 75.

²¹⁷ Sadakata, *Buddhist Cosmology*, 76.

²¹⁸ Ibid.

²¹⁹ Daniel Ryan Tuzzeo, “Crafting Cosmologies: Buddhist Cartography and the Spatial Imagination in Medieval China” (Ph.D. diss., Stanford University, 2020), 219.

Furthermore, this dissertation finds noteworthy the courageous vision given by the Buddhist cosmology to the question of the momentum of the universe. In the apocryphal thirtieth chapter of the *Lotus Sūtra on the Bodhisattva Aśvaghōṣa*, found in the Yuan Rong's copying sutra, S.4415 A, it describes "The World's Foundational discs." It is clearly described here that it is the "infinite wind" at the bottom of the universe that keeps the universe going:

The earth has a depth of twenty-trillion li. Below the earth is a disc of moisture with a depth of twenty-trillion li. Below the moisture is a disc of golden grain, with a depth of twenty-trillion li. Below the golden grain is a disc of vajra, with a depth of twenty-trillion li. Below the vajra disc is a disc of vast water, with a depth of eighty-trillion li. Below the water is the inexhaustible great wind disc, with a depth of 520-trillion li. This firmly supports the cosmos and ensures that it does not collapse.²²⁰

Buddhism also offers various speculations about the operation of this wind. One of these is that the operation of this wind is dependent on the karma of living beings. Another speculation is that the wind operates by the power of the Buddha's teachings.

In the first explanation for the dynamics of the universe in Buddhism, it is held that the universe operates according to the intentional actions (*karma*) of sentient beings. The *Abhidharma-kośa* notes that "the stars turn about Meru as though caught in a whirlpool." In Vasubandhu's explanation, our physical world rests on a disc of wind which is immeasurable in diameter, with a height of 1,600,000 yojanas (see Fig. 2.30).²²¹ This subtlest of the elements is established in empty space as a result of the intentional actions of sentient beings.²²² For this reason, the living being is considered to be a key element that constitutes the cosmos. This is also what makes Buddhist cosmology so different from modern scientific cosmology. In modern scientific cosmology, everything can work without the existence of living beings, whereas from

²²⁰ The original text in 《妙法蓮華經馬明菩薩品第三十》：「佛言。地深二十億萬里。地下有潤澤。深二十億萬里。澤下有金粟。深二十億萬里。金粟下有金剛。深二十億萬里。金剛下有大水。深八十億萬里。水下有無極大風。深五百二十億萬里。剛維天地制使不落。」(CBETA 2023.Q3, T85, no. 2899, p. 1426a14-18) The English translation of this passage references this article: Daniel Ryan Tuzzeo, "Crafting Cosmologies: Buddhist Cartography and the Spatial Imagination in Medieval China" (Ph.D. diss, Stanford University 2020), 269.

²²¹ Treasury 3.45.

²²² Huntington, *Creating the Universe*, 32.

the perspective of Buddhist cosmology, it is meaningless without living beings.²²³ In this cosmological system, the universe eternally repeats a cycle of fourfold changes depending on the force of *karma* (Fig. 2.31).²²⁴ A complete cycle lasts eighty intermediate *kalpas*, and each of the four periods lasts twenty intermediate *kalpas*.²²⁵ A Buddha can appear only during the *kalpa* of decrease within the Kalpa of Duration, when the human life span is between 80,000 and 100 years. But a Buddha does not appear in every *kalpa* of decrease.²²⁶

Buddhas do not appear during kalpas of increase, for then human beings are living longer and longer in a prosperous world, so they are content and in no frame of mind to listen to a buddha's teachings. Nor do they appear when the life span has sunk to between 100 and 10 years, for then human beings have become so inferior that they lack the ability to respond to the teachings. This is a time called the "evil world," permeated by five corruptions (*kasāyas*): the "corruption of life" (*āyus-kasāya*), because the human life span is short; the "corruption of the kalpa" (*kalpa-kasāya*), because the natural environment worsens; the "corruption of the passions" (*klesa kasāya*), because beings pursue only pleasure; the "corruption of views" (*drsti-kasāya*), because religious practitioners pursue false opinions; and the "corruption of living beings" (*sattva -kasāya*), because beings are physically and mentally inferior.²²⁷

In other words, in Hīnayāna cosmology, "*karma* (action)"²²⁸ these are works without the need for a god-like arbitrator.²²⁹ The Buddha appears and disappears in the universe.²³⁰ According to the Vasubandhu's Treasury of Abhidharma (*Abhidharma-kośa*), the Buddha achieves liberation from the three realms of desire, form and formlessness and returns to nothingness (termed *nirupadhisesa nirvāna*, "nirvāna without residue"), which is the goal of Hīnayāna Buddhists.²³¹

²²³ Sadakata, *Buddhist Cosmology*, 69.

²²⁴ Sadakata, *Buddhist Cosmology*, 99.

²²⁵ Ibid.

²²⁶ Sadakata, *Buddhist Cosmology*, 108.

²²⁷ Ibid.

²²⁸ "When the karma of living beings that created the world is finally exhausted (because there are no more living beings in the world), seven suns appear and burn up the wind circle, water circle, golden earth layer, Mount Sumeru, the four landmasses, and the Brahmā palace at the highest point of the First Dhyāna heavens. Beings who escaped, so to speak, to the Second Dhyāna heavens can evade this catastrophe." See Akira Sadakata, *Buddhist Cosmology: Philosophy and Origins* (Japan: Kosei Publishing Co. 1997), 102.

²²⁹ Sadakata, *Buddhist Cosmology*, 71.

²³⁰ Sadakata, *Buddhist Cosmology*, 113.

²³¹ Sadakata, *Buddhist Cosmology*, 115.

In the alternative explanation given by Buddhist cosmology, the universe is considered to be sustained by the power of dharma. This cosmology could be called “asaṅkhyeya cosmology” or Mahāyāna Buddhism cosmology. As Randolph Kloetzli said, “all beings are ‘fixed’ in the state of enlightenment when touched by the rays of light issued by the Buddha. Here there is a dramatic identification between light and the teaching. In this context, however, it is the teaching itself which is efficacious, and not the ability of beings to master and comprehend it.”²³² In the cosmology of Mahāyāna (“great vehicle”) Buddhism,²³³ there is not one Buddha but many Buddhas in the universe. There are various Buddha-realms (Buddha-lands or pure lands), and the Buddha is an eternal supra-human (cosmological) existence.²³⁴ In Mahāyāna Buddhism, salvation could be obtained through the Buddha’s teachings.²³⁵ This is unlike Hīnayāna Buddhism, where salvation must be achieved by one’s own efforts.²³⁶ In other words, Mahāyāna Buddhism offers a chance to the masses who cannot acquire the intelligence for Buddhist philosophy and practice.²³⁷

In short, this chapter indicates that the intellectual community of the Northern Qi had already gained a deeper understanding of the “*three theories of heaven* 論天三說” put forward by the intelligentsia of Han dynasty. Among these three theories, the viewpoint on which the “Xuaneye school” was based had already attracted the special attention of the intellectuals of the sixth century. The space understood by the “Xuaneye school” was also completely different from the absolute space understood by the people in the time of Newton and Descartes. Moreover, the Buddhist vision of infinite cosmic space, which could not be seen by the human eye at the beginning of the fifth century, further prompted the Chinese of the fifth and sixth centuries to realize that space was not homogeneous, isotropic, and static. Space was seen by the

²³² W. Randolph Kloetzli, *Buddhist Cosmology: Science and Theology in the Images of Motion and Light* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1983), 134.

²³³ Mahāyāna Buddhism originated in India around the first century A.D. and can be classically divided into three periods: early or dynamic (1st to 4th centuries A.D.), middle or scholastic (4th to mid-7th centuries A.D.), and late or esoteric (mid-7th to early 13th centuries A.D.). See Akira Sadakata, *Buddhist Cosmology: Philosophy and Origins* (Japan: Kosei Publishing, 1997), 113.

²³⁴ Sadakata, *Buddhist Cosmology*, 19; 113.

²³⁵ Sadakata, *Buddhist Cosmology*, 118.

²³⁶ Sadakata, *Buddhist cosmology*, 117.

²³⁷ Sadakata, *Buddhist cosmology*, 125.

Chinese people at this time as a fluid, heterogeneous entity. The understanding of space at this time is closer to relative space than to absolute space. It was quite different from the Euclidean geometric space assumed by European perspective. This also means that the drawing technique of linear perspective was fundamentally unadoptable by the Chinese at this time.

Chapter 3. Space in Chinese Context

The questions this chapter will explore are what kinds of spatial vocabularies emerged from the basic perceptions and understandings of space developed during the Six Dynasties? How did art critics of the Six Dynasties use these spatial vocabularies?

In the tradition of Western phonocentrism, the study of modern linguistics has been dominated by theoretical models based on Indo-European languages.²³⁸ It focuses on the influence exerted on words by an overall system external to the words. The basic idea is that the meaning of a script symbol comes from the differences of the symbol itself in the whole symbol system, and it is these differences that determine what kind of meaning the system will assign to a certain script symbol. Little consideration is given to how the internal compositional mechanisms of a script symbol affect the meaning it can carry. Fortunately, the views of the phonocentrists have been forcefully refuted by Derrida in his *Of Grammatology*. The richness of the internal structure of the Chinese character, which is quite different from that of English, continues to compel scholars to pay attention to the internal structure of the Chinese character.

In recent years, many materials provided by Chinese paleographers have demonstrated the richness of the internal mechanism of the Chinese character symbol, which was originally the result of a long evolution of non-phonetic symbols. Chinese characters were not a tool serving the recording of speech sounds. Chinese characters exist primarily as a “written script” rather than a “spoken language.” In other words, Chinese characters are not purely arbitrary symbols but rather symbols that retain their original rationale and usage. The Chinese characters themselves retain a rich association with their cultural context. It is this characteristic that gives us an additional channel to approach the original context that we want to understand.

²³⁸ Saussure defined the scope of his research as the phonetic system, and the system that stems from the Greek alphabet. See Ferdinand de Saussure, *Course in general linguistics*, trans. Wade Baskin (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), 26.

Unlike the fractured history of the Latin alphabet and hieroglyphics, the gradual evolution of Chinese characters through oracle bone, *jinwen*, seal script, official script, and regular script forms a relatively continuous and complete historical lineage.²³⁹ In terms of historical evolution, Chinese characters have gone through four different stages: inscribed characters, pictograms (hieroglyphic characters), ideograms, and sound symbols (modern simplified characters). Each transition of Chinese characters to the next stage is closely related to the transformation of Chinese culture.²⁴⁰

Among them, oracle bone scripts and Chinese bronze inscriptions were used in the Shang and Zhou Dynasties, which appeared on tortoise shells and metal ritual objects used for divination, and their manner of expressing meaning depended not only on the hieroglyphs themselves but also on the ceremonial scenes in which they were located.²⁴¹ In other words, the meaning of hieroglyphs at this time was realized by the verbal, actional, instrumental and pictorial ritual symbols within a ritual scene.²⁴² The pictograph of oracle bone scripts and Chinese bronze inscriptions existed as a medium of communication between humans and gods. The priests, sorcerers or kings at that time proved that their rights were divinely authorized and legitimate by mastering these hieroglyphs. In the words of Zhang Guangzhi, the use of writing at this time was not aimed at enlightenment but at domination.²⁴³ The oracle bone scripts cannot be examined without the ritual symbolic field in which they are located. The ritual “semiosphere” to which the oracle bone scripts are subordinated consists of three aspects.²⁴⁴ The first is the behavioral aspect of on-the-

²³⁹ Yirong Hu, “Fuhao Daerwen Zhuyi Jiqi Fansi Jiyu Hanzi Yanhua Shengtai De Fuhaoxue Jiexi 符号达尔文主义及其反思:基于汉字演化生态的符号学解析 [Symbolic Darwinism and Its Rethinking: A Semiotic Analysis Based on the Evolutionary Ecology of Chinese characters],” *Lanzhou Daxue Xuebao (Shehui Kexue Ban)* 兰州大学学报(社会科学版) [*Journal of Lanzhou University (Social Sciences)*] 46, no. 3 (2018): 160.

²⁴⁰ Hua Meng, *Hanzi Zhudao de Wenhua Fuhao Puxi* 汉字主导的文化符号谱系 [The Genealogy of Cultural Symbols Dominated by Chinese Characters] (Jinan: Shandong Education Press, 2014).

²⁴¹ Meng, *Hanzi Zhudao de Wenhua Fuhao Puxi*, 4.

²⁴² Meng, *Hanzi Zhudao de Wenhua Fuhao Puxi*, 5.

²⁴³ Guangzhi Zhang, *Meishu Shenhua Yu Jisi* 美术、神话与祭祀 [Fine Arts, Myths and Rituals] (Shenyang: Liaoning Education Publishing House, 2002), 61.

²⁴⁴ The concept of the “semiosphere” is a term from cultural semiotics proposed by Juri Lotman. See Vladimir E. Alexandrov, “Biology, Semiosis, and Cultural Difference in Lotman’s Semiosphere,” *Comparative Literature* 52, no. 4 (2000): 339

spot speech, such as the singing of prayers, incantations, and chants. The second aspect is the broader visual symbolic phenomena, such as physical acts like dances, worship, and performances with magic weapons, as well as the accompanying offerings, images, music, ritual objects, and architecture. The third aspect refers to the oracle bone scripts.

This ritual-symbolic field of multiple symbols, which Prof. Jan Assmann has referred to as an institutionalized expansive context, is generally dominated by the oral language.²⁴⁵ Herbert Marshall McLuhan has also argued that people living in this ritual symbolic field dominated by the spoken word are involved in a collective unconscious. It is a world patterned by myth as well as ritual, with a sacred and unchallenged value system.²⁴⁶ People living in such a society have, for very practical reasons, developed senses of touch, taste, hearing, and smell that are more developed than strictly visual.²⁴⁷ It was only at the stage of needing to be literate that people began to use their eyes more than their ears, and vision was placed at the top of the hierarchy of the sensory system. In McLuhan's view, phonetic writing in particular:

fell like a bombshell, installing sight at the head of the hierarchy of senses.

Literacy propelled man from the tribe, gave him an eye for an ear and replaced his integral in-depth communal interplay with visual linear values and fragmented consciousness. As an intensification and amplification of the visual function, the phonetic alphabet diminished the role of the senses of hearing and touch and taste and smell, permeating the discontinuous culture of tribal man and translating its organic harmony and complex synaesthesia into the uniform, connected and visual mode that we still consider the norm of 'rational' existence.²⁴⁸

²⁴⁵ Jan Assmann, "Lesende und nicht lesende Gesellschaften: zur Entwicklung der Notation von Gedächtnisinhalten," *Forschung & Lehre* 1 (1994): S. 28–31.

²⁴⁶ Eric McLuhan and Frank Zingrone, *Essential McLuhan* (Routledge, 1995), 364.

²⁴⁷ McLuhan and Zingrone, *Essential McLuhan*, 364.

²⁴⁸ McLuhan and Zingrone, *Essential McLuhan*, 364.

McLuhan also points out that phonetic scripts are fundamentally different from sacred scripts and hieroglyphics, in that visual functions can overdevelop in the use of phonetic scripts in a way that does not occur in other scripts.²⁴⁹

By the time of Confucius, the ritual symbolic field was in decline and “the rites and music were in ruins (禮崩樂壞),” so Confucius deplored this phenomenon.²⁵⁰ But it was also at this time that the literati class, represented by Confucius, was born, which made writing its profession. By organizing the six scriptures (Liu Jing), these first prophets of the writing era took the Chinese character out of its previous ritualistic context and assumed the task of conveying information, thus becoming the dominant type of the symbolic field of Chinese culture.²⁵¹ Another important figure in this phase was Xu Shen of the Eastern Han Dynasty, author of *Shuowen Jiezi* (Explaining Graphs and Analyzing Characters), who systematically sorted out the connections and changes in the form and sound of the Chinese characters from the pre-Qin Dynasty to the Han Dynasty, emphasizing that the Chinese characters were the “foundation of scripture and art (經藝之本).”²⁵²

According to the “Oracle Bone Script Collection and Interpretation” in the Oracle bone scripts of the Shang Dynasty, phonetic compound characters only accounted for 37 percent. In the *Shuowen Jiezi* (Explaining Graphs and Analyzing Characters), however, 80 percent of the characters are phonetic compound characters.²⁵³ Zhao Yuanren had conducted a semiotic analysis of the character creation methods, namely pictographs, ideographs, compound ideographs, and phonetic compounds. He pointed out that except for the pictographs, which retained the rationality of likeness on the appearance, the types of characters can be

²⁴⁹ McLuhan, and Zingrone, *Essential McLuhan*, 365.

²⁵⁰ When Zhao Yang, a reformer of the state of Jin, issued a legal document called the “*Book of Punishment* (刑書)” and engraved it on a tripod made of iron, Confucius exclaimed “Jin is dead, and has lost its measure!” See *Zuo Zhuan*, 2124–2125.

²⁵¹ Meng, *Hanzi Zhudao de Wenhua Fuhao Puxi*, 6.

²⁵² Xu Shen, Preface to *Shuowen Jiezi*.

²⁵³ There are only 432 pictographs in modern Chinese characters that still retain the rationality of likeness, and 90 percent of the characters are phonetic compounds. See Shuda Yang, *Zhongguo Wenzhi Xue Gaiyao* 中国文字学概要 [Outline of Chinese Philology] (Changsha: Hunan Renmin Chubanshe, 2010), 38.

categorized as various kinds of indices developed on the basis of the pictographs.²⁵⁴ Accordingly, Prof. Zhao Yiheng argues that Chinese characters actually follow Pierce’s symbolic trichotomy, evolving from icons to indices, and finally to symbols.²⁵⁵ In the following section, we will first examine the internal composition of these Chinese characters that cover the concept of “space.”

3.1 Internal Reconstruction of Spatial Vocabulary

The English word “space” is commonly translated as “*kongjian* 空間” in modern Chinese. During the Six Dynasties period, the word “*kongjian* 空間” appeared only once in the *Scripture of Contemplating the Buddha and the Samadhi Sea* (佛說觀佛三昧海經) translated into Chinese by Buddhahadra in 398–421 A.D., during the Eastern Jin Dynasty, and the rest of the 568 usages appeared in Buddhist texts after the Tang Dynasty. The word “*kongjian*” was not yet used extensively in the non-religious texts during the Six Dynasties period. The Chinese vocabulary increased dramatically as a result of the translation of the Buddhist scriptures.²⁵⁶ One of the most frequently used words containing the concept of “space” in Chinese translations of Buddhist texts from the Six Dynasties period is “*shijie* 世界,” which appears 13,688 times in Buddhist texts during the Six Dynasties period. The most frequently used words containing the concept of “space” in non-religious texts at this time are “*yuzhou* 宇宙,” “*liuhe* 六合,” and “*qiankun* 乾坤.”

The most frequently used word with the meaning of “space” in ancient Chinese texts of the Six Dynasties period is “*yu* 宇,” with at least 600 occurrences in non-religious texts of the Six Dynasties period and before, and 139 occurrences in

²⁵⁴ Yuanren Zhao, *Language and Symbolic Systems* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968), 103–104.

²⁵⁵ Yiheng Zhao, *Fuhao Xue Yuanli yu Tuiyan* 符号学原理与推演 [Semiotics Principles and Problems] (Nanjing: Nanjing University Press, 2011), 87.


²⁵⁶ According to Liang Qichao’s statistics, the increase was more than 35,000. See Qichao Liang, “Drinking Ice Room Monographs,” in *Buddhist Studies at Eighteen* (Zhonghua Shuju, 1989), 25

Buddhist texts. In the next section, we will first examine the vocabulary of “space” used during the Six Dynasties period from the word “*yu* 宇.”

The earliest explanation of “*yu* 宇” in the ancient Chinese context is found in the book “*Mozi-Canon I* (墨子閑詁•經上),” which was written in Warring States (475 B.C.–221 B.C.) during the Warring States period. The book reads, “Time: spreads over different periods. Space: spreads over different places (久, 彌異時也。宇, 彌異所也).” The meaning is that “*Yu*” spreads over different places. In *Mozi-Exposition of Canon I* (墨子閑詁•經說上), it is further written: “*Yu* (space), covers east and west, south and north (宇: 東西家南北)” makes it even clearer that these different directions are those that include the center, east and west, south and north. The untranslated word “home (*jia* 家)” in the middle of the sentence requires special attention, as it indicates to us the indispensability of the position of the human being as the subject of speech and observation. The position of the word “home (*jia* 家)” points to the fact that the so-called east, west, north and south orientations are all based on the subject’s position “home (*jia* 家)” as a reference point. In the *Mozi-Canon II*, which further explains the word “*yu* 宇,” the original text reads: “*Yu* (Space) involves movement in location. The explanation lies in length in terms of both extension and duration (宇: 或徙, 說在長宇久).” The explanation here is that “*yu* 宇” involves movement in location. This statement shows that at least since the Warring States period, the Chinese have always taken time into account when talking about space. This shows once again that “*yu* 宇” space was understood by the people at this time as an appearance or surface of time.²⁵⁷ In explaining time, space is also

²⁵⁷ However, in the English context, the word “space” itself originally referred only to space and not to time. It was not until the modern era that time and space began to be discussed together. However, in the ancient Chinese context, the discussion of space cannot be separated from the discussion of time, and space is regarded as the appearance of time.

indispensable. In the *Shuowen Jiezi* (Explanation of Characters), “*zhou* 宙” is interpreted as “zhou, the pole of a boat or a carriage, also covered.” The area covered by a movable ship or vehicle is classified as “*zhou* 宙.” In other words, the movement of space was used to represent time. This idea is also shown in the oracle bone script writing of “*zhou* 宙 (time).”

At the end of the Warring States period, the spatial scope of the concept of “Yu” was further expanded to include up and down. Lyu Buwei (292 BC–235 BC), in the “*Lyu Shi Chun Qiu* (吕氏春秋),” clearly wrote: “four sides of the upper and lower said yu (四方上下曰宇).” Based on the previous four directions of east, west, north and south, the two directions of up and down were added to form “yu 宇.” This interpretation of “yu” also continued in the texts of the Western Han dynasty (202 B.C.–8 A.D.). For example, in the “*Huainanzi*,” there is this sentence: “the past and the present shall be called Zeus, and the four directions and the upper and lower parts of the earth shall be called Yu (往古來今謂之宙，四方上下謂之宇).” When the concept of “yu” involves the six directions, “Yu” has a synonym “*Liuhe* 六合.” When more directions are involved, “yu” has the synonyms “*Qiankun* 乾坤” and “*World* 世界.” In the *Shuowen Jiezi*, written by Xu Shen, the word “yu 宇” is interpreted as follows: “Yu is defined as the edge part of the house. It comes from the 宀 (宇, 屋边也. 于声).” The oracle is , which consists of two parts: “宀” and “于.” “宀” looks like a side view of the roof structure of a house, indicating a place with a cover on the upper part. Next, let’s examine the six directions contained in “yu 宇”: “East (*dong* 東),” “West (*xi* 西),” “South (*nan* 南),” “North (*bei* 北),” “Up (*shang* 上),” and “Down (*xia* 下).”

“East (*Dong* 東)” was interpreted by Xu Shen in the *Shuowen Jiezi* as compound ideograph.²⁵⁸ The middle part of the character “*dong* 东” is written as “日” in the official script of the character “*dong* 东” (see Appendix 2.1a). The character is written in such a way as to simulate the sight of the sun between the trunk and the crown of a tree. It is like an imitation of what one sees at sunrise in the morning when the sun has just risen over the horizon and is not yet high enough to reach the branches of the tree. In Xu Shen’s *Shuowen Jiezi*, the word “*xi* 西” is interpreted as a pictographic character that a bird rests on its nest when the sun is in the west.²⁵⁹ Think of the written form of the word “west 西” “ as the birds returning to their nests and resting in the trees as the sun sets in the west (see Appendix 2.1b). In Xu Shen’s *Shuowen Jiezi*, “*nan* 南” is interpreted as pictograph that the trees planted in the warm south will grow well and flourish (see Appendix 2.1d).²⁶⁰ In Xu Shen’s *Shuowen Jiezi*, “*Bei* 北” is interpreted as two people who are facing each other (see Appendix 2.1c).²⁶¹ In *Shuowen Jiezi*, the phonetic compound character “*jia* 家” is interpreted as a place where people could live.²⁶²

It can be seen that the above explanations given by Xu Shen are all centred around the “everyday memory” of the space in which ordinary Han Chinese lived. They all come from the spatial experience of people’s daily lives in the agricultural era when they went out at sunrise and came back at sunset.



²⁵⁸ The original text: “東：動也。从木。” See Xu Shen 许慎, *Shuowen Jiezi 说文解字* [Discussing Writing and Explaining Characters].

²⁵⁹ The original text: “西，鳥在巢上。象形。日在西方而鳥棲，故因以為東西之西。” Xu Shen 许慎, *Shuowen Jiezi 说文解字* [Discussing Writing and Explaining Characters].

²⁶⁰ The original text: “艸木至南方，有枝任也。” Xu Shen 许慎, *Shuowen Jiezi 说文解字* [Discussing Writing and Explaining Characters].

²⁶¹ The original text: “北，乖也。從二人相背。” Xu Shen 许慎, *Shuowen Jiezi 说文解字* [Discussing Writing and Explaining Characters].

²⁶² The original text: “家，居也，從宀，豕省聲。” Xu Shen 许慎, *Shuowen Jiezi 说文解字* [Discussing Writing and Explaining Characters].

However, if we look at the words “east, west, south and north” inscribed on oracle bones and bronze objects, there is another interpretation of what these words represent. The meaning of these characters can be interpreted in another way. Firstly, let’s take a look at the oracle bone inscriptions of the character “*dong* 东” (see app.2.1a). Ding Shan, in his *Shuo Wen Queyi Jian* (说文阙义笺), quotes Xu Zhongshu as saying, “*dong*, the ancient word for bag (東, 古囊字。).” “The object is in a bag, encompassing its two ends. The East of *Dong* mimic it (实物囊中, 括其两端。東形象之).²⁶³ It is believed that the image of “*dong* 东” inscribed on the oracle bones and bronze objects is imitating a parcel that wraps something with its ends bound. Among them, “ “ represents the belly of the bag, and the interlocking lines in the center imitate the lines around the bag; the upper and lower “木” shapes imitate the binding of ropes. With regard to the oracle bone inscription of “*xi* 西” (see app.2.1b), Tanglan suggests that it may here represent ceremonial ding tripods.²⁶⁴ The “*Bei* 北” inscriptions on oracle bones and bronze objects are written in a way that simulates two people standing with their backs to each other (see app.2.1c). Tang Lan in the “interpretation of the names of the four directions” gives the following explanation: “The character for north is  , which resembles two people standing with their backs to each other.”²⁶⁵ According to the “*nan* 南” inscriptions on oracle bones and bronze objects (see app.2.1d), there is also another interpretation, which suggests that it denotes musical instruments made of tiles. For example, Guo Moruo, in his

²⁶³ Lan Tang, “Shi Sifang Zhiming 释四方之名 [Interpreting the Names of the Four Directions]” in *The Complete Works of Tang Lan 2 – Essays on 1935–1948* (Shanghai: Ancient Books Publishing House, 2015), 526.

²⁶⁴ Tang, “Shi Sifang Zhiming,” 527.

²⁶⁵ Tang, “Shi Sifang Zhiming,” 528.

Study of Oracle Bone Characters, also argues: “From the image of the character I think it is a musical instrument such as a bell and cymbalt.”²⁶⁶ Because in the oracle bone writing way of “nan 南,” the bottom part of “𠂔” is “𠂔” which looks like an inverted tile vessel. The middle part of this vessel is empty and makes a sound when it is struck. The upper part of “𠂔” is “𠂔” which looks like a rope hanging the vessel. According to the writing version of the inscription on oracle bones and bronze objects of “jia 家,” the explanation given by Tang Lan is “jia, like the image of 豕 (boar) in the middle of 宀.”²⁶⁷ It looks like a scene where a pig is placed under a roof for sacrifice.

If we take into account the ritual symbolic field in which the oracle bone is located to understand the oracle bone image of east “dong 東,” west “xi 西,” south “nan 南,” north “bei 北,” and home “jia 家” contained in “yu 宇” as a whole, we will find that some of the previous puzzling points can be explained. When these oracle bone symbols are considered together in a ritual context, they take on a complete unity of meaning: that is, together they constitute a ritual space centered on the place of sacrifice, “home 家.” The oracle bone image of “dong 東” indicates the direction in which the ritual objects are hung in this ritual space; the oracle bone inscription of “xi 西” indicates the position of the tripod used in the ritual ceremony; the oracle bone inscription of “nan 南” indicates the direction where the musical instruments are placed; the oracle bone inscription of “bei 北” indicates the direction where people sit with their backs to the musical instruments.

²⁶⁶ Tang, “Shi Sifang Zhiming,” 527.

²⁶⁷ Lan Tang, “Tianxiangge Jiaguwen Cunbing Kaoshi 天壤阁甲骨文存并考释 [Examination and Interpretation of Oracle Bone Writings of Tianyangge],” (Shanghai: Shanghai Guji Chubanshe, 2016), 168.

It can be seen that Xu Shen's interpretation in his *Shuowen jiezi* during the Eastern Han period seems to have been an intentional attempt to convert the memory of the special ritual space implied by the oracle bone inscriptions into the "everyday memory" of the space in which an ordinary Chinese after the Han Dynasty would have lived. This space was constructed on the basis of people's daily experience of going out at sunrise and coming back at sunset during the agricultural era. It was far from the world of myths and divination, which lacked effective knowledge accumulation. As Jan Assmann puts it, "Words do not provide meaning and knowledge on a lasting basis, and once knowledge is disintegrated, words become an unstructured, polysemous mass of symbols. The text is readable not because of the text itself, but because of the derived culture of memory and the institutionalization of its expanded communicative context."²⁶⁸

3.2 Space in Art Criticism of the Six Dynasties

Next, we will look at the use of the spatial vocabulary developed during the Six Dynasties in art criticism. First of all, we find that the word "*Kong Jian* 空间" brought in by Buddhism had not yet been used by art critics at this time. In Gu Kai Zhi's (348–405 A.D.) "Record of Painting Yun Tai Mountain," specific words of orientation such as "east, west, south, north, up, down," are frequently used. In his famous Six Principles of Painting, Xie He (479–502 A.D.) used the word "position," which contains the meaning of "space." In the following, we will examine how these art critics of the Six Dynasties used these spatial vocabularies in their criticism.

Spatial Organization for Gu Kaizhi

In the previous scholarship, under the vision of perspective, Alexander C. Soper suggests that Gu Kai Zhi's "Discussion of Paintings (Lun Hua 论画)" may have

²⁶⁸Jan Assmann, "You Wenzi he Wu Wenzi de Shehui 有文字的和无文字的社会——对记忆的记录及其发展 [Written and unwritten societies—the recording of memory and its development]," trans. Wang Xiaobing, *Journal of Ocean University of China* (Social Sciences) 6 (2004): 74; Jan Assmann, "Lesende und nicht lesende Gesellschaften: zur Entwicklung der Notation von Gedächtnisinhalte," *Forschung & Lehre* 1 (1994): S. 28–31.

involved “an interest in space relationship.” Because he believes that Gu Kai Zhi, when discussing the painting Zhou Benji, said: “The content of the painting Zhou Benji is extensive, but each part is closely connected and harmoniously integrated. The structure between each part is reasonable. However, the depiction of figures in terms of their appearance is not as good as that in the painting Xiao Lie Nv (重疊彌綸, 有骨法, 然人形不如小列女也).”²⁶⁹ And here Soper used the term “piling up, or overlapping” to translate the “*chong die mi lun* 重疊彌綸.” This is how Soper understands the term: “The phrase, which here must refer to figure arrangement, is the same one that in later literature is habitually employed to describe the overlapping of mountain shapes, rising higher as they recede.”²⁷⁰ Since the phrase “*chong die mi lun* 重疊彌綸” comes from the essay “*Lun Hua* 论画” which is an essay on figure painting, this sentence is discussing the organization of the figures, not the composition of the mountains. In the phrase “overlapping (重疊彌綸),” “*mi* (彌)” means to sew together, and “*lun* (綸)” means to pull by the thread. In “*Zhou Yi* (周易),” there is the phrase “the way of heaven and earth (彌綸天地之道).” In this context, “*mi lun* 彌綸” means that the figures are closely related to each other, as an organically connected whole. It does not mean that they are overlapping. Therefore, Soper’s interpretation of Gu Kaizhi’s phrase “*chong die mi lun* (重疊彌綸),” according to the composition of layers of mountains, was not in line with Gu Kaizhi’s original meaning.

²⁶⁹ Zhang Yanyuan, *A Record of the Famous Painters of all the Dynasties*, Vol. 5.

²⁷⁰ Alexander C. Soper, “Life-motion and the Sense of Space in Early Chinese Representational Art,” *The Art Bulletin* 30, no. 3 (1948): 176.

Additionally, in a common type of discussion influenced by Renaissance linear perspectives, scholars attach great importance to the term “near and far” as it appears in the criticism on painting. For example, the appearance of the term “near and far” in the sentence “Going west from the mountain, carefully observe the near and far (日西去山，別詳其遠近.)” in Gu Kaizhi’s *Records of Painting Yuntai Mountain*(畫雲臺山記) of the Eastern Jin Dynasty (348–405) has been regarded by many scholars as a signal of the artist’s interest in the expression of spatial depth at this time.²⁷¹ However, if one reads through the entire text of Gu Kaizhi’s “Record of Painting Yuntai Mountain,” one realizes that the term “near and far” here does not actually refer to near and far in the direction of the depth of space perpendicular to the plane of the painting, as implied by the perspective view. The understanding of some scholars in the past has been suspected of being taken out of the original context. It is therefore necessary to review the original text of this article by Gu Kaizhi, *Records of Painting Yuntai Mountain*.

Gu Kaizhi’s *Records of Painting Yuntai Mountain* has been proofread many times by scholars such as Guo Lao, Fu Baoshi, Wu Lifu, Zhao Gang, Yu Jianhua, Ma Cai and so on.²⁷² Among them, Fu Baoshi most vigorously disputed the reading of the Japanese scholar Ise Senichiro’s reading of “A Record of Painting Yuntai

²⁷¹ Jianyu Zhang, *HanTang Meishu Kongjian Biaoxian Yanjiu yi Dunhuang Bihua wei Zhongxin* 汉唐美术空间表现研究以敦煌壁画为中心 [Representation of Space in Chinese Art from the Han to the Tang Dynasty: a Study Based on Dunhuang Murals] (Beijing: Renmin University of China Press, 2018), 357–359.

²⁷² Jianhua Yu, *Gu Kaizhi Ziliao Yanjiu* 顾恺之研究资料 [Research Materials on Gu Kaizhi] (People’s Fine Arts Publishing, 1962); Cai Ma, “Gu Kaizhi Hua Yuntaishan Ji Jiaoshi 顾恺之《画云台山记》校释 [Gu Kaizhi’s Record of Painting Yuntai Mountain],” *Journal of Sun Yat-sen University* (Social Science Edition) 3 (1979): 105, 112.

Mountain.”²⁷³ Fu Baoshi, according to the Qing Jiaqing ten years (1805) Zhang Haipeng *Xue Jing Tao Yuan* (學津討源) version, as well as the Republic of China nine years (1920) Shanghai Tongwen Library photocopies of *Qin Ding Pei Wen Zhai Shuhua Pu* (欽定佩文齋書畫譜) version, carefully proofreads Gu Kaizhi’s *Records of Painting Yuntai Mountain* and paints a scroll painting based on this record (see Fig.3.2-1). He was the first to suggest that the term “*Chao Sheng* 超昇” in the text should be “*Zhao Sheng* 趙昇.” This speculation was later confirmed by many scholars who found the specific literature record. Some scholars have pointed out that in Feng Menglong’s *Yu Shi Ming Yan*, there is a record of “Zhang Daoling’s Seven Tests of Zhao Sheng.” There is also a record in the later *Taiping Huan Yu Ji*, Volume 86. In Ge Hong’s *Shen Xian Zhuan*, Volume 4, “Zhang Daoling’s Biography,” there are also detailed records. This further identifies the scene depicted in the *Record of Painting Yuntai Mountain* as the scene in which the Taoist master Zhang Daoling tested his disciples Wang Chang and Zhao Sheng seven times.

Based on the aforementioned proofreading of the *Record of Painting Yuntai Mountain* by many scholars, the text can now be divided into five paragraphs (see Appendix 3). Fu Baoshi has already pointed out that this article from the first paragraph to the fourth paragraph detailed an account of the picture from the nearest right hand side to the farthest left hand side, from east to west, and the fifth paragraph

²⁷³ Fu Baoshi and his teacher Seigo Kinbara (1888–1958) both believed that the Record of Painting Yuntai Mountain was not a non-realistic work as best understood by Ise Senichiro (1891–1948), but rather a concrete and detailed nature-based design for a landscape painting. See Baoshi Fu, *Zhongguo Gudai Shanshui Huashi de Yanjiu* 中国古代山水画史的研究 [A Study of the History of Ancient Chinese Landscape Painting] (Shanghai: Shanghai People Fine Arts Publishing House, 1960), 15. After clarifying some of Ise Senichiro’s misinterpretations of Gu Kaizhi’s Record of Painting of Yuntai Mountain, Fu Baoshi continued his research for more than six years and painted a scroll entitled Painting of Yuntai Mountain.

is to summarize the whole picture and make some additions.²⁷⁴ Although Fu Baoshi's reading of *Record of Painting Yuntai Mountain* has some overcorrections, later scholars also agree with Fu Baoshi's above understanding. Some later scholars made further revisions. Ma Cai integrates the opinions of these scholars and reads the *Record of Painting Yuntai Mountain* again.²⁷⁵ It is now clear that in the first paragraph, the phrase "Going west from the mountain, carefully observe the near and far (曰西去山, 別詳其遠近)" refers to the horizontal direction of the picture plane, from right to left, one by one, depicting the view from the near east toward the far west. Therefore, the phrase "near and far (遠近)" here should refer to the horizontal direction of the picture plane, from the beginning of the right hand to the left hand, from near to far, and is not about the depth of the vertical direction to the back of the picture plane.

Reading through the entire text of the *Record of Painting Yuntai Mountain*, one can repeatedly see that the "east-west" direction of Gu Kaizhi's planning is the "near and far" along the horizontal direction of the long side of the picture plane. The "near and far" is the near and far in relation to the right hand of the artist holding the brush; the right-hand side of the brush is the near side and the left-hand side is the far side. The "up and down" of Gu Kaizhi's plan is the "near and far" in the vertical direction along the short side of the picture. The only thing that is not discussed here is the "near and far" in the direction of depth towards the back of the picture plane.

²⁷⁴ Baoshi Fu, "Zhongguo Gudai Shanshui Huashi de Yanjiu 中国古代山水画史的研究 [A Study of the History of Ancient Chinese Landscape Painting]," (Shanghai: Shanghai People Fine Arts Publishing House, 1960), 19–24.

²⁷⁵ Cai Ma, "Gu Kaizhi Hua Yuntaishan Ji Jiaoshi 顾恺之《画云台山记》校释 [Gu Kaizhi's Record of Painting Yuntai Mountain]," *Journal of Sun Yat-sen University* (Social Science Edition), no.3 (1979): 105–112.

This indicates that Gukaizhi is intentionally trying to preserve the flatness of the two-dimensional picture plane, and does not want to break it, so he avoids showing the dimension of the depth towards the back of the picture plane.

With this, we can also understand that in the painting titled “Palace Ladies Adoring Their Face (飾容)” in *The Admonitions Scroll* attributed to Gu Kaizhi (Fig. 3.2-2a), the artist’s reason for showing two women combing their hair in a mirror from two different angles may be precisely to preserve the flatness of the two-dimensional picture. In the left half of this “palace ladies adoring their face” scene, the woman in the mirror is depicted from a three-quarter side angle in front of her (Fig. 3.2-2b) while the woman in the right half of the scene is depicted from a half side angle behind her (Fig. 3.2-2c). In this way, the front and back of the two opposite angles of the mirror image are shown and placed together in a way that is equivalent to slicing a section of the scene seen from the front and back on a distance and proximity axis, and then juxtaposing them. This way of organizing the image breaks the continuity of the depth direction of the picture. This clearly demonstrates that the artist was not interested in representing a continuous scene perpendicular to the depth of the picture from a fixed angle. Wu Hung has argued that the two women looking at themselves in the mirror constitute an independent and self-sufficient “three-dimensional space” (Fig. 3.2-2d).²⁷⁶ However, the effect of this “three-dimensional space” may be more likely to come from the subjective associations of the modern viewer. In Gu Kaizhi’s time, the scene of the “Palace Ladies Adoring Their Face” in *The Admonitions Scroll* depicts a similar scene from two opposite directions, so that the flatness of the picture is skillfully preserved while the three-dimensional effect towards the depth of the picture is dissolved. It will be further illustrated later in the discussion of the tomb murals that the depiction of the figures from the front and the

²⁷⁶ Hung Wu, *Kongjian de Meishu Shi 空间的美术史 [Art History in Space]* (Shanghai: Shanghai Renming Chubanshe, 2018), 37; Hong Wu, “Chongfang Nvshizhen Tu Tuxiang Xushi Fengge Shidai 重访《女史箴图》: 图像、叙事、风格、时代 [Revisiting the Female Historian: Image, Narrative, Style, and Era],” in *Art in Time and Space: The Second Collection of Wu Hong's Essays on Chinese Art History* (Beijing: Life, Reading, and Xinzhi Sanlian Shubanshu, 2016), 320.

back is likely to be an additive effect of the earlier maturation of figure painting, and is not intended to imply spatial depth through the depiction of the front and back of the figure.

According to the detailed record in the *Records of Painting Yuntai Mountain*, the scenery Gu Kaizhi chose to paint here came from the far distance and did not take the scenery from the near distance. Taking a distant view is the basic idea of Chinese landscape painting. In his “*Preface to Painting Landscapes (畫山水序)*” the Southern dynasty painter Zong Bing said along these lines,

Now if one hangs up the white paper to reflect the distant mountains, then one can see that the shape of the huge Kun Lun Mountain can also be encompassed within a square inch. A vertical stroke of three inches represents a height of a thousand ren; a horizontal brushstroke spanning several feet captures the vastness of a hundred li. Therefore, the painter is only concerned that he or she is not painting skillfully enough and is not worried about depicting an object so small that it detracts from the form. In this way, the beauty of Mount Song and Mount Hua, the spiritual essence of the mysterious feminine, can all be obtained within a single painting.²⁷⁷

It is also because the scene is located in the distance that great and noble landscape is able to be presented in a small picture. The Chinese masters of landscape painting at this time would not have paid as much attention to the contrast between near and far as the Renaissance painters who specialized in Renaissance perspective, and would not have painted a very large tree for the near view and then a very small mountain for the far view. If Chinese landscape painters take this approach to landscape painting, as Lin Shu said, “Not only does it not fit the six principles, but it will also be a thorn in people’s eyes. Just as Da Jiang said, a painting can no longer depict huge mountains if it depicts big trees.”²⁷⁸ The exaggerated proportionality of near and far places adopted by the perspective technique would have disturbed the

²⁷⁷ The original Chinese text: “今张绢素以远映，则昆阆之形，可围于方寸之内。竖画三寸，当千仞之高；横墨数尺，体百里之迥。是以观画图者，徒患类之不巧，不以制小而累其似，此自然之势。如是，则嵩、华之秀，玄牝之灵，皆可得之于一图矣。” See Zhang Yanyuan, *A Record of the Famous Painters of all the Dynasties*, vol. 6.

²⁷⁸ Shu Lin, “Chun Jue Zhai Lun Hua 春觉斋论画 [Discussing Painting in Chunjuezhai],” in *Huxue Jicheng Ming Qing 画学集成明-清 [Painting Science Integration Ming-Qing]*, ed. Wang Bo Min, Ren Daobin (Shijiazhuang: Hebei Fine Arts Press, 2002), 854.

expansive state of mind of the mid-medieval Chinese when they took landscape scenes in the distance.

In short, when we talk about “overlapping (*chong die* 重疊)” or “the near and far (*yuan jin* 遠近)” in Chinese painting, we are not discussing the issue of three-dimensional space, as is the case in the Renaissance perspective. As discussed in the previous chapter, the Chinese literati painters of the Six Dynasties understood “space” to be fundamentally different from the Euclidean geometric space understood by Renaissance painters. In terms of “space” that Chinese painters understood at this time, in the *Old Record of the Classifications of Painters*, Xie He of the Southern Qi Dynasty (479–502) put forward one of the Six Laws (*liu fa*),²⁷⁹ the “Management of Position,” which is supposed to be the first time that painting criticism involved the issue of space as it was understood during the medieval period.

In the Service of “Position(*Weizhi* 位置)”

In the translation of “*jingying weizhi* 經營位置” proposed by Xie He of the Southern Qi (479–502 A.D.), some influential Anglophone scholars at the beginning of the twentieth century did not realize that its meaning was different from the word “composition” often used in western art historical discourse. For example, Giles translated “*jingying weizhi*” as “artistic composition,” Sei-Ichi Taki translated “*jingying weizhi*” as “composition and grouping,” Binyon Laurence translated “*jingying weizhi*” as “composition and subordination, or grouping according to the hierarchy of things.”²⁸⁰ In 1930, Benjamin March also translated “*jingying weizhi*” as “In planning the composition one should observe consistency and propriety in the relation of things.”²⁸¹ In 1936, Osvald Sirén’s translation of the word “*jingying weizhi*” shows that the author realized that its meaning did not exactly match that of “composition” and therefore put the word in brackets and used other words to

²⁷⁹ James Cahil, “The Six Laws and How to Read Them,” *Ars Orientalis*, no. 4 (1961): 381.

²⁸⁰ Binyon Laurence, *The Flight of the Dragon: An Essay on the Theory and Practice of Art in China and Japan, Based on Original Sources* (New York: E. P. Dutton and Company, 1911), 12.

²⁸¹ Benjamin March, “The Approach to Chinese Painting,” *Art News*, New York, April 26, 1930, Section 1, p. 85.

translate it: “Plan and Design, Place and Position (i.e. Composition).”²⁸² He also makes a point of saying that “composition in Chinese painting is pre-eminently a problem of ‘spacing’ or of placing the objects so that the intermediate spaces become eloquent and aesthetically significant.”²⁸³ Acker translated “*jingying weizhi*” as “Division and Planning, i.e. placing and arrangement.”²⁸⁴ Later, James Cahill translated “*jingyin weizhi*” as “dividing and planning, positioning and arranging.”²⁸⁵

In recent years, Wu Hung points out that using “composition” to translate “*jingying weizhi*” does not fit the Chinese context, and reminds us that “One needs to be cautious against the implicit association with cavalier or single-point perspective when employing the concept of ‘composition’ within an academic context informed by western art historical discourse. The original meaning of ‘*Jing Ying Wei Zhi*’ refers primarily to the artist’s choice and combination of pictorial elements according to his or her own disposition, without connotations of a scientific or technical method of composition, as in the case of perspective.”²⁸⁶ And he proposed to translate it as “positioning.”

In the aforementioned English translations of “*jingying weizhi*” by scholars, the focus of the translations is mainly on the predicate-verb part, while the subject and the predicate of the sentence have not been translated exactly. The question that arises is: Whose position does the “position” of “management” refer to? Is it the position of the object being viewed or the position of the viewer? When we go back to the original context of this sentence and try to answer this question, we still find a lot of difficulties. After all, the sentence omits both a subject and part of the object. Because of the concise Chinese writing favored by the ancient Chinese writer, the exact subject, known only to the author, is usually omitted. This gives a great deal of

²⁸² Oswald Sirén, *The Chinese on the Art of Painting: Texts by the Painter-Critics, from the Han through the Ch'ing Dynasties* (Courier Corporation, 2013), Appendix 1.

²⁸³ Oswald Sirén, *The Chinese on the Art of Painting: Texts by the Painter-Critics, from the Han through the Ch'ing Dynasties* (Courier Corporation, 2013). This Dover edition, first published in 2005, is an unabridged republication of *The Chinese on the Art of Painting: Translations and Comments*, originally published by Henri Vetch, Peiping [Beijing], 1936).

²⁸⁴ William Reynolds Beal Acker, ed. and trans., *Some Tang and Pre-Tang texts on Chinese Painting*. 2 Vols. (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1954), 4.

²⁸⁵ James F. Cahill, “The six laws and how to read them.” *Ars Orientalis* (1961): 380.

²⁸⁶ Hung Wu, *Kongjian de Meishu Shi* 空间的美术史 [Space in Art History] (Shanghai: Shanghai Renming Chubanshe, 2018), 55; 262–263.

freedom to those who paraphrase or translate their texts. As a result of this style of writing, even if we go back to the entire original text of Xie He's "*jingying weizhi*," it is still difficult for us to know whose position he meant by "*jingying* (management)."

We then turn to examine how the Xie He uses the criterion of "*jing yin wei zhi*" in his criticism of specific paintings. The first thing to notice is that in the evaluations of the paintings classified by Xie He as "first grade" and "second grade," there is no special mention of the criterion of "*jingying weizhi*." Perhaps it is because "*jingying weizhi*" is the most basic requirement for painters, and there is no need to use it to evaluate the painting works of a master. Just like the modern art critic Lin Shu (1852–1924) in the "Chun Jue Zhai Lun Hua" said: "The fifth principle (Jing Yin Wei Zhi) is a basic rule that painters must master."²⁸⁷ Therefore, when Xie He commented on the painters whom he categorized as the first and second grades, he mainly commented on the two aspects of "Spirit Resonance which means vitality (氣韻生動)" and "Bone Method which is a way of using the brush (骨法用筆)." The "management of position (*jingying weizhi* 經營位置)" is too basic for painters of this level, and there is no need to talk about it. Xie he only mentions the criterion of "*jingying weizhi*" in his comments on painters of the "third grade." He comments on this painter as follows: "His execution and methods were elegant and charming. His management of position is ingenious. He commanded the praise of his own time, and enjoyed renown at the capital Luo Yang (體法雅媚，製置才巧。擅美當年，有聲京洛)."²⁸⁸ Here Xie He evaluates the artist's "*zhi zhi cai qiao* (製置才巧)," in which "*zhi* 置" as a verb in ancient Chinese has two meanings: a tailor, and to manipulate or organize. Xie He recognizes this artist's basic ability to control the position. Xie He describes this artist's ability as "*cai qiao* 才巧," which in the ancient Chinese language meant

²⁸⁷ Bomin Wang, Daobin Ren, eds., *Huaxue Jicheng* 画学集成 [Painting Science Integration Ming and Qing dynasties] (Shijia zhuang: Hebei Fine Arts Press, 2002), 847–848.

²⁸⁸ William Reynolds Beal Acher, ed. and trans., *Some Tang and Pre-Tang texts on Chinese Painting* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1954), 22.

highly skilled.²⁸⁹ In this case, it is still a terse Chinese expression, with no further description or qualification of “zhi 置.” We can either understand it as an extremely skillful arrangement and control of the position of the objects in the painting, or as an extremely skillful arrangement of the position of the viewpoints presented in the whole picture. Since there are no specific works by this “skillful” painter, we are still unable to know exactly what position he was working on.

Therefore, we still need to go back to more painting commentaries of the Six Dynasties to find out the exact meaning of “Jing Yin Wei Zhi.” We need to examine how painting critics of an era slightly earlier than Xie He’s time talked about issues related to the “jingying weizhi.”

Then the next step is to review the terms used in the commentary on landscape painting in the 4th–5th centuries, in the era before Xie He. The first ancient Chinese article dedicated to landscape painting is the *Hua Shan Shui Xu* (*The Preface to the Painting of Landscapes*) by Zong Bing (375–433 A.D.).²⁹⁰ In the first paragraph, Zong Bing said,

I have always cherished Mount Lu and Mount Heng, and I have spent a lot of time lingering in Jing Mountain and Wu Mountain. However, I have unknowingly grown old as the years passed. It is regrettable that I no longer have the physical strength to personally visit famous mountains and rivers. Instead, I can only walk sorrowfully along the path of Shimen Mountain, dragging my worn-out shoes. Therefore, I depict all the famous mountains I have traveled to, using ink and color.²⁹¹

The word “gou (構)” here is interpreted by scholars as “create,”²⁹² with a subjective component. This opening sentence first pointed out that when the author was too old and frail to visit the mountains in person, he chose to subjectively construct and arrange the position and shape of these mountains through painting to make up for the

²⁸⁹ Wang Li, *Gu Hanyu Zidian* 古汉语字典 [Dictionary of Ancient Chinese] (Beijing: Zhinghua Shuju, 2015), 259.

²⁹⁰ Zong Bing was also one of Huiyuan 慧远’s disciples. See Zhang Yanyuan, *A Record of the Famous Painters of all the Dynasties*, Volume 6.

²⁹¹ The original Chinese text: “余眷恋庐、衡，契阔荆、巫，不知老之将至，愧不能凝气怡身，伤跼石门之流，于是画象布色，构兹云岭。” See Zhang Yanyuan, *A Record of the Famous Painters of all the Dynasties*, vol. 6.

²⁹² Chuanxi Chen, “Liuchao Hualun Yanjiu 六朝画论研究 [Studies on Six Dynasties Painting]” (Nanjing: Jiangsu Meishu Chubanshe, 1985), 104.

regret of not being able to visit the mountains in person. This indicates that the “creation of the cloudy mountains (構茲雲嶺)” here is not a direct and objective imitation of nature, but rather an indirect and subjective construction based on the author’s own impressions of his own visits when he was unable to visit the landscapes in person.

Zong Bing here expresses an important point of view—that is, landscape does not exist in a purely material objective sense. In the first paragraph of *The Preface to the Painting of Landscapes*, Zong Bing points out that “As for mountains and rivers, their essence is inherent, and their spirit is ethereal (至於山水, 質有而趣靈),” which means that landscapes are both “essence(zhi 質)” and “spirit(ling 靈)”. The whole *Preface to the Painting of Landscapes* also argues that the reason to visit the mountains and paint them is because they embody the physical and the spiritual simultaneously. When the mountains and rivers have both material and spiritual parts, they will become good companions for people, and enjoy the same status as people. It also means that the landscape is no longer an objective object that can only be perceived by people. There is no longer any subject-object distinction between man and the mountains. Because here there is neither the subject of perception nor the object to be perceived, but only equal individuals.²⁹³ When the relationship between man and the mountains is that of equal friends, communication between the two becomes more comfortable and effective.

However, Zong Bing’s *Preface to the Painting of Landscapes* does not explain in detail how to “create cloudy mountains (構茲雲嶺).” Wang Wei (415–453 A.D.) later described in detail how to create a cloudy mountain range in a painting in his *Xu Hua* (敘畫). Wang Wei clearly excludes the topographical or military maps of the Wei and

²⁹³ It is also under this basic conception of the attitude towards landscape that we can understand why, in the paintings of the Six Dynasties in China, it was thought that landscape paintings and figure paintings could be just as evocative as those of the Six Dynasties. The idea that both people and objects can convey the spirits was also often explicitly mentioned in painting treatises after the Song dynasty: “The world knows that people have the divine 世徒知人之有神,” “but does not know that things have the divine 而不知物之有神.” See Yu Jianhua, *Zhongguo Hualun Leibian* 中国画论类编 [Chinese Painting Treatise] (Beijing: Renming Meishu Chuban She, 2016), 75.

Jin dynasties, such as the “Topography of the Five Mountains” made by Lady Zhao, the King of Wu, from the category of “landscape paintings” and explains that landscape painting is different from topographical maps or military instruction maps in that they are not in accordance with the objective reality painted for practical use but comprise the subjective and selective construction of landscapes for the purpose of aesthetics and enlightenment. Wang Wei in the *Xu Hua*(敘畫) wrote:

When it comes to painting, it is ultimately the portrayal of form and posture that artists seek. Moreover, in the art of ancient times, it was not merely about outlining cities and territories, distinguishing between provinces and marking hills and rivers. The essence of their work lay in merging form with spirit, where the stationary embodies the loss of vitality, and the dynamic reflects the transformation of the heart. Without incorporating subjective perception, the things depicted in the artwork lack vitality.²⁹⁴

In Wang Wei’s view, the key to creating landscape paintings lies in constructing natural scenery from different perspectives according to the changes of the subject’s position. It is this subjective “create 构” in the painting theory of the Six Dynasties that makes a painting different from a topographical map based on objective measurements. He clearly pointed out that one of the key factors distinguishing landscape painting from maps is the involvement of subjective conception. Landscape paintings cannot replicate nature exactly according to the actual position of objective objects but require subjective management and conception.

Therefore, after Zong Bing said, “creating the Clouds and Mountains 構茲雲嶺,” Wang Wei added, “Not only are my fingers and palms being used, but I am also using spirit (豈獨運諸指掌, 亦以明神降之).” Wang Wei clearly emphasizes the importance of artistic conceptualization and spiritual activity of “*ming shen* (明神)” to the creation of landscape paintings.²⁹⁵ “*Ming shen*(明神)” in the Six Dynasties is a

²⁹⁴ The original Chinese text: 「夫言繪畫者，竟求容勢而已。且古人之作畫也，非以案城域，辯方州，標鎮阜，劃浸流，本乎形者融靈。而動者變心。止靈亡見，故所托不動。」 See Zhang Yanyuan, *A Record of the Famous Painters of all the Dynasties*, vol. 6.

²⁹⁵ Chuanxi, *Zh Chen ongguo Shanshui Hua shi* 中国山水画史 [A History of Chinese Landscape Painting] (Tianjing: Tianjing Renming Meishu Chuban She, 2001), 15; Chen Chuanxi, *Liuchao Hualun Yanjiu* 六朝画论研

very common term, and refers to the human “wisdom, genius, spirit, emotion, thought, activity, imagination.”²⁹⁶ The meaning of Wang Wei’s statement is that the creation of landscape paintings cannot be reproduced by hands only but needs to take effort to pour in subjective thinking and emotion. Wang Wei here can be said to amend Zong Bing’s opinion about “depicting shape by shape,” suggesting that painting landscape is not to simulate the objective form. Wang Wei added that “With the eyes having their limits, what is seen may not encompass everything. Thus, with a single stroke of the brush, one attempts to outline the form of the boundless void, to depict the appearance of physical existence, and to capture the clarity within the tiny pupil.”²⁹⁷ Here the “emptiness (太虛)” refers to the realm of the mind, and exists in the human imagination.²⁹⁸ Wang Wei also explains in detail how to use a different manner of brush and ink painting to convey the spiritual qualities or states of mind that the landscape possesses.²⁹⁹

The point that Wang Wei makes about “the descent of spirits (mingsheng jiang zhi 明神降之)” is extremely crucial for both ancient and modern painting critics. Chen Chuanxi also believed that Zong Bing’s “depicting shapes by shapes (以形寫形)” was corrected and supplemented by Wang Wei’s “the descent of spirits,” which prevented Chinese painting from becoming naturalistic.³⁰⁰ This important concept was also consolidated and reiterated in much painting criticism in the era after Wang

究 [Studies on Six Dynasties Painting] (Nanjing: Jiangsu Meishu Chubanshe, 1985), 119.

²⁹⁶ Chuanxi Chen, *Liuchao Hualun Yanjiu* 六朝画论研究 [Studies on Six Dynasties Painting] (Nanjing: Jiangsu Meishu Chubanshe, 1985), 119.

²⁹⁷ The original Chinese text: “目有所極，故所見不周。於是乎以一管之筆，擬太虛之體，以判軀之狀，畫寸眸之明。” See Zhang Yanyuan, *A Record of the Famous Painters of all the Dynasties*, vol. 6.

²⁹⁸ In the Zhuangzi’s “Not traveling to the Taixu,” “*Taixu* 太虛” is interpreted as “the deep and original reason,” “*qi* 气” and “*Tai Kong* 太空”; in Cheng Xuanying’s commentary “*Tai* 太 is the name of vastness” and “*Xu* 虛 is non-physical.”

²⁹⁹ The original Chinese text: “於是乎以一管之筆擬太虛之體，以判軀之狀畫寸眸之明，曲以為嵩高，趣以為方丈，以攄之畫，齊乎太華，枉之點，表夫隆準。眉額頰輔，若晏笑兮。孤巖郁秀，若吐雲兮。橫變縱化，故動生焉。前矩後方，□□（則形）出焉。然後宮觀舟車，器以類聚；犬馬禽魚，物以狀分。此畫之致也。望秋雲，神飛揚；臨春風，思浩蕩。雖有金石之樂，圭璋之琛，豈能仿佛之哉。披圖按牒，效異山海，綠林揚風，白水激澗。嗚呼，豈獨運諸指掌，亦以明神降之，此畫之情也。” Zhang Yanyuan, *A Record of the Famous Painters of all the Dynasties*, vol. 6.

³⁰⁰ Chen Chuanxi 陈传席, *Liuchao Hualun Yanjiu* 六朝画论研究 [Studies on Six Dynasties Painting] (Nanjing: Jiangsu Meishu Chubanshe, 1985), 121.

Wei. Therefore, for the painting critics of the early medieval period, the reason for their careful observation of nature was not to imitate and reproduce the external appearance of nature, but rather to gain an understanding of the inner way embedded in the appearance of nature.

Furthermore, the reason why such a conception of landscape painting could be expressed in Zong Bing and Wang Wei is also related to the repeated challenges and critical thinking about the Han Dynasty Confucian moral concepts that began to arise in the society at that time from the beginning of the third century. At the beginning of the third century, Confucian morality began to be greatly challenged. As Chen Yinke puts it, in order to replace Liu on the throne at the end of the Han Dynasty, the Cao Wei regime (220–266), headed by Cao Cao, who was a non-Confucian of humble origins, most importantly sought to destroy the spiritual bulwark of the Confucian gentry (i.e., Confucianism).³⁰¹ Therefore, Cao Cao's "*Three Orders on Selecting Talent* 求才三令" explicitly rejected the morality of Confucianism and emphasized that the criterion for selecting talents to become officials was meritocracy rather than the morality of Confucianism. Jikang (223–262), one of the Seven Sages of the Bamboo Grove, satirized and attacked traditional Confucianism in his "Treatise on Nourishing Life (養生論)".³⁰² In the Jin Dynasty (266–420) after Cao Wei, the Sima family subverted the Cao Wei regime with the support of the Confucian gentry, so the criteria for selecting talents to become officials once again boasted the moral standards of Confucianism and were no longer based on meritocracy as in the Cao Wei Dynasty. However, in order to kill the dissidents, the Sima family only made use of the moral standard of Confucianism to do a lot of unkind and unrighteous things. In fact, the system of selecting officials in the Western Jin Dynasty—that is, "Jiu Pin

³⁰¹ Shengnan Wan, *Chen Yinke Weijin Nanbeichao Shi Jiangyan Lu* 陈寅恪魏晋南北朝史讲演录 [Lectures on the History of Wei, Jin, and North and South Dynasties by Chen Yinke] (Guiyang: Guizhou People's Publishing House, 2007), 9–10.

³⁰² The original text reads: "且凡聖人，有損己為世，表行顯功，使天下慕之，三徙成都者，或非食勤躬，經營四方，心勞形困，趣步失節者；或奇謀潛稱，爰及幹戈，威武殺伐，功利爭奪者；或修身以明貌，顯智以驚愚，藉名高於一世，取準的於天下，又勤誨善誘，聚徒三千，口倦談議，身疲磬折，形若救孺子，視若營四海，神馳於利害之端，心驚於榮辱之途，俯仰之間，已再撫宇宙之外者。"

Zhong Zheng Zhi (九品中正製)”—only ensured that the descendants of the gentry who supported the Sima family could have an official position.³⁰³ In the Western Jin Dynasty, being an official gradually became the main means of obtaining economic benefits. Therefore, there was widespread discontent and criticism of the Sima regime. The words of Gan Bao, as quoted in the fifth volume of *Jin Shu* (晉書), “*Discourse on the Chronicle of Emperor Xiaosmin*” (孝愍帝紀論), describe the eventual corruption of both the political and social culture under the rule of such a group of powerful “Confucian” clans.

This means that the so-called moral and noble Confucian figures had lost their charm and influence among the literati and intellectuals in the Wei and Jin Dynasties. Under this trend of thinking, those loyal and filial figures that used to appear in Han Dynasty’s stone reliefs also gradually lost their value to painters, who then turned their attention to those hermits and the mountains they inhabited. At the same time, the challenge and deconstruction of traditional Confucian morality by Taoist thought swept through literature in the third century and rapidly overturned people’s worldview.

In this social context, Zong Bing proposed that “Landscape painting entices the Tao through its shape (山水以形媚道),” viewing the form of landscape as a kind of existence that contains a deep “*Tao* 道” or “spirit.” The “shape 形” here is a comprehensive unity that contains both material and spiritual forms. Therefore, the purpose of painting landscapes is not to imitate the material form of natural landscapes but to imitate the spiritual part of the immaterial “Tao” or “Spirit” embedded in the landscapes. Landscape painting thus becomes a copy of the spiritual form of things. Therefore, the “*Jingyin weizhi*, management of position” in Chinese landscape painting should be regarded as another way of arranging and organizing the image that goes beyond perspectival arrangements of objects and properties in three dimensions. This way of organizing the image beyond the subject-object distinction is

³⁰³ Wan, *Chen Yinke Weijin Nanbeichao Shi Jiangyan Lu*, 20–21.

free and flexible, encouraging the painter to use subjective and creative thinking rather than subjecting him to the pre-determined laws of perspective. Therefore, as Wu Hong has pointed out, it is not appropriate to translate the term “*Jing Yin Wei Zhi*” in Chinese painting theory into “composition” in the European context, especially when discussing ancient Chinese landscape painting.

Although Zong Bing’s view of landscape as a unity of “essence(*zhi* 质)” and “spirit(*ling* 靈)” might be seen as an idealistic understanding of nature, it can easily be seen as a view that predates the development of science and has not yet reached the age of reason. Early European missionaries to China were convinced that this view, which did not distinguish between object and subject, was extremely irrational and inferior. It is true that for modern people educated in modern science, both Europeans and Chinese, a cognitive habit of understanding the world is to discuss object and subject separately, otherwise one easily falls into a state of confusion in which subject and object are not distinguished. But the fact is that this perspective of not distinguishing between subject and object is in fact a much higher perspective. This perspective has many similarities with the phenomenological perspective that developed after the Age of Reason in Europe.³⁰⁴

It is in this perspective that we can understand that the “management of position (*jingying weizhi* 經營位置)” discussed in the Six Dynasties’ landscape painting theory actually refers to an organization that transcends the objective view, and requires the addition of a subjective view, or a subject-object view. The painting does not only come from the visible material part but also needs to include the invisible non-material spiritual part. Therefore, the “*jingying weizhi*” of the Six Dynasties painting critics is not a process of treating the objects in the picture as objective objects in material form only. The objects in the painting, such as mountains, rivers, grass and trees, are not under the organization of the painter’s subjective intention. At this time, the painter treats the objects in the picture as a mixed unity with both

³⁰⁴ Ernst H. Gombrich, “The Renaissance Theory of Art and the Rise of Landscape,” *Norm and Form: Studies in the Art of the Renaissance* 1 (1966): 107–121.

objective material forms and subjective spiritual forms. Therefore, the process of “*jingying weizhi*” is not a process of organizing and arranging the objective objects, but a process of interacting with a subject-object unity that also has an autonomous spirit. Creating landscape paintings and appreciating them became both a way of returning to perceptual perception and experiencing spiritual communication in the depths of inner subjectivity.

It also implies that the so-called “management of position” of Xie He may also include both the position of the object to be viewed and the position of the viewer. This is unlike the linear perspective used in European Renaissance paintings, which followed a recognized optimum viewing position. Usually, this optimal viewing position had been tried and tested by the architectural engineers and had become habitual, so there was no need for the painter to take the time to manoeuvre. However, in the landscape paintings of the Six Dynasties, there was no optimal viewing position, and the artist would not set a fixed viewing position for the viewer. Perhaps the reason why the pleasure of viewing a landscape painting is considered by Zong Bing to be similar to that of visiting a landscape is that viewing a landscape painting also offers the possibility of experiencing the transformation of the landscape brought about by a change in the position of the subject.

In the aforementioned Six Dynasties painting theory, we have also seen that the subtle relationship between the subjective viewer and the objective scenery is exactly where the painter has to spend his or her thoughts to manage. It is a pity that no original works of landscape painting from the Six Dynasties have been preserved to show this way of “management (*jingying* 經營)” landscape painting more clearly. We can only see some traces of this in the later literati painters who still appreciated the Six Dynasties’ painting theory. Sometimes the painters would hint at this subtle relationship between the ever-changing subjective viewer and the objective scene through the figures of those who are set between the landscape and the mountains. Shi Shouqian also mentioned this in his study of landscape paintings by literati painters of the Ming and Qing dynasties, in which he found long scrolls of landscape paintings

where the changes in the scenery were determined by the position of an ever-changing viewer.

Fortunately, there are still some paintings of the Six Dynasties period that focus on figures that have been preserved. For example, on the sarcophagus of the filial son (Fig. 4.2-60), the two neighboring images are presented by changing the artist's viewing position. It is also worth noting that in the paintings of figures that remain from the Six Dynasties period, there are also clear indications of other special purposes for which the artist needed to "*jingying weizhi*" at this time.

In the case of narrative portraits depicting stories of martyred women and filial sons, the "position" that needs to be arranged mainly consists of that of the figures in the painting, and the buildings or environmental objects in the painting are merely used to imply the relative position of the figures in the painting. However, the positional relationship of the figures in the paintings was not used to imply the depth of space but given other meanings. Sometimes the fixed meanings assigned to the positions of the figures in the paintings of the Six Dynasties were still inherited from the Han Dynasty's portrait stones. For example, when discussing the story paintings in the Han Dynasty stone relief with the themes of martyred women, filial sons, and loyal ministers, Wu Hong pointed out the different meanings assigned to the relative positions of "inside" and "outside" separated by architectural elements. The "inside" represents the moral sanctuary of women, and the "outside" represents the scope of the interventionist power of male authority.³⁰⁵ The different meanings assigned to these different positions were still used in the Northern Wei Dynasty. The story of the "Liang Widow Gaoxing" in the Tale of the Martyrs,³⁰⁶ for example, is again depicted in a sarcophagus-bed back-screen painting from the Northern Wei Dynasty, and in the same position as in the previous Han painting: the beautiful widow is placed indoors, while the king of Liang, who asks for her hand in marriage, and his attendants, are placed outdoors (Fig.3.2-3). Here again, the "inside" represents the confines of the

³⁰⁵ Wu Hung, *Ibid.*

³⁰⁶ Xiang Liu, *Gu Lienv Zhuan* 古列女传[Biographies of Exemplary Women] (Beijing: Zhong Hua Shu Ju, 2015), 117-118.

female moral sphere, and the “outside” the sphere of the male power of intervention. Here the figures form a closed circuit of eye contact with each other, and none of them make eye contact with the viewer outside the picture. Moreover, the figures here form a closed circuit of eye contact with each other, and none of them makes eye contact with the viewer outside the frame. This also seems to imply that the images do not need to be gazed at, or that the viewer does not need to be in the scene in order to grasp their didactic meaning. The positional relationship between the figures on the sarcophagus already produces a clear meaning, and therefore does not require the participation of a viewer to do so.

Another example, noted by Wu Hung, is the use of different meanings conveyed by the location of images on a lacquer-painted screen excavated from the tomb of Sima Jinlong in the Northern Wei Dynasty. Both the front and back of the screen depict stories of ancient Chinese Confucian exemplars, with those on the front of the screen centering on female figures, drawn mainly from Liu Xiang’s *Biographies of Exemplary Women* (烈女傳) and those centering on male exemplars such as loyal ministers and filial piety painted on the back of the screen.³⁰⁷ Taking the image of one of the best-preserved screen paintings found in the tomb of Sima Jinlong as an example (Fig.3.2-4), there are four groups of female figures depicted on the front of the screen, from top to bottom: 1. the two consorts of Emperor Shun’s legendary virtues; 2. the famous three mothers of the Zhou family, Chou Taijang, Chou Tairen, and Chou Taisi; 3. the doting mother of the Eastern Zhou Dynasty, “Lushuai Chunjang”; 4. Ban Jieyu of Emperor Chengdi of Han Dynasty. The stories depicted in the corresponding images on the back of the screen are all centered around male figures (Fig.3.2-4b). Although there is no architecture in these screen paintings to define the inner and outer space, the screen itself can still define the inner and outer space by virtue of its front and back sides, so that the paintings of stories centering on female figures are located in the inner space delineated by the screen, while the

³⁰⁷ Hung Wu, *The Wu Liang Shrine: The Ideology of Early Chinese Pictorial Art* (Stanford University Press, 1989), 192.

paintings of stories centering on male figures are located in the outer space delineated by the screen.³⁰⁸ In this way, the image on the “inner” side of the screen once again represents the moral limits of the female sphere, while the image on the “outer” side of the screen once again represents the sphere of intervention of the male power.

In narrative paintings where there is no building or painting medium to divide the internal and external positions, the Six Dynasties painters used the different sizes and positions of the figures to indicate the status of the figures. A figure at the top of the picture can express a higher status than a figure at the bottom of the picture, and a figure in a symmetrical position can express equal status. This method already appeared in the Han Dynasty before the Six Dynasties. The positional relationship of the figures of different sizes is drawn in complete disregard of the perspective rule of “near, large,” and “far, small.” Figures drawn in larger silhouettes do not indicate “near” and are not located at the lower edge of the pictorial plane, as the rules of perspective dictate, but rather at the upper edge of the pictorial plane. This is because the size of the figure in the painting suggests the figure’s status or other authorial intent. A larger figure can also be placed at the bottom of the picture. This arrangement is not for a representation of spatial depth in accordance with the rules of Renaissance perspective, but just to serve the author’s intention as it happens to be necessary to place the larger figure, who indicates high status, in the scene below. Sometimes, in order to serve another author’s intention, larger figures are also placed in the upper position of the picture, i.e., the position that can be called “far away” in the Renaissance perspective, which completely breaks the rules of the Renaissance perspective. Figure paintings of the Six Dynasties period likewise followed this convention of managing position. When the images of Buddha, bodhisattvas, and donors appeared together in a single scene, the largest figure of the Buddha was to indicate the highest state of enlightenment rather than its location at the nearest point in a three-dimensional space. Smaller figures located at the bottom of the picture are

³⁰⁸ Hung Wu, *Chongping Zhongguo Huihua Zhong de Meicai Yu Zaixian* 重屏:中国绘画中的媒材与再现[The Double Screen: Medium and Representation in Chinese Painting] (Shanghai: Shanghai People's Publishing House, 2009), 80.

used to indicate the lower state of the unenlightened person while larger figures are used to indicate enlightened Buddhas and Bodhisattvas in higher states. Here the difference in size is not used to serve the purpose of creating a sense of spatial depth but rather to indicate the difference in status of the figures.

It could be said that the reason why the position is given a different meaning other than creating spatial illusion is that in the paintings of the Six Dynasties period, it was not the task of the painter to produce spatial illusion. In the paintings of the early medieval time, position was not involved in spatial representation. Painters did not rely on the different positions of similar objects near and far to produce the spatial illusion. For the literati of the early medieval time, space was a ubiquitous presence, where everything and everyone existed in space all the time. Replicating this everyday experience in a painting seems superfluous. The artist paints an object of any shape in any position in a painting, and any viewer can automatically complete the space in which it is located based on their daily visual experience. Here again, it is possible to understand why the early medieval Chinese regarded paintings that were intended to create a spatial illusion as mere claptrap. After all, for the Chinese painters of the early medieval time, they wanted to express concepts rather than experiences through artificial symbols and images.

Therefore, in the paintings of the Six Dynasties, the position of the figure in the painting was given multiple possibilities of expression, which may serve the clarity of the historical story that the painting was intended to depict, or may serve a specific concept. In paintings from the Han Dynasty to the Six Dynasties, we can constantly see that painters relied on the different meanings assigned to the different positions of the figures to construct their pictures. Therefore, if the figures in a painting follow the positional relationship under the law of perspective in order to achieve a spatial illusionary effect, it is tantamount to forcing the position of the figures in the painting for this purpose only, and the many meanings expressed by the figures in the painting by virtue of their different positions will be disturbed. This is tantamount to depriving the figures in the painting of the possibility of conveying different meanings. This would have been more than worthwhile for the Chinese painter of the early medieval

time, and would have been akin to depriving a painter of the freedom to use his or her tools. It would have greatly limited the ability of the image to express meaning.

In addition, in Gu Kaizhi's discussion of figure painting, we can also see that he put forward a skill that can make the figures come to life. This skill is to pay attention to the position of the figures and the surroundings in a picture plane, so that the figures can "look at the corresponding (以矚其對)." Without leaving the direction in which the eyes of the figure in the painting are looking, the eyes will not be hollow and lifeless.³⁰⁹ This is a very practical skill for dealing with figure painting and is particularly noteworthy. Yet it is often overlooked by modern scholars. In the second part of this dissertation, when discussing specific images, it will also be necessary to draw on this skill to understand the image.

In short, we have seen that both the landscape paintings that emerged in the Eastern Jin Dynasty and the figure paintings in the Wei and Jin Dynasties involve the issue of "management of position (*jingying weizhi*)." Therefore, by the time Xie He of the Southern Qi Dynasty wrote his "Old Record of the Classification of Painters" at the beginning of the sixth century, he had explicitly included the "*jingying weizhi*" in the general "Six Principles" for the appreciation of paintings.³¹⁰ What Xie He means by "*jingying weizhi*" is not to create a sense of spatial illusion in a picture plane. The "position" of the objects in the painting serves a variety of purposes. Even if the position of a figure in a figure painting is manipulated so that there is a counterpart for his or her eyes, "look at the corresponding," it is for the purpose of making the figure vivid and evocative of aliveness, not for the purpose of achieving the effect of a spatial illusion on the surface of the picture plane.

³⁰⁹ The original Chinese text is as follows: "人有长短，今既定远近以矚其對，則不可改易闊促，錯置高下也。凡生人亡有手揖眼視而前亡所對者；以形寫神而空其實對，荃生之用乖，傳神之趨失矣。空其實對則大失，對而不正則小失，不可不察也。一像之明昧，不若悟對之通神也。" See Zhang Yanyuan, *A Record of Famous Painters of All the Dynasties*, vol. 5.

³¹⁰ Osvald Sirén, *The Chinese on the Art of Painting: Texts by the Painter-Critics, from the Han through the Ch'ing Dynasties* (Courier Corporation, 2013). This Dover edition, first published in 2005, is an unabridged republication of *The Chinese on the Art of Painting: Translations and Comments*, originally published by Henri Vetch, Peiping [Beijing], in 1936.

Part II Images in Their Places

In this section I move into the more specific context of how images dealt with space in the tombs and caves built during the Six Dynasties period, respectively. The pictorial materials examined in this section are not as specifically named or authored as the images discussed in the first chapter, and most of the images in this section have not been given specific names or explicitly recorded in writing by the educated classes. However, the physical objects of these images have fortunately been preserved in the tombs and caves built in this period. The authors of these images were, for the most part, artisans who did not have access to much education. To what extent did this group understand and apply the concepts of image and space conceived by the literati intellectuals of the period in their practical artistic endeavors? The next two chapters will investigate this question in the context of specific burial sites and cave sites respectively to inquire into the specific roles and tasks assigned to images in the artistic practice at this time, and to explore what characteristics were assigned to these images. Did these images need to pursue spatial illusion?

Chapter 4 Images in Funerary Places

This chapter moves on to more specific contexts of the images, in the case of the tombs during the Six Dynasties, in order to restore as much as possible the relationship of the images to their original users in the Six Dynasties period, rather than to the modern viewers. We then return to the specific contexts in which the images are located in order to re-examine whether the images appearing in these places, after assuming specific roles and intentions, have adopted what previous scholars have generally called “space representation.”

4.1 The Role of Images in Funeral Places

Individuals inevitably experience varying degrees of anxiety about death. The introduction of Buddhism to China before the Common Era³¹¹ brought with it the

³¹¹ Xianlin Ji, *Datang Xiyu Ji Jiaozhu* 大唐西域记校注 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1985), 2.

concept of “Transmigration (Samsāra),” which partially alleviated death anxiety. Before the introduction of Buddhism, the Chinese concept of life and death was a one-way irreversible process, with no concept of reincarnation. The world after death and the state of being after death were unknown and mysterious to people during that time.

Many prayers can be found in Han Dynasty literature asking the dead to depart to the world of the dead in peace and not to return to the world of the living to interfere with the lives of the living. In the conception of the Western Han people, the existence of a human being in life was the harmony of the two dominant forces of yin and yang. When a person dies, the yin and yang are dispersed, with the *hun* souls ascending and the *po* souls sinking.³¹² After making sure that the *hun* soul and *po* soul have been separated and dispersed, the family of the deceased would say their final goodbyes to the dead body and carefully prepare everything in the underground chamber for the deceased to start their life after death. In the middle of the Western Han Dynasty, the underground burial chambers were built to imitate the former residence where the deceased lived when he or she was alive.³¹³ From the lavishly furnished tombs at this time, it can be seen that the living people tried their best to envision and imagine a beautiful world after death for the dead, and prepared all the necessities to the deceased in the tombs. The images that appear in tombs would show the tomb owner in formal attire and full of anticipation ready to set off for the other world, and then as having arrived at that mysterious world, but without a return journey scene. It was not expected that a deceased whose soul had flown far away would have any attachment to the world of the living. After burying the body of the deceased in an underground chamber, the chamber was permanently closed, and the deceased was expected to reside there in peace without disturbing the living, and no one was expected to disturb the spirit of the deceased.³¹⁴

³¹² Konyang Zhu, *Lidai Lingqin beikao* 历代陵寝备考 [A comprehensive examination of mausoleums throughout the Chinese dynasties] (Shanghai: Shenbao guan, 1937), 13.

³¹³ Zhongshu Wang, *Han Civilization* (trans. K.C. Chang) (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982), 175–179.

³¹⁴ In the Book of Rites, one is asked “When one goes to a burying-ground, he should not get up on any of the graves.” Li Chi, *Book of Rites* (New York: University Books, 1885), 89.

However, in literate records, some tombs were opened to the living for a short period of time at the beginning of the construction. But after that, they would be closed permanently and not opened easily. The case of Zhao Xuan, a villager who lived in the tomb for twenty years after burying his loved one without closing the tunnel, as cited by Zheng Yan in the “Biography of Chen Wang (陳王列傳)” in *Hou Han Shu* (後漢書), is only the first part of this incident. According to the complete record of the “Biography of Chen Wang” the final outcome of this incident was that the villager Zhao Xuan was punished, because his behavior of having five children with his wife during the twenty years of mourning near the tomb was regarded as disturbing and tainting the gods in the tomb.³¹⁵ This shows again that the Han Dynasty burial chamber was a private and confined place created for the dead, which was not wishing to be disturbed by anyone or anything.

The original purpose of establishing shrines on cemeteries was also to appease the lingering *hun* souls of the dead. An inscription left on a shrine in the Eastern Han Dynasty clearly affirms this purpose: “They erected a stone shrine, hoping that the *hun* souls of their parents would have a place to abide.”³¹⁶ The custom of erecting a shrine above the ground near a cemetery to hold rituals spread to the middle class by the end of the Western Han Dynasty, in the sixth year of Emperor Zhao’s reign (81 B.C.) at the latest.³¹⁷ The establishment of shrines not only appeased the “souls” of the dead but also calmed people’s anxieties about what would happen after death. For young people, visiting the ancestor’s shrine would demonstrate filial virtues and help one gain social prestige (bringing renown, official rewards, eventually offers of official position), and the shrine became a “performance site” for people to demonstrate the virtues of filial piety.³¹⁸ But for the elderly who have retired from

³¹⁵ The original text: “民有赵宣葬亲而不闭隧，因居其中，行服二十馀年，乡邑称孝，州郡数礼请之。郡内以荐蕃，蕃与相见，问及妻子，而宣五子皆服中所生。蕃大怒曰：”圣人制礼，贤者俯就，不肖企及。且祭不欲数，以其易黷故也。况乃寝宿冢藏，而孕育其中，诳时惑众，诬污鬼神乎？”遂致其罪。See Fanye 范曄, “Biography of Chen Wang” in *Hou Hanshu* 后汉书 [The Book of the Later Han].

³¹⁶ Fuyi Luo, “Xiang Tajun Shi Citang Tizi Jieshi 芑他君石祠堂题字解释 [An interpretation of the inscription of the stone offering shrine of Xiang Tajun],” *Palace Museum Journal* (1960): 178–80.

³¹⁷ Lixiang Xin, *Handai Huaxiang Shi Zonghe Yanjiu* 汉代画像石综合研究 [A Comprehensive Study of Han Dynasty Picture Stones] (Beijing: Wenwu Chubanshe, 2000), 66–69.

³¹⁸ Jean M. James, “The Eastern Han Offering Shrine: A Functional Study,” *Archives of Asian Art* 51 (1998): 28.

officialdom, the very fact that young people often come to pay their respects at the aboveground shrines effectively calms anxiety about their impending death.

In order to calm the anxiety of individuals about the inevitable process of growing old and dying, Confucianism not only promotes filial piety but also makes people believe that even if they grow old or die, their descendants will still come to visit them at the shrine to pay their respects. It also makes the children and grandchildren of the dead not fear the spirits of the dead, and thus describes the soul of the dead as a kind of God that can bring all kinds of blessings to future generations. For example, Cai Yong (133–192 A.D.)³¹⁹ set up a hut beside her mother’s grave. There were various auspicious events during his mourning period, such as rabbits running as if tamed alongside his hut, and a pear tree planted on the tomb that grew two trunks from a single base.³²⁰ When this aroused the admiration of the people of the time, he wrote a song called “Hymn of Praise on the Virtues of My Ancestors,” in which he repeatedly emphasized that all this was brought about by the lingering spirits of his virtuous ancestors.³²¹ The lingering spirits of his ancestors recognize him and provide him good fortune and worldly blessings.

The Taoist also offered another wonderful idea to calm people’s anxieties about the unknown time and space they would travel to and the unknown things they would experience after death. That is, a person could be guided through some special training methods for the body (e.g., a breathing exercise called *daoyin* 導引, purification, starvation, physical practices), and would gradually eliminate his material substance. The practitioner would finally free himself from the bonds of the body and ascend to a wonderful fairyland, where he would exist lightly and live forever. Many legends of Taoists ascending to immortality often emphasize the fact that they have indeed ascended to the wonderful fairyland by describing the fact that

³¹⁹ For an English-language biography of Cai Yong, see Chris Connery, “Ts'ai Yung,” in *Indiana Companion to Traditional Chinese Literature*, ed. William H. Nienhauser Jr. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986), 787–88.

³²⁰ Stephen R. Bokenkamp, *Ancestors and Anxiety: Daoism and the Birth of Rebirth in China*. (University of California Press, 2007), 1.

³²¹ Cai Yong, *Cai zhonglang ji*, ed. Sibuyi (Shanghai: Zhonghua shuju, 1927–36), 3.22a–22b.

after they have ascended their bodies cannot be found in the place where they are buried.³²² This emphasizes the fact that they have indeed become immortals and have ascended, thus permanently leaving this mundane world and rising to a realm of immortality from which they will never return. From the time of Emperor Wu of the Western Han Dynasty, such a vision provided by Taoist priests compelled emperors to travel deep into the mountains, rivers, and seas in search of immortals.³²³

An entirely different kind of solace is offered by the Buddhist concept of “Transmigration (samsara).” This concept declares that one’s existence in this world is but a small journey in the endless cycle of birth and death.³²⁴ The process between life and death is not irreversible. A person can be reborn after death through “Karma.” There are six paths of rebirth through karma accumulated during life. There are good karma and bad karma. If you have accumulated enough good karma, you can be reborn into one of the three higher states: Deva, human, asura. But if one accumulates bad karma, one is reborn into three worse states: animal, hungry ghost (*preta*), and prisoner of hell (*naraka*).

This amounted to good news along with bad news for people anxious about death. That promise of being able to be reborn into a higher state by virtue of good karma comforted those who are good enough never to do evil things. But the possibility of being reborn into three lower states also threw everyone into another round of anxiety. Even a good person who is careful never to do evil becomes more cautious and timid. That horrific vision of hell detailed in Buddhist texts makes the fear of the afterlife even more concrete. But it is also in the anxiety of fearing hell that people become more actively involved in accumulation of good karma. Even after

³²² For example, in both the *Baopuzi* 抱朴子 and the *Shiji* 史记, it is recorded that after the death of Li Shaojun, Emperor Wu sent someone to open Li Shaojun's coffin to see if his body was still there, but only clothes were found inside. Therefore, it is believed that there really exists a magic spell that allows Li Shaojun to become immortal and ascend to the next level of the human world. See *Baopuzi* (抱朴子 Baopuzi), vol. 2, p. 6; *Shiji* 史记, p. 1386.

³²³ Tian Tian, *Qinhan Guojia Jisi Shigao* 秦汉国家祭祀史稿 [*Qin and Han State Sacrifices: A Draft History*] (Beijing: shenghuo dushu xinzhi sanlian shudian, 2015), 121–208.

³²⁴ Stephen F. Teiser, *The Scripture on the Ten Kings and the Making of Purgatory in Medieval Chinese Buddhism*. (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1994), 4.

death, the deceased rely on their living family members to continue accumulating good karma for the deceased. The Buddhist term for this stage of a person's life after death, before he or she is reborn, is “*Antarābhava* (中陰).”³²⁵ In the *Foshuo Guanding Jing* (佛說灌頂經) translated in the Eastern Jin Dynasty, it is recorded that if the family members of the deceased can accumulate some more merits for the deceased in this stage of “*Antarābhava*,” they will also help the deceased get a better chance of rebirth, and avoid the “Eight Difficulties” that the deceased will have to suffer because of the sins committed by the deceased when he or she is reincarnated.³²⁶ This opportunity of reincarnation is offered once every seven days. During this time, the family of the deceased can hold a fast every seven days to accumulate good karma for the deceased.³²⁷ At this point in time, the deceased in the tomb is in a state of “*Antarābhava*,” which means that the tomb chamber becomes a temporary stopover for the deceased while they wait to be reborn, and is no longer their permanent place of residence after death.

Although Buddhism had already been introduced to China during the Han Dynasty,³²⁸ people's understanding of Buddha and the Buddhist concept of life and death as described above were still vague. It is recorded in *Hou Hanshu* (後漢書) and *Sishier Zhang Jing* (四十二章經) that Emperor Ming of the Han Dynasty dreamed of a golden man with a glowing head; one of his ministers told him that the golden man in his dream was a god (*shen* 神) known as “Buddha” in ancient India Tianzhu. In *Mouzi's Disputation of Confusion* (*Mouzi LihuoLun* 牟子理惑論), he also explains

³²⁵ *Antarābhava* (अन्तराभव) refers to “intermediate existence” representing a stage of reincarnation and conception according to the 2nd century *Mahāprajñāpāramitāsāstra* (chapter VII).

³²⁶ Teiser, *The Scripture on the Ten Kings*, 11.

³²⁷ In some Pure Land-type ritual activities that became popular during the Six Dynasties, there was also the idea that the good karma of chanting Amitabha's name could cause Amitabha or his messengers to come to the deceased and directly guide the deceased to be reborn in the Pure Land world. See Stephen F. Teiser, *The Scripture on the Ten Kings and the Making of Purgatory in Medieval Chinese Buddhism* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1994), 11–12.

³²⁸ Wei Liao - Xirong Zhuan 魏略·西戎傳 records: “In the first year of Yuan Shou of Emperor Ai of the Han Dynasty (2 BC), Jing Lu, a disciple of the doctor, was orally instructed in the Fudu Sutra by the king of the Great Yuezhi, Yi Cun.” This is the most widely recognised record in Buddhist scholarship of the first introduction of Buddhism to China.

what “Buddha” is: “‘Buddha’ is a posthumous title in the same way that ‘divine’ (shen) is the title of the Three Sovereigns (Sanhuang), and that ‘sage’ [sheng] is the title of the Five Emperors (Wudi). The Buddha is the first ancestor of morality and divinity.”³²⁹ Buddha is treated as a Western deity similar to the Queen Mother of the West appearing in Han Dynasty tombs.³³⁰

During the Six Dynasties, the Buddhist concepts of transmigration (samsara) and karma gradually became more widely understood and accepted. In the *Brahma Net Sutra* (梵網經) written by Kumārajīva (350–409 A.D.), it is already clearly written that the opportunity to be reborn is gained through the accumulation of good karma by chanting sutras for the deceased at a fast once every seven days.³³¹ According to the data collected by Stephen F. Teiser, the activity of the seven-seven fasts(七七齋) has been continuously carried out in folklore since the fifth century.³³² Pure Land Buddhist rituals, which had already become popular during the Sixth Dynasty, would invite Amitabha Buddha or his emissaries to come to the deceased by chanting Amitabha Buddha. People expect Buddha and his holy retinue would appear before them to receive them at the end of life.³³³ During the Six Dynasties, the Chinese fiction known as *Zhiguai* (誌怪), or “recording the strange,” such as *Mingxiangji* (Records of Divine Omens) of the late fifth century, was also full of “karma-based” lessons.³³⁴ It also recorded in *Fayuan Zhulin* (法苑珠林) that the story of Que Gungze and Wei Shidu was born in the Western Pure Land.³³⁵ Moreover, Hui Yuan in the first

³²⁹ Although a number of scholars have argued that the Mouzi Lihuo Lun is a pseudo-book and does not provide valuable information on the history of early Chinese Buddhism, Yasushun Fukui, in 1952, after reviewing the previous views of various scholars, deduced that it was written in the middle of the 3rd century AD. See also Erik Zürcher, *The Buddhist Conquest of China* (vol. 1) (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1959), 13–15.

³³⁰ Wu Hung, “Buddhist Elements in Early Chinese Art (2nd and 3rd Centuries A.D.),” *Artibus Asiae* 47, no. 3/4 (1986): 266–269.

³³¹ The original text in 《梵網經》Vol.2: 「而菩薩應為一切眾生講說大乘經律，若[18]疾病國難賊難、父母兄弟和上阿闍梨亡滅之日，及三七日乃至七七日，亦應讀誦講說大乘經律，齋會求福行來治生。」 (CBETA 2023.Q3, T24, no. 1484, p. 1008b10-14).

³³² Teiser, *The Scripture on the Ten Kings*, 20–22.

³³³ Teiser, *The Scripture on the Ten Kings*, 11.

³³⁴ See the three tales from the *Mingxiang ji* translated in Donald E. Gjetson, *Ghosts, Gods, and Retribution: Nine Buddhist Miracle Tales from Six Dynasties and Early T'ang China*, Asian Studies Committee, Occasional Papers Series No. 2, Amherst, 1978, pp 6–15.

³³⁵ The original text in 《法苑珠林》卷 42: 「晉闕公則。趙人也。恬放蕭然唯勤法事。晉武之世死于雒陽。」

year of Emperor An's Yuanxing reign in Jin Dynasty (402 A.D.), together with Liu Weimin, Lei Jizong and 123 others, in front of the Amitabha statue of the Mount Lu, established a temporary fast, and expected to be born in the Western Pure Land.³³⁶

During the Six Dynasties, Taoism was also influenced by the Buddhist concept of transmigration (samsara). The concept of rebirth appeared in a corpus of Taoist texts, the Lingbao scriptures, composed by Ge Chaofu and released to the world around 400 A.D.³³⁷ Early fifth-century Taoist ritual texts also show that Taoism absorbed the concepts of transmigration (samsara), as well as the concept of hell.³³⁸ The penitential ritual or abstinence ceremonies were popular among the Taoist,³³⁹ such as “*Retreat of Mud and Ash 塗炭齋*,” which was performed among Daoists in the early fifth century to rescue their deceased parents from the torments of hell.³⁴⁰ A Daoist named Lu Xiujing (陆修靜, 406–477 A.D.), in the winter of 453 A.D., wrote a series of five commemorations as a part of this penitential ritual. This Daoist text clearly shows that the Taoists appropriate Buddhist ideas of the vision of hell as detailed in Buddhist sutra. Taoists accept the Buddhist concept of karma, according to which one's evil deeds will inevitably lead to one's rebirth among the hungry ghosts

道俗同志為設會於白馬寺中。其夕轉經。宵分聞空中有唱讚聲。仰見一人形器壯偉儀服整麗。乃言曰。我是闕公則。今生西方安樂世界。與諸菩薩共來聽經。合堂驚躍皆得覩見。時復有汲郡衛士度。亦苦行居士也。師於則公。其母又甚信向。誦經長齋常飯僧。時日將中。母出齋堂與諸尼僧逍遙眺望。忽見空中有一物下。正落母前。乃則鉢也。有飯盈焉。馨氣充勃。闔堂蕭然一時禮敬。母自分行。齋人食之皆七日不飢。此鉢猶云尚存北土。度善有文辭。作八關懺文。晉末齋者尚用之。晉永昌中死。亦見靈異。有造像者。作聖賢傳具載其事。云度亦生西方。」(CBETA 2023.Q3, T53, no. 2122, p. 616b15-29)

³³⁶ Shi Huijiao, “Hui Yuan Zhuan 慧远传 [Biography of Hui Yuan],” in *Gao Seng Zhuan 高僧传*

[Biographies of Eminent Monks], vol. 6 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1992), 214.

³³⁷ These scriptures were collected and edited by Lu Xiujing, and traditionally believed to have been composed by Ge Chaofu, and released to the world around 400 A.D. See Stephen R. Bokenkamp, *Ancestors and Anxiety: Daoism and the birth of rebirth in China* (University of California Press, 2007), 14.

³³⁸ The gradual absorption of Buddhist concepts of life and death into Taoism has been studied in detail by scholars, for instance, Yamada Toshiaki, “The Lingbao School,” in *Daoism Handbook*, ed. Livia Kohn (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 225–55; Russell Kirkland, “The History of Taoism: A New Outline,” *Journal of Chinese Religions* 30 (2002): 177–93; and Livia Kohn, “Steal Holy Food and Come Back as a Viper: Conceptions of Karma and Rebirth in Medieval Daoism,” *Early Medieval China* 4 (1998): 1–4; Erik Zürcher, “Buddhist influence on early Taoism” *T'oung Pao* 66, no.1 (1980): 84–147.

³³⁹ Repentance constitutes almost one tenth of the Daozang tiyao, Ren jiyu lists 145 repentance and ceremonial fast (zhai 齋) texts out of 1473 Daoist texts in his Daozang tiyao (道藏提要). See Ren Jiyu 任继愈, ed., *Daozang tiyao 道藏提要* (Beijing: Chinese Academy of Social Science, New China Bookstore, 1991), 1273–1278.

³⁴⁰ For the “Retreat of Mud and Ash 塗炭齋,” see Stephen R. Bokenkamp, “Sackcloth and Ashes: Self and Family in the Tutan Zhai,” in *Scriptures, Schools, and Forms of Practice in Taoism*, ed. Poul Andersen and Florian C. Reiter (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2005), 33–48.

and various tortures in hell. Moreover, the *Declarations of the Perfected* (*Zhengao* 真誥), collected by Tao Hongjing (456–536 A.D.), also show similar descriptions of the afterlife. Mahayana Buddhist values clearly influenced Taoist ritual text, for example, the *Taishang cibe daochang*. The Buddhist technical terms, such as successive rebirths, six paths, four kinds of birth, field of merit, transcending one's human self, three vehicles, three jewels, etc., are sprinkled throughout this Daoist ritual text.³⁴¹

The new concepts of transmigration (samsara) brought by the introduction of Buddhism led people in the Six Dynasties to believe in the cycle of life and death and in the existence of hell. Furthermore, the Buddhist idea of karma also drove people to do good deeds and accumulate good karma as much as possible. The masses were constantly told that by accumulating good karma they would be reborn into a better state. The next question is, how did this concept of transmigration (samsara), brought about by foreign Buddhism, fit into and influence the Chinese mortuary practice during the Six Dynasties? What role did images located in the tombs assume in this process?

After the end of the Han Dynasty, which lasted for more than four hundred years (206 BCE–220 CE), Chinese society underwent changes of varying degrees in various aspects. One notable change occurred in funerary practices at the beginning of the third century.³⁴² In the early third century, the upper echelons of the Cao Wei

³⁴¹ In Daoism, however, the three jewels usually refer to the Dao, the scriptures, and Daoist teachers (Daojiao yishu 道教義樞, fasc. 1). See David W. Chappell, "The Precious Scroll of the Liang Emperor Buddhist and Daoist repentance to save the dead," in *Going Forth: Visions of Buddhist Vinaya*, ed. William M. Bodiford (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2005), 54.

³⁴² Yu Weichao, "Zhongguo Weijin Muzhi Bingfei Riben Gufen Zhiyuan 中国魏晋墓制并非日本古坟之源 [China's Wei-Jin Tomb System is not the Source of Japan's Ancient Burial Mounds]," in *Gushi de Kaogu Xue Tansuo* 古史的考古学探索 [Archaeological Exploration of Ancient History] (Beijing: Wenwu Chubanshe, 2002), 359–369; Han Guohe 韩国河, *Qinhan Weijin Sangzang Zhidu Yanjiu* 秦汉魏晋丧葬制度研究 [Research on Qin, Han, Wei-Jin and Jin Funerary System] (Shaanxi People's Publishing House, 1999), 71–82; Wu Guibing, "Jindai Muzang Zhidu Yu Liangjin Bianqian 晋代墓葬制度与两晋变迁 [The Jin Dynasty Funerary System and Changes in the Two Jin Dynasties]," *Southeast Culture*, no. 3 (2009): 58–63; Han Guohe, and Zhu Jin, "Sanguo Shiqi Muzang Tezheng Shulun 三国时期墓葬特征述论 [Characteristics of Tombs in the Three Kingdoms Period]" *Cultural Relics of Central China*, no. 6 (2010): 53–61; Yu Weichao, "Handai Zhuhou Wang yu Liehou Muzang de Xingzhi Fenxi 汉代诸侯王与列侯墓葬的形制分析——兼论“周制”、“汉制”与“晋制”的三阶段性 [Analysis of the Forms of the Burials of Vassal Kings and Marquises in the Han Dynasty—Analysis of the 'Zhou System,' The three phases of the 'Han system' and the 'Jin system']," in *Zhongguo Kaogu Xuehui Diyici Nianhui Lunwen Ji* 中国考古学会第一次年会论文集 [Proceedings of the First Annual Meeting of the Chinese Archaeological Society]

regime rejected the “lavish burial” prevalent in Han Dynasty society and promoted a “meager burial.” Before his death, Cao Cao issued his final decree on meager burials, abolishing the Han tradition of three years of mourning.³⁴³ His descendants followed his instructions to the letter. Cao Cao’s son, Cao Pi, the Emperor of Wei, went so far as to destroy his father’s sacrificial building, which had been built in accordance with Eastern Han rituals, to carry out the reforms.³⁴⁴ The tomb of Cao Cao found in Xigao Xue Village of Anfeng, Anyang city, Henan Province, is indeed a rather modest example of mausoleum.³⁴⁵ Cao Pi also issued a decree that he be given a meager burial after his death: “If someone disobey this decree and make any changes to my funeral arrangements, they will be killed again and again (若違今詔,妄有所變改造施,吾為戮屍地下,戮而重戮,死而重死).”³⁴⁶ Cao Pi’s descendants also obeyed his edict of meager burial. The purpose of the meager burial advocated by the Cao Wei regime was not simply to advocate frugality but to reform and change customs and traditions.³⁴⁷ In other words, the rulers of the early third century were intentionally trying to gain political prestige by not building monuments such as lavish mausoleums.

According to the documentary material, the concept of meager burial was also promoted by the upper class rulers at the beginning of the Western Jin Dynasty in the second half of the third century.³⁴⁸ In the early years of the Western Jin Dynasty, in

(Beijing: Cultural Relics Publishing House, 1980); Yang Hong, “Tan Zhongguo Hantang Zhijian Zangsu de Yanbian 谈中国汉唐之间葬俗的演变 [Talking about the Evolution of Burial Customs between the Han and Tang Dynasties in China],” *Cultural Relics* no. 10(1999); Qi Dongfang, “Zhongguo Gudai Sangzang Zhong de Jinzhi 中国古代丧葬中的晋制 [Jin System in Ancient Chinese Funerary System]” *Acta Archaeologica Sinica*, no. 3 (2015): 345-366.

³⁴³ Cao Cao died in Luoyang in the first month of the twenty-fifth year of Jian'an (220), and his coffin was brought back to Yecheng for burial. Before his death, Cao Cao issued a decree: “The tomb will be built on high ground, and will be unsealed and unshrined.”

³⁴⁴ “Li Zhi 礼志” in *Jinshu 晋书*.

³⁴⁵ Cao Cao’s mausoleum is “甲” shaped, with a two-chamber brick structure and four side chambers. For details, see Henan Institute of Cultural Relics and Archaeology, *CaoCao Gaoling Kaogu Fanxian Yu Yanjiu 曹操高陵考古发现与研究 [Cao Cao's High Tomb: Archaeological Discoveries and Research]* (Beijing: Cultural Relics Press, 2010).

³⁴⁶ Wendi Ji 文帝纪” in *Sanguozhi 三国志 [Records of the Three Kingdoms]*.

³⁴⁷ Dongfang Qi, “Zhongguo Gudai Sangzang Zhong de Jinzhi 中国古代丧葬中的晋制 [The Jin System in Ancient Chinese Funerals],” *Acta Archaeologica Sinica*, no. 3 (2015): 348.

³⁴⁸ Loyang Hanwei Imperial City Task Force of the Institute of Archaeology of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences 中国社会科学院考古研究所洛阳汉魏故城工作队, “Xijin Diling kancha Ji 西晋帝陵勘察记

order to popularize the meager burial within society, the rulers of the Western Jin Dynasty issued a funeral decree which clearly stipulated that “All burials shall not be accompanied by shrines, stone monuments, stone tables, or stone beasts.”³⁴⁹ In response to these changes in funeral activities, some scholars have put forward the concept of “*Jin system* (晉製).”³⁵⁰ After the founding of the Western Jin regime, it also gathered professionals to formulate the “*Jin Rites* (晉禮),” which were based on the Han system that Cao Wei had tried to abandon, including funeral activities. The question of whether to follow the abolition of the “three-year mourning” during the Wei Dynasty was debated many times between Sima Yan and his ministers. Finally, in the first year of his reign (265 A.D.), Si Ma Yan issued an imperial decree restoring the “three-year mourning.”

Behind this kind of decree hid more complicated political reasons. To put it simply, as the Sima family, which replaced the Cao Wei regime, succeeded in establishing the Western Jin regime, it meant that it was the Confucian aristocracy that finally triumphed over the non-Confucian clan.³⁵¹ At this time, the Sima family needed to adopt the moral standards of Confucianism in order to maintain the legitimacy of their regime. Therefore, when they established the Western Jin regime, they decided to restore the moral standards used by Confucians in the Han Dynasty. For example, “*The Nine Ranks of Officialdom* (九品中正製)” was adopted in the selection of officials, whereby the virtue and behavior were used to determine whether a person could become an official, and of course, the most important criterion

[Reconnaissance of the Mausoleums of the Western Jin Emperors],” *Archaeology*, no. 12 (1984); Jiang Ruoyi 蒋若是, “Cong Xunyu Zuofen Liang Muzhi Zhong dedao de Jinling Xiansuo He Qita 从‘荀岳’、‘左蔡’两墓志中得到的晋陵线索和其他 [from the street Yue Zuo Kwai two tomb records of the Jin Mausoleum clues and other],” *Cultural Relics* no. 10 (1961): 49–52.

³⁴⁹ For the Jin burial order cited in Taiping yulan, see Zhang Pengyi, *Jinling Jicun* 晋令辑存 [Jin order collection] (Xian: Sanqin Publishing House, 1989), 187.

³⁵⁰ Yu Weichao, “Handai Zhuhou Wang Yu Liehou Muzang de Xingzhi Fenxi 汉代诸侯王与列侯墓葬的形制分析——兼论“周制”、“汉制”与“晋制”的三阶段性 [The Analysis of the Forms of the Tombs of the Lords, Kings, and Lords of the Han Dynasty—The Three Stages of the Zhou, Han, and Jin Systems],” in *Xianqin Lianghan Kaogu Xue Lunji* 先秦两汉考古学论集 [pre-Qin and Han archaeology of the collection] (Beijing: Wenwu Chubanshe, 1985).

³⁵¹ Wan Shengnan, *Chen Yinke Weijin Nanbei Chao Shi Jiangyan Lu* 陈寅恪魏晋南北朝史讲演录 [Lectures on the History of Wei, Jin, and North and South Dynasties by Chen Yinke] (Guiyang: Guizhou People's Publishing House, 2007), 19.

was whether he was a filial piety-observant. As the upper-class rulers in the early Western Jin Dynasty still needed the moral standards established by Confucianism to enlist the power of the old Confucian aristocracy, the encouragement of “meager burials (*bozang* 薄葬)” was merely propaganda to correct the overly lavish burials custom left behind by the Han Dynasty, and the construction of the tomb itself was not rejected. Moreover, the rulers still needed to use the very act of building tombs and observing mourning to demonstrate one of the key moral standards practiced in Confucian society: filial piety.

However, the rulers of Jin only propagated Confucianism to the outside; in reality, they had long since become disgusted with Confucian moral standards and did not act according to them. Confucian moral standards became the umbrella under which the Sima family massacred dissidents. Therefore, dissatisfaction with the Jin rulers and skepticism towards Confucian moral standards pervaded the whole society. What began to appear in large numbers in Jin tombs were portraits of Wei Jin literati who transcended the Confucian moral standards, and not images of virtuous people according to Confucian moral standards. For example, in Nanjing and Danyang, Jiangsu Province, eight tombs with bricks depicting the “Seven Sages of the Bamboo Grove and the Rongqiqi” have been discovered (see Fig. 4.1-1a,b,c,d,e,f).³⁵² In Linqu, Shandong Province, the three walls of the tomb of Cui Fen from the Northern Qi Dynasty are also covered with images of Wei Jin sages under trees (see Fig 4.1-2 a,b,c).³⁵³

Therefore, despite the Western Jin rulers stipulating that no tombstones should be erected, miniaturized tombstones are still buried in archaeological finds in Jin tombs. Take, for example, the tombstone “Inscription of Beauty Xu, the Mammy of

³⁵² Luo Zongzhen, “Nanjing Xishanqiao Southern Dynasty Tomb and its Brick Murals,” *Cultural Relics* Z1(1960): 37–42; Nanjing Museum, “Jiangsu Danyang Huqiao Southern Dynasty Tomb and Brick Murals,” *Cultural Relics* no. 2 (1974): 44–56; You Zhenke, “Two Southern Dynasty Burials in Huqiao and Jianshan, Danyang County, Jiangsu Province,” *Cultural Heritage* no. 2(1980): 1–17, 98–101; Gong Juping et al., “Excavation Brief of the Southern Dynasty Brick-printed Mural Tomb (M5) at Shizigang, Yuhuatai, Nanjing,” *Cultural Heritage* no. 5 (2014): 20–38; L. Shen et al., “Briefing on the Excavation of Southern Dynasty Tombs in Tiexinqiao Xiaocun, Yuhuatai District, Nanjing,” *Southeast Culture* no. 2 (2015): 50–132; H. N. Qi et al., “Briefing on the Excavation of the Southern Dynasty Catacombs in Shishichong, Qixia, Nanjing,” *Southeast Culture* no. 4 (2015): 33–67.

³⁵³ Shandong Institute of Cultural Relics and Archaeology, “Shandong Linqu Beiqi Cui Fen Bihua Mu 山东临朐北齐崔芬壁画墓 [Mural Tomb of Cui Fen of Northern Qi in Linqu, Shandong],” *Cultural Relics* no. 4 (2002): 4–26.

Empress Jia of the Jin Dynasty” from the 9th year of the reign of Yuankang (299 A.D.), which was found during the excavation of a tomb of the Western Jin Dynasty in Luoyang, Henan Province. It is in the form of a stone monument with a fully engraved inscription, which was erected on a stone pedestal in the tomb. Another tombstone was excavated in a tomb of the eighth year of Taikang (287 A.D.), and the head of the stone has a round piercing. Moreover, a rectangular tombstone was discovered in the tomb of Yongning (302 A.D.), titled “Jin former Shangshulang Beidi Fu Xuan the late life of women’s Sun's tombstone.”³⁵⁴ And in the western suburbs of Beijing, in the Babaoshan tomb of the Western Jin Dynasty, there was another rectangular tombstone inscribed “Jinyang Wang Gong’s Deceased Wife Hua,”³⁵⁵ and another two tombstones found in the tomb of Xu Yi and Liu Bao of Western Jin Dynasty.³⁵⁶ The top of Xu Yi’s tombstone is square and pointed, and the top of Liu Bao’s tombstone is rounded, and the shape is like a stele, which is placed vertically in the tomb. During the eastern Jin Dynasty, the shape of tombstone gradually shifted from a monumental shape to a roughly rectangular one.

During the Wei and Jin Dynasties, there were also destructive practices of people destroying the lavish large-scale stone tombs of the Han Dynasty and using the stones to build their own burial chambers. These tombs altered by the people of Wei and Jin Dynasties are generally known as “*reburial stone tombs*.” Currently, archaeologists speculate that the owners of these tombs were lower officials, wealthy merchants and commoners, and it is believed that senior officials would not have used the old Han Dynasty tombstones.³⁵⁷ In the three regions where Han stone reliefs have

³⁵⁴ The second team of the Cultural Relics Task Force of the Bureau of Culture of Henan Province, “Excavation of Jin Tombs in Luoyang,” Fig. 4, *Archaeological Journal* no. 1 (1957); Luoyang Excavation Team of the Institute of Archaeology, “Excavation of Jin Tombs in the Western Suburbs of Luoyang,” *Archaeological Journal* no. 11, (1959); the second team of the Institute of Archaeology of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences in Henan, “The Two Tomb of the Wei and Jin Dynasties in the Apricot Garden Village of Yanshi, Henan Province,” *Archaeological Journal* no. 8 (1985).

³⁵⁵ Beijing Municipal Cultural Relics Task Force, “Briefing on the Cleaning of the Tomb of Hua Fang, Wife of Wang Joon, Western Jin Dynasty, Western Suburbs of Beijing,” *Cultural Relics* no. 12 (1965).

³⁵⁶ Shandong Zoucheng City Cultural Relics Bureau, “Shandong Zoucheng western Jin Dynasty Liu Bao Tomb,” *Cultural Relics* no. 1 (2005).

³⁵⁷ Guoguang Qian, and Zhaojian Liu, “The Discovery and Re-study of Reburial Portrait Stone Tombs,” *Southeast Culture* no. 1 (2005): 22.

been unearthed, namely Shandong, northern Jiangsu, and Nanyang District of Henan, archaeologists have continued to find such “reburial stone tombs.”³⁵⁸

In the Nanyang area of Henan Province, of the more than forty Han Dynasty portrait stone tombs scientifically excavated so far, there are at least ten “re-burial stone tombs” reconstructed with Han Dynasty stone reliefs during the Wei and Jin Dynasties. That is, Nanyang Dongguan Jin Tomb,³⁵⁹ Nanyang Xiguan West Jin Tomb,³⁶⁰ Li Xianggong Zhuang Three Kingdoms Tomb in Nanyang City’s eastern suburb,³⁶¹ Nanyang County Shilipu Stone Relief Tomb,³⁶² Nanyang City Building Materials Experimental Factory Stone Relief Tomb,³⁶³ Nanyang City Wangzhuang Stone Relief Tomb, Nanyang City Dushan Xipo Commercial Pictorial Stone Tomb, Nanyang City Medicine Market Pictorial Stone Tomb, Nanyang City Shilipu No. 2 Stone Relief Tomb, Nanyang City No. 2 Chemical Plant Stone Relief Tomb, Nanyang City Maternity and Child Healthcare Hospital Eastern Jin Dynasty Tomb, and Nanyang City Xingying No. 1 Pictorial Stone Tomb.³⁶⁴ In these tombs, most of the Han Dynasty’s stone reliefs are not placed according to the settings in the Han Dynasty’s tombs. For example, in the Dongguan tomb, the door post with the engraving of the doorkeeper of the comet was used as the capstone. In the Xiguan tomb, three stone beds were used as the capstone. In the Li Xianggong zhuang tomb, the tombstone of Xuaqu was used as the capstone. In the Shilipu tomb, the doorpost portraits were placed upside down. In the tomb of Wangzhuang, a lot of stone reliefs

³⁵⁸ Baoping Zhou, “A Study of Several Re-interred Han Pictorial Stone Tombs in Xuzhou – and the Phenomenon of Re-interment in Han Pictorial Stone Tombs,” *Cultural Heritage* no. 7 (1996): 70–74.

³⁵⁹ Wang Baoxiang, Liu Jianzhou, and Thoughtful Thought, “Dongguan Jin Tomb, Nanyang, Henan,” *Archaeology* 1 (1963): 25–27+5.

³⁶⁰ Wang Rulin, “Han Picture Stones from an Ancient Tomb in Xiguan, Nanyang, Henan,” *Archaeology* no. 8, 1964.

³⁶¹ Nanyang City Museum, “Nanyang Found in the Eastern Han Dynasty Xu A Qu Tombstone Portrait Stone,” *Cultural Relics* no. 8 (1974): 73–75+41.

³⁶² Zhao Chengfu, “Shilipu Picture Stone Tomb, Nanyang County, Henan Province,” *Cultural Heritage* 4 (1986): 48–63.

³⁶³ Nanyang City Museum, “Nanyang City Building Materials Test Plant Han Portrait Stone Tomb,” *Zhongyuan Cultural Relics* 3 (1985): 21–25+118.

³⁶⁴ Cui Ping, “An Experimental Discussion on the Re-burial Picture Stone Tombs Discovered in Nanyang,” *Proceedings of the Tenth Annual Conference of the Chinese Society of Han Painting*, ed. Chinese Society of Han Painting, Han Culture Research Centre of Nanyang Normal College (Hubei People’s Publishing House, 2006), 273–275.

were placed on the outer wall of the tomb room, and all of them were covered by the sealing soil. Xingying Tomb used the lintel stone as the cover stone.³⁶⁵

In Shandong area, there at least six “re-burial stone tombs.” They are Jiaxiang Songshan Han Dynasty's stone reliefs tombs,³⁶⁶ Jiaxiang Wulaowa Han Dynasty's stone reliefs tombs,³⁶⁷ Shandong Jiaxiang paper workshop stone reliefs tomb,³⁶⁸ Shandong Zoucheng Gao Li village stone reliefs tomb,³⁶⁹ Zoucheng flour mill stone reliefs tomb.³⁷⁰ In the tomb found in Cangshan, Shandong, with the inscription Yuanjia yuan year (151 A.D.), which is also a “re-burial stone tomb” by the Western Jin Dynasty people using the Han Dynasty’s stone reliefs.³⁷¹ Based on the 328-character inscription on the Han Dynasty’s stone reliefs used in this tomb, Yang Aiguo pointed out the multiple location changes made by the Western Jin dynasty.³⁷² He suggest that the Cangshan tomb here is a direct partial reconstruction of an Eastern Han tomb before burying the dead in Western Jin dynasty.³⁷³

In the Xuzhou area of Jiangsu, a number of Jin tombs have also been found using Han Dynasty's stone reliefs material. They are Jiawang Foshan stone reliefs tombs.³⁷⁴ And two Pixian Bayshan Eastern Han pictorial stone tombs.³⁷⁵ In the No.1 tomb, archaeological report pointed out that the stone in the ceiling of the tomb should originally be a tomb door stone in Han Dynasty tomb. The No. 2 tomb also has such a

³⁶⁵ Cui Ping, “An Experimental Discussion on the Re-burial Picture Stone Tombs Discovered in Nanyang,” Proceedings of the Tenth Annual Conference of the Chinese Society of Han Painting, ed. Chinese Society of Han Painting, Han Culture Research Centre of Nanyang Normal College (Hubei People’s Publishing House, 2006), 273.

³⁶⁶ Zhu Xilu, “Han Picture Stones Unearthed in 1980 at Songshan, Jiaxiang, Shandong,” *Cultural Heritage* 5 (1982): 60–70.

³⁶⁷ The period of alteration is presumed to be the Three Kingdoms or Western Jin Dynasty based on the excavated coins. Zhu Xilu, “Jiaxiang Wulaowa Discovers a Batch of Han Pictorial Stones,” *Cultural Relics*, 5 (1982): 71–78.

³⁶⁸ Cradling Xilu, “Shandong Jiaxiang Paper Square Picture Stone Tomb,” *Cultural Heritage* 5 (1986): 31–41.

³⁶⁹ Hu Xinli, Wang Jun, and Zheng Jianfang, “Han Pictorial Stone Tombs in Gao Li Village, Zoucheng, Shandong,” *Cultural Heritage* 6 (1994): 24–30.

³⁷⁰ Liu Peigui, Zheng Jianfang, and Wang Yan, “Eastern Han pictorial stones unearthed in Zoucheng,” *Cultural Heritage* 6 (1994): 32–36+1.

³⁷¹ Zhang Qihai, “Shandong Cangshan Yuanjia Yuannian Painted Elephant Stone Tomb,” *Archaeology* 2 (1975): 124–146; Fang Pengjun, and Zhang Xunliao, “A Discussion on the Age and Related Issues of the Painted Elephant Stone Inscriptions of Yuanjia Yuannian in Cangshan, Shandong,” *Archaeology* 3 (1980): 271–278.

³⁷² Yang Aiguo, “Two Questions on the Painted Stone Tomb in Chengqian Village, Cangshan County, Shandong,” *Huaxia Archaeology* 1(2004): 48.

³⁷³ Yang Aiguo, “Two Questions on the Painted Stone Tomb in Chengqian Village, Cangshan County, Shandong,” *Huaxia Archaeology* 1 (2004): 48.

³⁷⁴ Geng Jianjun and Liu Zunzhi, “Jiawang Foshan Picture Stone Tomb,” Xu Guangji, ed. (Heritage Publishing House, 1998), 124–125.

³⁷⁵ You Zhenyao, Chen Yongqing, and Zhou Jasheng, “Two Eastern Han pictorial stone tombs in Baisan Gouzi, Pixian County, Jiangsu Province,” *Cultural Heritage* 5 (1986): 17–30.

phenomenon. For example, the stone on the north side of the door inverted, the carved figures are head down and feet up. The earliest archaeological excavation reports on the above phenomena suggested that the burials were made in a hasty manner, but later archaeologists, after further research, suggested that the original Han Dynasty's stone reliefs tombs were repaired and used as reburial tombs.³⁷⁶ Moreover, there is also a Jin Dynasty tomb made of Han Dynasty's stone reliefs found in Damiao, Xuzhou.³⁷⁷ Another tomb found in Wayao, Xinyi County, which was converted from Han pictorial stone material, with no doorway and two stone slabs used to seal the tomb.³⁷⁸ The early archaeological report also speculated that the tomb was built by the descendants using the tomb materials made by the predecessors.³⁷⁹ Another Jin tomb found in Hanwang xiang, Tongshan County, contains two inscribed Han Dynasty's stone reliefs.³⁸⁰ One of the stones is inscribed: “shi zhi wan qiqian 室直萬口七千.” Another is engraved: “shi zhi wan wuqian 室直(值)口萬五千.” Some scholars according to the “*shi* 室” appears in these two inscription, presumed that these two pieces stones are from the Han dynasty tombs in the stone room of the ancestral shrine.³⁸¹ Later, Yang Aiguo specifically wrote an article to argue that in the Han Dynasty, “*shi* 室” should refer to ‘tomb room’ rather than “shrine.”³⁸² It could be assumed that the Jin Dynasties reburial tombs are mainly taken from the stone reliefs in the Han Dynasty tombs, but it cannot be completely ruled out that some of the materials used in the Jin Dynasties tomb were taken from the shrine of Han Dynasty.

It is worth noting that in the process of reorganization of the carefully planned Han Dynasty's stone reliefs in the Wei Jin Dynasty tombs, some of the concepts that

³⁷⁶ Zhou Baoping, “A Study of Several Re-interred Han Pictorial Stone Tombs in Xuzhou – and the Phenomenon of Re-interment in Han Pictorial Stone Tombs,” *Cultural Heritage* 7 (1996): 71.

³⁷⁷ Meng Qiang, and Li Xiang, “Jin-Han Picture Stone Tomb at Damiao, Xuzhou, Jiangsu Province,” *Cultural Heritage* 4 (2003): 61–70.

³⁷⁸ Zhou Baoping, “A Study of Several Re-interred Han Pictorial Stone Tombs in Xuzhou – and the Phenomenon of Re-interment in Han Pictorial Stone Tombs,” *Cultural Heritage* 7 (1996): 70.

³⁷⁹ Wang Kai, and Xia Kaichen, “Han Pictorial Stone Tombs at Wayao, Xinyi, Jiangsu Province,” *Archaeology* 7 (1985): 614–618.

³⁸⁰ Yanlin, and Guoguang, “Discovery of East Han Yuanhe Third-Year Portrait Stones in Xuzhou,” *Cultural Heritage* 9 (1990): 64–73.

³⁸¹ Zhou Baoping, “A Study of Several Re-interred Han Pictorial Stone Tombs in Xuzhou – and the Phenomenon of Re-interment in Han Pictorial Stone Tombs,” *Cultural Heritage* 7 (1996): 72.

³⁸² Yang Aiguo, “Chamber as Tomb Room,” *Cultural Heritage* 9 (1998): 69–70.

had been given to the tombs during the Han Dynasty were also gradually invalidated. Those randomly assembled burial tomb chambers also seem to show that the common people of the Jin Dynasties did not care about the original location of the Han Dynasty's stone reliefs and the specific meaning they conveyed. The Han stone reliefs were only used by the common people of the Wei and Jin Dynasties as a kind of raw material to be used in the construction of tomb. The reason why they chose to move the huge and heavy stone reliefs used in Han tombs to their own or their parents' tomb was only to indicate that they still accepted the previous concept of burial.

In the tombs of the 3rd to 6th centuries, there were still "land purchase vouchers (买地券)," which had been widely used since the Han Dynasty to buy a home for the dead underground.³⁸³ For example, there is a land purchase certificate of Zheng Chou from the sixth year of Huangwu in the Eastern Wu Dynasty (227 A.D.) unearthed in Wuhan.³⁸⁴ Another land purchase voucher from the second year of Yongning in the Western Jin Dynasty (302 A.D.) was unearthed in Shizahu, Banqiao Town, Nanjing.³⁸⁵ And a land purchase voucher of Xu Fu from the tenth year of Yuanjia in the Liu Song Dynasty (433 A.D.) was unearthed in Changsha.³⁸⁶ A land purchase voucher of Liu Cang from the third year of Yongming in the Xiao-Qi Dynasty (485 A.D.) was unearthed in Wuhan.³⁸⁷ A land purchase voucher of He Jing from the first year of Ordinary in the Xiao-Liang Dynasty (520 A.D.) was unearthed in Zixing, Hunan Province.³⁸⁸ The people of the 3rd to 6th centuries still regarded the tomb as a resting place for the Po soul of the dead. Therefore, it is still necessary to prepare the deceased with everything they need to live underground.

³⁸³ Zhao Xueye and Zhao Wanjun, "Tomb Vouchers of the Wei and Jin Dynasties in Gaotai, Gansu and the Deities and Divination Maps Involved," *Archaeology and Antiquities* no. 1 (2008): 85–90.

³⁸⁴ Lan Wei et al. "Briefing on the Cleaning of the Early Six Dynasties Burials at Renjiawan, Wuchang," *Cultural Heritage* no. 12 (1955): 65–73; Cheng Xinren, "Interpretation of Two Dongwu Lead Coupons Unearthed in Wuhan," *Archaeology* no. 10 (1965): 529–530.

³⁸⁵ "Briefing Note on the Clearance of Jin Tombs at Shizahu, Banqiao Town, Nanjing," *Cultural Heritage* no. 6 (1965): 37–45, 58–59.

³⁸⁶ Xiao Xiang, "Land Purchase Tickets of Xu Vice in the Southern Dynasty Unearthed in Changsha," *Hunan Archaeological Journal* (1982): 127–128.

³⁸⁷ Wang Shancai, "Four Southern Dynasty Chronological Tombs in the Wuhan Area," *Archaeology* no. 4 (1965): 176–184, 214–217.

³⁸⁸ Fu Juyou, "Tomb of the Jinnan Dynasty in Zixing, Hunan," *Journal of Archaeology* no. 3 (1984): 335–417.

In the stone reliefs found in the southern region of the Wei and Jin Dynasties, the images appear on those stone reliefs were also modelled on the architectural images used in Han Dynasty tombs. Many of the stone reliefs used in Wei and Jin tombs in Gansu province are also modelled on images used in the Han Dynasty tombs. For example, in Jiayuguan, the brick reliefs of the tombs of the Sixteen Kingdoms period are also depicted with stacked silk fabrics and other high-class funerary objects that were used in the Han Dynasty tombs. While there are no gorgeous murals like those in the Han Dynasty tombs in the tombs of the Wei and Jin Dynasties in the Luoyang area, the tombs are still equipped with simple ceramic artefacts, including everyday items, ceramic barns, sheepfolds, wells, oxcarts, figurines of maids and warriors, etc., which could be used by the deceased. Therefore, it can be said that the underground burial chambers created by the people for the dead during the Wei and Jin Dynasties were still self-contained private places that only satisfied the needs of the dead.

At the end of the Western Jin Dynasty, under the internal strife within the Han Chinese ruling group, the ethnic minorities also took advantage of the chaos to set up their own regimes and enter the period of the Five Hu and Sixteen Kingdoms (304–439 A.D.). However, at this time, the rulers of the ethnic minorities who came to dominate the Central Plains began to admire the culture of the Han Dynasty in an attempt to continue the glory of the past. During the Northern Wei Dynasty (386–534 A.D.), which was founded by the Xianbei tribe and ended the disputes in the Central Plains, the upper-class rulers of the Northern Wei Dynasty made long-term planning and continuous efforts to fully absorb and inherit the Han culture. This comprehensive absorption of Han culture in Northern Wei society was also evident in funeral culture.

The first thing worth noting is that the Northern Dynasty population developed a completely different attitude towards the Han Dynasty's burial remains from those of the Wei and Jin populations. During the Northern Wei period, there were still some stone shrines built by the Han Dynasty for their ancestors that stood relatively intact above ground. For example, Li Daoyuan of the Northern Wei recorded in his *Shui Jing Zhu* (水經註) the well-preserved stone shrines of the Xiaotang Mountain in

Changqing, Shandong,³⁸⁹ a stone shrine of Han lieutenant Lu Gong (魯恭冢), and a stone shrine of Li Gang, an assassin of the Han province of Jing (荊州).³⁹⁰ These shrine buildings were not destroyed and dismantled for reuse by the people of Northern Wei Dynasty. Rather, they were seen by the people of the Northern Wei Dynasty as excellent places for interactive activities with the departed saint of the Han Dynasty. They also specifically recorded this interaction on the stone shrine.

For example, it has preserved a large number of inscriptions by people of the Northern Wei Dynasty in the XiaoTang Mountain Stone Shrine (Fig. 4.1-3a). Among the inscriptions relating to filial piety, there is one by Shen Shanglong, which was carved on the east wall of the XiaoTang Mountain Stone Shrine: “Shen Shanglong came to this hall on the 2nd day of the 2nd month in the first year of Yongkang (396 A.D.), and was touched by the filial piety of the people.”³⁹¹ Later, Hu Changren, the king of Longdong in the Northern Qi Dynasty and the governor of Qi Prefecture, engraved a long inscription titled “*Ode to the Longdong King’s Feeling of Filial Piety* (隴東王感孝頌)” on the entire outside of the west wall of the Xiaodang Mountain Stone Shrine (Fig. 4.1-3b). This stone inscription is over 500 words long and about filial piety.³⁹²

Other visitors of the Northern Dynasty simply left inscriptions indicating that they had visited this shrine, such as the two inscriptions carved on the inside of the east wall of the XiaoTang Mountain stone shrine: “Meng Shixiong came here on the 3rd day of the 3rd month of the 2nd year of Yongxing (410 A.D.), and it is raining

³⁸⁹ Yan Zheng, “The Viewers of the Stone Shrine at Xiaodang Mountain in the Eastern Han Dynasty and Beyond,” *Art Research* no. 2 (2021): 15–21; Jiang Yingzhuo, Yang Aiguo, Xin Lixiang, Wu Wenqi, eds., *Xiaotang Mountain Stone Ancestral Hall* (Beijing: Cultural Relics Press, 2017), 2; Liu Wentao and Li Baobei, “An Examination of the Two Northern Wei Inscriptions at the Xiaotang Mountain Stone Shrine,” *Oriental Archaeology* (2019): 200–205; Yang Aiguo, “Posterior Inscriptions on the Stone Ancestral Halls of Xiaotang Mountain – Thoughts from Huang Yi’s Fine Topography of the Stone Ancestral Halls’ Portraits in the First Year of the Jiaqing Period,” *Xiling Art Series* no. 9 (2017): 3–8+2; Yang Aiguo, “How Stories are Generated – An Example of Guo’s Tombstone Ancestral Hall on Xiaotang Mountain, Changqing, Shandong,” *Social Science Front* no. 9 (2016): 111–119; Huang Lingmei and Bao Qiang, “A Reconsideration of the Inscription of the Stone Shrine at Xiaotang Mountain,” *Oriental Museum* no. 4 (2016): 92–99; Xia Chaoxiong, “Xiaotangshan Stone Shrine Painting, Dating and Master Trial,” *Heritage* no. 8 (1984): 34–39; Xu Jianguo, “Xuzhou Han Pictorial Stone Room Shrine Architecture,” *Zhongyuan Cultural Relics* no. 2 (1993).

³⁹⁰ Guowei Wang, *Shui Jing Zhu Jiao* 水经注校 (Shanghai: Shanghai People's Publishing House, 1984), 275–291.

³⁹¹ The reference to “the man” could be interpreted as the patron of the stone shrine, but it is not clear.

³⁹² Jin Wenming, *Jinshi Lu Jiaozheng* 金石录校证 (Shanghai: Shanghai Calligraphy and Painting Publishing House, 1985), 44.

heavily. Hang around here.” There are also three inscriptions carved on the inner side of the west wall: “In the second month of the first year of Tian’an (466 A.D.), General Jianwei come here”; and “On the 25th day of the third year of Taihe (479 A.D.), three people from Shanchi County, Wang Tianming, Wang Qun, and Wang Dingru were here, and they traveled to the Hall of Filial Piety to inscribe this character.” Another inscription said: “On the 2nd day of the 2nd month of the 2nd year of Jingming (501 A.D.), Wu □□ Gu came here to the Hall of Filial Piety.” The following inscription was carved on the inside of the stone on the east side of the north wall: “On the 25th day of the 12th month in the 23rd year of the reign of Taihe (499 A.D.), the King of Guangling visited this place.” A similar inscription is in the stone on the west side of the north wall: “On the 25th day of the 12th month of the 23rd year of the reign of Taihe (499 A.D.), the King of Guangling arrived here.” Another inscription is on the west side of the triangular partition: “On the 25th day of the 4th month of the 1st year of the Jingming reign (500 A.D.), Wang Gaigui, the governor of Taiyuan, visited here.”

There are also some visitors to this shrine who write their wishes on its walls, such as the inscription engraved on the inner side of the west stone on the north wall of the shrine: “Taihe 23rd year (499 A.D.) December 25th, imperial concubine of Guangling Wang visits this place, I wish the country eternal blessing, the descendants are filial and loyal.” The inscription engraved on the inner west stone on the north wall of the shrine reads, “On the 27th day of the 4th month of the first year of Yanchang (512 A.D.), the late Qi Zhou prefectural governor private tutor Cheng Shi Sheng Luo Dong □ Bao Shot Wu Shi Chen □ Luo Zhen, etc., wishing for peace, travelling on the good road, sitting in the right place, and dealing with good people.” The inscription written inside the east wall of the shrine reads, “On the 24th day of the 4th month of the 10th year of Tianbao (559 A.D.), four people of Zhang □□ Kuang □ came to pass by the Hall of Filial Piety and wrote the words, May it be so from the heart.” The inscription engraved inside the east wall of the shrine reads, “Tianbao nine years (588 A.D.) mountain Chi County people on the 27th day of the fourth month, Liu Gui and Liu Zhang brothers back to the Qian over the Hall of Filial Piety,

visit and make a wish, May it be so from the heart.” The wording and content of these inscriptions are very reminiscent of the inscriptions in the Mogao Caves at Dunhuang during the same period.

Also worth noting is that, although Buddhist images had already appeared in tombs during the Han dynasty,³⁹³ this phenomenon occurred more frequently in the funerary locations of the Northern Dynasties. Many stone burial furnishings from this period have been found to contain Buddhist images. For example, the stone house-shaped sarcophagi (Fig. 4.1-4a) was excavated from the Zhijiabao Tomb (484–489) in Datong, Shanxi.³⁹⁴ It shows a neatly arranged procession of people holding lotus flowers on the east and west walls (Fig. 4.1-4b,c) and similar images are often found in mural paintings of the Mogao Caves in Dunhuang during the Northern Dynasties. Moreover, three large lotus flowers are depicted on the steps to the side of the coffin bed in a Northern Wei mural tomb in Datong, Shanxi Province (Fig. 4.1-5). There is also a Northern Wei sarcophagus, namely Yuanmi Sarcophagus in the collection of The Minneapolis Institute of Arts,³⁹⁵ in which an image of the Mani jewel appears in the center of the sarcophagus headstall (Fig.4.1-6). There is also the Ningmao stone chamber in the collection of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (Fig. 4.1- 7a), where a lotus flower appears in the hands of the middle group of figures on the outer side of the back wall (Fig. 4.1- 7b). In Shangyao Village, an image of Mani jewel also appears in the center of the upper part of the sarcophagus headstall, and a group of feathered figures holding lotus flowers appears on the left- and right-side panels of the sarcophagus (Fig. 4.1-8).³⁹⁶ One of the two Northern Dynasties sarcophagi found in

³⁹³ Hung Wu, “Buddhist Elements in Early Chinese Art (2nd and 3rd Centuries A.D.),” *Artibus Asiae* 47, no. 3/4 (1986): 263–352.

³⁹⁴ Wang Yintian, and Liu Junxi, “Datong Zhijiabao beiwei Mu Shiguo Bihua 大同智家堡北魏墓石椁壁画 [Mural paintings on the stone outer coffins of Northern Wei tombs in Datong Zhijiabao],” *Cultural Heritage* no.7 (2001): 40–51+1.

³⁹⁵ Richard S Davis, “A Stone Sarcophagus of the Wei Dynasty.” *Bulletin of the Minneapolis Institute of Art* 37 no. 23 (1948): 110; Wu Hung, *Monumentality in Early Chinese Art and Architecture* (Stanford University Press, 1995), 251–280; Wang Eugene Y., “Coffins and Confucianism: The Northern Wei Sarcophagus in The Minneapolis Institute of the Arts,” *Orientalisms* 30, no. 6 (1999): 56–64; He Xilin, “Morality and Faith: A Re-examination of Issues Related to the Northern Wei Painted Sarcophagus in the Minneapolis Museum of Art Collection,” *Art Research* no. 4(2020): 30–51; Jie Shi, “Image, Body, and Simulation of the Afterlife in the Early Medieval Sarcophagus of Prince Yuan Mi,” *Archives of Asian Art* 70 no.2 (2020): 199–224.

³⁹⁶ Luoyang Museum, “Luoyang Beiwei Huaxiang Shiguan 洛阳北魏画像石棺 Luoyang Northern Wei Painted Sarcophagus,” *Archaeology*, no. 3 (1980): 229–241.

Yushe County, Shanxi Province, and recorded in the archaeological report, also has a lotus image.³⁹⁷

It is important to note that although Buddhist motifs appear in a large number of the stone burial furnishings produced by the people of Northern Dynasties listed above, the use of these Buddhist motifs is still similar to that of the Han dynasty—that is, they are merely used as “an integral part of China’s cultural matrix, interacting with funerary art in China.”³⁹⁸ The mortuary practice is still dominated by the funerary concept of the Han Dynasty. Most of the images used in the Northern Dynasties’ funerary locations were still inherited from the Han Dynasty sarcophagus, such as the images of couples sitting side by side, banquets and music, carriages and horses travelling, stories of filial piety, and the four spirits animals. For example, the stone room-shaped coffin excavated from the Zhijiabao tomb (484–489 A.D.) in Datong, Shanxi, still depicts a seated couple in the centre of the north wall (Fig. 4.1-9). There is also an earlier tomb with a clear date (A.D. 435) found in Shaling, Datong, Shanxi province, which also shows a couple seated together on the east wall of the chamber (Fig. 4.1-10). The Ningmao stone chamber, despite the presence of figures holding lotus flowers on the back wall, still has images of the filial story of Dinglan, Shun, Dong Yong, and Dong Yan, who are filial figures embodying Confucianism, inscribed on the left and right side of the wall (Fig. 4.1-11a,b). Many of the sarcophagi of the Northern Dynasties excavated so far follow the fixed pattern of images used in the sarcophagi of the middle and late Eastern Han Dynasty.³⁹⁹

³⁹⁷ Wang Taiming, “Yudu Xian Faxian Yipi Shiguan 榆社县发现一批石棺 [Discovery of a Batch of Sarcophagi in Yushe County],” in *Proceedings of the Shanxi Provincial Archaeological Society 3*, ed. Shanxi Provincial Archaeological Research Institute (Taiyuan: Shanxi Ancient Books Publishing House, 2000), 119–122.

³⁹⁸ Annette L. Juliano, “Converging Traditions in the Imagery of Yu Hong’s Sarcophagus: Possible Buddhist Sources,” *Journal of Inner Asian Journal of Inner Asian Art and Archaeology 1* (2006): 34.

³⁹⁹ Han Dynasty portrait sarcophagus in the late Eastern Han Dynasty in Sichuan formed a more fixed pattern—for example, the Wang Hui sarcophagus, Jianyang Ghost Head Mountain Han portrait sarcophagus, unearthed in Fushun a sarcophagus. All in the head of the sarcophagus file are set Zhu Bird, or two-door que doorway. Sarcophagus on both sides of the gang set the green dragon and white tiger as well as the soul ascension to the fairyland scene; sarcophagus foot file for the Xuanwu or Fuxi Nuwa image; sarcophagus lid set persimmon tattoo. For details, see Luo Erhu, “Study on Han Dynasty Pictorial Sarcophagus,” *Journal of Archaeology* no. 1 (2000): 31–62; Lei Jianjin, “Discovery of the List of Pictorial Sarcophagus in Gitou Mountain, Janyang County,” *Sichuan Cultural Relics* no. 6 (1988): 65; Gao Wen, ed., *Sichuan Han Dynasty Sarcophagus Portrait Collection* (Beijing: People’s Fine Arts Publishing House, 1998); Gao Wen, Gao Chenggang, eds., *The Art of Chinese Sarcophagi* (Taiyuan: Shanxi People’s Publishing House, 1996), 10.

During the Northern Dynasties, many sarcophagi were decorated with blue dragons and white tigers on both sides of the sarcophagus, vermilion birds and Xuanwu in the front and back, and the lid of the sarcophagus is decorated with Fanghua pattern inlaid with four spirit animals, which defines another time and space for the deceased.

Consider, for example, a dated Northern Wei Dynasty (518–520 A.D.) sarcophagus excavated in Yushe County, Shanxi Province.⁴⁰⁰ It has the image of a dragon carved on the left side of the sarcophagus (Fig. 4.1-12 a), and the image of a tiger on the right side of the sarcophagus (Fig. 4.1-12 b). There is also the image of a dragon carved on the left side of the well-preserved sarcophagus of Xue Huaiji (523 A.D.) from Wanrong, Shanxi Province (Fig.4.1-13).⁴⁰¹ The images of Xuanwu and the tiger also appear on the fragmentary stone of the tomb's lid excavated from this tomb (Fig. 4.1-14). Recently, there was also a sarcophagus excavated from the tomb of Cao Lian in the second year of Yong'an (528 A.D.) of the Northern Wei Dynasty, which has a dragon on the left side, a tiger and the figure of a filial son on the right side (Fig. 4.1-15a,b), and the image of Xuanwu on the footplate of sarcophagus (Fig. 4.1-15c). The sarcophagus of Yuanmi, which is particularly exquisite and intricately carved, has Mani pearl on the head gear of the sarcophagus; the images of the dragon and tiger appear on the left- and right-side panels of the sarcophagus while the story of the Filial Piety Sons appears underneath those images (Fig.4.1-16). The overall image setting is still in the mode of Han Dynasty.

Attempts to change and innovate entirely independently of the images systems of Han stone reliefs seem to have taken place more radically in the mid to late Northern Wei Dynasty. One example of the Buddhist concept of life and death revolutionizing the practice of funerary art occurred in the second half of the fifth century in a sarcophagus made for a female. This sarcophagus unearthed from a tomb of Xing He Jiang in the third year of the Huangxing of the Northern Wei Dynasty (469 A.D.) was

⁴⁰⁰Wang Taiming, "Discovery of a Batch of Sarcophagi in Yushe County," in Shanxi Provincial Archaeological Society, Shanxi Provincial Archaeological Research Institute, ed. *Proceedings of the Shanxi Provincial Archaeological Society 3* (Taiyuan: Shanxi Ancient Books Publishing House, 2000), 11, 119–122.

⁴⁰¹ Wu Junhua, Ma Sheng, and Zhong Longgang, "Briefing on the Excavation of the Tomb of Xue Huaiji of the Northern Wei Dynasty in Xisiya, Wanrong, Shanxi," *Cultural Heritage* no. 1 (2023): 4–32.

discovered in 2015 in the Tongjiawan village south of Datong, Shanxi Province. This sarcophagus was 2.23 metres in length, 1.37 metres in width, and 1.7 metres in height (Fig. 4.1-17 a).⁴⁰² The four walls of the sarcophagus are all covered with images of Buddhist themes such as seated Buddha, flying devas, Dharma protectors, and donors with lotus flowers (Fig 4.1-17 b). In the center of the north wall next to the funeral bed, there is no longer an image of the tomb owner and his wife seated side by side, but two Buddhas seated side by side (Fig 4.1-17 c).⁴⁰³

Scholars such as Li Yuqun and Li Meitian have speculated that this sarcophagus may be a simulation of a Buddhist temple that served as a place of worship and sustenance, based on the style of the hall with the overhanging roof and the Buddhist mural paintings in the interior.⁴⁰⁴ However, this speculation based on the viewpoint of the living may not be particularly consistent with the basic context of the burial chamber as a private place for the dead. Here this dissertation speculates on another possibility from the viewpoint of the dead. It is possible that the reason why Xinghe Jiang's sarcophagus containing the body of the deceased in a place surrounded by Buddha images on all four walls of her sarcophagus is that the owner of the tomb hoped that she would be welcomed by the Buddhas to the Pure Land after her death. As early as the Eastern Jin Dynasty, the *Buddha said the Buddha view of the Buddha Samadhi Sea Sutra* (佛說觀佛三昧海經), volume 10 of the translation of Buddhahadra (359–429 A.D.), records that the “seven Buddhas” has declared the thought that the seven Buddhas are “always born in the Pure Land.” Therefore, in this Xinghejang sarcophagus, seven seated Buddhas appear side by side on the south wall opposite the coffin bed of the tomb owner (Fig. 4.1-17d). The setting of these seven

⁴⁰² This sarcophagus bed has attracted the attention of scholars since its discovery, and before the official archaeological report was released, Zhang Qingjie, Zhang Zhizhong, and others had already published articles to discuss it: Zhang Qingjie, “Paintings Dedicated to Another World: Mural Paintings of a Northern Wei Tomb in Pingcheng,” in Shanghai Museum, ed., *Wall View: A Detailed Reading of Ancient Mural Paintings of Shanxi. A Close Reading of Ancient Mural Paintings* (Shanxi: Peking University Press, 2017), 85; Zhang Zhizhong, “On the Buddhist Imagery of a Northern Wei Tomb in Datong,” in Shing Muller, Thomas O. Hollman and Sonja Fili, “Early Medieval NorthChina: Archaeological and Textual Evidence from Archaeological and Textual Perspectives,” *Wiesbaden* (2019): 57–80.

⁴⁰³ Gu Shunfang, and Lv Xiaojing, “Investigation Brief on the Stone Outer Coffins of the Northern Wei Xinghe Jiang Tomb in Tongjiawan, Datong, Shanxi,” *Cultural Heritage*, no. 1 (2022): 18–34.

⁴⁰⁴ Li Yuqun, “Symbol of the Buddha's Palace – Stone Coffin of Northern Wei Buddhist Mural Painting in Tongjiawan, Datong, Shanxi,” *Cultural Heritage*, no. 1 (2022): 52–53.

Buddhas is probably related to this idea. On the three walls adjacent to the coffin bed of the deceased, there are a total of eight Buddha statues (including one on the broken north wall) (Fig. 4.1.-17e,f), which probably represent the scene of the Buddhist scripture that says that at the end of the life, “all the Buddhas will come to welcome the deceased.”

This suggests that at least in the second half of the 5th century in the Pingcheng area of the Northern Wei Dynasty, the Buddhist concept of transmigration (samsara) had already entered the practice of tomb art. This breaks with the commonly held view that Buddhism art and tomb art maintained a parallel “two-track situation” of independent development from the Han to the Tang dynasties.⁴⁰⁵ In the 5th century funerary art practices, people believed in the concept of transmigration and adopted the Buddhist concept of life and death in the construction of funerary chambers. The Buddhist idea of karma drove people to do as much good as possible and to accumulate good karma, convincing them that they would inevitably be rewarded with a good rebirth into a better state. Therefore, they painted Buddha all over the funerary chambers and depicted the queue of their offerings to Buddha under each statue, praying that through this good karma they would be reborn in the Pure Land of Buddha. At this time, the funerary chamber is regarded as the place where they live in the Antarābhava state before they are reborn. Anyway, funerary chambers with the Buddhist concept of life and death were still built as private spaces for individuals.

In terms of the burial practices of the upper echelons of the hierarchy, an example of the way in which the Buddhist concept of transmigration (samsara) transformed burial practices that needs attention is the tomb of the Empress Dowager

⁴⁰⁵ For example, Lin Shengzhi argues that burial images and Buddhist art belonged to two different categories during the Northern and Southern Dynasties, and that Buddhist images were consciously excluded from burials place. See Lin Shengzhi, *Images and Decorations: Representations of Life and Death in Northern Dynasty Tombs*, (National Taiwan University Press Centre, 2019), 111–112. Wu Hong has also argued that Buddhist art and tomb art maintained a “dual track” of parallel development, which can be viewed as traditional tomb art consciously rejecting the assimilation of alien religious art for the sake of its own independence. See Wu Hung, *Ancient Chinese Art in the Global Landscape* (Sanlian Bookstore, 2017), 125. Earlier Yu Weichao also argues that because Buddhist and Taoist activities were not expressed in secular burial practices from the Northern and Southern Dynasties to the Sui and Tang Dynasties, direct representations of Buddhist and Taoist beliefs are rarely seen in tomb portraits. See Yu Weichao, “Stages of Change in the Content of Chinese Ancient Tomb Murals: Outline of Speech at the Symposium on the Exhibition of the Essence of Ancient Tomb Murals in Hebei,” *Cultural Heritage* no. 9 (1996): 65–66.

Feng of the Northern Wei Dynasty, located in Datong, Shanxi, where the construction of the tomb was begun in the third year of the Northern Wei Dynasty's reign of Taihe (479 A.D.) and completed in the fifteenth year of the reign of Taihe (491 A.D.).⁴⁰⁶ The Siyuan Pagoda was built at the bottom of the southern slope about 800 metres away from the tomb of the Yonggu Mausoleum (Fig. 4.1-18a).⁴⁰⁷ It is also recorded in the *Shui Jing zhu* that Empress Dowager Feng planned to build her own mausoleum by including the Siyuan Buddhist Temple in the whole mausoleum. The construction of the Siyuan Buddhist Temple was started in the third year of Taihe (479 A.D.), which is the first stage of the whole mausoleum project. Although this phenomenon of combining tombs with pagodas was already recorded when Emperor Mingdi of Han Dynasty welcomed Buddha into China, it is also said that pagodas were erected on both imperial tombs and the common people's tombs at that time.⁴⁰⁸ In addition, there are also records of folk building Buddhist temples near tombs during the Northern and Southern Dynasties.⁴⁰⁹ But so far no physical evidence has been found left by the Han Dynasty imperial family, whereas the foundations for the construction of a large Buddhist temple at that time were left in the Yonggu Mausoleum of Empress Dowager Feng of the Northern Wei Dynasty.

In addition, the tomb of Empress Dowager Feng was also designed differently from the Han Dynasty tradition. The whole tomb was not painted with gorgeous motifs, but only a lotus flower image was carved on the white sandstone inlaid in the center of the tomb chamber's ceiling.⁴¹⁰ On both sides of the stone door at the southern end of the tomb chamber's tunnel are carved images of a child holding a

⁴⁰⁶ The tombs of the Northern Wei royal family before the Empress Dowager Feng were located at the "Jinling," but no remains of the Jinling have been found, and its exact location in northern China is not clear. For a study of the "Golden Tombs," see the article by Su Bai. See Su Bai, "The Northern Wei Dynasty Luoyang City and the Tombs of Mang in the North: A Collection of Remains of the Xianbei Dynasty," *Cultural Relics*, 7 (1978).

⁴⁰⁷ Hu Ping, "Datong Northern Wei Fangshan Siyuan Buddhist Temple Site Excavation Report," *Cultural Heritage* no. 4 (2007): 4-26+1.

⁴⁰⁸ In the *Luoyang Galan Records* 洛阳伽蓝记, it is written: "明帝崩, 期祇洹于陵上。自此以后, 百姓冢上或作浮图焉。When Emperor Ming collapsed, the period of the Emperor's death was on the mausoleum. Since then, the people's mound or made floating map."

⁴⁰⁹ The *宋书* 萧惠开传 *Song Book - Xiao Huikai biography*: "(萧惠开)丁父艰,居丧有孝性,家素事佛,凡为父起四寺……京口墓亭,名曰禅亭寺。(Xiao Huikai) Ding father hardship, mourning with filial piety, family vegetarianism Buddha, where the father up four temples ... Jingkou Tomb Pavilion, the name is Zen Pavilion Temple."

⁴¹⁰ Xie Tingqi, "Datong Fangshan Northern Wei Yonggu Mausoleum," *Cultural Heritage* no. 7 (1978): 30.

lotus bud in both hands, a peacock, and the lotus column (Fig. 4.1-18 b). The niches with Buddha in the northern Mogao Caves at Dunhuang, such as Cave 248, Cave 288, Cave 290, and Cave 301 (Figs. 5.1-47, 66, 72, and 101), also frequently use similar columnar heads.⁴¹¹ Previous scholars have also pointed out that the columnar heads image also appears in Caves 9 and cave 10 of the Yungang Grottoes, which were constructed at about the same time.⁴¹² Therefore, some scholars, based on the fact that the construction of Empress Dowager Feng's mausoleum as well as Caves 9 and 10 of the Yungang Grottoes were all built by Wang Yu's team, speculated that the use of these Buddhist images in Empress Dowager Feng's tomb chamber may have been determined primarily by Wang Yu's team that worked together to build the tomb, rather than a direct relationship with Empress Dowager Feng herself. However, Wang Yu's low status as a eunuch is said to have been achieved by his ability to read the mind of Empress Dowager Feng. Then the construction team led by Wang Yu that chose what images to use in the tomb chamber of Empress Dowager Feng also needed the consent of Empress Dowager Feng before implementation. Considering that Empress Dowager Feng was a devout Buddhist, the reason why she agreed to have children holding lotus buds and the lotus column appearing in this important position on both sides of the first door of the tomb chamber was probably because she understood the religious meaning associated with it. That is, the meaning of rebirth in the lotus flower in the Pure Land.

In fact, regardless of whether this was the idea of Empress Dowager Feng herself or Wang Yu, it implies that people at this time had already accepted the concept of transmigration brought about by Buddhism. That is why the two children holding lotus buds were depicted at the first door leading to the tomb chamber, hoping that the deceased would be reborn in the Pure Land of Buddha after being reborn in the lotus flower. Moreover, the columns on both sides of the door leading to the tomb chamber were carved in imitation of a Buddhist niche, which seems to imply that the deceased

⁴¹¹ Wang Yu's biography 王遇传 in *The Book of Wei* 魏书: “遇性巧，強於部分。北都方山靈泉道俗居宇及文明太後陵廟，洛京東郊馬射壇殿，修廣文昭太後墓園，太極殿及東西兩堂、內外諸門製度，皆遇監作”

⁴¹² Hinako Ishimatsu, *A Study of the History of Buddhist Statuary in the Northern Wei Dynasty*, trans. Norio Shinohara (Beijing: Cultural Relics Publishing House, 2012).

who pass through this door can finally transcend the cycle of life and death and become Buddha-like beings.

This type of tomb door pattern used in the tomb of Empress Dowager Feng also appears in tombs from other regions. For example, in the late Northern Wei Dynasty tomb of Badaliang Cemetery M1,⁴¹³ found near Tongwancheng in Jingbian, Shaanxi Province, the two sides of the doorway to the entrance of the tomb chamber are carved into columnar round arches, with red colours on the columns and flames on both sides of the arched lintel (Fig. 4.1-19a). On both sides of the door of the east wall of the tomb, there are images of figures with feet on lotus flowers (Fig. 4.1-19b). The other three walls contain images of monks, including a monk kneeling on a bed of ropes on the south wall (Fig. 4.1-19c).⁴¹⁴ A similar image of a kneeling monk appears on the north wall at the top of Cave 285 in Mogao Caves (Fig. 5.1-63d). An arched lintel supported by a lotus column also appears on the north wall of the anterior chamber of a Northern Wei tomb at Chenzhuang, Datong County, Datong City, Shanxi Province (Fig. 4.1-20a).⁴¹⁵ In the ceiling center of the front chamber there is also a lotus flower (Fig. 4.1-20b), and in the ceiling center of the back chamber there is an astrological image (see Fig.4.1-20c). Moreover, the lintel of the door of the tomb of Princess Ru Ru of the Eastern Wei Dynasty in Cixian, Hebei Province, is also in the form of a rounded arch, with lotus flower bunched columns on both sides (Fig.4.1-21).⁴¹⁶

In the same late-fifth- and early-sixth-century southern region, the Buddhist concept of transmigration was also incorporated into the construction of mass graves through pagoda-like buildings. The masonry features that also appear on the back wall of the burial chamber of a tomb of Southern Dynasty (late fifth or early sixth century) at Xuezhuang, Deng County, Henan Province, are very similar to those that were

⁴¹³ Xing, F. L. et al., "Briefing on the Excavation of Northern Dynasty Imitation Wooden Structure Mural Tomb around Tongwancheng, Jingbian County, Shaanxi, China," *Archaeology and Cultural Relics* no. 3 (2013): 9–117.

⁴¹⁴ Xing, "Briefing on the Excavation of Mural-Painted Tombs with Imitation Wooden Structures of the Northern Dynasty around Tongwancheng, Jingbian County, Shaanxi," 10.

⁴¹⁵ Gao Feng, et al. "Briefing on the Excavation of Northern Wei Tomb at Chenzhuang, Datong County, Datong City, Shanxi," *Cultural Heritage*, no. 12 (2011): 37–46.

⁴¹⁶ Soup Pond, "Trial of Mural Paintings in the Tomb of Princess Ru Ru of the Eastern Wei Dynasty," *Cultural Heritage* no. 4 (1984): 16.

exclusive to Buddhist pagodas architecture at that time (Fig. 4.1-22).⁴¹⁷ The phenomenon of masonry stupas within burial chambers has been discussed by Shi Jie.⁴¹⁸ The arch door in this tomb are also similar to those of the aforementioned tomb of Empress Dowager Feng, in that a flying goddess with flowing figures appears above the pillars on both sides of the door (Fig 4.1-23). Shi Jie points out that this phenomenon of physical stupas structure in burial chambers is different from the phenomenon of Buddhist motifs that appeared alone in tombs in previous centuries, which lack of a unified Buddhist context.⁴¹⁹ The Buddhist motifs found in the tombs of the Eastern Han Dynasty were still attached to the local Chinese funerary context, and the Buddhist motifs were treated as members of the world of immortals when the soul ascended to heaven after death.⁴²⁰ However, in this tomb in Deng County, the masonry stupa is set in an important position of special significance on the back wall of the tomb, participating in the overall architectural structure of the tomb. This implies that the owner of the tomb had understood the Buddhist concept of transmigration, and wished therefore to regard his death as the same as Buddha's nirvana, thus building a brick solid pagoda at the back of the tomb where his body was placed, modelled on the stupas that housed the relics of Buddha. The masonry pagoda embedded on the back wall of the tomb chamber replaced the image of the

⁴¹⁷ Jie Shi, "To Die with the Buddha: The Brick Pagoda and Its Role in the Xuezhuang Tomb in Early Medieval China," *T'oung Pao* 100, no. 4/5 (2014): 366–367.

⁴¹⁸ Shi, "To Die with the Buddha: The Brick Pagoda and Its Role in the Xuezhuang Tomb in Early Medieval China," 363–403.

⁴¹⁹ A partially damaged tomb brick dated to the second or third century was found in Sichuan with a stamped pagoda image on it; see Xie Zhicheng Xie Zhi Cheng, "Sichuan Handai huaxiangzhuang shang de fota xingxiangf" 四川漢代畫像磚上的佛塔形象, *Sichuan wenwu* 四川文物 4 (1987): 62–64. A well-preserved pottery model, 104 centimeters tall, was recently excavated in present-day Caiyue in Xiangyang, Hubei province; see Xiangfan shi wenwu kaogu yanjiusuo 襄樊市文物考古研究所, "Hubei Xiangfan Fancheng Caiyue Sanguo mu fajue jianbao" 湖北襄樊棗越三國墓發掘簡報, *Wenwu* 9 (2010): 4–9. For more such Buddhist motifs in Eastern Han tombs, see Yu Weichao 俞偉超, "Dong Han fojiao tuxiang kao 東漢佛教圖像考," in his *Xian Qin Liang Han kaoguxue lunji* 先秦兩漢考古學論集 (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1985), 157–69; Marilyn M. Rhie, *Early Buddhist Art of China and Central Asia: Later Han, Three Kingdoms, and Western China in China and Bactria to Shan-shan in Central Asia* (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 33–47.

⁴²⁰ On studies of the Buddhist elements in the Eastern Han and the Three Kingdoms Period, see Wu Hung, "Buddhist Elements in Early Chinese Art (2nd and 3rd centuries AD)," in *Artibus Asiae* 47, no. 3–4 (1986): 263–352; Erik Zürcher, "Han Buddhism and the Western Region," in *Thought and Law in Qin and Han China*, ed. Han China, W.L. Idema and Erik Zürcher (Leiden: Brill, 1990), 159; Stanly Abe, *Ordinary Images* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 11–102. These scholars hold relatively similar positions, identifying the Buddhist-looking motifs as Daoist iconographies camouflaged under exotic appearances without serious, definite Buddhist implications.

seated owner of the tomb, and lotus motifs and lotus incarnation images appear abundantly in the bricks used in the tomb (Figs. 4-24).

So far, more than thirty tombs have been found in Nanjing, Ezhou, and Dengxian, in which stupa-like structures have been found in the same location of the tomb chamber of South Dynasty. For example, a stupa-like structure was found on the back wall of a Southern Dynasty tomb in Hu Village, Jiangning District, Nanjing, Jiangsu province (Fig. 4.1- 25a).⁴²¹ The bricks used in this tomb also show the image of a lotus flower (Fig. 4.1- 25b). Pagoda structure also appears on the back wall of the chamber of the Southern Dynasty tomb M5 in Zelin, Ezhou City, Hubei Province (Fig. 4.1- 26a).⁴²² Pagoda structures have also been found in the back wall of five other tombs in Ezhou, namely, the back wall of the tomb chamber of M11 (Fig. 4.1- 27), the back wall of the tomb chamber of M8 (Fig. 4.1-28),⁴²³ the back wall of the tomb chamber of Tomb M1 of the South Dynasty (Fig. 4.1-29), the back wall of the tomb chamber of Tomb M2 in Guanyin Long of the South Dynasty (Fig. 4.1-30),⁴²⁴ and the same position in the back wall of the tomb M13 chamber of Tangjiaotou (Fig. 4.1-31).⁴²⁵ Pagoda structures are also found on the back wall of the Southern Dynasty brick tomb in Qingshui Gou, Xiangyang city, Hubei province (Fig. 4.1- 32a,b,c).⁴²⁶ The image of a figure holding a lotus flower is also repeated in these Southern Dynasty brick tombs, such as in tomb M1 of Jiajiachong brick tomb in Xiangyang, Hubei province (Fig. 4.1-33 a,b,c,d,e). There are also lotus-patterned bricks (Fig. 4.1- 34 a) and figures kneeling on lotus flowers (Fig. 4.1-34b) in the Southern Dynasty

⁴²¹ Xiang Li, "Southern Dynasty Tomb in Hucun, Jiangning District, Nanjing, China," *Archaeology* no. 6 (2008): 51–57.

⁴²² Museum of Ezhou, "Ezhou Shi Zelin Nanchao Mu 鄂州市泽林南朝墓 [Southern Dynasty Tomb at Zelin, Ezhou City]," *Jiangnan Archaeology* no. 3 (1991): 37–100.

⁴²³ Huang Yijun, Xu Jinsong, He Jianping, "Tomb of the Six Dynasties in Guojiaxinwan, Ezhou, Hubei," *Cultural Relics* 10 (2005): 35–47.

⁴²⁴ Museum of Ezhou, "Ezhou Shi Guanyin Long Nanchao Mu Fajue Jianbao 鄂州市观音垅南朝墓发掘简报 Briefing on the Excavation of the Southern Dynasty Tomb of Guanyin Ridge in Ezhou City," *Jiangnan Archaeology* no. 4 (1995): 32–37

⁴²⁵ Dated to the early fourth century, the rear wall bears a conspicuous stepped structure. See Li Taoyuan and Xu Jinsong, "Hubei Ezhou Shi Tangjiaotou Liuchao Mu 湖北鄂州市塘角头六朝墓 [The Six Dynasties Tomb at Tangjiaotou, Ezhou City, Hubei Province]," *Archaeology* 11 (1996): 1–27.

⁴²⁶ Yang I and Liu Jiansheng, "Briefing on the Excavation of Southern Dynasty Pictorial Brick Tomb in Qingshui Gou, Xiangyang, Hubei," *Cultural Heritage* 11 (2017): 21–39.

brick tomb at Qingshuigou in Xiangyang. These figures were also used repeatedly in the Mogao Caves at Dunhuang during the same period.

The behavior of people during the Southern Dynasties period of embedding pagoda structures into the back wall of tombs seems to indicate that they no longer wished to be reincarnated, but rather to transcend the cycle of life and death and attain nirvana like the Buddha. At this point the Buddha was no longer seen as a Taoist-like deity who had attained immortality but was further understood as a historical buddha who has archived enlightenment and escaped the cycle of life and death, and was no longer subject to the suffering of life and death.

As for the funerary practices of the Northern Dynasties, the tombs of the aristocratic elite often show images of the deceased couple seated in front of a folding screen, who still seem to be waiting to receive the worship of their present descendants before leaving. Beside them are servants and attendants well prepared for the journey to the unknown, and servants are standing in front of the honorary ox carts and carriages prepared for their masters, waiting to depart. What is noteworthy, however, is the appearance of another group of images reflecting the Buddhist concept of transmigration in the wall paintings of some tombs at the end of the Northern Dynasties. That is, ceremonial processions in both directions of travelling to and from the tomb appear on the wall paintings of the passages. It seems to indicate that they actually regarded the tomb chamber as a transit place for the cycle of life and death, and they seemed to have been convinced that they would get the chance to return to this world again after departing from this world. For example, the processions depicted on the east and west walls of the passages of the Northern Dynasty tombs found at Jiuyuan Gang, Shanxi, also include both processions departing from the tomb and processions returning to the tomb (Fig 4.1- 35, Fig 4.1-36).⁴²⁷ The processions in the fourth lowest layer are all those returning towards the tomb chamber (see Fig 4.1-35c, 36 d), and the processions in the third layer are all

⁴²⁷Shanxi Museum 山西博物院, *Shanxi Jiuyuan Gang Beichao Muzang Bihua Banqian Baohu* 山西九原岗北朝墓葬壁画搬迁保护 [Relocation and Conservation of Mural Paintings in Northern Dynasty Burials in Jiubuagang, Shanxi] (Beijing: Science Press, 2018), 114–126.

those departing from the tomb chamber (Fig 4.1-36c, 35b). Moreover, the two walls of the tomb of Lou Rui in the first year of the Wuping reign (570 A.D.) also depict both departing processions and returning processions on the walls of tomb passage (Fig. 4.1-37).

But at the same time, in the North Dynasty mural tomb of Wanzhang in Ci Xian County, Hebei Province, the only direction of the processions on both sides of the tomb passage is away from the tomb chamber, and the floor of the tomb passage between this one-way caravan is painted with huge lotus flowers (Fig. 4.1-38a,b).⁴²⁸ It implies that the owner of the tomb maybe hoped that he would never return to this world after leaving, and that he would never go through the endless cycle of birth and death again, but wanted to transcend the cycle of birth and death and attain nirvana like the Buddha. The lotus images in the tomb passage suggest that the tomb owner wished to appear above the “lotus world (蓮花藏世界),” just like the Buddha, and no longer experience the suffering of the cycle of birth and death. This kind of procession with only one direction of departure from the tomb on both sides of the tomb passage also appeared in other areas at the end of the Northern Dynasties. For example, in the murals on both sides of the passage of Xu Xianxiu tomb in Shanxi, Northern Qi Dynasty (the second year of Wuping, 571A.D.), both of the processions depart from the direction of the tomb and there is no procession in the direction of returning to the tomb (Figs. 4.1- 39a,b,c,d,e,f). Above the processions were depicted a fantasy world like the Han descriptive prose “*Daren Fu*(大人賦),” which seems to indicate that these processions have already escorted the tomb owner to that fantasy world and do not intend to return to this world again.

In summary, in the archaeological remains of tombs from the third to the sixth centuries that have been discovered so far, the Buddhist concept of transmigration was understood and accepted to varying degrees by different groups of people, and it entered into their respective plans for the construction of the tomb chambers that they

⁴²⁸ Guangji Xu, Dahuang Jiang, and Zhu Yan, “Northern Dynasty Tomb at Wanzhang, Magxian County, Hebei, China,” *Archaeology* no. 7 (1990): 601–679; Xu Guangji, “Excavation and Research on the Large Mural Tomb of North Dynasty in Wanzhang, Magixian, Hebei,” *Cultural Heritage* no. 9 (1996): 71–73.

had prepared for themselves. Guided by the Buddhist concept of transmigration, people came to believe in the existence of the wheel of life and death. The dead enter the tomb chamber in a state similar to the “Antarābhava” and wait for their next reincarnation. Families of the deceased can continue to do good deeds by performing the “seven sevens of fasting (七七齋)” outside the tomb. This will give the deceased a good chance of being reborn once every seven days. The Buddhist idea of karma strongly drives people to do as much good as possible and accumulate good karma. They are convinced that they will be reborn into a better state with good karma. Therefore, even in the private place of the tomb, which is only a temporary place for the deceased to stay, they continue to accumulate more merit and good karma through Buddhist activities (for example, in the tomb of Xing Hejiang). By the sixth century, the appearance of pagoda structures in the tombs in the southern region and the one-way procession murals in the northern region showed that with the further in-depth understanding of Buddhist concepts, some people finally understood that the endless cycle of birth and death also meant that they had to inevitably experience various kinds of sufferings. Therefore, they began to hope to jump out of the cycle of life and death and to attain nirvana like the Buddha. Thus, the stupa structure symbolizing nirvana was embedded in the tombs, and the procession of no more return journeys appeared in the mural tombs.

This means that whether the tomb chamber was treated as another permanent place for a person to live after death, or as a transit station for the dead waiting to be reborn, the images present in these tombs were always prepared specifically to meet the needs of the dead. The main purpose of these images in the tombs was not to be viewed by ordinary people, but to be treated as objects themselves for the dead owner of the tomb. Their very existence has meaning. For the owner of the tomb, the images that appear here, as well as the burial objects made of other materials, are objects that can satisfy his needs in another state. Therefore, it can be said that the images drawn here belong to the category of the object. In other words, the nature of the images in the tombs at this time is similar to that of the “object (*duixiang* 對象)” discussed in

the first chapter. They do not need to be viewed from a particular angle in order to meet the visual needs of ordinary people but only need to satisfy their own rationality as objects in order to meet the needs of the dead owner of the tomb. Therefore, there is no need to rely on imitating the appearance of the object from the perspective of common people to obtain meaning.

In this dissertation, the basic nature of the images in the tombs of the Six Dynasties is particularly important, and only based on it is it possible to understand more appropriately the relationship between images and space in the tombs. It is only based on this discussion that it is possible to deduce more appropriately what the images drawn in the tombs are trying to express and what they are not trying to express.

Based on this basic nature of the images in the Six Dynasties tombs, we will next re-examine whether these tomb images, which were not burdened with the task of “representation,” had any attempt or interest in reproducing the effects of three-dimensional space. Here our re-examination work will proceed by examining the image singletons and the image combinations in Six Dynasty tombs, respectively.

4.2 Image and Space in Funeral Places

(1) Image Singletons

Let us first explore a technique of drawing known as the “three-quarter obliquely side view” depicted in the pictorial material found in the tombs. The earliest single objects depicted in this three-quarter view were human figures, which can be seen, for example, in mural tombs from the Eastern Han Dynasty found in Dongping County, Shandong Province (see Fig. 4.2-1). This may be the achievement of the pioneer development of figure painting in early medieval Chinese art history.⁴²⁹ However, not

⁴²⁹ Zhang Daqian also discussed the phenomenon that figure painting was valued before landscape painting in the Middle Ages of China: “After the discovery of the Dunhuang Buddha statues, it was only then that we realised that what the ancients paid attention to was initially the figures, not the landscapes.” Another cloud: “It is a pity that later figure painting declined, painters were reluctant to paint figures, while craftsmen could paint figures but did not understand the importance of lines.” Li Yongchiao, ed., *Zhang Daqian's Painting Quotations* (Hainan Photographic Arts Publishing House, Haikou, 1992), 234–235.

too many scholars believe that the single figure painted in this way has a strong three-dimensional sense. But when other single objects are also painted in a three-quarter view—for example, when the carriage is drawn with this three-quarter view—many scholars think that this way of painting is an attempt to create a spatial illusion.⁴³⁰

If we get rid of the linear perspective to re-examine the pictorial materials appearing in tombs, we will find that in many examples cited by previous scholars, the drawing method of such carriages is closer to the parallel projection (axonometric drawing) method in engineering drawings, which is used for depicting the objective facts, rather than the perspective projection drawing method, which is used to imitate spatial illusion. Axonometric projection is a type of parallel projection. A single image using the axonometric projection method may also give a sense of “spatial illusion.” However, since the images using the axonometric projection method do not follow the perspective shortening law presented through the human eye, the so-called “spatial illusion” they present is a kind of warped three-dimensionality that does not conform to the three-dimensionality seen by the human eye. We can feel a more natural sense of three-dimensionality in paintings that use perspective projection. This is because the perspective projection belongs to the view under the center projection method, and its imaging principle is similar to that of the human eye and the camera, thus forming an image that is very close to what the human eye sees. In a perspective projection drawing, projections of distant objects are smaller than projections of objects of the same size that are closer to the projection plane. Thus, at least one vanishing point is formed in a perspective projection drawing, whereas no vanishing point is formed in a parallel projection drawing. In a parallel projection drawing, projections of distant objects are equal in size to projections of the same objects that are closer to a projection plane. Thus, the stereoscopic sense of an image drawn using parallel projection is a distortion of the actual stereoscopic sense experienced by the human eye. It also shows that parallel projection drawings are not drawn to show some kind of three-dimensionality under the human eye’s vision, but only to show the

⁴³⁰ Song Li, “Carriage Painting and Cartographic Methods: From Oracle Bones to Picture Stones,” in *Sacred Images: An Anthology of Chinese Art History* by Li Song (Beijing: Renmin Publishing House, 2016), 74.

objective structure that the object itself has. Parallel projection preserves the relative proportions of an object's dimensions. Perspective projection produces realistic views but does not preserve the relative proportions of an object's dimensions.

In other words, the purpose of parallel projection drawing is different from that of perspective projection drawing. The parallel projection drawings do not aim to reproduce what is seen, but to draw what is. A parallel projection drawing is simply a flat pictorial representation of the actual objective information about an object: its true length, width, and height, which is then integrated into a graphical representation of the measured length, width, and height. It needs to avoid resemblance to the appearance seen by a biased eye in a certain position, but rather synthesize the overall view from every viewpoint. It is the equivalent of an outsider's third-person perspective outside the fixed framework. It avoids the influence of subjective factors of people who view only from a fixed viewpoint but shows as much as possible to synthesize the information from various horizons to ensure objectivity. The perspective projection drawing, however, only guarantees reproducing the appearance from a fixed viewpoint.

In the examples cited by the previous scholars, the distorted three-dimensional illusion of the chariot is not yet obvious when it is depicted in this parallel projection drawing. Take, for example, a chariot drawing unearthed in the Western Han tombs found at the Jingyuan Primary School in Luoyang (Fig. 4.2-2). There are also images of groups of chariots depicted in wall paintings unearthed in the Han tomb at Changcun, Wangcun Township, Xingyang City, Henan Province, among which there are images of chariots inscribed with the titles "*Time Chariot of the Governor of Baxian County* 巴郡太守時車" (Fig. 4.2-3 a), "*Time Chariot of the Order of Beiling* 北陵令時車" (Fig. 4.2-3 b), chariot with an ax (Fig. 4.4.2-3 c), and caravan in Xingyang tomb (Fig. 4.2-3 d).

But a closer look at the way these chariot images are drawn reveals several drawings that defy the laws of perspective and foreshortening. For example, in the above example of an axe-chariot (see Fig. 4.2-3 c), the wheel on the right side of the

driver seems to be even larger than the wheel on the left side. However, a measurement with a ruler shows that the diameter of the wheels on the left and right sides is the same. The width of the raised parallel fenders on both sides of the caravan was also found to be surprisingly significantly different in the mural of the tomb in Xingyang (see Fig. 4.2-3 d). Measured with a ruler, the fender on the right side of the motorist is drawn somewhat wider than the one on his left side. This phenomenon suggests that the artist seems to have chosen to draw the caravan fender nearer and farther away to counteract the tendency of the human eye to narrow the right side of the motorist, which is farther away from us under the effect of misperception. Moreover, the chariot wheels painted on the west wall of a Han tomb in Hao Tan Township, Dingbian County, Shaanxi Province, are also painted in this way, most likely in an attempt to counteract the visual illusion of the human eye (Fig. 4.2-4).

However, the drawing method of “near-small, far-large” in painting, which violates the law of perspective, had been understood by scholars such as Zhang Jianyu and Huang Houming as belonging to “two subtypes derived from parallelogram perspective,” along with “near-large, far-small.”⁴³¹ Liu Weidong, however, equates this “near-small, far-large” technique with the inverted perspective technique described by Arnheim in his article “Inverted Perspective and the Axiom of Realism.”⁴³² However, if one looks closely at the Chinese paintings listed here, one will see that the “near-small, far-large” is only what the eye thinks it is.

The twisted sense of three-dimensionality continued in the images in the tombs from the third to sixth centuries. In the Wei and Jin Dynasties, some images on the bricks in the tombs had already drawn three-side faces of a three-dimensional object but did not make further modifications following the laws of perspective to make it conform to the spatial three-dimensional effect that the human eye would see. For example, on the bricks excavated in Deng County, Henan Province (Fig. 4.2-5), the

⁴³¹ Zhang Jianyu, *Research on the Spatial Representation of Han and Tang Art Centred on Dunhuang Murals Hundred Galleries of Literature Series* (Beijing: People's University of China Press, 2018), 66; Huang Houming, “Art History and Images: A Reading of The Meaning of Images,” *Art Studies* no. 1 (2010): 74.

⁴³² Liu Weidong, “Palace Music Pictures: Reflections on the Representation of Space in Traditional Chinese Painting,” in *Meaning of Images* (Chengdu: Sichuan Fine Arts Press, 2006), 3–4; Rudolf Arnheim, “Inverted Perspective and the Axiom of Realism,” in *New Essays on the Psychology of Art* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), 171.

three sides of the base of the palanquin have been drawn at a three-quarter side angle, but the parallel sides of the base of the sedan chair have been drawn to the same length, without any perspective foreshortening to create the three-dimensional effect. The parallel sides of the base of the palanquin are also carved in this way on the bricks excavated from the Southern Dynasty brick tomb at Qingshuigou in Xiangyang, Hubei, and the parallel sides of the base of the sedan chair are also carved to be of equal length (Fig. 4.2-6).⁴³³

When a similar palanquin reappears on a lacquer screen in the tomb of Sima Jinlong (484) in Datong, Shanxi (Fig. 4.2-7), the artist still does not address the issue, choosing instead to cover the other side of the palanquin to avoid this problem. In addition, line drawings on the back wall of the Ningmao stone chamber (now in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston) from the third year of the Northern Wei dynasty (527 A.D.), excavated in Luoyang, Henan Province, clearly show that the craftsmen at this time also used the parallel projection method of drawing the monolithic object on the back wall of the stone chamber and that the two parallel edges of the square well are drawn as equal in length, as if they had been measured with the help of a ruler (see Fig. 4.2-8). Moreover, on the filial son sarcophagus (now in the collection of at The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art),⁴³⁴ which was made in Luoyang around the end of the Northern Wei Dynasty (ca. 525 C.E.), the paving bricks on the floor are similarly depicted not as a perspective foreshortening, but rather the lengths of the front and back edges of the paving bricks are drawn to be of equal length (see Fig. 4.2-9.).

When continuing to draw other objects such as tables, tents, pavilions, or architectural monoliths in this parallel projection manner, a very awkward three-dimensionality becomes apparent. This is the case, for example, in the mural painting excavated from Tomb No. 2 in the village of Dahuting, Xinmi City, Henan Province (see Fig. 4.2-10.). Here, the two parallel sides of the long table farther apart are drawn as equal length according to the axonometric drawing, and the parallel sides of the

⁴³³ Yang Yi and Liu Jiangsheng, "Briefing on the Excavation of Southern Dynasty Pictorial Brick Tomb in Qingshui Gou, Xiangyang, Hubei," *Cultural Heritage*, 2017, no. 738 (11): 21–39.

⁴³⁴ Laurence Sickman, "The Sarcophagus of Filial Piety: Its Date and Iconography," in E. Chaney and N. Ritchie eds., *Oxford, China and Italy: Writings in Honour of Sir Harold Acton on His Eightieth Birthday* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1985), 71–79.

tent next to it are also drawn as equal length. This is when an awkward three-dimensionality becomes apparent to the eye. This drawing method has continued to the Northern Wei Dynasty. In the mural paintings on the south wall of Tomb M7 of the early Northern Wei Dynasty (the first year of Taiyan, 435 A.D.) found in Shaling, Datong, Shanxi Province,⁴³⁵ the tents and the house monoliths are also depicted using the parallel projection method (Fig. 4.2-11). The images of architectural monoliths on the painted lacquer excavated from this tomb also follow the parallel projection drawing method (Fig. 4.2-12). Similar houses and tents in another form also appear in the burial pottery of another Northern Wei tomb M10 found at Yunbo Road, Datong, Shanxi (Fig. 4.2-13).⁴³⁶

In a Northern Wei mural tomb found at Yunbo Li Road in Datong,⁴³⁷ the steps of the building painted in the centre of the east wall of the tomb are also drawn in an axonometric way that is not naturally connected to the main body of the building, instead being drawn in a viewpoint that is consistent with the front view of the main body of the building and in a way that can display spatial continuity (see Fig. 4.2-14). There is also an image of a single architectural unit on a stone screen of Northern Qi Dynasty,⁴³⁸ which was excavated in Anyang (now in the Guimet Museum and the Boston Museum of Fine Arts), in which the steps are also drawn in a side view (Fig. 4.2-15 a, b, c) while the main body of the building is only shown from the front. This way of drawing different building parts from different viewpoints is more like an illustration than a reproduction of the appearance of a building in continuous space under the human eye's daily viewpoint.

The avoidance of the kind of perspective projection drawing that produces the illusion of spatial depth is even more evident in another mural of a Northern Dynasty tomb of Jiuyuangang in Xinzhou City, Shanxi Province. That is, in the drawing of the gatehouse above the tomb door, the ground floor tiles are drawn with an unnatural

⁴³⁵ Gao Feng, et al., "Briefing on the Excavation of the Northern Wei Mural Tomb at Shaling, Datong, Shanxi," *Cultural Heritage* no. 10 (2006): 4–24.

⁴³⁶ Zhang, Z. Z. et al., "Excavation Brief of the Northern Wei Tomb (M10) at Yunbo Road, Datong, Shanxi," *Cultural Heritage* no. 11 (2017): 4–21.

⁴³⁷ J. X. Liuet al., "Briefing on the Excavation of the Northern Wei Mural Painting Tomb on Yunbo Li Road, Datong, Shanxi," *Cultural Heritage* no. 12 (2011): 13–25.

⁴³⁸ Gustina Scaglia, "Central Asians on a Northern Ch'i gate shrine," *Artibus Asiae* 21 no.1 (1958): 9–28.

joint in the middle section (Fig. 4.2-16). This again shows that the painter is simply drawing the left and right parts of the floor separately, following the axonometric projection drawing method, rather than using a perspective projection drawing method to create a sense of continuous spatial depth.

The twisted three-dimensional illusion, which does not correspond to the viewpoint of the human eye, is also more apparent when larger objects are drawn in this axonometric parallel projection drawing method—for example, in the courtyard paintings depicted on Han dynasty mural tombs, such as the one on the south wall of a Han tomb in Hao Tan Township, Dingbian County, Shaanxi Province, discovered by the Shaanxi Institute of Archaeological Research in 2003 (Fig. 4.2-17). Another example is in the painting of architectural complexes of the Northern Dynasties period, which will be discussed in detail in the next section of this chapter.

Given that the nature of the images in the tombs is similar to the nature of the objective “*xiang* 象” discussed in the first chapter—that is, they are of the nature of the objects themselves—it is understandable that the painters in the examples cited above have drawn three sides of a three-dimensional object without further modification to make it display the spatial illusion that the human eye would see from an everyday viewpoint. The reason is that the concern in drawing something here is similar to an engineer’s concern with the actual length of each side of a concrete object, and what is to be avoided is the drawing of false lengths that have been processed by the human eye. In order to emphasize the real existence of the objects depicted in the tombs, the artisans chose to draw them in such a way as to reflect their objective reality, rather than some kind of visual appearance. The fact that people at that time would not have felt that such a parallel projection drawing was an inappropriate violation of the laws of perspective is because they were not attempting to see spatial depth on the images of the tombs. This again implies that these images were drawn to fulfil the rationality of their existence as objects in their own right, and not to fulfil the rationality of their existence as viewed by the human eye.

It is also for this reason that we can continue to see that the depictions of single objects in the tombs of the Six Dynasties do not focus on the rendering of their volume but rather on clearly indicating them with clear contour lines. From the Wei and Jin Dynasties to the end of the Northern and Southern Dynasties, the images of singletons, such as people, animals, plants, daily necessities, vehicles and buildings, are all still in the line-drawing style seen in the Han dynasty's mural tombs. There are no examples of what can be called the drawing of displaying three-dimensional sense. The colouring of the lotus flower in the top tiles of the Leitai Han Tomb in Wuwei (see Fig. 4.2-18), discussed by previous scholars, also does not present a three-dimensional appearance, or show the "inherent bumps and colours of the object."⁴³⁹ Here the lotus flower is coloured in a way that also resembles a calligraphy-like brush stroke to indicate the objective colour of the object, and the petals are coloured at intervals.

Examples of this calligraphic brushstroke style of colouring frequently appeared in the Wei and Jin tombs in the Gansu region. The purpose of this way of colouring is not at all to render a volumetric effect, but more like a quick colouring—for example, the image of a horse on the east wall of the front chamber of Tomb No. 3 in Jiayuguan, found in the Gansu region (Fig. 4.2-19). The horses images in Tomb No. 6 in Jiayuguan also have some colors dotted on them with a brush (Fig. 4.2-20); the figures in the same tomb are also colored in the same way using calligraphic brush strokes (Fig. 4.2-21.). And the horse painted in Tomb No. 7 in Jiayuguan is also dotted with some colours with a red brush at intervals (Fig. 4.2-22a, b), and the figures in the same tomb are also painted with this kind of colouring method (Fig. 4.2-23a, b). The image of horses on the bricks in Tomb 12 of the Jiayuguan tomb are also coloured in this way (Fig. 4.2-24).

In the mural tombs of the Sixteen Kingdoms period (304–439 A.D.) in Jiuquan City's Guoyuan Township, the filling of colour also mimics the calligraphic lines in the outlines of the paintings, which are dotted and ticked. For example, in the image

⁴³⁹ Zhang Pengchuan, "A Brief Description of Han and Jin Paintings Unearthed in Hexi 河西出土的汉晋绘画简述," *Wenwu* 文物 [Cultural Relics], no. 6 (1978): 61.

of the figures on the west wall of the anterior chamber of Tomb No. 5 in Dingjiazha, Jiuquan City (Fig. 4.2-25a, b, c) and the image of the figures of the East Duke and the Queen Mother of the West on the top of the east and west slope (Fig. 4.2-26a, b), it can be clearly seen that the red colouring is sketched in along the edges of the ink lines and not filled in completely. In the case of the Heavenly Horse on the south side of the tomb, the colouring is evenly filled with red only on the tail, mane and hooves of the horse (Fig. 4.2-27).

The figures on the bricks of the tomb of the Wei and Jin dynasties in Jiayuguan are also painted evenly, without any intention of rendering a sense of volume. For example, the female figure in Tomb No.4 in Jiayuguan is painted flatly with red pigment only on the upper part of the blouse and the lower part of the trousers (see Fig. 4.2-28), while the robes worn by the male figure are painted flatly on the whole garment (Fig. 4.2-29). The female figures in Tomb No. 3 at Jiayuguan are also colored in the same way (Fig. 4.2-30 a). There is a horse-riding figure in Tomb No. 3 at Jiayuguan, which is also coloured flatly (Fig. 4.2-30b). Here the colors seem to have been used only to distinguish between different objects. If the figures are painted red, the horses are not; if the horses are painted red, the figures are not. This type of coloring is also used for the horse-riding figures in Tomb No.7 of Jiayuguan (Fig.4.2-31). The image of sheep in Tomb No. 13 of Jiayuguan also adopts this kind of coloring manner, and the adjacent sheep are not colored with the same color (Fig. 4.2-32). In the Northern Wei Dynasty tomb, murals are also painted similarly. For example, in the hunting scene on the east wall of tomb No. 9 in the second year of Heping of the Northern Wei Dynasty (461 A.D.) in Tongjiawan, the figures, animals, and hills are colored in intervals as well⁴⁴⁰ (Fig. 4.2-33).

On the paintings of coffin panels unearthed from tombs of the Northern Wei Dynasty, it can also be seen that the depiction of the monolithic images is focused on the clarity of the contour lines, and the colors are not varied in intensity but only used

⁴⁴⁰ Zhang Qingjie et al., "Briefing on the excavation of Northern Wei tombs (M7, M9) in Tongjiawan, southern suburb of Datong, Shanxi," *Cultural Heritage* no .12 (2015): 4–98.

for even filling. For example, in two paintings of coffins unearthed from the Northern Wei Dynasty (484–489 A.D.) tomb of Zhijiabao in Datong,⁴⁴¹ the artist has devoted himself to the depiction of outline lines, and the colors are only used to fill in between the contour lines (Fig 4.2- 34a,b,c,d,e; Fig 4.2-35a,b,c). The painting on the coffin panels in this tomb can also be colored with different colors between adjacent figures (Fig 4.2-34e).

This flat coloring can also be seen more clearly on a lacquer coffin of the Northern Wei dynasty, excavated in Guyuan, Ningxia. This flat coloring is shown on the left panel of this lacquer coffin (Fig. 4.2-36 a, b, c), on the lid of the coffin (Fig. 4.2-37a, b), and on the headstall of the lacquered coffin (Fig. 4.2-38). This type of coloring manner continued to be used in mid-sixth-century tombs in the Ningxia region. For example, in the tomb of Yuwen Meng from the fifth year of the Northern Zhou's Baoding period (A.D. 565), found in the Guyuan,⁴⁴² the flat coloring manner was also used to color the figures (Fig. 4.2-39).⁴⁴³ In the tomb of Tian Hong in the fourth year of the Northern Zhou's Jiande period (575 A.D.) in the Guyuan region of Ningxia, the coloring manner of the figures on both sides of the door on the north wall of the main chamber is the same as in the aforementioned Wei and Jin tombs, with the upper body clothing painted flat in red (Fig. 4.2- 40). There is still no attempt by the artisan to create a sense of volume by using variations in color intensity.

Again, in the mural tomb of Shanxi during the Northern Wei period, the flat coloring method was also used. For example, the costumes of the figures in the mural paintings in the Northern Wei Dynasty tomb No. 29 in Qilicun, Datong, are all painted flatly (Fig. 4.2-41a,b,c,d).⁴⁴⁴ The figures in a Northern Qi mural tomb at

⁴⁴¹ Gao Feng Liu Junxi, "Coffin panel paintings of Northern Wei tombs in Datong Zhijiabao," *Cultural Heritage* no. 12 (2004): 35–47+1.

⁴⁴² Geng Zhiqiang, *Excavation Report and Research on the Tomb of Yuwen Mang of the Northern Zhou Dynasty in Guyuan, Ningxia* (Sunshine Publishing House, 2014); Geng Zhiqiang and Chen Xiaohua, "The Interpretation of the Tombstone of Yuwen Mang of the Northern Zhou Dynasty," *Xixia Studies* no. 2 (2013): 91–100; Ningxia Cultural Relics and Archaeological Institute of Guyuan Workstation, "Guyuan northern Zhou Yuwenmeng Excavation Brief," in Xu Cheng (Ningxia People's Publishing House, 1994), 134–147.

⁴⁴³ Yuanzhou Joint Archaeological Team, *Tianhong Tomb of the Northern Zhou Dynasty* (Cultural Relics Publishing House, 2009).

⁴⁴⁴ Hou Xiaogang, "Excavation Brief of Northern Wei Tomb Group M29 in Qili Village, Datong, Shanxi," *Cultural Heritage*, no. 1(2023): 33–57.

Shuiquanliang, Shuozhou, Shanxi Province, are also colored flatly (Fig. 4.2-42a,b,c).⁴⁴⁵ In the tomb of Lou Rui in the first year of Wuping of the Northern Qi Dynasty (570 A.D.) found in the southern suburb of Taiyuan City, Shanxi Province, the figures on both walls of the tomb passage are also painted in a uniform, flat manner (see Fig. 4.2- 43a,b,c). The figures and animals on the four walls of the tomb chamber and two walls of the tomb passageway in Xu Xianxiu's tomb in the second year of Wuping of the Northern Qi Dynasty (571 A.D.) were also colored flatly (Fig. 4.2-44a,b,c,d,e,f,g).

There are many other examples of the calligraphic-like brushwork coloring manner in mid-sixth-century tombs. For example, the costumes of the figures depicted on the east and central walls of the Northern Wei mural tomb at Yunboli Road in Datong are colored with a calligraphic-like brushwork, but again, not all the figures are colored (Fig.4.2-45a). The final rendering of the garments using this manner of coloring could easily be thought to indicate the folds of the garment. However, the fact that not all of the figures' garments are painted with this so-called "fold effect" suggests that it's merely showing a different stripe-coloured dress. The fact that the curved direction of the red arcs on the lower part of the costume of the first standing figure located next to the tomb owner is upwards rather than downwards also suggests that the red lines here are not indicative of the folds that are formed when a garment falls (Fig. 4.2-45b).

Likewise, in the tomb of Li Xian and his wife found in the Guyuan area in the fourth year of the Tianhe period of the Northern Zhou Dynasty (569 A.D.),⁴⁴⁶ the warrior figures on the east and west walls of the tomb are also drawn using clear ink lines, and the colors are "written" along the black outlines using a calligraphic-like brush (Fig. 4.2- 46). It appears that the dark areas are painted in red on the inside of the figure's arms where the folds of the garment are. But the light areas on the outer edge of the cuffs of the sleeves are also painted in red. It suggests that this manner of

⁴⁴⁵ Qu Chuanfu et al., "Briefing on the Excavation of the Northern Qi Mural Painting Tomb at Shuiquanliang, Shuozhou, Shanxi," *Cultural Heritage*, no.12 (2010): 26–42+1.

⁴⁴⁶ Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region Museum, Ningxia Guyuan Museum, "Ningxia Guyuan Beizhou Lixian Fufu Mu Wajue Jianbao 宁夏固原北周李贤夫妇墓挖掘简报," *Cultural Relics 文物*, no.11 (1985): 1–20.

coloring does not indicate light and dark. Moreover, the coloring of the figure's face is also done in red on the raised brow bone, but red is also used to color the sunken area at the corner of the eye and the base of the nose. This use of red for both the depressions and the bumps again shows that the artisan is not attempting to show volume through coloring.

Moreover, the skirt of a female figure in a mural painting in the tomb of Wang Wen, dated to the first year of the Northern Wei dynasty's Taichang reign (532 A.D.), is also colored in red stripes, not to indicate the effect of the group of folds depressing and protruding but rather to indicate the striped pattern of the garment as it was (Fig. 4.2-47). This kind of red- and white-striped costume can be seen on terracotta figurines excavated in Luoyang from the Yuan Zuan tomb of the Northern Wei Dynasty (ca. 525 A.D.) (Fig. 4.2-48).⁴⁴⁷

(2) Combinations of Image Singletons

Among the scholars previously influenced by Ludwig Bachhofer, Annette Juliano in 1980, taking the example of the stone reliefs from the Xue Zhuang tomb in Deng County, once again followed Bachhofer's view:

The subsequent development of pictorial art from Han through Tang (206 B.C. to 906 A.D.) shows continued interest in human activities, growing realism, and gradual mastery of the third dimension. Architecture, furniture, and the effective devices increasingly utilised to create backdrops for Teng-hsien contributed a crucial link in this development between the Han and Tang dynasties.⁴⁴⁸

Juliano uses the premise of a Eurocentric perspective (the experience of stage theatre) that assumes that character activity in a narrative must unfold in a three-dimensional setting. Juliano seems to rule out the possibility that character activity can be organized in a two-dimensional plane to develop a narrative. Juliano believes that people in China during the Six Dynasties would have been operating on a similar assumption, and to unfold a narrative in a three-dimensional setting two basic problems must be resolved: "1) the organization of elements, landscape, and figures in

⁴⁴⁷ Cindy Xu and Shen Chen, "Terracotta Figurines Excavated from Yuanxi Yuan Codified Tombs of the Northern Wei Dynasty in Luoyang (above)," *Luoyang Archaeology*, no. 2 (2019): 46–53.

⁴⁴⁸ Annette L. Juliano, "Teng-Hsien: An Important Six Dynasties Tomb," *Artibus Asiae. Supplementum* 37 (1980): 69.

space, and 2) the control of the third dimension.”⁴⁴⁹ With this presupposition, which is not in the original Chinese context, Juliano argues that the colorful stone reliefs in the Southern Dynasties tombs in Xuezhuang, Deng County, which are engraved with background images of mountains and forests, have a more progressive and stronger spatial awareness than those of the same period, which only contain images of people.⁴⁵⁰ Similarly, Juliano argues that of the two works attributed to Gu Kaizhi, *Nymph of the Lo River*, which depicts a landscape with mountains and forests, has a more progressive spatial awareness than the *Admonitions scroll*, which has only figures.⁴⁵¹

If we try to escape this Renaissance perspective, we can see that there are indeed alternative interpretative possibilities. Revisiting Juliano’s example of the images on the stone reliefs from the tombs in Deng County. In those bricks with so-called “stage backdrops” images of mountains and forests, such as the images of “Guo Ju Buried His Child” (see Fig. 4.2-49), the trees in this picture appear only as the main narrative element separating the scene depicted in the picture, with “Guo Ju Buried His Child” explicitly inscribed next to the two trees in the center. Between the two trees in the center, the words “Guo Ju” and “wife” are inscribed. Moreover, the branches and leaves of these trees extend to the edge of the picture frame and blend into the flat decorative pattern above the picture, without attempting to create a sense of space. Besides, in the image of “Four Greybeards of South Mountain” on the bricks from the same tomb in Deng County (Fig. 4.2-50), the images of the mountains and forests are only filled in between the figures as elements of the story depicted, and the three groups of similar plants separating the four figures are not depicted following the rule of “near, big; far, small.” Again, there is no attempt to create a three-dimensional illusion by relying on these images of mountains and forests. Moreover, there are also several pictorial scenes depicted on the bricks from the tomb in Deng County that do not have a “stage backdrop” at all. For example, in a picture on the bricks without

⁴⁴⁹ Juliano, “Teng-Hsien: An Important Six Dynasties Tomb,” 69.

⁴⁵⁰ Juliano, “Teng-Hsien: An Important Six Dynasties Tomb,” 71.

⁴⁵¹ Ibid.

backdrops, the size of the figures is not used to imply spatial depth (Fig.4.2-51). The slightly smaller size of the two figures with double hairdos is simply due to their low status as attendants and is not intended to create a spatial effect.

There is also a combination of images of rocks and mountains that appear on sarcophagi that have been used by several scholars to argue for the Six Dynasties painters' interest in producing spatial illusion.⁴⁵² One of the most discussed examples is the image on the sarcophagus of a filial son at the beginning of the 6th century, now collected in the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art (see Fig. 4.2-52).⁴⁵³ The images painted among the topmost trees and rocky outcrops on the sarcophagus are considered by some scholars to represent distant hilltops and have been used to illustrate that at this point the artist was demonstrating unprecedented maturity in the representation of spatial illusions.⁴⁵⁴ However, it is also possible that these images at the top of the trees and rocky outcrops are simply representing the scene above, such as clouds, mist, birds, etc. These images, located along the upper edge of the sarcophagus, are therefore likely to represent only an overhead view rather than a distant background. Here the amazingly straight and towering mountains and trees at the top frame of the picture seem to have been designed precisely to obscure those distant views, which should be located at the top edge of the picture plane under the law of Renaissance perspective. This design is also in line with the design ideas of the Six Dynasties, discussed in Chapter 3, in which the artist preferred to represent the high scenery in the upper part of a picture rather than the distant scenery behind the picture. The artist seems to be intentionally blocking the viewer's attention from the distant background. Instead, he endeavors to focus the viewer's attention on the six storylines in the near foreground. Here, (1) the virtuous Wang Lin is ready to sacrifice herself for the freedom of his younger brother, who has been captured by the rebel

⁴⁵² Alexander C. Soper, "Life-Motion and the Sense of Space in Early Chinese Representational Art," *The Art Bulletin* no. 3 (1948): 167–186; Michael Sullivan, *The Birth of Landscape Painting in China* (University of California Press, 1962).

⁴⁵³ Laurence Sickman, "The Sarcophagus of Filial Piety: Its Date and Iconography," in E. Chaney and N. Ritchie eds. *Oxford, China and Italy: Writings in Honour of Sir Harold Acton on His Eightieth Birthday* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1985), 71–79; Xu Jin and Ma Xiaoyang, "A Study of the Owners of Northern-Wei Funerary Furniture with Filial-Son Illustrations from Luoyang in American Collections," *Calligraphy Series*, no. 1 (2020): 18–24.

⁴⁵⁴ Zhang Jianyu, *Research on Spatial Representation of Han and Tang Art-Centred on Dunhuang Mural Paintings, Hundred Gallery Series* (Beijing: People's University of China Press, 2018), 142.

army while holding a wake for their parents; (2) Cai Shun is the first to jump on his mother's coffin when everyone else is fighting a fire; (3) Dong Yong, who is ready to sell his body to bury his father, suddenly receives the help of a celestial maiden; (4) Shun is thrown into a well by his father, and even after escaping, he still secretly helps his blind father; (5) Guo Ju, to support his father, buries his newborn child; (6) when Yuan Gu tells his father that the reason he has retrieved the tools for carrying his grandfather to the wilderness to wait to die is that to prepare for the future when he carries his father to the wilderness. This enabled his father to finally understand the meaning of filial piety and decide to carry his grandfather back to fulfill his filial duty.⁴⁵⁵

Alexander C. Soper later admitted that the motifs on the sarcophagus, located between the vertical precipitous peaks of the towering mountains, are simply for filling the interstices: “contribute no real sense of opening out into the amplitude of the natural world. They are simply another kind of space filler drawn on a backdrop, for a stage still naively overcrowded and relatively incoherent.”⁴⁵⁶ However, Soper's analysis of the picture on this sarcophagus of the filial son ignores the size relationships between the same types of plants depicted here. For example, the bushes on the ground at the bottom of the section of the sarcophagus inscribed with the “Filial Son Dong Yong” are not larger than the bushes of the same shape that appear in the middle of the picture (see Fig. 4.2-52b). This suggests that the artist was not interested in using the size of plant images to produce spatial illusion at this point either. A similar example occurs in the Ningmao shrine, wherein the back wall of the kitchen scene, the artisan depicted the trees in the lower left and upper right of the scene as almost the same size, and even the group of trees in the upper right of the scene is a little larger than the group of trees in the lower left of the scene (Fig. 4.2-53).

⁴⁵⁵ Keith Knapp, *Selfless Offspring: Filial Children and Social Order in Medieval China* (University of Hawai'i Press, 2005), 132.

⁴⁵⁶ Alexander C. Soper, “Life-motion and the Sense of Space in Early Chinese Representational Art,” *The Art Bulletin* 30, no.3 (1948): 182

Although Soper first argued that the image of “Filial Son Wang Lin” on the sarcophagus shows the artist's ambition to express the depth of space at this point (Fig. 4.2- 52c) . He argued that “ Only in the two adjacent episodes of the story of Wang Lin are they used more ambitiously to frame a deeper penetration into depth.”⁴⁵⁷ Soper this time seems to have moved away from his fixed perspective view and adopted a different interpretation scheme. He suggests that this time the artisan was engaged in an “ambitious experiment”.⁴⁵⁸ He believes that the two neighboring images here are deliberately arranged by the artist to show the same episode from different angles: “On the outside, a group of figures is placed emerging from a narrow defile between precipitous peaks; on the inside the same group, with backs turned, is retracing its steps.”⁴⁵⁹ However, in terms of the specific details of the picture this represents two different episodes(Fig. 4.2- 52c), one episode in which Wang Lin binds himself to the robbers in an attempt to sacrifice himself for his brother's freedom, and the other episode in which both Wang Lin and her brother are released and the robbers leave. This means that those mountains are just miscellaneous continuous mountains extending from left to right along the horizontal direction of the picture, rather than one mountain shown from two opposite viewpoints.

Soper's interpretation triggered Wu Hong's further analysis of this picture of “filial son Wang Lin”, which led to his concept of “binary imagery” or “opposing composition”. This is a combination of frontal and reverse depictions of a figure juxtaposed together.⁴⁶⁰ The earliest example of this type of opposing composition cited by Wu Hung is the drawing in the section “Adornment” in the *Admonitions scroll* attributed to Gu Kaizhi (Fig. 4.2- 54). Wu Hung believes that this kind of composition, in which both the front and the back of the figures are shown, reflects the interest of the people at this time in reproducing the depth of three-dimensional

⁴⁵⁷ Soper, “Life-motion and the Sense of Space,” 181.

⁴⁵⁸ Alexander C. Soper, “Early Chinese Landscape Painting,” *The art bulletin* 23, no. 2 (1941): 159.

⁴⁵⁹ Soper, “Early Chinese Landscape Painting,” 159.

⁴⁶⁰ Hung Wu, “Stones of Transparency: 'Counter-views' and Dualistic Images in Medieval Art,” in *Fine Arts in Ceremony: Wu Hung's Ancient Chinese Art History Literature and Editorial* (Beijing: Life, Reading and Xinzhi Sanlianshuijian, 2005), 691.

space in a two-dimensional picture, only that this way of reproducing spatial depth is different from the principle of linear perspective adopted in the paintings of the European Renaissance.⁴⁶¹ He believes that this “binary imagery” approach displays objects from two viewpoints, front and back, rather than from an assumed ideal single viewpoint.⁴⁶² However, when a combination of figures not only front and back but also lateral sides appear on the wall of the Ningmao stone chamber (Fig. 4.2- 55),⁴⁶³ it is difficult to continue to think that this combination is also an expression of spatial depth. Wu Hung also agrees with another idea to interpret this combination, suggesting that it may be a way of composition to show the state of the figures at different times.⁴⁶⁴ Wu Hung finally agrees that this “binary imagery” is often just a general strategy to increase the complexity of the pictorial expression.⁴⁶⁵

If we take a closer look at the original image of the Admonitions scroll (Fig. 4.2- 56), we can see that the left and right sides of the mirror are not strictly mirror-symmetrical. In terms of body posture, the woman looking at the mirror on the left and the woman looking at the mirror on the right do not form a strict mirror symmetry, with one at a three-quarter lateral angle (Fig. 4.2- 56a,) and the other at a one-half dorsal angle (Fig. 4.2- 56c). Look again at the faces of the two women who are looking at themselves in the mirror. One of them is seated at a three-quarters side angle facing the viewer outside the painting, with three-quarters of her face shown to the viewer outside the painting (Fig. 4.2- 56c). Then check out the eyes of the characters in this painting by using the criterion “to look at the corresponding (以矚其對),” which Gu Kaizhi once mentioned. The woman on the far left, standing with her hair combed, looks cautiously down into the long hair of the seated woman below her. The seated woman with long hair at a three-quarter profile angle has her eyes looking

⁴⁶¹ Wu, “Stones of Transparency,” 689.

⁴⁶² Wu, “Stones of Transparency,” 689.

⁴⁶³ For an introduction to the Ningmao Stone House, see Kojiro Tomita, “A Chinese Sacrificial Stone House of the Sixth Century A.D.,” *Bulletin of the Museum of Fine Arts* 40, no. 242 (1942): 98-110; Guo Jianbang, “Ningmao Stone Chamber and Tombstone of the Northern Wei Dynasty,” *Henan Wenbo newsletter*, no.2 (1980), 33-40. In this paper I adopt the former's dating 529 A.D..

⁴⁶⁴ Hung Wu, “Stones of Transparency: 'Counter-views' and Dualistic Images in Medieval Art,” in *Fine Arts in Ceremony: Wu Hung's Ancient Chinese Art History Literature and Editorial* (Beijing: Life, Reading and Xinzhi Sanlianshuijian, 2005), 688- 689.

⁴⁶⁵ Wu, “Stones of Transparency: 'Counter-views' and Dualistic Images in Medieval Art,” 689.

at herself in the mirror in front of her. The woman on the right, with her back to us, holds the mirror in her own hands and looks intently at her face as it appears in the mirror. There is no eye contact between the two women who look only at themselves in the mirror. This suggests that the artist intentionally did not allow the two women to have any contact with each other. Because for the theme of the painting to be conveyed here, that is, “women know how to adorn their faces but do not know how to adorn their natures”, the artist needs to show that they are only concerned with the appearance in the mirror but not what is beyond it, through the fact that each of them is only looking at themselves in the mirror but not beyond the mirror. I am afraid that this arrangement is exactly where Gu Kaizhi's intention lies. This also indicates that Gu Kaizhi used “to look at the corresponding” to express a more vivid image of the character when he painted the figure.

In other words, the different angles of the figures and the correspondence between their eyes are just “to look at the correspondence “in order to make the figures more vivid in painting. The other effects of this arrangement were not intended by the artist. Under the eyes of modern scholars, the other effects of the arrangement are only added on by subjective associations of the modern viewer. The modern viewer's imagination is perfectly stimulated by Wu Hung's ingenious interpretation of the section on “Adornment” of the *Admonitions scroll*:

The concept of a ‘mirror-image’ is thus presented literally: each group is itself a pair of mirror-images, and the two groups together again form a reflecting double. We may also imagine that this composition may be viewed from ‘both sides’ of the scroll: an invisible viewer at the other side of the canvas would find the same picture as we do, but the images he sees would be reversed ones.⁴⁶⁶

However, if we step away from this clever association and examine the original painting more closely, we will see many details of the two women's postures do not constitute strict mirror symmetry, such as one facing right with her body at a three-quarter side angle, and the other facing back with her back to us, and so on.

⁴⁶⁶ Hung Wu, “Stones of Transparency: ‘Counter-views’ and Dualistic Images in Medieval Art,” in *Fine Arts in Ceremony: Wu Hung's Ancient Chinese Art History Literature and Editorial* (Beijing: Life, Reading and Xinzhi Sanlianshuijian, 2005), 692; Hung Wu, *Monumentality in Early Chinese Art and Architecture* (Stanford University Press, 1995), 268.

Therefore, this dissertation suggests that this effort to show the figure from different angles is likely to have been an add-on to the earlier maturation of figure painting. The artist did not intend to imply spatial depth through the frontal, lateral, and reverse sides of the figure. This combination of figures from different viewpoints may be indicative of an interest in creative artistic expression at this time, but not an interest in reproducing three-dimensional spatial depth on a two-dimensional pictorial plane.

The method of “to look at the correspondence” that Gu Kaizhi proposed when he talked about the tips of figure painting, which could make the figures evocative, was adopted very frequently in the art practice in the Northern and Southern Dynasties era. The details of the eyes depicted in the different figures are also vividly reflected in the images on the bricks of the Seven Sages of the Bamboo Grove and the Rongqi from the Southern Dynasties tomb at Xishanqiao in Nanjing, Jiangsu Province (Fig. 4.2-57, Fig. 4.2- 58).⁴⁶⁷ The figures on the south wall are Rong Qizhi, Ruan Xian, Liu Ling, and Xiang Xiu; the figures on the north wall are Jikang, Ruan Ji, Shan Tao, and Wang Rong. Moreover, the combination of the three groups of figures on the back wall of the Ningmao stone chamber is also noted “to look at the correspondence” (Fig. 4.2-59). The eyes of the two maids on the left correspond to each other, and the eyes of the two men on the right correspond to each other. Also, the figures of sages under the trees on the east, west, and north walls of the tomb of Cui Fen from the Northern Qi Dynasty, found in Shandong, do the same thing, “to look at the correspondence.”

⁴⁶⁷ Zongzhen Luo, “Nanjing Xi Shanqiao Nanchao Mu Jiqi Zhuanke Bihua 南京西善桥南朝墓及其砖刻壁画 [Nanjing Xishanqiao Southern Dynasty Tomb and its Brick Murals],” *Wen Wu* 文物 [Cultural Relics], Z1(1960):37-42; Nanjing Museum 南京博物院, “Jiangsu Danyang Huqiao Nanchao Damu Ji Zhuanke Bihua 江苏丹阳胡桥南朝大墓及砖刻壁画[Jiangsu Danyang Huqiao Southern Dynasty Tomb and Brick Murals],” *Wen Wu* 文物[Cultural Relics], no.2 (1974):44-56; Zhenke You, “Jiangsu Danyang Xian Huqiao Jianshan Liangzuo Nanchao Muzang 江苏丹阳县胡桥、建山两座南朝墓葬 [Two Southern Dynasty Burials in Huqiao and Jianshan, Danyang County, Jiangsu Province],” *Wen Wu* 文物 [Cultural Relics], no.2(1980):1-17; Juping Gong, “Nanjing Yuhua Tai Shizi Gang Nanchao Zhuanyin Bihua Mu Fajue Jianbao 南京雨花台石子岗南朝砖印壁画墓(M5)发掘简报[Excavation Brief of the Southern Dynasty Brick-printed Mural Tomb (M5) at Shizigang, Yuhuatai, Nanjing],” *Wen Wu* 文物 [Cultural Relics], no.5 (2014): 20-38; Lihua Shen, “Nanjing Yuhua Tai Qu Tiexin Qiao Xiaocun Nanchao Mu Fajue Jianbao 南京市雨花台区铁心桥小村南朝墓发掘简报[Briefing on the Excavation of Southern Dynasty Tombs in Tiexinqiao Xiaocun, Yuhuatai District, Nanjing],” *Dongnan Wenhua* 东南文化 [Southeast Culture], no. 2(2015):50-60; Haining Qi, “Nanjing Xixia Shizi Chong Nanchao Damu Fajue Jianbao 南京栖霞狮子冲南朝大墓发掘简报[Briefing on the Excavation of the Southern Dynasty Catacombs at Shishichong, Qixia, Nanjing],” *Dongnan Wenhua* 东南文化[Southeast Culture], no.4 (2015):33-48.

In the aforementioned famous sarcophagus of the filial son of the Northern Wei Dynasty (collection of Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, Missouri), we can also see that the characters are constantly “to look at the correspondence”. This is a way to make the characters more flexible and vivid, and at the same time to increase the clarity of the narrative of the picture. In the two groups of figures in the story of the filial son Wang Lin, each group forms a self-contained eye correspondence that serves two different storylines (Fig. 4.2-60). In the group on the left, the eyes of the characters on the left riding the horse and leading the horse both meet the eyes of the man kneeling on the ground, which expresses the plot of the protagonist Wang Lin, who is shown kneeling with his hands tied, begging the robbers to release his brother and take him away. On the right side of the group of characters, the horse and the crowd of horseback riders are at a one-half angle with their backs towards the picture and their eyes towards the position of the mountains. It shows that Wang Lin and her brother were released, and the robbers left to hide in the mountains and forests. These two sets of character combinations each form self-contained eye correspondences respectively. There is no eye correspondence formed between the two sets of characters. While, the modern viewer can choose to associate these two groups of figures together, once again associating them with a mirrored “binary imagery”. As Wu Hung so emotionally describes it:

here our vision is controlled by the figures' motion. In viewing the left ‘frontal’ scene our eyes take in the arriving figures, but when we turn to the next scene we cannot help but feel that we are abruptly and, in a way, very rudely abandoned and ignored. The figures are leaving us and about to vanish, and in an effort to catch them our gaze follows them into the deep valley.⁴⁶⁸

Guided by such a modern scholar's view, our attention is then drawn to the figures on horseback leaving us, and we even begin to look forward to following those robbers and the pristine mountain world in which they are to be secluded. And then we almost forget that the reason why this story is portrayed here is to praise the

⁴⁶⁸ Hung Wu, “Touming Zhishi Zhonggu Yishu Zhong de Fanguan He Eryuan Tuxiang 透明之石：中古艺术中的‘反观’和二元图像[Stones of Transparency: 'Counter-views' and Dualistic Images in Medieval Art],” in *Art in its Ritual Context: Essays on Ancient Chinese Art by Wu Hung* (Beijing: Life, Reading and Xinzhi Sanlianshuijian, 2005), 692; Hung Wu, *Monumentality in Early Chinese Art and Architecture* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995), 265.

actions of the protagonist, that is the filial son Wang Lin. At this point, we can only go back to the correspondence between the eyes of the figures to reconfirm the protagonist of the story and the theme of the drawing. Therefore, the subjective interpretation of the modern viewer seems to have deviated somewhat from the original intention of the author of this painting. The fact is that this painting of “filial son Wang Lin” does not attempt to create a space for the characters to move around as they wish.⁴⁶⁹ Because the details in this painting show that the figures and the mountains are not arranged according to the rules of perspective, in terms of size and position. Indeed, we moderns can easily imagine that there is a space between two figures standing opposite to each other and that there is a space in front of a portrait with its back facing us in a painting. But this belongs only to our modern habit of viewing, of seeing the images located in the upper edge of the pictorial plane as extending behind the surface of the pictorial plane. It belongs to the subjective associations of the modern viewer.

A similar misunderstanding has occurred in the recent discussion by Shi Jie of the University of Chicago. He discussed the groups of figures on the YuanMi sarcophagus collected by the Minneapolis Museum of Art (Fig. 4.2-61).⁴⁷⁰ Shi Jie argues that the diagonal gaze between the figures here is used as a visual device to construct a three-dimensional space.⁴⁷¹ The tendency of modern scholars to view this device as a means of constructing three-dimensional space is largely due to interference from the inertia of Renaissance linear perspective thinking. But if one returns to the original context in which this royal sarcophagus was constructed, and tries to examine these images through the eyes of the creators of this sarcophagus, another explanation does exist here.

⁴⁶⁹ Hung Wu, “Touming Zhishi Zhonggu Yishu Zhong de Fanguan He Eryuan Tuxiang 透明之石：中古艺术中的‘反观’和二元图像[Stones of Transparency: 'Counter-views' and Dualistic Images in Medieval Art],” in *Art in its Ritual Context : Essays on Ancient Chinese Art by Wu Hung* (Beijing: Life, Reading and Xinzhi Sanlianshuijian, 2005), 692; Hung Wu, *Monumentality in Early Chinese Art and Architecture* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995), 268.

⁴⁷⁰ Research on the sarcophagus has been ongoing for decades. The sarcophagus was dated to 524 as an integral part of the burial goods of a prince of Northern Wei. Toshio Nagahiro has also discussed this sarcophagus along with the Nelson sarcophagus and other Northern Wei stone carvings dated to the early 6th century.

⁴⁷¹ Jie Shi, “Image, Body, and Simulation of the Afterlife in the Early Medieval Sarcophagus of Prince Yuan Mi,” *Archives of Asian Art* 70, no. 2 (2020): 199-224.

Then next try to get rid of the perspective view and re-examine the sarcophagus of Yuanqui once again. First, according to the *Wei Shu(Yuanmi Zhuan)*, Yuan Mi's sarcophagus was made by the “Dong Yuan” (East Garden) team, which specialized in serving the royal family.⁴⁷² This “Dong Yuan” team was led by Jiang Shaoyou, who had served as a general craftsman of the Northern Wei Dynasty. In the *Record of the Famous Painters of All the Dynastie*, Zhang Yanyuan commented that Jiang Shaoyou was “good at figure paintings and carvings”, and that “he possessed some talent for painting, but he often preferred to run the building works of architectures and gardens (常在圍湖城殿之側) .” Although Zhang Yanyuan did not appreciate Jiang Shaoyou's involvement in the construction of architecture and gardens, but still affirmed his ability and talent in figure paintings and carvings. Then the figures on the carved sarcophagus from Jiang Shaoyou's team deserve to be analyzed more closely from the perspective of figure paintings. The previous scholars' attention has been focused on Confucianism represented by the filial figures on the sarcophagus. The analysis of the whole picture is also mainly concerned with the combination of the images of mountains and forests among these filial figures.⁴⁷³ The subtle relationship between the images of the filia figures in this picture has not yet been carefully considered in any of the previous discussions. However, the management of these figures's position on the sarcophagus is probably where Jiang Shaoyou, who was good at figure painting, best demonstrated his talent. Therefore, it is worthwhile to further understand the images that appear on this sarcophagus from the view of the figure painting. Considering that figure painting was far more mature than landscape painting at this time, and that an important trick when painting figures was “to look at

⁴⁷² *Wei Shu Yuan Jing Chuan*(魏书元谧传)records that: “Zhao County King Anjin Ling Wang Lu Zi in addition to the Palace Shangshu plus Annan General Zheng Guang four years of princely to give the East Garden secret weapon court dress a set of clothes, an attack of 500 pieces of silk.(趙郡王謐靈王恢子除都宮尚書加安南將軍正光四年薨給東園秘器朝服一具衣一襲賻帛五百匹.)”

⁴⁷³For example, Professor Wang Eugene, following Wu Hung's discussion, used linear perspective to interpret the images of the rocks and trees now depicted here as sequentially reduced according to some proportional relationship, thus creating a background with a sense of depth. See Eugene Wang, “Coffins and Confucianism- The Northern Wei Sarcophagus in the Minneapolis Institue of Arts,” *Orientation*, Vol.30, no.6 (1997):56- 64. Wu Hung's interpretation of the images in this sarcophagus is also still based on the “dualistic” perspective he proposed. See Hung Wu, *Monumentality in Early Chinese Art and Architecture* (Stanford University Press, 1995), 251- 80.

the correspondence” as mentioned by Gu Kaizhi. It is possible that the East Garden team, led by Jiang Shaoyou, also utilized this trick when designing the sarcophagus of Yuan Mi, making an ingenious link between the characters of the many stories of filial piety and the deceased inside the sarcophagus.

This painting trick used in the figure painting makes the way the Yuan Mi sarcophagus arranges the figures of these filial stories more ingenious than any other sarcophagus. Although the Yuan Mi sarcophagus may mimic the shape of a ceramic model of a house found in a Northern Wei tomb in Xinji, Ningxia.⁴⁷⁴ Both are carved with two windows in almost the same position (Fig. 4.2-62). Another colorful lacquer coffin excavated in Guyuan also shows a bust of a couple behind a small window on the side of the coffin panel (Fig.4.2-63).⁴⁷⁵ However, the outside of the window is filled with geometrical images; above the window, along the edge of the lid, there is a long row of images depicting the stories of the filial sons Shun, Guo Ju, and Cai Shun, as well as the story of the filial son Yin Boqi, the son of Yin Jifu, with the caption of a list describing the content, and a triangular pattern dividing the plots. In this colorful lacquer coffin in Guyuan, the figure of the filial son and the couple behind the small window are only juxtaposed, and the couple behind the window has empty eyes without any connection with other images in the pictorial plane. The Yuan Mi sarcophagus displays the skill of “looking at the correspondence “ between the figures behind the window representing the deceased on the other side of the sarcophagus and the filial son figures around the window (Fig. 4.2-64). Inside the window carved on the sarcophagus panel, the upper bodies of a couple are shown, standing with their arms folded and smiling, looking calmly and contentedly out of the window at the filial sons. Around the window are painted figures of filial sons who support their parents, with most of the protagonists of the stories of filial sons depicted on the left panel being male elders and most of the protagonists of the stories of filial sons

⁴⁷⁴ Feng Luo, “Pengyang Xinji Beiwei Mu 彭阳新集北魏墓[Pengyang Xinji Northern Wei Tomb],” *Wenwu* 文物 [Cultural Relics], no.9(1988):26-42.

⁴⁷⁵ Ji Sun, “Guyuan Beiwei Qiguan Hua Yanjiu 固原北魏漆棺画研究 Study on the Lacquer Coffin Paintings of the Northern Wei Dynasty in Guyuan,” *Wenwu* 文物 [Cultural Relics], no.9(1989):38-44; Ningxia Guyuan Museum 宁夏固原博物馆, *Guyuan Beiwei Mu Qiguan Hua 固原北魏墓漆棺画* [Lacquer Coffin Paintings from Northern Wei Tombs in Guyuan] (Yinchuan: Ningxia People's Publishing House, 1988), 43-49.

depicted on the right panel being female elders. When the figures inside the window and those outside the window in keeping with the tips of “looking at the correspondence”, it re-emphasizes that what the artist depicts here is all for the deceased inside the window. This is a deliberate refusal of the gaze of the viewer outside the sarcophagus. It also emphasizes the fact that the sarcophagus was ultimately intended to create an ideal place specifically for the deceased. The knocker on both sides of the sarcophagus also hints once again at the funerary function of the sarcophagus itself. In the recent discovery of Northern Wei Dynasty tombs in Qili Village, Datong, Shanxi Province, a complete coffin with this kind of knocker was unearthed (Fig. 4.2-65).⁴⁷⁶

When the sarcophagus of Yuan Mi is re-examined and freed from the perspective viewpoint, it is equally clear that the small mountains along the upper edge of the sarcophagus do not necessarily represent the far-distant mountains that penetrate the pictorial plane. It is also possible that its reduced size shows that it is located very high up. Thus, it may be showing the mountains spreading high above along the two-dimensional plane of the picture. That is the Heavenly Mountain where the Divine Beasts floating are located, and where there is the celestial phenomenon displayed by the Blue Dragon, the White Tiger, the Vermilion Bird, and the Xuanwu (Fig. 4.2-61d,e).

In any case, if one looks at these funerary images of the Northern Dynasty without a preconceived perspective view, one constantly perceives that these combinations of rocks and trees are just used as a means of defining a field of action, not to create a sense of spatial depth. This means also was used repeatedly in the narrative images of the Dunhuang Mogao caves murals, as will be discussed in detail in the next chapter.

Finally, there is another inappropriate view that believes the arrangement of figures is used to suggest spatial recession. This view was first proposed by Fang

⁴⁷⁶ Xiaogang Hou, “Shanxi Datong Qilicun Beiwei Muqun Fjue Jianbao 山西大同七里村北魏墓群 M29 发掘简报[Briefing on the Excavation of Northern Wei Tomb Group M29 in Qili Village, Datong, Shanxi],” *Wenwu* 文物 [Cultural Relics], no.1 (2023):33-57.

Wen. He once illustrated this view with the example of a mural in the tomb of Helingol, Inner Mongolia, dated the second century (Fig. 4.2-66). He argues that the “parallelograms” formed by the figures sitting together, as well as the “parallelograms” formed by the sides of a building, successfully “suggest spatial recession in space”.⁴⁷⁷ This method of so-called “parallelogram” composition to suggest a recession in space, according to Fang Wen, is called “parallel perspective” or “parallelogram perspective”.⁴⁷⁸ Many Chinese scholars under Fang Wen’s influence have accepted and developed this view. For example, Zhang Jianyu, a Ph.D. student under his supervision, has further extended his so-called “parallelogram perspective” by proposing the so-called “triangle” and “trapezoid” composition to express the sense of spatial recession, which was used in his doctoral thesis entitled “Representations of Space in Chinese art from the Han to the Tang Dynasty.” Continuing Ludwig Bachhofer's failed path, Zhang adds materials from Dunhuang murals to his argument for the gradual maturation of “Representations of Space” in Chinese art over the 1,000 years from the Han to the Tang dynasties.

Two of the earliest examples of Chinese painters depicting spatial recession, cited by Zhang Jianyu, come from the west wall of the Han Dynasty Tomb No. 1 at Xi'an University of Science and Technology.⁴⁷⁹ they are images depicting a cockfighting scene (Fig. 4.2-67a) and images depicting a feasting scene (Fig. 4.2-67b), respectively. He argues that the cockfighting scene here uses “parallelograms”

⁴⁷⁷ Wen Fong, “Why Chinese Painting is History,” *The Art Bulletin* 85, no. 2 (2003): 272.

⁴⁷⁸ Wen Fong, *Art as History: Calligraphy and Painting as One* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014), 264-266.

⁴⁷⁹ Archaeologists speculated this tomb should be dated to the late Western Han Dynasty, i.e., from the second half of the 1st century BCE to the first half of the first century BCE. See Xiaoshi Kou, Anlin Hu, “西安理工大学西汉壁画墓发掘简报[Xi'an University of Science and Technology Western Han Dynasty Mural Tomb Excavation Brief],” *Wenwu* 文物[Cultural Relics], no.5 (2006):42-43; Shiping Luo, “Dixia Huajuan Zhongguo Gudai Mushi Bihua 地下画卷:中国古代墓室壁画[Underground Scrolls: Ancient Chinese Tomb Room Murals],” *Meishu Yanjiu* 美术研究[Art Research], no.3 (2009):20; Xilin He, Qingquan Li. *Zhongguo Mushi Bihua Shi* 中国墓室壁画史 [History of Chinese Tomb Room Mural Painting] (Beijing: Higher Education Press, 2009), 21-25; Peixian Huang, “Handai Bihua Mu de Fenqu yu Fenqi Yanjiu 汉代壁画墓的分区与分期研究[A study on the zoning and staging of mural-painted tombs in the Han Dynasty],” *Koagu Yu Wenwu* 考古与文物[Archaeology and Cultural Relics], no.1(2010),75. Some other scholars believe that this tomb should be dated no earlier than 70 AD in the Eastern Han Dynasty, see Houming Huang, Kangning Ye, “Tuxiang Yu Kongjian Yi Handai Huaxiang Yishu wei Zhongxin 图像与空间:以汉代画像艺术为中心[Image and space:centred on Han dynasty portrait art],” *Zhongguo Meishu Yanjiu* 中国美术研究[Research of Chinese Fine Arts], no.1 (2014):11.

to show spatial recession, and the feasting scene uses “triangles” to show a three-dimensional spatial scene. He believes that at this time, i.e., during the Western Han Dynasty, Chinese painters had already accomplished a key painting invention in “representations of space,” which the author defines as the “parallelogram method (斜邊形空間畫法) .”⁴⁸⁰ One of the controversial examples cited by Zhang Jianyu is the Zhuwei shrine from Jinxiang County, Shandong Province, during the Han Dynasty.⁴⁸¹ According to the images on the east, west, and north walls restored by Wilma Fairbank (see Fig. 4.2-68),⁴⁸² Zhang argues that the left and right areas separated by the center columns together form a “triangular” (lower part of the architrave) or “trapezoidal” (upper part of the architrave).⁴⁸³ However, this understanding probably misinterpreted the authorial intention of the Zhuwei shrine. Because the columns carved in the middle serve precisely to evade this understanding. The two sides of the column are not combined in the same scene. The artisan's intention was more likely to draw different groups of feasting figures on both sides of the pillar in an axonometric view. In the case of the north wall (Fig. 4.2-68b), for example, the two scenes separated by the column in the center of the north wall are independent scenes drawn in the three-quarter axonometric method, with two figures seated inside a screen and being served by a group of people, and another group of people facing the figures seated inside the screen. The other scenes on the east and west walls are similarly arranged on both sides of the columns. The columns carved in the center of each wall serve to separate these two independent scenes.

The mural paintings of tombs from the fourth to the sixth centuries also reveal a continuing consistency in the way the painters dealt with similar situations. For example, the mural paintings in the Goguryeo (mid-fourth-century) Wudaoyong tomb

⁴⁸⁰ Jianyu Zhang, *Hantang Meishu Kongjian Biaoxian Yanjiu yi Dunhuang Bihua wei Zhongxin* 汉唐美术空间表现研究 以敦煌壁画为中 [Research on the spatial representation of Han and Tang art centred on Dunhuang murals] (Beijing: People's University of China Press, 2018), 59.

⁴⁸¹ Yingzhu Jiang, Aiguo Yang and others have dated it to the second half of the second century of the late Eastern Han Dynasty, see Yingju Jiang, Aiguo Yang and Qun Jiang, *Zhuwei Shixhi* 朱鮪石室 [The Stone Chamber of Zhu Wei] (Beijing: Cultural Relics Press, 2013), 78-84.

⁴⁸² Wilma Fairbank, “A Structural Key to Han Mural Art,” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 7, no. 1 (1942): 52-88.

⁴⁸³ Zhang, *Hantang Meishu Kongjian Biaoxian Yanjiu*, 69.

found in Ji'an City, Jilin Province(Fig. 4.2- 69), also painted the rows of tiles on the left taken at an axonometric angle from the left, and the rows of tiles on the right taken at an axonometric angle from the right. There is also another example in the murals above the door of the tomb from the Northern Dynasty in Jiuyuangang, Xinzhou City, the image of the ground tiles is also following the same method. Drawing the left and right parts of the floor tile by taking the left and right angles respectively following the axonometric method(Fig. 4.2- 70). These drawings are more like an arrangement adopted by painters to comply with the principle of symmetry.

The “near-small, far-large” phenomenon in paintings, which violates the law of perspective, has also been interpreted by scholars such as Zhang Jianyu and Huang Houming as two subtypes derived from the “parallelogram perspective”.⁴⁸⁴ However, if we look at this phenomenon in the original context of the Six Dynasties, we will find that it is only a result of painting the important figures larger and the secondary figures smaller. The figure sizes were not used to produce a spatial recession in the Six Dynasties images. It is also common to see in tomb murals at this time that when two figures are shown, they are also avoided to be in a diagonal forward and backward position, but are shown side by side on a horizontal line. In this way, the impression of flatness is reinforced. A more thorough examination of the Six Dynasties images in these tombs reveals how those elements that emphasize flatness lead the viewer's eye, while those that might evoke spatial recession imagery are curbed.

Zhang Jianyu's example of a so-called “trapezoidal composition” is from a tombstone with an inscription in clerical script of the third year of the Yangjia (134 A.D.) in the collection of the Cultural Relics Management Institute of Lingbi County,

⁴⁸⁴ Houming Huang, “Yishu Shi Yu Tuxiang Tuxiang de Yiyi Duhou 艺术史与图像:《图像的意义》读后[Art History and Images:After Reading The Meaning of Images],” *Meishu Yanjiu* 美术研究[Art Research], no.1 (2010): 74; Jianyu Zhang, *Hantang Meishu Kongjian Biaoxian Yanjiu yi Dunhuang Bihua wei Zhongxin* 汉唐美术空间表现研究 以敦煌壁画为中 [Research on the spatial representation of Han and Tang art centred on Dunhuang murals] (Beijing: People's University of China Press, 2018),66.

Anhui Province (Fig. 4.2-71).⁴⁸⁵ In this case, he believes that the hall in the upper center of the picture is symmetrical with the two side verandahs, indicating the depth of the space in a diagonal pattern, then the hall, the two side verandahs, and the bottom edge form a trapezoidal shape indicating the courtyard in front of the hall.⁴⁸⁶ However, if we look closely at the details on this stone relief, we can find that at the lower end of the picture on both sides there are wooden poles sticking through the bottom of the veranda towards the ground. This suggests that what is depicted here is a passageway that was built up and gradually raised to eventually lead to the hall at the highest point. The diagonal veranda on both sides of the central hall shows progressively higher slopes. Moreover, an example from an Eastern Han tomb mural in Helinger, Inner Mongolia, again makes it clear that this so-called “trapezoidal composition” represents height along the pictorial plane of the painting rather than spatial depth perpendicular to the pictorial plane (Fig. 4.2-72). Because a small boat is painted in the lower center of the picture, it is clear that the people in the upper part of the picture are located at a high position, and the people on the slopes on both sides are located at a low position. Similarly, a similar arrangement on the back wall of the sarcophagus in Yu Hong's tomb at the end of the 6th century is unlikely to represent spatial depth as suggested by Zhang Jianyu.⁴⁸⁷ It is more likely to be a representation of a progressively higher slope (Fig. 4.2-73): the two men sitting in the center are at the top position, the attendants on either side stand along the slope, and the dancer in the center, with his accompanist, is at the lowest position of the slope.

In short, among the tomb murals of the Six Dynasties found in the current archaeological discoveries, there is no trace of these images having a way of reproducing the illusion of three-dimensional space. Those images that many scholars in the past thought of as showing spatial illusion belong to the subjective speculation

⁴⁸⁵ Aiguo Yang, *Youming Liangjie Jinian handai Huaxiang Shi Yanjiu* 幽明两界：纪年汉代画像石研究 [*The Two Realms of the Phantom and the Bright: A Study of Chronological Han Dynasty Picture Stones*] (Xi'an: Shaanxi People's Publishing House, 2006), 49.

⁴⁸⁶ Jianyu Zhang, *Hantang Meishu Kongjian Biaoxian Yanjiu yi Dunhuang Bihua wei Zhongxin* 汉唐美术空间表现研究 以敦煌壁画为中 [Research on the spatial representation of Han and Tang art centred on Dunhuang murals] (Beijing: People's University of China Press, 2018), 66.

⁴⁸⁷ Zhang, *Hantang Meishu Kongjian Biaoxian Yanjiu yi Dunhuang Bihua wei Zhongxin*, 264-266.

of modern scholars. In the investigation of these images in tombs in the first half of this chapter, it can be seen that the property of these images is closer to “object,” as the object itself exists in the tomb to satisfy the needs of the material and spiritual life of the owner of the tomb. The existence of these images has meaning and value in itself and does not need to be gazed at or glanced at by a particular viewer to gain meaning and value. The images painted in the tombs therefore only need to satisfy pictographic clarity of form, not to create a convincing stage scene for the viewer. This also means that the artisans of images in tombs do not need to master the kind of reproduction techniques that can confuse the human eye. Therefore, it is no longer necessary to analyze the images in these tombs using the criteria for producing spatial illusion on the picture plane.

Chapter 5. Images in Cave-Temples

This chapter delves into the cave temples of the Six Dynasties to examine what special qualities were assigned to the images in cave temples by the people of this time. Did these images need to simulate spatial illusions or deal with spatial issues? To explore these questions, this chapter first needs to explore what activities the image-covered cave temples were used for, and how the images in these cave temples participated in these activities.

5.1 The Role of Images in Cave-Temples

During the Six Dynasties, people began to excavate cave-temples in the mountains above the ground in large numbers, and both the upper-class rulers and the masses invested enough manpower and money to rival that invested by the people of the Han Dynasty in the construction of tombs. Generally speaking, the purpose of building cave-temples was to provide a suitable place for the believers in the present world to fulfill their various religious activities or monastic life. Previous scholars have variously described what these religious practices were.

Most of the earliest scholars who discussed the specific functions of the Northern Dynasties cave temples paid particular attention to the meditative function. Many scholars have argued that these cave temples were excavated in the mountains for Zen monks to meditate.⁴⁸⁸ The reason is that most of the Buddhists in the Northern Dynasties period, as shown in the literature, had a strong interest in the theory and practice of meditation. Tang Yongtong in his work lists many textual references to ascetic meditative practice during the Northern Dynasties, specifically practices prevalent in the Northern Wei (386-534 A.D.).⁴⁸⁹ According to this textual evidence on meditative practice during the Northern and Southern Dynasties, Liu Huida first suggested that one of the main purposes of the Northern Wei cave temples was to provide an ideal place for meditation. He points out that: “The purpose of the grottoes

⁴⁸⁸ Huida Liu, “Beiwei Shiku Yu Chan 北魏石窟与禅 [Northern Wei Caves and Zen],” *Kaogu Xuebao 考古学报* [*Acta Archaeologica Sinica*], no.3 (1978):337.

⁴⁸⁹ Yongtong Tang, *Han Wei Liang Jin Nanbeichao Fojiao shi 汉魏两晋南北朝佛教史* [History of Buddhism in the Han, Wei, Jin, and North and South Dynasties] (Beijing: Shangwu yinshu guan, 1938).

at that time, in addition to what is generally referred to as religious ceremonies of worship and offering, the cultivation of blessings and merits, as well as the requirement of the individual to create images, it is likely that the practice of meditation is also one of the important purposes for the monks to build grottoes.”⁴⁹⁰ Liu Huida proposed that the meditation grottoes in the Northern Wei grottoes have three types: (1) The first type of these grottoes was located at a certain distance from the grottoes covered with images cut alone, without any images and statues in the grottoes. None of these grottoes is more than one square meter in size and only about one meter high, such as the small grottoes in the northern part of the Mogao Grottoes group, and many small grottoes near the Yungang grottoes also belong to this category. (2) The second type of meditation caves was small caves with statues on all four walls, for example, the many small caves in the western and center part of the Yungang Grottoes fall into this category; (3) The third type of these meditation caves was the small caves attached to the large caves which have statues and murals, the small caves do not have statues, for example, Mogao cave 267, Mogao Cave 269, Mogao Cave 270, Mogao Cave 271 attached to the mogao cave 268, as well as the eight small caves located in the Mogao Cave 285.⁴⁹¹ He Shizhe also speculates that mogao Cave 268 is the earliest meditative cave opened by Lezun or Faliang.⁴⁹² Moreover, scholars such as Duan Wenjie, Xiao Mo, and Ma De also agreed with Liu Huida’s view.⁴⁹³ Although Ma De notes that no records of meditative activities of Zen monks in Mogao Caves have been found since the Northern Liang period, and after

⁴⁹⁰ Liu, “Beiwei Shiku Yu Chan,” 337-352

⁴⁹¹ Liu, “Beiwei Shiku Yu Chan,” 339-340.

⁴⁹² Shizhe He, “Dunhuang Mogaoku Beichao Shiku yu Changuan 敦煌莫高窟北朝石窟与禅观 [The Northern Caves of the Mogao Grottoes at Dunhuang and the View of Zen],” *Dunhuang Xue Jikan 敦煌学辑刊 [Journal of Dunhuang Studies]*, no.00(1980):43.

⁴⁹³ Wenjie Duan, “Tuban Jieshuo 图版解说 [Explanation of the Plates],” in *Zhongguo Shiku Dunhuang Mogao Ku Di Yi Juan 中国石窟：敦煌莫高窟 [China's Caves: The Mogao Caves of Dunhuang]* (Beijing: Wenwu Chubanshe, 1982); Mo Xiao, “Dunhuang Mogaoku de Shiku Xingshi 敦煌莫高窟的石窟形式 [Forms of the Dunhuang Mogao Grottoes],” in *Zhongguo Shiku Dunhuang Mogao Ku Di Er Juan 中国石窟：敦煌莫高窟 2 [China's Caves: The Mogao Caves of Dunhuang]* (Beijing: Wenwu Chubanshe, 1984), 187-199; De Ma, *Dunhuang Mogaoku Shi Yanjiu 敦煌莫高窟史研究 [Studies of the history of the Mogao Grottoes, Dunhuang]* (Lanzhou: Gansu jiaoyu chubanshe, 1996), 212-216.

the Northern Liang period Mogao Caves became a site for many other Buddhist activities for both monks and laymen.⁴⁹⁴

In “The Northern Caves of the Mogao Grottoes at Dunhuang and the meditation,” He Shizhe continues to expand Liu Huida's view from the Northern Wei Dynasty(386-534 A.D.) to the entire Northern Dynasty period(386-581A.D.).

According to He Shizhe, the statues of Buddha in the niches of Mogao Caves were mainly for the novice meditation practitioners to “look at the statues”, in addition to the consecration site for the deities by the devotees and donors.⁴⁹⁵ He quoted from the *Zuochan Sanmei Jing* (坐禪三昧經),⁴⁹⁶ and the content of the “Visualizing the

Image(观像品)” in the *Scripture of Contemplating the Buddha and the Samadhi*

Sea(观佛三昧海經).⁴⁹⁷ He argues that the Buddha image in the backlight of the statue in Mogao Cave 272, Mogao Cave 254 (Northern Wei Dynasty), Mogao Cave 257 (Northern Wei Dynasty), Mogao Cave 260 (Northern Wei Dynasty), Mogao Cave 432 (Northern Zhou Dynasty), Mogao Cave 296 (Northern Zhou Dynasty), Mogao Cave 439, Mogao Cave 430, Mogao Cave 297 (Northern Zhou Dynasty), Mogao Cave 442, and Mogao Cave 301 (Northern Zhou Dynasty), is the “transformation buddhas in the

⁴⁹⁴ Ma, *Dunhuang Mogaoku Shi Yanjiu*, 216.

⁴⁹⁵ Shizhe He, “Dunhuang Mogaoku Beichao Shiku Yu Changuan 敦煌莫高窟北朝石窟与禅观[The Northern Caves of the Mogao Grottoes at Dunhuang and Zen Concepts],” *Dunhuang Xue Jikan* 敦煌学辑刊[Journal of Dunhuang Studies], 00(1980): 44.

⁴⁹⁶ The original text in *Zuochan Sanmei Jing* 坐禪三昧經 Vol 1: 「第五法門治等分行，及重罪人求索佛，如是人等當教一心念佛三昧。念佛三昧有三種人：或初習行、或已習行、或久習行。若初習行人，將至佛像所，或教令自往諦觀佛像相好，相相明了，一心[3]取持。還至靜處，心眼觀佛像，令意不轉，繫念在像，不令他念；他念攝之，令常在像。若心不住，師當教言：「汝當責心：『由汝受罪，不可稱計，無際生死，種種苦惱，無不更受。若在地獄，吞飲洋銅，食燒鐵丸；若在畜生，食糞噉草；若在餓鬼，受飢餓苦；若在人中，貧窮困厄；若在天上，失欲憂惱。常隨汝故，令我受此種種身惱心惱、無量苦惱。今當制汝，汝當隨我。我今繫汝一處，我終不復為汝所困更受苦毒也。汝常困我，我今要當以事困汝。』」如是不已，心不散亂，是時便得心眼見佛像相光明，如眼所見無有異也。如是心住，是名初習行者思惟。」(CBETA 2023.Q3, T15, no. 614, p. 276a7-23)

⁴⁹⁷ The original text in 《佛說觀佛三昧海經》 Vol 9: 「佛滅度後現前無佛，當觀佛像。觀佛像者，若比丘、比丘尼、優婆塞、優婆夷、天龍八部、一切眾生欲觀像者，先入佛塔以好香泥及諸[13]瓦土塗地令淨，隨其力能燒香散華供養佛像，說己過惡禮佛懺悔，如是伏心經一七日。復至眾中塗掃僧地除諸糞穢，向僧懺悔禮眾僧足，復經七日。如是供養心不疲厭，若出家人應誦毘尼，極令通利；若在家人孝養父母恭敬師長，調心令軟。心若不軟當強折伏令心調順，如調象馬不令失御。心柔順已，住於靖處燒眾名香，禮釋迦文而作是言：『南無大德、我大和上、應、正遍知、大悲世尊！願以慈雲覆護弟子。』作是語已五體投地泣淚像前，從地而起齊整衣服結加趺坐，繫念一處隨前眾生，繫心鼻端、繫心額上、繫心足指。」(CBETA 2023.Q1, T15, no. 643, p. 690c1-16)

light (光有化佛) ” in the *Chan Essentials* (*Chanmi Yaofa Jing* 禪祕要法經).⁴⁹⁸ He Shizhe speculates that the cross-legged Maitreya in Mogao Cave 275 was used by monks for meditation, also based on the contents of the second volume of the *Chan Essentials*.⁴⁹⁹ However, the content of *Chan Essentials* only mentions that a person who practiced meditation could meet Maitreya Buddha after his death.⁵⁰⁰ There is no mention in the sutra that the statue or image of Maitreya Buddha is the object of meditation.

He Shizhe also quotes the content of the second volume of the *Chan Essentials*: “(The Buddha said to Ānanda:) Among the four classes of disciples who cultivate this method for fixing the mind, there may be those who contemplate and then see, with utmost clarity, the image of the white bones in a single small portion of their bodies, such as the tip of the toe or the tip of the finger. Know that such people, if they see a single finger, a single nail, or the entire skeleton, will be reborn in the Tuṣita heaven because of the sharpness of their minds. [Such people] have put an end to all their suffering in the three unhappy realms of rebirth. Though they are not yet liberated, they will never again be reborn in the unhappy realms. Know that such people possess merit that will not decay and that they have escaped forever the miseries of the three lower paths of rebirth. How much greater, then, to see all the skeletons [described in this scripture]! Those who see these skeletons, though not yet liberated and not possessing any undefiled merit, have nonetheless escaped from the painful torments of the three lower rebirths and the eight difficult situations. Know that these people will always be reborn where they can see the Buddhas. In a future lifetime, they will meet Maitreya at the first dragon flower assembly and will be first to hear the Dharma

⁴⁹⁸ He, “Dunhuang Mogaoku Beichao Shiku Yu Changan,” 45.

⁴⁹⁹ Greene, Eric M. “Scripture on the Secret Essential Methods of Chan: Chan Essentials (Chan Mi Yao Fa Jing 禪祕要法經)” In *The Secrets of Buddhist Meditation: Visionary Meditation Texts from Early Medieval China*, (University of Hawai’i Press, 2021), 111–216.

⁵⁰⁰ The original text in 《禪祕要法經》 Vol 3: 「若有四眾，修繫念法，乃至觀見脚指端手指端一節少分白骨相極令明了，若見一指、若見一爪、一切諸白骨。當知此人以心利故，命終之後必定得生兜率陀天，滅三惡道一切苦患。雖未解脫，不墮惡道。當知此人功德不減，已得免離三塗苦難，何況具足諸白骨人。見此骨人者，雖未解脫無漏功德，當知此人已免一切三塗八難苦厄之患，當知此人世所生不離見佛，於未來世值遇彌勒龍華初會，必先聞法得證解脫。」 (CBETA 2023.Q3, T15, no. 613, p. 268a9-18)

and attain liberation.”⁵⁰¹ He argued that the cross-legged Maitreya statue in Mogao Cave 275 is also for Zen monks to view the image with, although the scripture does not say that the Maitreya statue is the object of Zen monks to meditate.

He Shizhe also believes that the Buddhist paintings of Jātaka (*bensheng* 本生), Avadāna (*piyu* 譬喻), and Nidāna (*yinyuan* 因緣) that appeared in the Mogao Caves in the Northern Dynasty are the contents of “contemplation of the Buddha’s flesh-and-blood body of birth(观生身)” in the *Five Gates* (五門禪經要用法).⁵⁰² He also quoted the “*Lotus-samādhi contemplation method*(法華三昧觀法)” in the *Concise Essentials of Meditation*(思維略要法), which mentions that Shakyamuni Buddha sat with the Prabhūtaratna Buddha in the Seven Treasures Pagoda.⁵⁰³ He believed that the images of two Buddhas sitting side by side in the Mogao caves, such as Cave 259, Cave 428, and Cave 461, are all the contents of the “Lotus-samādhi contemplation method”.⁵⁰⁴ He Shizhe believes that the Buddhas of the Ten Directions are related to meditation is also based on what is mentioned in the “method for contemplating the Buddhas of the Ten Directions(十方諸佛觀法)” in the *Concise Essentials of Meditation*.⁵⁰⁵ Moreover, He quoted that the Monk Seng Yin saw the ten directions of

⁵⁰¹ The original text in 《禪祕要法經》Vol 3: 「佛告阿難: 「若有四眾, 修繫念法, 乃至觀見脚指端手指端一節少分白骨相極令明了, 若見一指、若見一爪、一切諸白骨。當知此人以心利故, 命終之後必定得生兜率陀天, 滅三惡道一切苦患。雖未解脫, 不墮惡道。當知此人功德不減, 已得免離三塗苦難, 何況具足諸白骨人。見此骨人者, 雖未解脫無漏功德, 當知此人已免一切三塗八難苦厄之患, 當知此人世所生不離見佛, 於未來世值遇彌勒龍華初會, 必先聞法得證解脫。」」 (CBETA 2023.Q3, T15, no. 613, p. 268a9-18)

⁵⁰² He Shizhe believes that the “living body 生身” here refers to the various physical bodies that Sakyamuni incarnated in order to “universalise all sentient beings.” See He Shizhe 贺世哲, “Dunhuang Mogaoku Beichao Shiku Yu Changuan 敦煌莫高窟北朝石窟与禅观[Dunhuang Mogao Grottoes of the Northern Dynasties and Meditation.” *Dunhuang Xue Jikan* 敦煌学辑刊 [Journal of Dunhuang Studies], no.00(1980): 45.

⁵⁰³ The original text in 《思惟略要法》: 「三七日一心精進如說修行, 正憶念《法華經》者, 當念釋迦牟尼佛於耆闍崛山與多寶佛在七寶塔共坐, 十方分身化佛遍滿所移眾生國土之中, 一切諸佛各有一生補處菩薩一人為侍, 如釋迦牟尼佛以彌勒為侍。一切諸佛現神通力, 光明遍照無量國土, 欲證實法出其舌相, 音聲滿於十方世界。所說《法華經》者, 所謂十方三世眾生若大若小, 乃至一稱南無佛者, 皆當作佛。惟一大乘, 無二無三, 一切諸法一相一門, 所謂無生[5]無滅畢竟空相。唯有此大乘, 無有二也。習如是觀者, 五欲自斷、五蓋自除, 五根增長, 即得禪定。住此定中深愛於佛, 又當入是甚深微妙一相一門清淨之法。當恭敬普賢、藥王、大樂說、觀世音、得大勢、文殊、彌勒等大菩薩眾, 是名一心精進如說修行正憶念《法花經》也。此謂與禪定[7]和合令心堅固, 如在三七日中, 則普賢菩薩乘六牙白象來至其所, 如經中說。」 (CBETA 2023.Q3, T15, no. 617, p. 300b25-c13)

⁵⁰⁴ He, “Dunhuang Mogaoku Beichao Shiku Yu Changuan,” 49.

⁵⁰⁵ The original text in 《思惟略要法》: 「念十方諸佛者, 坐觀東方廓然明淨, 無諸山河石壁, 唯[15]見一佛

Buddhas during his meditation in the records of *Gao Seng Zhuan*.⁵⁰⁶ He Shizhe also believes that the image of the White Buddha on the west wall of Mogao Cave 254, Cave 263, Cave 435, and Cave 288 in the Northern Dynasty is the “*Pure White Buddha*(純潔白佛)” that appears in the grottos under the Buddha's light, as mentioned in Volume 4 of the *Scripture of Contemplating the Buddha and the Samadhi Sea*.⁵⁰⁷ He also quotes from Volume 10 of the *Scripture of Contemplating the Buddha and the Samadhi Sea*⁵⁰⁸ and suggests that the images of nine Buddhas on the north wall of Mogao Cave 285 were related to the seven Buddhas mentioned in this sutra.⁵⁰⁹ At the turn of the 21st century, He Shizhe in his book also re-emphasized the meditative function of Mogao Cave 285, but at the same time conceded that Cave 285 may also have had a penitential function.⁵¹⁰

After He Shizhe examines in some detail the correspondence between the images of Buddha in the Mogao Caves mentioned above and the Meditation Sutra, he also mentioned the existence of another type of image in the caves, that is, the images of the donor images appeared on the lower section of the walls in mogao caves. However, he does not state whether there is any correspondence between these images and the Meditation Sutra. He Shizhe does not seem to have examined the

結跏趺坐舉手說法。心眼觀察，光明相好[16]畫然了了，繫念在佛不令他緣，心若餘緣攝之令還。如是見者，更增十佛，既見之後復增百千，乃至無有邊際，近身則狹轉遠轉廣，但見諸佛光光相接。心眼觀察得如是者，迴身東南，復如上觀。既得成就，南方西南方，西方西北方，北方東北方，上下方都亦如是。既得方方皆見諸佛，如東方已，當復端坐總觀十方諸佛，一念所緣周匝得見。定心成就者，即於定中十方諸佛[17]皆為說法，疑網雲消得無生忍。若宿罪因緣不見諸佛者，當一日一夜六時懺悔隨喜勸請，漸自得見，縱使諸佛不為說法，是時心得快樂身體安隱。是則名為觀十方諸佛也。」(CBETA 2023.Q3, T15, no. 617, p. 299c4-18)

⁵⁰⁶ The original text in 《高僧傳》Vol 11: 「高乃密以神力，令印於定中，備見十方無極世界，諸佛所說法門不同。印於一夏尋其所見，永不能盡，方知定水無底，大生愧懼。」(CBETA 2023.Q3, T50, no. 2059, p. 397c1-4)

⁵⁰⁷ The original text in 《佛說觀佛三昧海經》Vol 4: 「一一雲中有恒沙佛刹；一一刹中塵數化佛；一一化佛出此光明。此光現時，下方世界有百萬金山，於其巖間百億寶窟，如雲踊起，是眾窟中純諸白佛，白妙菩薩及聲聞眾以為侍者，金精寶光在佛左右，猶如斷山眾寶映錯。有妙寶蓋如須彌山無量寶成，一一寶間百億光明，迴旋宛轉」(CBETA 2023.Q3, T15, no. 643, p. 666a21-27)

⁵⁰⁸ The original text in 《佛說觀佛三昧海經》Vol 10: 「若有眾生觀像心成，次當復觀過去七佛像。觀七佛者當勤精進，晝夜六時勤行六法，端坐正受當樂少語，除讀誦經廣演法教，終不宣說無義之語，常念諸佛心心相續，乃至無有一念之間不見佛時，心專精故不離佛日」(CBETA 2023.Q3, T15, no. 643, p. 693a12-17)

⁵⁰⁹ He, “Dunhuang Mogaoku Beichao Shiku Yu Changuan,” 49.

⁵¹⁰ However, later He Shizhe thought that Cave 285 not only had the function of meditation, but also had the function of penance. See Shizhe He, *Dunhuang Tuxiang Yanjiu Shiliuguo Beichao Juan* 敦煌图像研究一十六国北朝卷[Dunhuang Image Study of the Sixteen Northern Dynasties] (Lanzhou: Gansu Education Publishing House, 2006), 295-347.

images of these donors in detail. He generally believed that the donors in the Mogao Caves of the Northern Dynasties were mostly princes and nobles, bureaucrats and landowners, and so on.⁵¹¹ This is inconsistent with the fact that, as can be seen from the Mogao Cave donors' inscriptions collated by the Dunhuang Research Academy, the majority of the donors who appeared in the caves during the Northern Dynasties were members of the general public who did not have official titles.⁵¹²

Later Liu Yongzeng goes further and argues that the mural paintings in Gansu province from the Northern Wei to the end of the Sui period, including Mogao Caves,⁵¹³ and other caves such as Cave 169 in the Bingling Cave-Temples, Cave 2 in the Horseshoe Cave-Temples, and Cave 10 in the Western Thousand Buddhas Caves, are all related to the Meditation Sutra.⁵¹⁴ Liu Yongzeng proposed that the “Thousand Buddhas Around a Preach Scene(千佛圍繞式說法圖)” pattern that often appears on the four walls of these caves is based on the *Scripture on the Sea of the Discernment of the Buddha Samādhi (Guanfo sanmei hai jing)*. Liu Yongzeng's “Thousand Buddhas” refers to “the past, present, and future Buddhas, the Seven Buddhas, and the Buddhas of the Ten Directions that fill the void in space.”⁵¹⁵ In Liu Yongzeng's view, the Buddha statues in these grottoes, the various Jataka paintings, and the “Thousand Buddhas Around a Preach Scene” are all objects to be used in “viewing and reciting the Buddhas”.⁵¹⁶ Liu Yongzeng concludes that these paintings of the Buddha's biography and the story of his life can be used both to “recount the Buddha's life for

⁵¹¹ He, “Dunhuang Mogaoku Beichao Shiku Yu Changuan,” 50.

⁵¹² Dunhuang Research Institute, *Dunhuang Mogaoku Gongyong Ren Tiji 敦煌莫高窟供养人题记* [Dunhuang Mogao Caves Provider Inscription] (Beijing: Cultural Relics Publishing House, 1986).

⁵¹³ Liu Yongzeng's examination of the Mogao Caves is limited to those caves that were excavated during the 140 years between the Re-emergence Period of the Northern Wei Dynasty (ca. 460–470) and the end of the Sui Dynasty (618 A.D.), and considers only those caves that have both the “Thousands of Buddhas Surrounding the Sayings” and the “Stories” paintings. “These caves are 16 in number. There are 16 such caves: Cave 254, Cave 257, Cave 260, Cave 263, Cave 285, Cave 461, Cave 438, Cave 428, Cave 296, Cave 299, Cave 301, Cave 302, Cave 419, Cave 423, Cave 427, and Cave 417. See Yongzeng Liu, “Qianfo Weirao Shi Shuofa Tu Yu Guanfo Sanmei Haijing 千佛围绕式说法图与《观佛三昧海经》 [A Thousand Buddhas Around a Figure of Preaching and the Guanfo Samadhi Sutra],” *Dunhuang Yanjiu 敦煌研究* [Dunhuang Research], no. 01(1998):16.

⁵¹⁴ Liu Yongzeng also believes that Mogao Grottoes Cave 268 and Cave 285 are Zen caves. See Yongzeng Liu, “Qianfo Weirao Shi Shuofa Tu Yu Guanfo Sanmei Haijing 千佛围绕式说法图与《观佛三昧海经》 [A Thousand Buddhas Around a Figure of Preaching and the Guanfo Samadhi Sutra],” *Dunhuang Yanjiu 敦煌研究* [Dunhuang Research], no.1(1998):17.

⁵¹⁵ Liu, “Qianfo Weirao Shi Shuofa Tu Yu Guanfo Sanmei Haijing,” 13.

⁵¹⁶ Liu, “Qianfo Weirao Shi Shuofa Tu Yu Guanfo Sanmei Haijing,” 19.

people to venerate and to propagate the salvation of all living beings,” but they can also be used to “view and recite the Buddha.”⁵¹⁷

Lai Pengju further discusses the meditative function of images in his book titled “The Quest for Meditation Practice: iconography in the Silk Road Buddhism”. He argues that the grottoes excavated in the mountains along the Silk Road were ideal places for “practicing dhyana”, because, on the one hand, they were warm in winter and cool in summer, and suitable for meditation. On the other hand, “The walls of those caves are within the sight of practitioners. Thus, they can transform the content of the dhyana they practice into images and paint them on the walls. By doing so, they can sit and watch at the same time, until the attainment of samadhi. The mural paintings, under such a circumstance, can be viewed as the product of the necessity for the practitioner to practice in caves.”⁵¹⁸ Lai Pengju argues that both Mogao Cave 272 and Mogao Cave 275 are modeled on the fourth-century square Zen caves of Afghanistan, where both the object of meditation and the practitioner of meditation are in the same place. Therefore, the meditation activity in the square caves is static.⁵¹⁹ Lai Pengju also links the stone stupas of the Northern Liang Dynasty with the Central-pillar grottoes and suggests that the Central-pillar grottoes were transformed from a space for the activity of “walking the path for repentance(行道懺悔)” around a pagoda.⁵²⁰ He cited such central pillar caves as Cave 44 of Tuyugou, Cave 38 of Tuyugou, Thousand Buddha Cave of Wenshu Mountain, Jinta Temple Cave, Mogao Cave 254, Mogao Cave 257, Mogao Cave 251, Mogao Cave 263, Mogao Cave 260, Mogao Cave 437, Mogao Cave 435 in Dunhuang. He ultimately argues that the

⁵¹⁷ Ibid.

⁵¹⁸ Pengju Lai, *Silu Fojiao de Tuxiang Yu Canfa 丝路佛教的图像与禅法*[The Quest for Meditation Practice: Iconography in Silk Road Buddhism] (Taiwan: Yuan Kuang Buddhist Institute, 2002), 4-5.

⁵¹⁹ Lai, *Silu Fojiao de Tuxiang Yu Canfa*, 186.

⁵²⁰ The *Divine Spells of the Seven Buddhas and Eight Bodhisattvas* records many different spells. The principal benefit of reciting those various spells is the destruction of sins. See Greene, Eric M. *Chan before chan: meditation, repentance, and visionary experience in Chinese Buddhism* (University of Hawaii Press, 2021), 183-184. Zhiyi also mentions the existence of repentance manuals based on the *Divine Spells of the Seven Buddhas and Eight Bodhisattvas*. See Daniel B. Stevenson, “The T’ien-t’ai Four Forms of Sāmadhi and Late North-South Dynasties, Sui and Early T’ang Buddhist Devotionalism. ’ang Buddhist Devotionalism.” (PhD diss., Columbia University, 1987), 228-229. For the structure of *Divine Spells of the Seven Buddhas and Eight Bodhisattvas* and its relationship to other medieval dhāraṇī collections, see Koichi Shinohara, *Spells, Images, and Maṇḍalas* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014), 4-10.

emergence of these center-pillar caves has added activities of circumambulation, chanting, and repentance to the original meditation practice, creating a situation in which the center-pillar caves and the square caves are paired with each other in the process of meditation.”⁵²¹ It seems that Lai Penju regards the activities of circumambulation, chanting, and repentance as part of the meditation activities. It is also worth noting that Lai Pengju later made another speculation about the function of Mogao Cave 285, which will be discussed later.

Later, Zhang Yuanlin reemphasized the meditation function of Mogao Cave 285. Similarly, he believes that the images of “two Buddhas seated together” on the south wall of Cave 285, the “two Buddhas seated together”, “seven Buddhas from the past”, and “the Buddha of Immeasurable Life” on the north wall of Cave 285 are all contents of “contemplating the Buddha (佛身觀) .” In addition, he believes that the narrative painting of “Five Hundred Bandits,” “Pindola Bharadvaja’s sister converted to Buddhism,” “Buddha transforms a buffalo,” “Shi Sheng Wen Ji (shashin monge)” and Karma Story Painting of “a Sāmaṇera Committing Suicide for Abstinence” are from different Buddhist sutra, but Zhang Yuanlin believes that they all reflect the idea of “all beings have Buddha nature 众生皆有佛性” advocated by *The Lotus Sūtra*.⁵²² And He suggests that they are painted in the same place, on the south wall of Cave 285, were used for the so-called “Visualization of Buddha-nature (佛性觀)” in the “Lotus-samādhi contemplation method (法華三昧觀法)” created by Kumārajīva. Zhang Yuanlin's so-called “ Visualization of Buddha-nature” is proposed based on the “Lotus-samādhi contemplation method” in the *Concise Essentials of Meditation* (思維略要法). However, the original text is talking about observing “emptiness”, not “all beings have Buddha nature”.⁵²³

⁵²¹ Lai, *Silu Fojiao de Tuxiang Yu Canfa*, 191.

⁵²² Yuanlin Zhang, “《法华经》佛性观的形象诠释——莫高窟第 285 窟南壁故事画的思想意涵[Fahuajing Foxing Guan de Xingxiang Quanshi Mogaoku Di Erbawu Ku Nanbi Gushihua de Sixiang Yihan],” *Dunhuang Yanjiu* 敦煌研究[Dunhuang Research], no.6 (2004):7-8.

⁵²³ The original text in 《思维略要法》: 「所說《法華經》者，所謂十方三世眾生若大若小，乃至一稱南無佛者，皆當作佛。惟一大乘，無二無三，一切諸法一相一門，所謂無生無滅畢竟空相。唯有此大乘，無有二

Subsequently, Li Jingjie agreed that the four small chambers beside the north and south walls of Mogao Cave 285 were used for actual meditation practice, and agreed with Zhang Yuanlin's earlier speculation about the relationship between the cave murals and the “Lotus-samādhi contemplation method.” Li Jingjie then states again that the images that appeared in the Mogao Caves, from the Northern Dynasties to the Sui Dynasty, are closely related to the classical sutras on Meditation.⁵²⁴ Li Jingjie also agrees with Lai Pengju's view that the “jataka painting” on the northern wall of Mogao Cave 275 is used for the meditation of “contemplation of the Dharma body(法身觀).”⁵²⁵ According to Li, the mural paintings in Mogao Cave 275 reflect the path of meditation from the contemplation of the body of birth, the contemplation of the Dharma body, the contemplation of the buddhas of the ten directions, to the contemplation of the rebirth in Tusita Heaven.⁵²⁶ He believes that the murals of Jataka on the north and south walls of the Mogao Cave 275 are painted for the “contemplation of the body of birth” and “contemplation of the Dharma body”, according to the *Five Gates* (Wumen Chanjing Yaofa 五門禪經要法).⁵²⁷ Li Jingjie also believes that the images of the thousands of Buddhas between the upper niches on the north and south walls of Mogao Cave 275 are used for contemplating the Buddhas of the ten directions described in *Five Gates*.⁵²⁸ He also argues, based on the *sūtra on Visualizing Maitreya Bodhisattva's Rebirth Above in Tusita Heaven*(觀彌勒

也。習如是觀者，五欲自斷、五蓋自除，五根增長，即得禪定。」(CBETA 2023.Q3, T15, no. 617, p. 300c2-7)

⁵²⁴ Jingjie Li, “Dunhuang Mogaoku Beichao Suidai Dongku Tuxiang Goucheng Shilun 敦煌莫高窟北朝隋代洞窟图像构成试论[An Experimental Discussion on the Composition of Images in the Dunhuang Mogao Caves during the Sui Dynasty of the Northern Dynasties],” in *Proceedings of the 2005 Yungang International Symposium*, ed. Yungang Grottoes Research Institute (Cultural Heritage Press, 2005), 366.

⁵²⁵ Lai, *Silu Fo jiao de Tuxiang Yu Canfa*, 200-204.

⁵²⁶ Li, “Dunhuang Mogaoku Beichao Suidai Dongku Tuxiang Goucheng Shilun,” 377.

⁵²⁷ Li, “Dunhuang Mogaoku Beichao Suidai Dongku Tuxiang Goucheng Shilun,” 376.

⁵²⁸ The original text in 《五門禪經要用法》：「念十方佛者，坐觀東方廓然大光，無諸山河石壁，唯見一佛結加趺坐舉手說法。心明觀察光明相好畫然明了，係心在佛不令他緣，心若餘念攝之令還。如是見者，便增十佛。既見之後，復增百佛千佛乃至無邊身。近者則使轉遠轉廣，但見諸佛光光相接。心明觀察得如是者，迴想東南復如上觀。既得成已，西北方四維上下亦復如是。既向方方皆見諸佛已，當復一時并觀十方諸佛，一念所緣周遍得見。定心成就者，於定中見十方諸佛皆為說法，疑網悉除得無生忍。若有宿罪因緣不見諸佛者，當一日一夜六時懺悔勸請隨喜，漸自得見。縱使勸請不為說法，是人心快樂身體安無患也。」(CBETA 2023.Q3, T15, no. 619, p. 327c3-16)

菩薩上生兜率天經), that the cross-legged Maitreya, the main statue on the west wall of Cave 275, as well as the small statue of Maitreya in each of the upper niches of the north and south walls, are the objects of meditation.⁵²⁹ Similarly, Li Jingjie argues that the images of the Jataka and the thousands of Buddhas in Mogao Cave 254, Mogao Cave 257, Mogao Cave 301, Mogao Cave 290, and Mogao Cave 428 of the Northern Dynasty, are the content of “contemplation of the Buddha’s body of birth (生身觀),” “the contemplation of the Dharma body(法身觀),” and “contemplating the buddhas of the ten directions(十方佛觀).”⁵³⁰ Along the same line of thought, Li Jingjie believes that the nirvana pictures painted in Mogao Cave 295 and Mogao Cave 280 of the Sui Dynasty are the content of “contemplation of the four immeasurable minds(四威儀觀想),” and that the images of a thousand Buddhas on the four walls of the caves are the contents of the “contemplating the buddhas of the ten directions”.⁵³¹ In addition, Li Jingjie believes that the combination of these Nirvana images and images of thousands of Buddhas have a close relationship with the Kizil Caves and the Bamiyan Caves.⁵³² Therefore, he believes that the arrangement of images in Kizil Cave 189 is also set up following the path of meditation from contemplation of the Buddha’s flesh-and-blood body of birth, contemplation of the four immeasurable minds, to contemplation of the Buddhas of the ten directions.⁵³³ The arrangement of the images

⁵²⁹ The original text in 《佛說觀彌勒菩薩上生兜率天經》:「是名彌勒菩薩於閻浮提沒生兜率陀天因緣。佛滅度後我諸弟子,若有精勤修諸功德、威儀不缺,掃塔塗地,以眾名香、妙花供養,行眾三昧深入正受,讀誦經典,如是等人應當至心,雖不斷結如得六通,應當繫念佛形像,稱彌勒名。如是等輩,若一念頃受八戒齋,修諸淨業發弘誓願,命終之後,譬如壯士屈申臂頃,即得往生兜率陀天,於蓮華上結跏趺坐,百千天子作天伎樂,持天曼陀羅花、摩訶曼陀羅華,以散其上讚言:『善哉,善哉!善男子!汝於閻浮提廣修福業來生此處。此處名兜率陀天,今此天主名曰彌勒,汝當歸依。』應聲即禮,禮已諦觀眉間白毫相光,即得超越九十億劫生死之罪。是時菩薩隨其宿緣,為說妙法,令其堅固不退轉於無上道心。如是等眾生若淨諸業、行六事法,必定無疑,當得生於兜率天上值遇彌勒,亦隨彌勒下閻浮提,第一聞法,於未來世,值遇賢劫一切諸佛,於星宿劫,亦得值遇諸佛世尊,於諸佛前受菩提記。」(CBETA 2023.Q3, T14, no. 452, p. 420a9-29)

⁵³⁰ Jingjie Li, “Dunhuang Mogaoku Beichao Suidai Dongku Tuxiang Goucheng Shilun 敦煌莫高窟北朝隋代洞窟圖像構成試論[An Experimental Discussion on the Composition of Images in the Dunhuang Mogao Caves during the Sui Dynasty of the Northern Dynasties],” in *Proceedings of the 2005 Yungang International Symposium (Research Volume)*.ed.Yungang Grottoes Research Institute. (Cultural Heritage Press, 2005),377-390.

⁵³¹ Li, “Dunhuang Mogaoku Beichao Suidai Dongku Tuxiang Goucheng Shilun,” 378.

⁵³² Li, “Dunhuang Mogaoku Beichao Suidai Dongku Tuxiang Goucheng Shilun,” 378.

⁵³³ Li, “Dunhuang Mogaoku Beichao Suidai Dongku Tuxiang Goucheng Shilun,” 379.

in Cave 222, Cave 386, and Cave 388 of Bamiyan Cave also follows the path of meditation from the “contemplation of the four immeasurable minds” to the “contemplation of the Buddhas of the ten directions.”⁵³⁴

Later Wang Eugene attempted to make a more rational connection between the murals of Mogao caves and the practice of meditation. He viewed the caves, which were covered with murals, as an “optical theatre” for staging various objects for meditation practice. Taking Mogao Cave 254, the central-pillar cave, as an example(Fig.5.1-1a,b,c,d,e), he argues that the “subjugation of mara” and the “the jataka tale of prince Mahasattva” painted on the front of the north and south walls of the cave are the dramas performed in the cave, which consist of the objects of visualizations.⁵³⁵ Besides, Wang Eugene proposed that the murals in Cave 254 were set up for a kind of “repentant visualization”.⁵³⁶ He seems to have adopted Lai Pengju's view that the activity of repentance is part of the practice of meditation. “To repent is to visualize”, he argues.⁵³⁷ However, in the Meditation sutra texts written before the sixth century, it is only mentioned that in meditative practices (yogic visualization), if one is unable to successfully visualize various images of the Buddha, one needs to go to the actual statue of the Buddha to perform some act of deep repentance. The *Sūtra on Visualizing Maitreya Bodhisattva's Rebirth Above in Tusita Heaven*, translated by Ju Qu Jing Sheng during the Liu-Song period, includes visualization among the activities that can eradicate sins, and the sutra states that if one can contemplate a deva and a lotus flower in one's mind, and say Maitreya's name, one can eradicate the “sins of a thousand and two hundred kalpas of births and deaths(千二百劫生死之罪)”.⁵³⁸

⁵³⁴ Ibid.

⁵³⁵ Eugene Wang, “Painted statue in an optical theater: a fifth-century Chinese Buddhist cave,” *Source: Notes in the History of Art* 30, no. 3 (2011):31

⁵³⁶ Wang, “Painted statue in an optical theater,” 25-32..

⁵³⁷ Wang, “Painted statue in an optical theater,” 28.

⁵³⁸ The original text in 《佛說觀彌勒菩薩上生兜率天經》:「作是觀者，若見一天人、見一蓮花，若一念頃稱彌勒名，此人除却千二百劫生死之罪；但聞彌勒名合掌恭敬，此人除却五十劫生死之罪；若有敬禮彌勒者，除却百億劫生死之罪」(CBETA 2023.Q3, T14, no. 452, p. 420b25-29)

In addition, many other scholars agree with the meditation function of the grottoes in the Turpan area and the grottoes in the Dunhuang area, such as Ning Qiang and Wang Eugene.⁵³⁹ One of the earliest scholars to make a detailed study of the meditation function of the caves in the Turpan region of Xinjiang was Nobuyoshi Yamabe. Yamabe points out that in the Turfan region, many caves are structured complexes with a main hall and side cells that were most likely used for individual meditation.⁵⁴⁰ For example, in the Toyok Cave 42,⁵⁴¹ the murals for *aśubha* meditation are a skeleton, a naked female corpse, and a half-skeletal body (Fig.5.1-2).⁵⁴²

Professor Sarah E. Fraser was the first to notice the difference in style between the murals in Toyok Cave 42 and its neighbor cave, Toyok Cave 41, where the images for visualization were painted in a style less like that of a professional artist and more like that of a Buddhist monk who had depicted the images himself on the walls of the cave 42.⁵⁴³ The murals in Toyok Cave 41 (Fig.5.1-3), on the other hand, look like they were designed and planned by professional painters beforehand.⁵⁴⁴ Later, Nobuyoshi Yamabe agreed with Professor Fraser that the overall style of the murals in Toyok Cave 42 is quite different from the ornate murals in the caves that were used for worship and ceremonial activities and that this unskilled and infantilized style of

⁵³⁹ Eugene Wang, "Oneiric horizons and dissolving bodies: Buddhist cave shrine as mirror hall," *Art History* 27.4 (2004): 494-521; Eugene Wang, *Shaping the Lotus Sutra: Buddhist Visual Culture in Medieval China* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2005), 18-23; Qiang Ning, "Visualisation on Practice and the Function of the Western Paradise Images in Turfan and Dunhuang in the Sixth to Seventh Centuries," *Journal of Inner Asian Art and Archaeology*, no.2 (2007): 133-43.

⁵⁴⁰ Nobuyoshi Yamabe, "An examination of the mural paintings by visualising monks in Toyok Cave 42," in *Conjunction with the origin of some Chinese texts on meditation 'in Turfan Revisited: The first century of research into the arts and cultures of the silk road*, ed. D. Durkin-Meisterernst (Berlin: Dietrich Reimer, 2004), 401.

⁵⁴¹ Due to the discovery of new unnumbered caves during the new excavation of the Toyok caves by the Turpan Regional Bureau of Cultural Relics, the caves were renumbered. The new number of Toyok Cave 42 is K32. See Chen Ling, Li Yuqun, and Li Xiao. "Excavation Brief of the Northern Grottoes in the Eastern District of Tuyugou, Shanshan County, Xinjiang," *Archaeology*.01(2012):8.

⁵⁴² Nobuyoshi Yamabe, "The Sūtra on the ocean-like Samādhi of the visualization of the Buddha: The Interfusion of the Chinese and Indian Cultures in Central Asia as Reflected in a Fifth Century Apocryphal Sūtra"(PhD diss., Yale University, 1999), 457-458.

⁵⁴³ Sarah E. Fraser, "A Reconsideration of Archaeological Finds from the Turfan Region," in *Dunhuang Turfan Studies (IV)*, ed. Ji xianlin (Beijing: Peking University Press, 1999), 391-392.

⁵⁴⁴ Fraser, "A Reconsideration of Archaeological Finds from the Turfan Region," 394.

drawing demonstrates the practical nature of the cave. Nobuyoshi Yamabe thus reaffirms the actual meditative function of Toyok Cave 42.

In recent years several other scholars have also agreed with the meditative function of the Toyok Grottoes. Angela F. Howard, for example, again supports Nobuyoshi Yamabe's view and emphasizes the importance of meditation activities in religious practices. She agreed that "Toyok Caves 20 and 42 were used for meditation and carried painted references to it—for example, the skeleton used in the *aśubha-bhāvanā* mental concentration and the themes derivative from Mahayana types of visualization, especially the *Amitāyur Visualization Sutra*."⁵⁴⁵ It is noteworthy that in Angela F. Howard's article devoted to rebutting the views of Euro-American scholars who questioned the meditative function of the caves, she used as an argument the discovery by archaeologists of at least 100 caves used for actual meditative activities among the 339 Kizil caves in the Kucha region.⁵⁴⁶ It is worth noting that the caves in the Kizil, which were used for actual meditation activities, are not decorated with any images, and the walls are simply flattened with white clay.⁵⁴⁷ Although there are some caves in the Kucha region with images of Zen monks and meditation objects, Angela F. Howard argues that these images were not painted in the caves as meditation aids, but only as "records of meditation states".⁵⁴⁸ She states that "in Kucha, painted allusions to monks and ascetics meditating on skeletons and skulls are references to the widespread practice of meditation in the monasteries, but are not meditation aids."⁵⁴⁹ The caves for the monks to perform actual meditation activities would be those "unadorned cells".⁵⁵⁰ In Subashi, the majority of meditation caves are not decorated, only a few meditation caves have a mural of a monk meditating near a tree.⁵⁵¹ However, Howard repeatedly emphasizes that the images depicting Zen

⁵⁴⁵ Angela F. Howard, "On 'Art in the Dark' and Meditation in Central Asian Buddhist Caves," *The Eastern Buddhist* 46, no. 2 (2015):37.

⁵⁴⁶ Howard, "On 'Art in the Dark' and Meditation in Central Asian Buddhist Caves," 19–40.

⁵⁴⁷ Angela F. Howard, and Giuseppe Vignato, *Archaeological and visual sources of meditation in the ancient monasteries of Kuča*. (Brill, 2014), 20.

⁵⁴⁸ Angela F. Howard, "Miracles and Visions Among the Monastic Communities of Kucha, Xinjiang," *Journal of Inner Asian Art and Archaeology* 2 (2007):80.

⁵⁴⁹ Howard, "On 'Art in the Dark' and Meditation in Central Asian Buddhist Caves," 37

⁵⁵⁰ Howard, "On 'Art in the Dark' and Meditation in Central Asian Buddhist Caves," 37.

⁵⁵¹ Howard, "On 'Art in the Dark' and Meditation in Central Asian Buddhist Caves," 24.

monks and objects of meditation were not painted to assist in the actual practice of meditation, but only as “icons referring to the practice of meditation.”⁵⁵² Those images were only part of the inventory of murals that permitted to be painted in monasteries. It is not reasonable to assume the meditative function of a cave based on the images of meditating monks.

In recent years, Xia Lidong, in his functional restoration of a group of caves including Toyok Cave 42 (K32), has similarly argued that actual meditative activity took place in a small, unpainted cell on the side wall of Toyok Cave 42 (K32).⁵⁵³ However, he still believed that the murals that appeared in Toyok Cave 42 (K32) were painted to assist actual meditation activities.⁵⁵⁴ He believed that these murals depicting meditation monks and objects of meditation could guide the meditator to remember what to contemplate before meditation.⁵⁵⁵

Also not to be ignored is the fact that in the northern area of caves of the Mogao Grottoes at Dunhuang, many small caves are not painted with murals (Fig.5.1-4) . These small caves are very likely to have been used by the monks for their actual meditation activities. This means that if a large number of monks did practice meditation at the Mogao Caves in Dunhuang during the Northern Dynasties, they did so in those caves in the northern area of the Mogao Grottoes where there are no wall paintings. So were the caves in the southern part of the Mogao Grottoes, which are covered with murals, actually used for meditation activities or not? A more careful investigation is still needed.

It is also worth noting that while previous scholars have raised the mediative function of the caves, some scholars have also raised the possibility that those caves with murals were used for other religious activities. For example, in a discussion of the function of the early centre-pillar caves of the Mogao Grottoes, Ning Qiang and

⁵⁵² Howard, “On ‘Art in the Dark’ and Meditation in Central Asian Buddhist Caves.” 31.

⁵⁵³ Lidong Xia, “Shiku Kongjian Yu Yishi Zhixu 石窟空间与仪式秩序: 重建吐峪沟东区第 30-32 窟禅观程序 [Cave Space and Ritual Order: Reconstructing the Zen Viewing Program in Caves 30-32, Tuyugou East.]” *Gugong Bowuyuan Yuankan 故宫博物院院刊* [Palace Museum Journal], no.4(2022):29.

⁵⁵⁴ Xia, “Shiku Kongjian Yu Yishi Zhixu,” 20-34.

⁵⁵⁵ Xia, “Shiku Kongjian Yu Yishi Zhixu,” 29.

Hu Tongqing use the example of Mogao Cave 254, suggesting that the back half of the cave, with its center pillar, could have been used for “circumambulation” activity and that the front half of the cave could have been used as a place for people to perform “worshipping” activities.⁵⁵⁶ Later Stanleyk Abe also used Mogao Cave 254 as an example, speculating that it could have served a variety of religious practices based on its form and mural setting, including “visualization, the recitation of the names of the Buddhas, circumambulation, and some type of oral recitation”.⁵⁵⁷ Stanleyk Abe points out that Ning Qiang and Hu Tongqing's argument for possible circumambulatory movement in Mogao Cave 254 is based on the sutra that date later than the construction of Mogao Cave 254. Stanleyk Abe therefore chose to use the *Trapuṣa and Bhallika Sūtra*(提謂波利經), which are contemporary with the construction of Mogao Cave 254, as evidence that the center-pillar cave could have been used for circumambulation.⁵⁵⁸ Only Stanleyk Abe failed to notice that the *Scripture on the Sea of the Discernment of the Buddha Samādhi* (Guanfo sanmei hai jing 觀佛三昧海經) translated by Buddhahadra in the Eastern Jin Dynasty(317-420 A.D.) also mentions a kind of circumambulatory movement. In this sutra, there are 10 references to the ritual activity of “circumambulating the Buddha.” This shows that circumambulation with the Buddha at the center is a way of paying homage to the Buddha. Later, Li Chongfeng also believed that the central pillar caves were used by Buddhists for chanting sutras around the pagodas and for praising the Buddha.⁵⁵⁹

It is worth noting here that Stanleyk Abe was the first to point out the difference between the central pillar in Mogao Cave 254, which has niches for statues of Buddha, and a pagoda. He suggests that the central pillar in Mogao Cave 254 represents the central mast of the pagoda, rather than the pagoda proper, such that

⁵⁵⁶ Qiang Ning, Tongqing Hu, “Dunhuang Mogao Grottoes Cave 254 Thousand Buddhas Painting Research Study,” *Dunhuang Research*, no.4(1986):29.

⁵⁵⁷ Stanleyk Abe, “Art and Practice in a Fifth-Century Chinese Buddhist Cave Temple,” *Ars Orientalis* 20 (1990): 12.

⁵⁵⁸ Abe, “Art and Practice in a Fifth-Century Chinese Buddhist Cave Temple,” 10-11.

⁵⁵⁹ Chongfeng Li, *Zhongying Fojiao Shiku Si bijiao Yanjiu Yitang Ku Wei Zhongxin* 中印佛教石窟寺比较研究——以塔堂窟为中心[A Comparative Study of Buddhist Cave Temples in China and India - Focusing on the Tatang Caves] (Beijing: Peking University Press, 2003),7.

entering the central pillar cave is tantamount to entering a pagoda.⁵⁶⁰ Stanleyk Abe uses the *Scripture on the Sea of the Discernment of the Buddha Samādhi*, a fifth-century translation of the Buddhahadra, to suggest that the statue of Buddha on the central pillar of Mogao Cave 254 may have been prepared for the very activity of “entering a pagoda to see the Buddha image” that is referred to in the sutra (Fig.5.1-1e) . Checking the *Scripture on the Sea of the Discernment of the Buddha Samādhi*, in eight of the nine times that the sutra mentions the act of entering the pagoda to observe the image of the Buddha, it says that when one fails to observe the image of the Buddha, one needs to enter the pagoda to observe the Buddha image and to make sincere repentance.⁵⁶¹ This means that the purpose of entering the pagoda is mainly to remove one's sinful obstacles to clear the way for the next time when one succeeds in visualizing the Buddha image in one's mind. Therefore, entering the pagoda to view the Buddha's image belongs to the category of penitential activities. This implies that the statues of Buddha on the four sides of the central pillar of Mogao Cave 254 and the images of Buddha painted on the four walls of the cave as objects of performing repentance rather than objects of performing meditative visualization.

⁵⁶⁰ Stanleyk Abe, “Art and practice in a fifth-century Chinese Buddhist cave temple.” *Ars Orientalis* (1990): 1-31.

⁵⁶¹ The original text in 《佛說觀佛三昧海經》卷 2: 「若比丘，犯不如罪，觀白毫光闇黑不現，應當入塔觀像眉間，一日至三日，合掌啼泣一心諦觀，然後入僧說前罪事，此名滅罪。前五種罪，念白毫光經八百日，然後復有別羯磨法。」(CBETA 2023.Q1, T15, no. 643, p. 655b20-24)

The original text in 《佛說觀佛三昧海經》卷 2: 「若坐不見當入塔觀，入塔觀時，亦當作此諸光明想，至心合掌踟跪諦觀，一日至三日心不錯亂，命終之後生兜率天，面見彌勒菩薩色身端嚴，應感化導，既得見已身心歡喜入正法位。」(CBETA 2023.Q1, T15, no. 643, p. 656a29-b5)

《佛說觀佛三昧海經》卷 4: 「佛告阿難: 「佛滅度後佛諸弟子，見佛胸相光者，除却十二萬億劫生死之罪，若不能見胸相分明者入塔觀之。如是觀者名為正觀，若異觀者名為邪觀。」(CBETA 2023.Q1, T15, no. 643, p. 665b6-9)

The original text in 《佛說觀佛三昧海經》卷 7: 「佛滅度後，如我所說觀佛影者，是真觀如來坐。觀如來坐者，如見佛身等無有異，除百千劫生死之罪。若不能見，當入塔觀一切坐像，見坐像已懺悔障罪。此人觀像因緣功德，彌勒出世，見彌勒佛初始坐於龍華樹下結加趺坐，見已歡喜，三種菩提隨願覺了。」(CBETA 2023.Q1, T15, no. 643, p. 681b29-c7)

The original text in 《佛說觀佛三昧海經》卷 9 〈8 本行品(九)〉: 「空中聲言: 『汝四比丘! 空王如來雖復涅槃，汝之所犯謂無救者，汝等今當入塔觀佛，與佛在世等無有異。』我從空聲入塔觀像眉間[A3]毫相，即作是念: 『如來在世光明色身與此何異? 佛大人相願除我罪。』作是語已，如大山崩五體投地，懺悔諸罪觀佛眉間。懺悔因緣，從是已後八十億阿僧祇劫不墮惡道，生生常見十方諸佛，於諸佛所受持甚深念佛三昧，得三昧已諸佛現前授我記[2]別。」(CBETA 2023.Q1, T15, no. 643, pp. 688c27-689a7)

The original text in 《佛說觀佛三昧海經》卷 9 〈8 本行品(九)〉: 「告王子言: 『世有佛像眾寶嚴飾極為可愛，可暫入塔觀佛形像。』時彼王子隨善友語入塔觀像，見像相好，白言比丘: 『佛像端嚴猶尚如此，況佛真身? 』作是語已比丘告言: 『汝今見像若不能禮者，當稱: 『南無佛! 』』是時王子合掌恭敬稱: 『南無佛! 』還宮係念塔中像，即於後夜夢見佛像。」(CBETA 2023.Q1, T15, no. 643, p. 689a25-b2)

Moreover, among the early scholars who questioned the meditative function of Mogao Cave 285, Sudo Hirotohi makes a noteworthy point. He suggests that it is also possible that the caves with images or sculptures of “meditation monks” may have been painted only to conceptually celebrate the idea of meditation and the Zen monks who were famous for it, and not necessarily for the actual practice of meditation.⁵⁶² Since in Mogao Cave 285, in addition to the images of seated “meditation monks” painted and sculpted on the top edges of the ceiling and on the west wall of Mogao Cave 285, the remnants of pagodas in the small caves on the north and south walls, as well as the remnants of what appears to be a pagoda on the elevated plateau in the center of the main chamber (Fig. 5.1-5), this suggests that Mogao Cave 285 might be built to honor and worship the departed monks.

Later Robert Sharf entertains a provocative possibility by questioning the importance of meditation practice among the monastic communities of Dunhuang and Kucha. He proposes that: “I would suggest that we approach Mogao, Kizil, and other larger sites in Xinjiang and Gansu as we do Yungang and Longmen; rather than regard the grottoes as intended for monastic practice such as meditation, we would do better to treat them as mortuary shrines donated by well-heeled patrons to produce merit for their deceased parents and ancestors.”⁵⁶³ Sharf began to pay attention to the function of mortuary dedication rather than the function of meditation in the caves of Dunhuang Mogao caves and Kizil caves. Sharf prefers to believe that central pillar caves, whether in Kucha or Dunhuang, were memorial or funerary caves. Sharf also explicitly proposed that meditation was not practiced in decorated central pillar caves, such as Mogao Cave 254 in Dunhuang.⁵⁶⁴ This point of Sharf is very important and the arguments given are convincing. Except Sharf uses the dark environment of Cave 254 to deny that the murals were used as a meditation aid. This argument might be not very appropriate, as there are traces of burning material at the lower edge of the niche

⁵⁶² Sudo Hirotohi, “Zen Bikkhu Images and Cave 285 at Dunhuang,” in *Cave Archaeology, Collected Papers of the International Symposium on Dunhuang Cave Research* (Liaoning Fine Arts Publishing House, 1990), 393-396.

⁵⁶³ Robert Sharf, “Art in the dark: the ritual context of Buddhist caves in western China,” *Art of merit: studies in Buddhist art and its conservation*, (2013): 49.

⁵⁶⁴ Sharf, “Art in the dark,” 38-65.

in the center pillar of Mogao Cave 254. This suggests the possibility that Mogao Cave 254 was used in a light environment with burning candles.

At the same time, Eric M. Greene also suggested two other possibilities for the function of the caves. Firstly, Greene according to the Mahāsāṃghika -Vinaya passage points out that the murals of corpses or monks meditating on corpses and skeletons just was part of a generic repertoire of painting subjects that is permitted to be drawn in Buddhist temples.⁵⁶⁵ According to the Mūlasarvāstivāda -Vinaya, the murals of corpses should be painted in the toilet, and the skeletons should be painted in monastic living quarters.⁵⁶⁶ There is no evidence to prove that the cave adorned with these murals of corpses or monks meditating on corpses served meditation practice. According to Mahāsāṃghika-vinaya and Sarvāstivāda-vinaya, Greene also points out that a “hall for exertion” (prahānasālā) translated into Chinese as “*Chan tang* 禅堂” meaning “meditation hall,” was described as a single large room, rather than a collection of small cells.⁵⁶⁷ Although the actual site for a monk's meditation practice may vary to varying degrees, the ideal meditation hall is a single, larger place that is desired to be used by several people together. Secondly, Greene takes the example from a cave at the monastery Tape Shotor (active from the second through the early seventh century) near the site of Hadda in eastern Afghanistan, and the caves in Turfan. He suggests that the cave, decorated with an image of “white bones” “Buddha or other deities, may have been used for a pre-death ritual practice.⁵⁶⁸ Greene quotes a passage from *Hua yan jing* (Avatamsaka-sutra) which was translated by Buddhahadra in the early fifth century: “When you see a person about to die, encourage them to bring to mind the Buddha, and further show them a holy image [of the Buddha] and have them make reverence to it.”⁵⁶⁹ This passage was also cited by

⁵⁶⁵ Eric M. Greene, “Death in a cave: meditation, deathbed ritual, and skeletal imagery at tape shotor,” *Artibus Asiae* 73.2 (2013): 271.

⁵⁶⁶ Greene, “Death in a cave: meditation, deathbed ritual, and skeletal imagery at tape shotor.” 272; Gregory Schopen, “Art, Beauty, and the Business of Running a Buddhist Monastery,” in *Buddhist Monks and Business Matters* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2004), 34-36.

⁵⁶⁷ Greene also notes that this description of the “meditation hall” is an ideal description, see Greene, “Death in a cave: meditation, deathbed ritual, and skeletal imagery at tape shotor,” 272.

⁵⁶⁸ Greene, “Death in a cave: meditation, deathbed ritual, and skeletal imagery at tape shotor,” 286-287.

⁵⁶⁹ Greene, “Death in a cave: meditation, deathbed ritual, and skeletal imagery at tape shotor,” 287.

Dao Xuan in his Vinaya commentary. In Daoxuan's (596-667 A.D.) *Map of the Jetavana Monastery (Zhong Tianzhu Sheweiguo Zhihuan si tujing)*, he describes a “Cloister of Impermanence” (Wuchang yuan) as follows: “within which is found a white-silver hall, its four encircling corridors filled with white flowers. Everywhere there are paintings of white bones. All those near death are brought here and shown the white bones and various depictions of impermanence.”⁵⁷⁰ There is an earlier source for this information obtained by Daoxuan.⁵⁷¹ This kind of deathbed ritual prevailed among Buddhist monks in China and India during the sixth- and seventh centuries. In India, the laymen were also allowed to take on a special ordination so they could be cared for by the Sangha in their final days.⁵⁷²

Greene finally points out that: “what we interpret as meditation-themed imagery, even imagery of skulls and skeletons that textual sources specifically prescribe as aids for certain meditation practices, may often have pointed to, and been used in, a wider range of activities.”⁵⁷³ Moreover, Sharf also points out that: “meditation was not at the heart of Buddhism, or the sole vocation of monks, but rather one aspect of Buddhism.”⁵⁷⁴

As Greene and Sharf ultimately point out, there are indeed many possibilities for the function of caves other than for the practice of meditation. The next part of this chapter will then use the example of the Mogao Caves, built in the 4th-6th centuries, to investigate how these image-covered caves actually served specific religious practices, and what role the images played in the actual Buddhist practices.

This chapter will return as far as possible to the original context of the Mogao Caves at the time of their excavation and will use the Buddhist ritual texts and Dunhuang manuscripts that were already in existence at that time to further investigate the other functions of these image-covered caves. Given that the valuable

⁵⁷⁰ Greene, “Death in a cave: meditation, deathbed ritual, and skeletal imagery at tape shotor,” 286.

⁵⁷¹ Scholars have generally come to the conclusion that Daoxuan also received information from Chinese pilgrims to India, as well as from Indian and Central Asian monks who were active in China. See Greene, “Death in a cave: Meditation, deathbed ritual, and skeletal imagery at tape shotor,” 287.

⁵⁷² Greene, “Death in a cave: meditation, deathbed ritual, and skeletal imagery at tape shotor,” 288.

⁵⁷³ Greene, “Death in a cave: meditation, deathbed ritual, and skeletal imagery at tape shotor,” 293.

⁵⁷⁴ Robert H. Sharf, “Is mindfulness Buddhist? (and why it matters),” *Transcultural psychiatry* 52.4 (2015): 470-484.

written materials found in Mogao Cave 17 have not been fully utilized in past discussions on the function of Mogao Caves, this dissertation will pay particular attention to these valuable materials that were once preserved in Mogao Caves.

According to the manuscripts and inscriptions preserved in Mogao Caves, the first construction of the Mogao Cave was excavated in the second year of the first Qin dynasty (366 A.D.) by the monk Le Zun. According to the Dunhuang manuscripts in the French collection, P.3720, “Records of the Mogao Caves”, and the inscription of Mogao Cave 156, “Records of the Mogao Caves”, the Mogao Grottoes that we now call “*mogao ku* 莫高窟” were already known as “*xianyan si* 仙巖寺” during the Jin Dynasty.⁵⁷⁵ According to the written and inscribed material preserved in the Mogao Caves, there were at least 19 temples that existed at the same time as the Mogao Caves in the Dunhuang area during the 4th-6th century. During the Sui and Tang dynasties, the Mogao Cave complex was known as the “*chongjing si* 崇敬寺.”⁵⁷⁶ The discovery of twenty-two halls in front of the Mogao Caves (Fig. 5.1-6), dating from the Five Dynasties to the Yuan Dynasty, also indicates that the complete architectural form was very close to that of the terrestrial temples.⁵⁷⁷ The wooden structures attached to the cliff faces of these early caves can also be seen in the earliest photography of the Mogao Caves taken by Paul Eugène Pelliot’s team (Fig. 5.1-7a,b). It can be said that during its existence from the 4th to the 10th century, the Mogao Caves were indistinguishable from terrestrial temples in shape and size. These caves were served together with other temples for the monks nuns and lay Buddhists of the

⁵⁷⁵ P.3720, titled “Mogaoku Ji 莫高窟记[Records of the Mogao Caves],” in the Dunhuang manuscripts, records that in the Western Jin Dynasty, Suo Jing inscribed the Mogao Caves with the name “Xianyan Temple 仙岩寺”; and the “Records of the Mogao Caves 莫高窟记” in the north wall of the front chamber of Cave 156 of the Mogao Caves in Dunhuang, dated 865 A.D., reads: “In the Jin Dynasty, Suo Jing inscribed the name of the cave with the name Xianyan Temple (晋司空索靖题壁号仙岩寺).” According to the *Jin Shu Suo Jing biography*, Suo Jing was a member of the Dunhuang family at the time of Emperor Wu of the Jin Dynasty (265-290A.D.), specialized in cursive writing, and one of the “Five Dragons of Dunhuang”, whose dates of birth and death were 238-303 A.D.

⁵⁷⁶ According to “Li Jun repair Mogao Grottoes 李君修莫高窟佛龕碑,” recorded that “自秦建元之日，迄大周圣历之辰，乐傅、法良发其宗，建平东阳弘其迹。推甲子四百他岁，计石窟一千余龕。今见置僧徒，即为崇敬寺也。”

⁵⁷⁷ Yushan Pan, Shichang Ma, *Mogaoku Kuqian Diantang Yizhi* 莫高窟窟前殿堂遗址[Ruins of the Hall in front of the Mogao Caves] (Beijing: Cultural Relics Press, 1985), 12.

time. This then implies that they inevitably had to undertake some similar Buddhist practices.

These Buddhist practices were conducted according to the monastic codes or proper protocol prescribed by the masters. For the practitioners of religion at that time, these daily practices, in which the body was guided to participate personally, were crucial to their understanding of religious ideas. The extent of the importance of these everyday bodily norms was also reflected in some of Kumārajīva's statements. In explaining the difficulties of translating Buddhist scriptures, this master translator Kumārajīva clearly reveals that he is not worried about the meaning of the scriptures not being able to be translated by him in Chinese, but rather that body posture and poetic qualities are lost in the process of translation. This is because he believes that the meaning of the sutras can be conveyed to people through translation, but other important parts such as gestures and postures at the core of body memory/liturgy, as well as poetic tones and accents cannot be conveyed through literal translation, and these parts actually are the most important parts for religion. Kumārajīva uses a very interesting analogy to illustrate this dilemma facing his translation work: "It is like chewing rice and giving it to a person, not only does it lose its flavor, but it makes you sick."⁵⁷⁸ This means that just as the value of art can only be realized if it is experienced by the person, so too, very similarly, the important value of religion to the individual can only be realized if the person is personally involved in the process of receiving it. Conveying the meaning of Buddhist scriptures only in Chinese is like telling us that food can be eaten without letting us chew it and eat it; then the food will not be able to fulfill its most important value. The important value that religion can offer to people is not something that can be told through words but has to be realized through the personal involvement of their own body.

Stephen F. Teiser has pointed out that Chinese Buddhists have found a way of solving these problems of posture by producing rich liturgical literature.⁵⁷⁹ The rich

⁵⁷⁸ Chu Sanzang Jiji, vol. 14, .101.

⁵⁷⁹ Stephen F. Teiser, *Studies in Ritual and Buddhism*. trans. Yu Xin and Zhai Minhao (Beijing:Life. Reading . Xinzhi Sanlian Bookstore Limited, 2022), 36.

Buddhist liturgical literature produced in China can be divided into three categories. The first is the Indian Vinayas (Jie Lü 戒律, precepts) originally written in Sanskrit and Indian vernaculars, translated by foreign monks and Chinese assistants, and collected in *Taisho Shinshu Daizokyo*. According to Sheng Yan, the existence of precepts in China began in the Three Kingdoms era. In the second year of the Jia Ping era (250 A.D.), Dharma-kāla translated *The Basic Rules of Discipline* at the Baima Temple in Luoyang. In the early fifth century, four relatively complete translations of various Discipline (Vinaya) canons were translated into Chinese: the Dharmagupta Vinaya (十诵律, 412 A.D.), Sarvāstivāda Vinaya (413 A.D.), Mahāsāṃghika (僧祇律, 418 A.D.), and Mahīśāsaka vinaya (五分律, 424 A.D.). The second category is these Indian Vinaya texts translated from Sanskrit and compiled by Chinese monks, known as “*Ritual Books* 礼仪类书.” The third category is the indigenous texts titled “ritual text” compiled by local Chinese monks who were authorities on the rituals. Those texts are not collected in the *Taisho Shinshu Daizokyo*. The “abstinence-ceremony” manuscripts (斋会文本) discovered at Dunhuang belong to this category. According to the *Records of the Dharma Treasures of All Ages* (歷代法寶記), in the Eastern Jin Dynasty, Dao An created the first ritual system, the so-called “Three Ritual Examples of Daoan (道安三例),” which was then compiled for the first time in four volumes of the *Texts for Abstinence-ceremony* (齋文) by the Shu monk, Si An (嗣安). This was followed by the numerous texts of “*zhaiyuan wen* 齋願文” from Dunhuang and several records of “Texts for Abstinence-ceremony” brought back by Japanese monks.⁵⁸⁰

Fortunately, among the manuscripts excavated from Cave 17 of Dunhuang Mogao Cave, preserved several hundred individual pieces of liturgical text explicitly

⁵⁸⁰ Sanqing Wang, *Dunhuang Fojiao Zhaiyuan Wenben Yanjiu* 敦煌佛教斋愿文本研究 [Studies on Dunhuang Buddhist Prayer Texts] (Taipei: Xinwenfeng Publishing Company, 2009), 37.

titled “abstinence-ceremony text (*zhaiwen* 齋文)” or sometimes “prayer text (*yuanwen* 願文)” prepared for a variety of abstinence-ceremony rituals conducted by monks, nuns and laypeople.⁵⁸¹ Its quantity is very considerable, and the number of volumes collated by previous scholars is nearly one thousand volumes.⁵⁸² After years of collecting the published Dunhuang manuscripts, Huang Zheng and Wu Wei have cataloged about 600 volumes containing the ritual text, of which only 271 Volumes are currently recorded in his compilation of *Dunhuang Prayer Texts*. These *Prayer Texts* can be divided into two categories: “application *zhaiwen*” and “model *zhaiwen*.”⁵⁸³ Among them, the application *zhaiwen* are the texts that were read by monks during the actual activities.⁵⁸⁴ The model texts are the reference texts for monks to draft their texts used for the actual activities.⁵⁸⁵ Scholars have found records of actual religious ritual accoutrements in Dunhuang liturgical manuscripts. Those liturgical manuscripts were composed and copied by monks in Dunhuang, they were used in a wide range of rituals conducted by monks, including rituals such as the series of offerings incense and flower, reading sutras, reciting the appropriate mantra, praising the three jewels, reciting a Gāthā, performing abstinence-ceremony, repentance and so on.⁵⁸⁶

However, these Dunhuang corpus used in a wide range of rituals have not been taken as seriously among previous scholars who have discussed the function of the Dunhuang Mogao cave in the past. Previous scholars discussing Dunhuang murals have focused their attention mainly on the “transformation texts(*bianwen* 变文),” and

⁵⁸¹ Ru Zhan, “Lun Dunhuang Zhaiwen Yu Fojiao Xingshi 论敦煌斋文与佛教行事[On Dunhuang prayer text and Buddhist action,” *Dunhuang Xue Jikan* 敦煌学辑刊[Journal of Dunhuang Studies], no.1 (1997): 68.

⁵⁸² Wang, *Dunhuang Fojiao Zhaiyuan Wenben Yanjiu*, 40.

⁵⁸³ Zhan, “Lun Dunhuang Zhaiwen Yu Fojiao Xingshi,” 69.

⁵⁸⁴ Chunwen Hao, “Dunhuang Xieben Zhaiwen Jiqi Yangshi de Fenlei yu Dingming 敦煌写本斋文及其样式的分类与定名[Classification and Designation of Dunhuang Written Zaiwen and Its Styles].” *Beijing Shifan Xueyuan Xuebao Shehui Kexue Ban* 北京师范学院学报(社会科学版) [Journal of Beijing Normal College (Social Science Edition)], no.3, (1990):91-97.

⁵⁸⁵ Zhan, “Lun Dunhuang Zhaiwen Yu Fojiao Xingshi,” 69.

⁵⁸⁶ Sanqing Wang, *Dunhuang Fojiao Zhaiyuan Wenben Yanjiu* 敦煌佛教斋愿文本研究[Studies on Dunhuang Buddhist Prayer Texts] (Taipei: Xinwenfeng Publishing Company, 2009), 37.

have paid far less attention to “*zhaiwen* 齋文,” or “*yuanwen* 願文.” Even though the number of “*yuanwen*” found at Dunhuang is so impressive, and even far greater than that of the “*bianwen*.” Not only has the “*Yuanwen*” received far less attention than the “*Bianwen*” in modern scholarship, but it also seems to have been deliberately ignored by medieval scholars in the Middle Ages.⁵⁸⁷ However, it is certainly worth paying more attention to the *yuanwen* which records the procedures of specific religious practices that were omitted from the Buddhist sutras. The discussion of the function of the caves that follows in this dissertation will rely heavily on this valuable Dunhuang corpus.

First of all, when we try to go back to the original context to examine the Mogao Caves, the first thing we need to consider is their original location. In the previous scholarship, it has been noted that the earliest group of neighboring caves in the Mogao Grottoes, namely Mogao Caves 268, 272, and 275 (Fig. 5.1-8, Group A.), were likely to be a group of caves excavated through unified planning.⁵⁸⁸ However other combinations of caves have not received the same attention from scholars. In my fieldwork, I found that such a combination of caves occurred in the mogao caves excavated between the 4th and 6th centuries. That is, near the caves with truncated pyramid-ceiling always built the central-pillar caves. There are at least six such combinations of truncated pyramid-ceiling caves and center-pillar caves from the 4th-6th century excavated on the south parts of the cliff faces of the Ming Sha mountain where the Mogao Grottoes are located (Fig. 5.1-9). They are numbered in order from south to north as follows.

Group B: including Mogao Cave 249 (a truncated pyramid-ceiling cave excavated during the Western Wei period in the area of the first floor of the cliff face), and Mogao Cave 248 (a central-pillar cave immediately to the south of Cave

⁵⁸⁷ Zheng Huang, Wei Wu, *Dunhuang Yuanwen Ji* 敦煌愿文集[Dunhuang Prayer Text] (Changsha: Yuelu Shushe, 1995), 10.

⁵⁸⁸ Scholars such as Wei Wenbin believe that this group of caves are all Buddhist spaces of Maitreya's Pure Land created with Maitreya's belief as the theme. See Tongshu Yang, and Wenbin Wei, “Gansu Shiliuguo Shiqi Shiku Si de Changuan Linian yu Biaoxian 甘肃十六国时期石窟寺的禅观理念与表现 [The Concept and Performance of Zen Concepts in Cave Temples of the Sixteen Kingdoms Period in Gansu],” *Xibei Mingzu Daxue Xuebao Zhexue Shehui Kexue Ban* 西北民族大学学报(哲学社会科学版) [Journal of Northwest University for Nationalities (Philosophy and Social Science Edition)], no.5, (2019):81.

249), and the central-pillar Mogao Cave 251 which was already completed during the Northern Wei period, located to the north of the Mogao Cave 249 (Fig. 5.1-10).

Group C: including Mogao Cave 285, a truncated pyramid-ceiling cave, which was excavated on the second floor of the cliff during the Western Wei period, and the adjacent cave to the north of Mogao Cave 285 is the central pillar Mogao Cave 288 which is also located in the second floor of the cliff during the same time (Fig 5.1-11).

Group D: including a group of caves excavated around a truncated pyramid-ceiling Mogao Cave 438 which is located on the third floor of the cliff face, with central-pillar caves excavated to the south, north, and below; the central-pillar cave to the south is Mogao Cave 442, which was excavated during the Northern Zhou period, and Mogao Cave 290, below it, is also a central-pillar cave excavated during the Northern Zhou period, while cave 437, adjacent to the north, is a central-pillar cave excavated during the Northern Wei Dynasty (Fig. 5.1-12).

Group E: including a truncated pyramid-ceiling Mogao Cave 294 which was excavated on the second floor of the cliff face during the Northern Zhou Dynasty, and a central-pillar Mogao Cave 432 directly above the Mogao Cave 294 (Fig. 5.1-13).

Group F: including a group of truncated pyramid-ceiling caves, that is Mogao Cave 296, Mogao Cave 297, Mogao Cave 299, which was excavated on the second floor of the cliff face during the Northern Zhou Dynasty, and a larger central-pillar Mogao Cave 431 directly above them, which was excavated during the Northern Wei Dynasty (Fig 5.1-14).

Group G: including Mogao Cave 301, a truncated pyramid-ceiling cave, which was excavated on the second floor of the cliff during the Northern Zhou Dynasty, and the central-pillar Mogao Cave 428 which is directly located above Mogao Cave 301 on the third floor of the cliff during the Northern Zhou Dynasty (Fig 5.1-15).

The combination of the above-mentioned group of caves with the central-pillar cave, which repeatedly accompanies the truncated pyramid-ceiling cave, is likely to imply that the grotto designers of the time intentionally planned for them to be grouped. It is possible that this combination was deliberately arranged to facilitate a

specific religious practice. So what religious practice was served in these combined caves? The previous Dunhuang scholars have spent a great deal of energy investigating the meditative practice that might be carried out in these caves. However, the seven groups of caves mentioned above do have the potential to serve other religious practices, such as a ritual known as “penance (*li chan* 禮懺).” The so-called “*li chan* 禮懺” is a ritual activity to confess one's sins and to worship the Buddhas at the same time.⁵⁸⁹ Some scholars have already noted the importance of the ritual “Li Chan” in the Northern and Southern Dynasties.⁵⁹⁰ Recently, Eric M Greene also notes that different activities going by the name of the “*chanhui* 懺悔” ritual emerged as a dominant form of Chinese Buddhist ritual during the fifth century.⁵⁹¹ In Eric M. Greene's words, “chanhui” typically denotes the entire rite that invariably includes offerings, worship, and other formal invocations.⁵⁹² He pointed out that “*Chanhui* rituals were part of the daily monastic liturgy and also became the most important component of the activities carried out by both clergy and laity on the ‘abstinence (*zhai* 齋)’ days that occurred six times a month and structured the Buddhist calendar.”⁵⁹³

Buddhist scriptures containing the concept of “chanhui (Kṣama)”⁵⁹⁴ have been translated since the beginning of the introduction of Buddhism to China. The Taisho Collection already contains 61 scriptures on chanhui (Kṣama) confessional scriptures

⁵⁸⁹ Yang Mingfen, *Tangdai Xifang Jingtu Lichan Fa Yanjiu* 唐代西方净土礼忏法研究 [Study on the Western Pure Land Rituals of the Tang Dynasty] (Beijing: Min zu chu ban she, 2007), 4.

⁵⁹⁰ For the popularity of chanhui rituals among the southern aristocracy in the fifth and sixth centuries, see Vande Walle, “Lay Buddhism among the Chinese Aristocracy during the Period of the Southern Dynasties: Hsiao Tzu-liang (460-494) and His Entourage,” *Orientalia Lovaniensia Periodica* 10 (1979): 275-279. For the books that have treated the topic of Buddhist Chanhui in early medieval China in scholarship, see Mingfen Yang, *Tang dai xi fang jing tu li chan fa yan jiu* 唐代西方净土礼忏法研究 (Beijing: Min zu chu ban she, 2007); Juan Wang, *Dunhuang li chan wen yan jiu* 敦煌禮懺文研究 (Taipei: Fagu wenhua shiye gufen youxian gongsi, 1998); Juan Wang, *Tang Song Guyi Fojiao Chan yi Yanjiu* 唐宋古逸佛教懺儀研究 (Taipei: Wen jin chu ban she, 2008.); Kai Sheng, *Zhongguo Fojiao Chanfa yanjiu* 中国佛教忏法研究 (Beijing: Zong jiao wen hua chu ban she, 2004); Darui Shi, *Tiantai chan fa zhi yanjiu* 天台懺法之研究 (Taipei: Fa gu wen hua, 2000); Li-ying Kuo, *Confession et contrition dans le bouddhisme chinois du Ve au Xe siècle* (Paris: École Française d'Extrême-Orient, 1994).

⁵⁹¹ Eric M. Greene, *Chan before chan: meditation, repentance, and visionary experience in Chinese Buddhism* (University of Hawaii Press, 2021), 162.

⁵⁹² Greene, *Chan before chan*, 163.

⁵⁹³ Greene, *Chan before Chan*, 162.

⁵⁹⁴ The word repentance is a phonetic translation of the Sanskrit word Kṣama.

from the Northern and Southern Dynasties.⁵⁹⁵ Dao An (312-385 A.D.) of the Eastern Jin Dynasty formulated the *Monastic Rules* (僧尼規範) describing some specific Chinese Buddhist repentance rituals. *Monastic Rules* is therefore also regarded as the beginning of Chinese penance.⁵⁹⁶ However, the full content of *Monastic Rules* is no longer clear. There is no way to know what the specific penance rituals were, but only according to the records in the section of Dao An's biography of *Gao Seng Zhuang*, we know that there were “three paradigmatic rituals”: “Firstly, it was the method of performing the incense, fixing the seat, attending the sutra, and lecturing on the sutra; secondly, it was the method of walking in the six times of the day, eating and drinking, and reciting; and thirdly, it was the method of Uposatha, dispatching, and repenting.”⁵⁹⁷ It was from Tao An that “chanhui” was explicitly incorporated into the daily religious practice of monks.

Moreover, according to *Gao Seng Zhuang*, the famous monk Liu Saha of the Eastern Jin Dynasty also “devoted himself to the good karma, with penance as his priority.”⁵⁹⁸ The earliest records of the practice of ritual penance is in the “Golden Light Abstinence- ceremony(金光明齋)” written by Xuan Gao in the fifth year of the Northern Wei Dynasty (439 A.D.).⁵⁹⁹ This was followed by the “*Puxian* Abstinence-ceremony Repentance(普賢齋懺)” by Sengbao in the Liu Song period.⁶⁰⁰ As well as the “Methods of Confessing and Extinguishing Sins by All Scriptures(眾經懺悔滅罪方法)” by Liang Baochang in the 16th year of Tian Jian (517 A.D.).⁶⁰¹ In addition to

⁵⁹⁵ Darei Shi, *Tiantai Chanfa Zhi Yanjiu* 天台忏法之研究[A Study of Tiantai Confession] (Taipei: Dharma Drum Cultural Enterprise Co., Ltd., 2000), 25-30.

⁵⁹⁶ Mingfen Yang, *Tangdai Xifang Jingtū Lichan Fa Yanjiu* 唐代西方净土礼忏法研究[Study on the Western Pure Land Rituals of the Tang Dynasty] (Beijing: Min zu chu ban she, 2007), 19-20.

⁵⁹⁷ The so-called “Three Examples of Dao An” is as follows: “安既德为物宗，学兼三藏。所制僧尼轨范，佛法先章，条为三例：一日行香、定座、上经、上讲之法；二日常日六时行道、饮食、唱时法；三日布萨、差使、悔过等法。天下寺舍遂则而从之。”

⁵⁹⁸ Shi Huijiao 释慧皎, “Huida Zhuan 慧达传[Biography of Hui Da]” in *Gao Seng Zhuan* 高僧传 [Biographies of Eminent Monks] Volume 1.3, (Beijing, Zhonghua Shuju, 1992), 477.

⁵⁹⁹ Shi Huijiao, “Xuan Gao Zhuan 玄高传 [Biography of Xuan Gao],” in *Gao Seng Zhuan* 高僧传 [Biographies of Eminent Monks], vol. 1, 1, (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1992), 411.

⁶⁰⁰ Shi Huijiao, “Seng Bao Zhuan 僧苞传[Biography of Sengbao]” in *Gao Seng Zhuan* 高僧传 [Biographies of Eminent Monks] vol. 7, (Beijing, Zhonghua shuju, 1992), 271.

⁶⁰¹ Shi Huijiao, “Tan Guang Zhuan 昙光传[The Biography of Tanguang],” in *Gao Seng Zhuan* 高僧传 [Biographies of Eminent Monks], vol. 13, (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1992), 514.

the ritual penance made by these monks as recorded in the *Gao Seng Zhuang*, there is also various ritual penance made by the royal family as recorded in the chapter of penance in the *Guang Hong Ming Ji* (廣弘明集). For example, Liang Emperor Jianwen's "the Construction of Nirvana Confession by Xie Chi 謝敕為建涅槃懺啟," "Six Roots Confession 六根懺文," Emperor Liang Gaozu's "Mohe Prajnaparamita Confession 摩訶般若懺文," Liang Emperor Wu's "Vajra Prajnaparamita Confession 金剛般若懺文," Chen Emperor Wen's "Lotus Sutra Confession 妙法蓮華經懺文," "Golden Light Confession 金光明懺文," "Datong Fangguang Confession 大通方廣懺文," the "Confessions of Void Bodhisattva 虛空藏菩薩懺文," the "Confessions of the Fang Deng Dharani 方等陀羅尼齋懺文," the "Confessions of the Medicine Master 藥師齋懺文," the "Confessions of the Shara Lent 娑羅齋懺文," the "Confessions of the Unhindered Society of Sacrifice 無礙會舍身懺文," and the "Confessions of the Shengtianwang Prajnaparamita 勝天王般若懺文" by Emperor Xuan of the Chen Dynasty, and so on. However, the specific repentance procedure is still not found in these repentance texts. However, these repentance records at least indicate that the practice of ritual repentance and confession of wrongs was indeed widely popular in the northern and southern regions during the 4th-6th centuries.

It is true that many of the specific aspects of these Buddhist penance rituals as practiced in the 4th-6th centuries have been missing. Most of the penance rituals based on different Buddhist sutras listed in the *Chu San Zang Ji Ji* (出三藏記集), such as the "*Maitreya Six Times of Penance Dharma Marginal Record* (彌勒六時懺悔法緣記)," the "Dharma for Saving and Destroying Sins and Curing Diseases According to Guan Shiyin (觀世音菩薩所說救急消滅罪治病要行法)," the "Golden Light Repentance (金光明懺悔法)," and "*Fang Guang Tuoluoni Qizhong Huifa*

Yuanji(方廣陀羅尼七眾悔法緣記).” Although most of the specific ritual procedures mentioned in these texts have been lost. Fortunately, however, some complete penance rituals of the 4th-6th century are preserved in the penance rituals recorded by the master Ling Yu and Zhi Yi, as well as in the texts of the rituals in the Dunhuang manuscript.⁶⁰² The texts preserved at Dunhuang, are entitled “Rites (li 禮)” or “*Libai Wen*(禮拜文),” such as the “*Huanghun Li*(黃昏禮),” the “*Rites of the Ten Directions*(十方禮).” Those texts contain detailed records of various ritual procedures. In addition to this, the official Buddhist texts in the Taishozo have also preserved some ritual records of penitential activities. All these data can still support this dissertation to further explore the question of whether the Mogao cave in Dunhuang during the 4- 6th century had the function of ritual confession.

In terms of the ritual activities shown in the Dunhuang manuscripts that are known so far, the settings in both types of caves, the truncated pyramid-ceiling cave and the center-pillar cave, have the potential to provide suitable venues for ritual repentance. In the following, we will delve into the specific mogao caves of Dunhuang from the 5th-6th centuries, examining whether these mural-covered caves could have been used for confessional practices, and what role the images in the caves played in the service of these specific religious practices.

(1) Group A: Mogao Cave 268, Cave272, Cave 275,

This group of caves, including Mogao Cave 268, Mogao Cave 272, and Mogao Cave 275, is located on the third floor of the cliff face in the southern section of the Mogao Caves (Fig. 5.1-16a). The full archaeological report from the Dunhuang Research Institute states that the remains of the cliff façade on which these three caves are located indicate that the three caves were built with a unified plan.⁶⁰³ There have

⁶⁰² Mingfen Yang, *Tangdai Xifang Jingtū Lichan Fa Yanjiu* 唐代西方淨土禮懺法研究[A Study of the Western Pure Land Rituals of the Tang Dynasty] (Beijing: Min zu chu ban she, 2007), 4.

⁶⁰³ Dunhuang Academy. *Mogaoku Di erliuliu zhi Erqiwu Ku Koagu Baogao* 莫高窟第 266 ~ 275 窟考古報告第一分冊[Archaeological Report on the 266th to 275th Caves of Mogao Cave (Part I)] (Beijing: Cultural Relics Press, 2011), 244-247.

been many theories as to when the three caves were built. The earliest scholars, such as Zhang Daqian and Su Bai, proposed that it dated to the “Northern Wei Dynasty.”⁶⁰⁴ They are also dated to the “Western Liang” and “Northern Liang (ca.428-429 A.D.)” by Alexander C. Soper.⁶⁰⁵ Nowadays, most Dunhuang scholars agree that these three Mogao Caves were built during the Northern Liang period, and are the earliest caves excavated in Dunhuang.⁶⁰⁶ Recently, Dr. Zhao Rong carefully analyzed the spatial occupation and modification of these three caves from an archaeological stratigraphic view and further speculated on the actual sequence of excavation of these three caves. That is the caves were likely finished gradually in the Western Liang and Northern Liang periods: the first half of Mogao Cave 268 was excavated first, followed by Mogao Cave 275 and the second half of Mogao Cave 268, and then Mogao Cave 272 was excavated, and finally, the rear of Mogao Cave 268 was enlarged (Fig. 5.1-16c).⁶⁰⁷

First examine Mogao Cave 268, which was opened early (Fig.5.1-17). Because of its structural similarity to the vihara caves of the Northwest Indies, which were

⁶⁰⁴ Jianhua Xu, and Dingwei Xie, *Dafengtang Yuze Zhang Daqian Shuzha Sanshi Wu Tong* 大风堂余泽张大千书札 35 通 (Hangzhou: Zhejiang People's Fine Arts Publishing House, 2018); Baozhou Zhang, *Dunhuang Mogaoku Bianhao de Kaogu Wenxian Yanjiu* 敦煌莫高窟编号的考古文献研究[An Archaeological Documentary Study of the Numbering of the Mogao Caves at Dunhuang]Vol.1, (Lanzhou: Gansu Culture Press, 2020), 117-216; Bai Su, “Cangan Dunhuang Di Erbawu Hao Ku Zhaji 参观敦煌第 285 号窟札记[Notes on a visit to Cave 285 at Dunhuang].” *Wenwu Cankao Ziliao* 文物参考资料 .02(1956):16-21+13-14; Bai Su, “Dunhuang Mogaoku Zaoqi Shiku Zakao 敦煌莫高窟早期石窟杂考[Dunhuang Mogao Grottoes Early Grottoes Miscellaneous Examination],” in *Zhongguo Shiku Si Yanjiu* 中国石窟寺研究[*Chinese Cave-Temple Research*] (Beijing: Wenwu Chubanshe, 1996), 214-225; Bai Su, “莫高窟现存早期石窟的年代问题[Age Problems of Existing Early Mogao Grottoes]” in *Zhongguo Shiku Si Yanjiu* 中国石窟寺研究[*Chinese Cave-Temple Research*] (Beijing: Wenwu Chubanshe, 1996), 270-278.

⁶⁰⁵ Alexander C. Soper, “Northern Liang and Northern Wei in Kansu,” *Artibus Asiae* 21, no.2 (1958): 131-164. Later Jin Weino and Wang Taki also believed that these three caves should have been excavated during the Xiliang period, see Long Wang, “Gansu Zaoqi Shiku de Liangge Wenti 甘肃早期石窟的两个问题. [Two Problems of the Early Grottoes in Gansu],” in *Yijiu Basan Nian Quanguo Dunhuang Xueshu Jiangzuo Hui Wenji* 1983 年全国敦煌学术讲座会文集·石窟艺术编[1983 National Dunhuang Academic Lecture Series - Cave Art] (Lanzhou: Gansu People's Publishing House, 1985); Weino Jin, “Gansu Shiliuguo Shiqi de Zaoxiang yu Bihua 甘肃十六国时期的造像与壁画 The Images and Mural Paintings of the Sixteen Kingdoms Period in Gansu,” in *Dunhuang Wen Sou* 敦煌文荟[Dunhuang Anthology] (Taipei:Xinwen Feng Chuban Gongsu,1999),159-172.

⁶⁰⁶ In the 1980s, Fan Jinshi and others dated these three caves to the Northern Liang period. See Jinshi Fan, “Dunhuang Mogaoku Beichao Shiku Fenqi 敦煌莫高窟北朝石窟分期[Staging the Northern Dynasty Caves of the Mogao Grottoes at Dunhuang],” in *Zhongguo Shiku Dunhuang Moqao Ku Diyi Juan* 中国石窟敦煌莫高窟第一卷[*Chinese Grottoes Dunhuang Mogao Grottoes Volume I*] (Beijing: Cultural Relics Publishing House, 1982.)

⁶⁰⁷ Rong Zhao, “Dunhuang Mogao Ku Beiliang Sanku Kaizao Cidi Shilun 敦煌莫高窟北凉三窟开凿次第述论 [On the Excavation Sequence of the Three Northern Liang Caves at Mogao in Dunhuang],” *Dunhuang Yanjiu* 敦煌研究 [Dunhuang Research], no.02(2022):67-80.

used for meditation, it has long been recognized by scholars as a meditation cave. Moreover, the murals in the four subsidiary caves on the two walls of Mogao Cave 268 have also been recognized by scholars as being later additions during the Sui dynasty, and the walls in Mogao Cave 268 were white walls without any murals during the northern Liang dynasty. This also supports the idea that the actual meditation chamber is not covered in images.⁶⁰⁸

However, the burning materials left on the floor of the Mogao Cave 268 have not been explained in the previous scholarship. During my two expeditions in 2019-2020, it was found that the wax oil residues or burning residues, which had accumulated over time, could still be seen at the entrance of Mogao Cave 268, and on the floor of the four subsidiary chambers in Mogao Caves 267, Mogao Cave 269, Mogao Cave 270, and Mogao Cave 271 (Fig.5.1-18a). Wax oil residues from burning candles can also be seen on the countertops in the middle part of the entrances to the small chambers (Fig. 5.1-18b,c,d,e,f). The Dunhuang Academy has not yet analyzed the date of these burnt deposits. If the results of the dating are available, it will be possible to make a more definitive determination of the specific time of the cave's use. However, the presence of these burning deposits in Mogao Cave 268 suggests that this place, at least for a long period, was not reserved for monks to sit and meditate, but may have been a place to burn incense or lamps. These physical traces left behind by actual use suggest that lamp burning or incense burning might be a quotidian activity in these caves. And this is exactly what was done when making puja and devotional rites towards the Buddha image such as burning incense, scattering flowers, and prostration to the Buddha image. This suggests that Cave 268 and its subsidiary caves were probably originally constructed for this kind of liturgical activity that requires the burning of lamps and incense. It is therefore likely that the successive seated Buddha images in Mogao Cave 268 and the small side chambers on

⁶⁰⁸ In the field survey carried out by archaeologist Giuseppe Vignato in the Kizil caves, hundreds of caves used for actual meditation activities were found to be unadorned with any images, with the walls simply flattened with white clay. See Angela F. Howard, and Giuseppe Vignato, *Archaeological and visual sources of meditation in the ancient monasteries of Kuča* (Leiden: Brill, 2014).

either side of it were painted as objects of those liturgical activities (Fig.5.1-19, 20, 21, 22).

In addition, above these four small side chambers on the north and south walls of Mogao Cave 268, there are also images similar to the lintels above the niches on the west wall of the caves where statues of the Buddha were placed (Fig. 5.1-17b, c.). This implies that the four side chambers attached to Mogao Cave 268 might have once been shaped as niches for the images of Buddha, just like the niches in the west wall of Mogao Cave 268. Below these Buddha images in these four side chambers, there are rows of figures making offerings that are not related to meditation activities. These figures are all holding offerings (Fig.5.1- 19a, 20a,b, 21a,c,d, 22 a, b). This also implies that an act of worship may have taken place here.

In terms of the murals in Mogao Cave 268 and the four small side chambers built into its north and south walls, their use was not necessarily related to meditation activities. The walls of Mogao Cave 268, as well as the four small chambers of Mogao Caves 267, 269, 270, and 271, are covered with neatly arranged rows of seated Buddhas (Fig.5.1-19,20,21,22). Since the inscriptions next to these consecutive seated Buddhas are completely missing now, Dunhuang scholars generally refer to them as “Thousand Buddhas”.⁶⁰⁹ In the Western Qin period, the lower part of the rows of seated Buddhas in niche 24 above the east wall of Cave 169 at the Bingling Temple in Yongjing was inscribed: “ Hui Chao, Dao-Hong... and others created these thousand Buddhas.”⁶¹⁰ However, in the case of Mogao Caves, the total number of small seated Buddhas in rows in Mogao Caves 267, Mogao Cave 269, Mogao Cave 270, and Mogao Cave 271 is much less than one thousand, and it is perhaps inaccurate to refer to them as “The thousand buddha motif”.

⁶⁰⁹ Shizhe He, “Guanyu Beichao Shiku Qianfo Tuxiang Zhu Wenti 关于北朝石窟千佛图像诸问题[Problems concerning the images of a thousand Buddhas in the Northern Dynasty caves],” *Dunhuang Yanjiu* 敦煌研究 [Dunhuang Research], no.3 (1989):1-10; Gansu province cultural relics task force 甘肃省文物工作队, *Zhongguo Shiku Yongjing Bingling si* 中国石窟永靖炳灵寺 [Chines Grottoes Yongjing Bingling Cave-Temples] (Beijing: Cultural Relics Press, 1989), 185; Shizhe He, *Dunhuang Tuxiang Yanjiu Shiliuguo Beichao Juan* 敦煌图像研究十六国北朝卷 [Research on Dunhuang Images: The Sixteen Kingdoms and the Northern Dynasties] (Lanzhou: Gansu Education Publishing House, 2006), 3.

⁶¹⁰ Gansu Provincial Cultural Relics, Bingling Temple Cultural Relics Depository, ed. *Caves of China Yongjing Bingling Temple* (Beijing: Cultural Relics Press, 1989), 185.

To be precise, the number of small seated Buddhas painted on the walls of Mogao Cave 267 is 63 Buddhas on the north wall, 117 Buddhas on the west wall, 42 Buddhas on the south wall, 117 Buddhas on the east wall (Fig. 5.1-19). The number of small seated Buddhas painted on the walls of Mogao Cave 269 is 119 Buddhas on the east wall, 130 Buddhas on the west wall, and 77 Buddhas on the north wall (Fig.5.1-20). The number of small seated buddhas painted on the walls of Mogao Cave 271 is 52 Buddhas on the north wall, 77 Buddhas on the east wall, 72 Buddhas on the west wall, and 36 Buddhas on the south wall (Fig.22). The number is close to the sum of “fifty-three Buddha”, “thirty-five Buddha” “fifty-three Buddha “, “twenty-five Buddhas” and “seven Buddhas”.⁶¹¹ The number of small seated buddhas painted on the walls of Mogao Cave 270 is 35 Buddhas on the north wall, 35 Buddhas on the south wall, 38 Buddhas on the west wall, and on the east wall which is indecipherable; but all in the vicinity of 35 Buddhas possibly representing the “Thirty-five Buddhas” (Fig.21).

At the same time, the statues of “fifty-three Buddhas” and “thirty-five Buddhas” with clear inscriptions also appeared in other places during the Northern Dynasties. For example, on the west wall of Guyang cave in Longmen Grottoes, there are Buddha statues with clear inscriptions: “ February 10th, Dadei Yongping four years (511A.D.), Huang Yuande, his brother Wang Nu and others, respectfully created a Maitreya statue and fifty-three Buddhas for the deceased mother.”⁶¹² But the number of Buddha statues at the site is less than fifty-three (Fig.5.1-23a). There is a stele of Liu Fa Zang in the collection of the Freer Gallery of Art in the United States, dated the second year of the Zhengguang of the Daidai (521A.D.), on which there is a clear inscription:” disciple Liu Fa-zang and Fa-zun made fifty-three Buddhas for his brother.” However, there are only thirty-four small seated Buddhas on the stele (Fig.5.1-b). It seems that slight discrepancies between the actual number of statues and the number of inscriptions often occur.

⁶¹¹ The names of the Buddhas in each of the above quantitative groups do not duplicate the names of the Buddhas in the other quantitative groups.

⁶¹² Jinglong Liu, *Guyang Dong Longmen Shiku Di Yisisan Ku* 古阳洞龙门石窟第 1443 窟[Guyang Cave: Cave 1443, Longmen Grottoes] (Beijing: Science Press, 2001),74.

In fact, whether the rows of seated Buddhas represent the “Thirty-five Buddhas,” the “Fifty-three Buddhas,” or the “Twenty-five Buddhas” and the “Seven Buddhas of the Past” does not affect the discussion of the function of the cave. Because, in reviewing the Buddhist literature in which these Buddha names appear, it is found that “Twenty-five Buddhas,” “Thirty-five Buddhas,” “Fifty-three Buddhas,” “Seven Buddhas of the Past,” and “One Thousand Buddhas” are all related to the religious practice of repentance and the elimination of sin. In the following, we will examine one by one the references to the “Twenty-five Buddhas,” “Thirty-five Buddhas,” “Fifty-three Buddhas,” “Seven Buddhas of the Past,” and “One Thousand Buddhas” in the Buddhist sutra translated before the 6th century.

In the *Foshuo Jueding Pini Jing* (佛說決定毘尼經) translated by Dunhuang Sanzang in the West Jin Dynasty (ca.266-313 A.D.), it is written that those who have broken the precepts are required to be alone beside the “Thirty-five Buddhas” and to perform some act of deep repentance all day and night.⁶¹³

In Volume 1 of the *Fo shuo Mile Da Chengfo Jing* (佛說彌勒大成佛經), translated by Kumārajīva during the Yao Qin period (ca. 402 A.D.), there is a record of destroying the negative karmic effects by making offerings to the “seven Buddhas of the past” at the consecration site.⁶¹⁴

Volume 10 of the *Scripture of Contemplating the Buddha and the Samadhi Sea* (佛說觀佛三昧海經) translated by Buddhahadra in 398~421A.D in the Eastern Jin Dynasty, mentions the need to continue to visualize the images of the “seven Buddhas of the past” in one's mind when one has succeeded in visualizing images in mind, instead of viewing the specific images of the seven Buddhas with one's physical

⁶¹³ The original text in 《佛說決定毘尼經》:「若有菩薩成就五無間罪，犯於女人、或犯男子，或故犯、犯塔、犯僧，如是等餘犯，菩薩應當三十五佛邊，所犯重罪晝夜獨處至心懺悔。懺悔法者：歸依佛、歸依法、歸依僧。」(CBETA 2023.Q3, T12, no. 325, p. 38c17-20)

⁶¹⁴ The original text in 《佛說彌勒大成佛經》:「若於過去七佛所，得聞佛名，禮拜供養，以是因緣，淨除業障。復聞彌勒大慈根本，得清淨心，汝等今當一心合掌，歸依未來大慈悲者，我當為汝廣分別說。」(CBETA 2023.Q3, T14, no. 456, p. 429a8-12)

eyes.⁶¹⁵ This suggests that the painted images of the seven Buddhas were not used for meditation practice.

In the *Sutra on Visualizing the Two Bodhisattvas Bhaisajyarāja and Bhaisajyasamudgata* (佛說觀藥王藥上二菩薩經), translated by Kālam yaśas at the beginning of 5th century (ca. 424-442 A.D.), it is recorded that if some sentient beings wish to expiate the sins, they should diligently pay homage to the names of the “fifty-three Buddhas.”⁶¹⁶

In Volume 2 of *Secret Essential Methods for Curing Meditation Sickness* translated by Ju Qu Jing Sheng of the Liu Song Dynasty (ca. 455 A.D.), it is mentioned a method of eliminating sins and illnesses is to visualize the “seven Buddhas of the past” and to recite their names one by one in one's mind.⁶¹⁷

In the *Sūtra on the Names of the Buddha* (*Fo Shuo Foming Jing* 佛說佛名經) translated by Bodhiruci during the Northern Wei Dynasty (ca. 520-524 A.D.).⁶¹⁸ it is also recorded in detail that placing a statue of the Buddha in a purifying room and making offerings and reciting the “twenty-five Buddhas”, and after twenty-five days and nights of earnest confession, one's sins could be expiated.⁶¹⁹

To sum up, in the Buddhist sutra translated into Chinese before the 6th century in which the names of these Buddhas appear, the “Seven Buddhas of the Past”, “twenty-

⁶¹⁵ The original text in 《佛說觀佛三昧海經》卷 10 〈10 念七佛品(一〇)〉: 「若有眾生觀像心成, 次當復觀過去七佛像。觀七佛者當勤精進, 晝夜六時勤行六法, 端坐正受當樂少語, 除讀誦經廣演法教, 終不宣說無義之語, 常念諸佛心心相續, 乃至無有一念之間不見佛時, 心專精故不離佛日。」 (CBETA 2023.Q3, T15, no. 643, p. 693a12-17)

⁶¹⁶ The original text in 《佛說觀藥王藥上二菩薩經》: 「若復有人能至心敬禮五十三佛者, 除滅四重五逆及謗方等皆悉清淨。以是諸佛本誓願故, 於念念中即得除滅如上諸罪。」尸棄如來、毘舍浮如來、拘留孫如來、拘那含牟尼如來、迦葉如來亦讚是五十三佛名, 亦復讚歎善男子善女人能聞是五十三佛名者、能稱名者、能敬禮者, 除滅罪障如上所說。」 (CBETA 2023.Q3, T20, no. 1161, p. 664a9-16)

⁶¹⁷ The original text in 《治禪病祕要法》卷 2: 「鬼為亂時, 應當數息極令閑靜, 應當至心念過去七佛、稱彼佛名——南無毘婆尸佛、尸棄佛、提舍佛、[14]鳩樓孫佛、迦那含牟尼佛、迦葉佛、釋迦牟尼佛——稱彼佛名已, 應當憶持一切音聲陀羅尼。」 (CBETA 2023.Q3, T15, no. 620, p. 341c18-23)

⁶¹⁸ In the previous scholarship, the *Sūtra on the Names of the Buddha* (*Foshuo fo ming jing* 佛說佛名經) always being identified by scholars for its association with the Thousand Buddhas (*qianfo* 千佛) motif consisting of a repeating pattern of painted or low-relief sculptures of seated Buddhas, which appears in the For example, see Xiaopeng Liang, *Dunhuang Mogaoku Qianfo Tuxiang Yanjiu* 敦煌莫高窟千佛圖像研究 [A Study of the Thousand Buddha Motifs in the Mogao Caves at Dunhuang] (Beijing: Minzu chubanshe, 2006); Stanley K. Abe, “Art and Practice in a Fifth-Century Chinese Buddhist Cave Temple,” *Ars Orientalis* 20 (1990): 1-31.

⁶¹⁹ The original text in 《佛說佛名經》卷 8: 「若比丘、比丘尼、優婆塞、優婆夷, 欲懺悔諸罪, 當淨洗浴, 著新淨衣, 淨治室內, 敷設高座, 安置佛像, 懸二十五枚幡, 種種華香, 供養誦念此二十五佛名, 日夜六時懺悔, 滿二十五日, 滅四重八禁等罪, 式叉摩那、沙彌沙彌尼亦如是。」 (CBETA 2023.Q3, T14, no. 440, p. 161c2-7)

five Buddhas,” “thirty-five Buddhas”, “fifty-three Buddhas”, and “one thousand Buddhas” are were the direct objects of repentance and recitation in the ritual process. It is mentioned in the sutras that one needs to worship and repent sincerely in front of the images of these Buddhas to extinguish all kinds of sins. Only the sutra that records the “Seven Buddhas of the Past” in meditation activities in addition to penitential activities. It is only recorded that if one fails to visualize the images in their mind, then one needs to come to the statue of the Buddha to perform some act of deep repentance and their sins could be expiated. Yet it does not say that one needs to come to the statue of the Buddha to visualize and meditate.

Also noteworthy is a record in Dunhuang manuscripts that mentioned ritual repentance by reciting the name of Buddha in the Northern Liang period. In this manuscript which is numbered S.4494, there is a transcription of what has been tentatively labelled the “*Liu Shi Li Wen* 劉師禮文.” This text records the specific ways for the elimination of sins, in which worshipping in twelve different directions on a given day of the twelve months of the year (Fig. 5.1-24) .⁶²⁰ A similar form of worship is found in the Taoist scriptures as well.⁶²¹ The end of Liu Shi's Ritual Texts indicates that the copying of the entire text was completed on the 29th day of the 5th month of the 11th year of the Da Tong era (545 A.D.) and that it was copied by a monk named Dao Yang: “Dao Yang of the Pingnan Temple”. Moreover, at the end of the text of “Liu Shi Li Wen,” it is also recorded that during the Xuan Shi period of Bei Liang (412-427), a person called “Master Liu(*liu shi* 劉師)” spread this method of worship for the removal of sins to the future generations. Master Liu also claimed that if one could persist in worshipping in a specific direction at a specific time for three years, one could be reborn in the Pure Land of Maitreya.⁶²² This indicates that the

⁶²⁰ Guangchang Fang, “Liushi Liwen Zhong Libai Fa Chutan 《劉師禮文》中禮拜法初探.[An Initial Exploration of the Worship Method in the Liu Shi Li Wen,” *Shijie Zongjiao Yanjiu* 世界宗教研究[Studies in World Religions], no.1(2008):21-27.

⁶²¹ The original text: “洞真太上八素真經三五行化妙訣•存青童君法”, Dao zang 正統道藏•正乙部•通字號, 《中華道藏》第一冊二〇一頁上二〇二頁上 (The Chinese Taoist Collection, Volume 1, page 201, top 202)

⁶²² The original text of “Liushi Liwen 刘师礼文” is as follows: “玄始十一岁次己卯, 刘师唯法, 教化后生, 除罪礼拜。若有信者, 能如不失时节, 礼拜满三年, 即得道。所愿随意, 不违心。欲生向处, 随意求愿。”

activity of seeking to be reborn in the Western Pure Land to worship and remove sins already existed in the Northern Liang period. Moreover, between the Xuanshi period of the Northern Liang Dynasty (ca.412-427 A.D.) and the eleventh year of the Datong era (545 A.D.) when Dao Yang copied this text, this kind of sin-eliminating activity of worshipping Buddhas in different directions one by one had already become popular.

Therefore, it is very likely that the images of seated Buddhas in Cave 268 of Mogao Caves, which are distributed in all directions on the four walls, were also painted to provide specific objects of worship for penitents who wished to be reborn in the Pure Land of the West. Moreover, “Liu Shi Li Wen” here recorded the specific worship method only states at what time and in what direction to worship but does not specify the name of the specific Buddha who is the object of worship.⁶²³ Perhaps it is because of the existence of such caves in which the images of the Buddhas were painted in actual religious practice that the names of the Buddhas to be worshipped for the elimination of sins did not need to be reiterated in writing by the person who recorded the method. Moreover, on the walls of Mogao Cave 268, Mogao Cave 269, Mogao Cave 270, Mogao Cave 267, and Mogao Cave 271, images of seated Buddhas are neatly painted in all directions (see Fig 5.1-17, Fig 5.1- 19, Fig 5.1-20, Fig 5.1-21, Fig 5.1-22), and their locations encompass the directions of worship ritual recorded in the Dunhuang manuscript “Liu Shi Li Wen” (Fig. 5.1-24) . In addition, in the second half of the final addition to Mogao Cave 268, now the west wall, the niche contains a cross-legged Maitreya statue, with two kneeling bodhisattvas on lotus thrones on each side of the niche (Fig 5.1-17a). This is also in line with the scene described in the *Sutra of the Buddha on Viewing Maitreya Bodhisattva's Ascension to*

欲生弥勒佛国，愿人求毕，不违心意。往生西方妙乐国土，亦得住生。生卅三天上，亦得如是。礼敬礼尽，更如法界诸佛，并及得道沙门。”

⁶²³ Fang Guangchang thus points out that this method of worshipping to remove sins has no relationship with the way of worshipping to specific Buddhist names advocated by the system of Buddhist Names Sutras introduced to China from India, but is closely related to the early forms of ritual confession in Chinese Taoism, see Guangchang Fang, “Liushi Liwen Zhong Libai Fa Chtan 《刘师礼文》中礼拜法初探[An Initial Exploration of the Worship Methods in the Liu Shi Li Wen],” *Shijie Zongjiao Yanjiu* 世界宗教研究[Studies in World Religions], no.1(2008):26-27.

Tusita(佛說觀彌勒菩薩上生兜率天經).⁶²⁴ And most scholars agree that these images represent the world of the Pure Land.⁶²⁵ Then the promise made in the “Liu Shi Li Wen” that after three years of worshipping the Buddha in different directions for a specified period, one would be able to rebirth in the Pure Land of the West can also correspond to the statues and images on the west wall of the cave 268.

This penance ritual of the Thirty-five Buddhas, Fifty-three Buddhas, and other Buddhas as the object of penance was continued in the northern regions created by Ling Yu (517-605 A.D.) at the end of the Northern Dynasty, and in the ritual of “San Jie Jiao 三階教” practiced by Xin Xing at the Northern Qi Dynasty. A similar method of confession to the buddhas recorded in the “Liu Shi Li Wen” was also recorded in the *Collection of Confessions from Various Sutras*(集諸經禮懺儀), Volume 1, “Day and Night, Six Hours of Making Vows (晝夜六時發願文)”, collected by Zhi Sheng in the Tang Dynasty.⁶²⁶

It is also worth noting that, according to Professor Sheng Kai's study of Buddhist penance rituals, early penitential activities were only for the present benefit of secular people to eliminate sins, and it was only in the time of Zhi Yi (538-597 A.D.) that penance was made a prerequisite for the attainment of the actuality of meditation.⁶²⁷ This again negates the connection between the side chambers of Mogao Cave 268 in the Northern Liang period and the practice of meditation from the level

⁶²⁴ The original text in 《佛說觀彌勒菩薩上生兜率天經》:「佛滅度後我諸弟子，若有精勤修諸功德、威儀不缺，掃塔塗地，以眾名香、妙花供養，行眾三昧深入正受，讀誦經典，如是等人應當至心，雖不斷結如得六通，應當繫念念佛形像，稱彌勒名。如是等輩，若一念頃受八戒齋，修諸淨業發弘誓願，命終之後，譬如壯士屈申臂頃，即得往生兜率陀天，於蓮華上結加趺坐，百千天子作天伎樂，持天曼陀羅花、摩訶曼陀羅華，」(CBETA 2023.Q3, T14, no. 452, p. 420a10-18)

⁶²⁵ Mingfen Yang, *Tangdai Xifang Jingtū Lichan Fa Yanjiu* 唐代西方淨土禮懺法研究[Study of Western Pure Land Rituals in the Tang Dynasty] (Beijing: Mingzu Chubanshe, 2007), 156.

⁶²⁶ The original text in 《集諸經禮懺儀》卷1 原文如下:「禮佛功德。廣大如法界。究竟如虛空。盡未來際供養一切三寶。終無有休息。隨意靜默量時任唱。初夜半夜後夜午時平明日沒。唱靜六時禮拜佛法大綱。晝三夜三各嚴持香華。入塔觀像默供養行道禮佛。平明及與午時。並別唱五十三佛。餘皆總唱。日暮初夜並別唱三十五佛。餘皆總唱。半夜並別唱二十五佛。餘皆總唱。觀此七階佛如在目前。思惟如來所有功德。廣作如是清淨懺悔。上來布置禮佛綱軌次第多少悉。是故信行禪師。依經自行此法。於[14]今徒眾亦常相續依行不絕。但以現無正文流傳。恐欲學者無所依據。是以故集此文流通於世。願後學者。依文讀誦。不增不減。」(CBETA 2023.Q1, T47, no. 1982, p. 465b28-c13)

⁶²⁷ Kai Sheng, *Zhongguo Fojiao Chanfa Yanjiu* 中國佛教懺法研究[A Study of Chinese Buddhist Confession] (Beijing: Religious Culture Press, 2004), 336.

of internal Buddhist doctrine. Therefore, this dissertation suggests the possibility that Mogao Cave 267, Mogao Cave 269, Mogao Cave 270, and Mogao Cave 271, which were attached to Mogao Cave 268, were once used as a place for penance rituals.

As for the function of Mogao Cave 275, which was excavated after Mogao Cave 268, apart from the meditation function proposed by the early scholars,⁶²⁸ some scholars also have put forward speculations on other functions. For example, some scholars have suggested the possibility of Mogao Cave 275 being used as a lecture theatre since the area of Mogao Cave 275 is larger than that of both Mogao Cave 268 and Mogao Cave 272.⁶²⁹ In support of the view that Mogao Cave 275 was used as a lecture hall, some scholars have named the remaining mural painting on the east wall of Mogao Cave 275 “*Meditation Pavilion Lecture Hall*(禪閣講堂說法圖),” and believe that the central figure who preached the Dharma on the front is the famous monk Fa Liang.⁶³⁰ In recent years, Dr. Zhao Rong, based on the line drawings in the *Archaeological Report on Caves 266-275 of Mogao Caves*, has reconstructed the content of the image on the east wall of Mogao Cave 275 here, suggesting that it depicts the ritual scene of a group of monks preaching the Dharma and taking the precepts in front of the meditation pavilion (Fig. 5.1-25b).⁶³¹ This suggests that the original function of Cave 275 may have been related to precept-taking activities. However, according to Zhao Rong's reconstruction of the murals on the east wall of

⁶²⁸ For example, Li Jingjie believes that Cave 275 is a cave for meditation practice with Maitreya Bodhisattva as the main object of meditation. See Jingjie Li, “Dunhuang Mogaoku Beichao Suidai Dongku Tuxiang Goucheng Shilun 敦煌莫高窟北朝隋代洞窟图像构成试论 [Discussing Dunhuang Mogao Grottoes Northern Dynasties Sui Dynasty Cave Image Composition],” in *Yungang Guoji Xueshu Yantao Hui Lunwenji Yanjiu Juan* 2005 年云冈国际学术研讨会论文集 (研究卷) [2005 Yungang International Symposium Proceedings (Research Volume)], (Beijing: Cultural Relics Press, 2005), 376.

⁶²⁹ De Ma, *Dunhuang Mogaoku Shi Yanjiu* 敦煌莫高窟史研究 [Studies on the History of the Dunhuang Mogao Caves] (Lanzhou: Gansu Education Press, 1996), 55-60; Delong Yuan, “Shishi Mogaoku Di Erqier Ku de Neirong 试释莫高窟第 272 窟的内容 [A Try For Interpretations of the Contents of Cave 272 at Mogao Grottoes],” *Dunhuang Yanjiu* 敦煌研究 [Dunhuang Research], no.5 (2002):15.

⁶³⁰ Lin Mei, “Tanmo Pi yu Tanmo Bi Mingshi Bian Fushuo Dunhuang faliang Chanshi Ji Xiangguan Wenti 昙摩毗与昙摩婢名实辨—附说敦煌法良禅师及相关问题 [Tammopithecus and Tammopithecus: An Introduction to the Dunhuang Zen Master Faliang and Related Problems],” *Dunhuang Yanjiu* 敦煌研究 [Dunhuang Research], no.3 (2005): 80.

⁶³¹ Zhao Rong, “Dunhuang Mogaoku Di Erqiwu Ku Dongbi Canhua Neirong Shixi 敦煌莫高窟第 275 窟东壁残画内容试析 [A Trial Analysis of the Content of the Remnants of the Eastern Wall Painting in Cave 275 of Dunhuang Mogao Caves],” *Sichou Zhilu Yanjiu* 丝绸之路研究集刊 [Journal of the Silk Road Studies], no.00(2020):376-393.

cave 275, this scene may also represent an episode in the Buddhist tale, in which Sakyamuni agrees to the demon king's request for nirvana and goes to the lecture hall to inform the monks that he will reach nirvana in three months and exhort the monks to cultivate themselves diligently.⁶³² In other words, it is possible that the depiction of this Buddhist tale on the east wall of Mogao Cave 275 was painted as the object for the usual ritual of praising the Buddha. However, the function of the cave at the time of its construction cannot be determined solely by a single mural in the cave, but rather by considering the combination of the murals in the cave as a whole, as well as the context in which the cave was built.

Now, let us re-examine all the murals in Cave 275 (Fig. 5.1-25). First, we will look at the identities of the main statue on the west wall, which is the main wall opposite the entrance to the cave, and the eight statues on the north and south walls. Based on the previous research on Maitreya statues,⁶³³ it can be assumed that the main statue on the west wall and the small statues on the north and south walls are related to Maitreya. The cross-ankled statue on the west wall can be regarded as Maitreya, with his hair pulled back and wearing a precious crown with a seated Buddha in the center of the crown (Fig. 5.1-26a). This main statue is also flanked by two lions on either side. These features are consistent with the image of Maitreya at the time of his rebirth in Tusita Heaven recorded in the *Sutra on Visualizing Maitreya Bodhisattva's Rebirth Above in Tusita Heaven* translated by Juqu Jingsheng (at ca. 455 A.D.) This sutra records that Maitreya appeared on a lion's seat in the Mani Hall of Seven Treasures Terrace in Tusita Heaven and that hundreds of thousands of Buddhas appeared in the Heavenly Treasure Crown that he wore. Although this sutra does not mention that Maitreya sits in a cross-ankled position, the 28 examples of statues with

⁶³² Miyaji Showa, *Niepan he Mile de Tuxiang Xue* 涅槃和弥勒的图像学: 从印度到中亚 [Iconography of Parinirvana and Maitreya: from India to Central Asia], trans. Li Ping (Beijing: Wenwu Chubanshe, 2009), 75.

⁶³³ Some Japanese scholars have pointed out that the difference between the statue of Maitreya Buddha and the statue of Sakyamuni Buddha is indeed very small, and it is difficult to identify the statue without an inscription. See Miyaji Showa, *Niepan he Mile de Tuxiang Xue* 涅槃和弥勒的图像学: 从印度到中亚 [Iconography of Parinirvana and Maitreya: from India to Central Asia], trans. Li Ping (Beijing: Wenwu Chubanshe, 2009), 248-255; J. C. Huntington, "The Iconography and Iconology of Maitreya Images in Gandhara," *Journal of Central Asia*, vol. VII, no. 1 (1984), 133-178; Yu Min Li, "The Maitreya Cult and its Art in Early China" (PhD diss., The Ohio State University, 1983), 140-230.

explicit “Maitreya” inscriptions found so far already show that Maitreya was often portrayed in a cross-ankled position in actual statues.⁶³⁴ It is therefore entirely possible that the cross-legged statue in Mogao Cave 275 is also a representation of Maitreya.

Moreover, the ceiling of Mogao Cave 275 is modeled on the roof of a Chinese traditional palace (Fig. 5.1-26b), and the entire grotto is modeled on a palatial room. What more, the four figures of Maitreya appearing along the upper walls of the north and south walls of Mogao Cave 275 are all placed in palace-shaped niches (Fig. 5.1-26, Fig. 5.1-27). This is fully in line with the description in the Sutra *Sutra on Visualizing Maitreya Bodhisattva's Rebirth Above in Tusita Heaven* that the Tusita Heaven Palace has 5,000,000,000,000 jeweled palaces, with a forty-nine-tiered palace in the center. In Mogao Cave 275, the upper portions of the North wall and South wall are dominated by the unequivocal identification of the bodhisattvas with crossed ankles as Maitreya. This suggests that the upper parts of the North wall and South wall are related to Maitreya in Tusita Heaven. The bodhisattvas statue with crossed ankles (Ardharyāṅkāśana)⁶³⁵ in the two niches in the upper parts of the North and South walls also corresponds to the description of the Bodhisattva Maitreya who sits under the Long Hua Tree in contemplation after Maitreya's descent to Jambudīpa (Fig.5.1-26e, Fig.5.1-27c) .⁶³⁶

⁶³⁴ Takashi Koezuka, “Mogaoku Di erqi wu Jiaojiao Pusa Xiang yu Jiantuoluo De Xianli 莫高窟第 275 窟交脚菩萨像与犍陀罗的先例[The Cross-footed Bodhisattva Statue in Cave 275 of the Mogao Caves and the Precedent of Gandhara],” *Dunhuang Yanjiu* 敦煌研究[Dunhuang Research], no.1 (1990): 17-21; Guangming Yin, “Beiliang Shita Fenqi Shilun 北凉石塔分期试论[A Trial Study of the Staging of the Stone Pagodas of Beiliang],” *Dunhuang Yanjiu* 敦煌研究[Dunhuang Research], no. 3 (1997): 88-96; Guangming Yin, “Beiliang Shita Shang de Yijing Bagua Yu Qifo YI Mile Zaoxiang 北凉石塔上的易经八卦与七佛一弥勒造像[The Yi Jing Bagua and Seven Buddhas and a Maitreya Statue on the Beiliang Stone Pagoda],” *Dunhuang Yanjiu* 敦煌研究[Dunhuang Research], no.1 (1997): 83-90; Guangming Yin, *Beiliang Shita Yanjiu* 北凉石塔研究[Studies on the Beiliang Stone Pagoda] (Xinzhu: Juefeng Cultural Foundation, 2000), 75; Miyaji Showa, *Niepan he Mile de Tuxiang Xue* 涅槃和弥勒的图像学: 从印度到中亚[Iconography of Parinirvana and Maitreya: from India to Central Asia], trans. Li Ping (Beijing: Wenwu Chubanshe, 2009),297; Huiming Wang, “Dunhuang Jingtū Tuxiang Yanjiu 敦煌净土图像研究[A Study of Pure Land Motifs at Dunhuang]” (PhD diss., GaoXiong, Sun Yat-sen University, 2000),31-32.

⁶³⁵ Miyaji Showa, *Niepan he Mile de Tuxiang Xue* 涅槃和弥勒的图像学: 从印度到中亚[Iconography of Parinirvana and Maitreya: from India to Central Asia], trans. Li Ping (Beijing: Wenwu Chubanshe, 2009), 286-290.

⁶³⁶ There are three sutras translated during the Six Dynasties that mention Maitreya sitting under the Dragon Tree after descending from Tusita Heaven: 1. The *Sutra on the Descent of Maitreya* 弥勒下生经 Translated by Zhu Fahuo in the second year of the reign of Emperor Taiping in the year 303; 2. The *Sutra on Maitreya's Great Success* 弥勒大成佛经 in the Fourth Year of the reign of Hongshi Translated by Hatamarashita in the fourth year

Furthermore, the images on the lower part of the north and south walls of Mogao Cave 275 have been pointed out by scholars as possibly representing Maitreya's career and previous lives, not necessarily the tale of Sakyamuni.⁶³⁷ This is because Maitreya's attainment of Buddhahood in the future is also the result of his diligent practice of cultivating purity (*brahmacharya* 梵行) in his previous life. For example, in Volume 13 of the *Zhong Ahan Jin* (中阿含經), it is recorded that Maitreya had “widely performed and circulated brahmacharya.”⁶³⁸ Therefore, the narrative paintings on the middle part of the north wall of Mogao Cave 275 might be regarded as Maitreya's bodhisattva deeds before he ascends to Tusita Heaven (Fig.5.1-27). The narrative paintings on the south wall of Mogao Cave 275 might be regarded as the events involving Maitreya's descent to Jambudīpa and attaining Buddhahood (Fig.5.1-26). Because in the *Sutra of Maitreya's Paradise (Life After Maitreya's Coming as a Buddha)*, there is a description of Maitreya's rebirth in the future in the capital city of Chi Tou Mo, where he attained enlightenment, and attained Buddhahood.⁶³⁹

In summary, the murals and statues in Mogao Cave 275 are all centered around Maitreya. Yet, this is not necessarily a product of the combination of Maitreya's

of the reign of Hongshi in the year 402 A.D.; and 3. The *Sutra on the Descent of Maitreya into the Buddha* 弥勒下生成佛经 Translated by Hatamarashita in the Fourth Year of the reign of Hongshi and in the Fourteenth Year of Hongshi from the year 402 to the year 412 A.D.. It is just that none of these classics mentions the specific posture of Maitreya

⁶³⁷ Zhang Yuanlin, “Mogao Ku Di Erqiwu Ku Gushi Hua yu Zhuzun Zaoxiang Guanxi Xintan 莫高窟第 275 窟故事画与主尊造像关系新探[A New Exploration of the Relationship between the Story Paintings and the Main Statue in Cave 275 of Mogao Caves],” *Duanhuang Yanjiu* 敦煌研究[Dunhuang Research], no. 04(2001):56-65; Mingfen Yang, *Tangdai Xifang Jingtū Lichan Fa Yanjiu* 唐代西方净土礼忏法研究 Study of Western Pure Land Rituals in the Tang Dynasty,(Beijing: Mingzu Chubanshe, 2007),164.

⁶³⁸ The original text in 《中阿含經》卷 13:「尊者彌勒即從坐起，偏袒著衣，叉手向佛白曰：「世尊！我於未來久遠人壽八萬歲時，可得成佛，名彌勒如來、無所著、等正覺、明行成為、善逝、世間解、無上士、道法御、天人師，號佛、眾祐，如今世尊、如來、無所著、等正覺、明行成為、善逝、世間解、無上士、道法御、天人師，號佛、眾祐。我於此世，天及魔、梵、沙門、梵志，從人至天，自知自覺，自作證成就遊，如今世尊於此世，天及魔、梵、沙門、梵志，從人至天，自知自覺，自作證成就遊。我當說法，初妙、中妙、竟亦妙，有義有文，具足清淨，顯現梵行，如今世尊說法，初妙、中妙、竟亦妙，有義有文，具足清淨，顯現梵行。我當廣演流布梵行，大會無量，從人至天，善發顯現，如今世尊廣演流布梵行，大會無量，從人至天，善發顯現。我當有無量百千比丘眾，如今世尊無量百千比丘眾。」」(CBETA 2023.Q3, T01, no. 26, p. 510c10-27)

⁶³⁹ The original text in 《佛說彌勒下生經》:「當其夜半彌勒出家，即於其夜成無上道。時三千大千刹土六返震動，地神各各相告曰：『今時彌勒已成佛。』」(CBETA 2023.Q3, T14, no. 453, p. 421c16-19)

beliefs and the meditation practice that was prevalent at the time.⁶⁴⁰ It is still possible that Maitreya's belief was combined with the idea of repentance. The combination of the popular belief in Maitreya and the idea of penance had already given rise to numerous penance rituals for the elimination of sins around Maitreya when Mogao Cave 275 was built.⁶⁴¹ Previous scholars have noted the prevalence of Maitreya beliefs when discussing the recurring image of Maitreya in the religious context of the Mogao Cave 275. Few scholars have discussed the prevalence of Maitreya's penitential activities.⁶⁴² In the *Sutra on Visualizing Maitreya Bodhisattva's Rebirth Above in Tusita Heaven*, the recurring theme is that if someone “calls the Maitreya Buddha’s name, 1200 kalpas of sins of this person will be expiated,” if someone “hears the name of Maitreya, this person will be free from the sin of birth and death for a thousand and two hundred kalpas,” “Hearing the name of Maitreya and putting their palms together in reverence, this person will free from the sin of birth and death for fifty kalpas,” and “If there is a person who pays homage to Maitreya, the sin of birth and death for ten billion kalpas will be removed.”⁶⁴³ This sutra repeatedly mentions the efficacy of saying Maitreya's name and paying homage to Maitreya in removing sins. And it clearly states that paying homage to Maitreya removes the most sins. In this sutra, it is also clearly stated that for mortals who have committed serious sins, if they wish to be reborn in the Pure Land of the Buddhas, they should throw themselves onto the ground and make sincere repentance when they hear the name of Maitreya Bodhisattva; and if someone produces the statue of Maitreya, a series of incense and flower offerings, they will be greeted by Maitreya Bodhisattva and immediately be reborn in the Pure Land.⁶⁴⁴

⁶⁴⁰ Mingfen Yang, *Tangdai Xifang Jingtū Lichan Fa Yanjiu* 唐代西方淨土禮懺法研究[Study of Western Pure Land Rituals in the Tang Dynasty] (Beijing: Mingzū Chubanshe, 2007), 162.

⁶⁴¹ Kai Sheng, *Zhongguo Fojiao Chanfa Yanjiu* 中國佛教懺法研究[A Study of Chinese Buddhist Confession] (Beijing: Religious Culture Press, 2004), 334.

⁶⁴² Sheng, *Zhongguo Fojiao Chanfa Yanjiu*, 340.

⁶⁴³ The original text in 《佛說觀彌勒菩薩上生兜率天經》: 「若一念頃稱彌勒名, 此人除却千二百劫生死之罪; 但聞彌勒名合掌恭敬, 此人除却五十劫生死之罪; 若有敬禮彌勒者, 除却百億劫生死之罪; 設不生天, 未來世中龍花菩提樹下亦得值遇, 發無上心。」(CBETA 2023.Q3, T14, no. 452, p. 420b26-c2)

⁶⁴⁴ 《佛說觀彌勒菩薩上生兜率天經》: 「若善男子、善女人, 犯諸禁戒造眾惡業, 聞是菩薩大悲名字, 五體投地誠心懺悔, 是諸惡業速得清淨。未來世中諸眾生等, 聞是菩薩大悲名稱, 造立形像, 香花、衣服、繒蓋、幢幡, 禮拜繫念, 此人命欲終時, 彌勒菩薩放眉間白毫大人相光, 與諸天子雨曼陀羅花, 來迎此

In addition to this, there are also records in other literature of penitential rituals around Maitreya for the elimination of sins. For example, in Volume 12 of the *Chu Sanzang Ji Ji* (出三藏記集), there is a record of “Mile Liushi Chanhui Fayuan Ji (彌勒六時懺悔法緣記)” with a note that it is from the *Mile Pusa Suowen Benyuan Jing* (彌勒菩薩所問本願經). In *Mile Pusa Suowen Benyuan Jing*, translated by Dharmarakṣa in the Western Jin Dynasty (ca.303 A.D.), it is recorded that one of the reasons why Maitreya could become a Buddha is that Maitreya Bodhisattva once with his knees down on the ground and face to the ten directions said this verse: “I repent of all my sins.”⁶⁴⁵ There is also a record of a fifty-day penance in front of the statue of Maitreya in the *Biography of Famous Monks* by Liang Dynasty Bao Chang.⁶⁴⁶ Moreover, one of the most frequent themes in the preserved inscriptions of Maitreya statues from the early Northern Dynasties is also “repentance and the elimination of sins.”⁶⁴⁷

This dissertation therefore suggests that Mogao Cave 275 has the potential for Maitreya repentance rituals. Apart from the fact that the direct object of the repentance ritual activity is painted inside its cave, the architectural space of the cave also fully accommodates the dynamic activities of worship and penance. The cave is 3.2-3.5 meters high, 3.5 meters wide, and 5.65 meters long. In addition, a row of donor images appears below both the north and south walls of Mogao Cave 275. The row of donors on the north wall includes figures holding musical instruments and

人。此人須臾即得往生，值遇彌勒，頭面禮敬，未舉頭頃便得聞法，即於無上道得不退轉，於未來世得值恒河沙等諸佛如來。」(CBETA 2023.Q3, T14, no. 452, p. 420b6-15)

⁶⁴⁵ The original text in 《彌勒菩薩所問本願經》：「彌勒菩薩晝夜各三正衣束體，叉手下膝著地，向於十方說此偈言：『我悔一切過，勸助眾道德，歸命禮諸佛，令得無上慧。』」(CBETA 2023.Q3, T12, no. 349, p. 188c23-27)

⁶⁴⁶ Zong Shi (宗性), “Copy of the Biographies of Famous Monks,” II.6, “Biography of Bao Yun,” *Swastika Xinzhi Zhuanzhengjing* (卍新纂續藏經), vol. 77, p. 358.

⁶⁴⁷ Xudong Hou, *Wu Liu Shiji Beifang Mingzhong Fojiao Xinyang yi Zaoxiang Ji Wei Zhongxin de Koacha* 五六世紀北方民眾佛教信仰以造像記為中心的考察 [An Examination of the Fifth and Sixth Century Northern Popular Buddhist Beliefs Centred on the Record of Statues] (Beijing: Social Science Literature Press, 2015), 196-204; Jisui Sato, “Beichao Zaoxiang 北朝造像 Statue in the Northern Dynasties” in Riben Zhong Qingnian Xuezhelun Zhongguo Shi Liuchao Suitang Juan 日本中青年學者論中國史六朝隋唐卷 [Young and Middle-aged Japanese Scholars on Chinese History of the Six Dynasties Sui and Tang Volumes]. ed. Liu, Junwen (Shanghai: Shanghai Ancient Books Publishing House, 1995), 82-86.

figures holding flowers (Fig.5.1-27g,h). In the lower part of the south wall, there are rows of heavenly beings holding flowers (Fig.5.1-26f,g,h). The direction of these donor rows is towards the statue of Maitreya on the west wall. This also seems to imply that the worship of Maitreya was once conducted here. Furthermore, according to Buddhist rituals, it is also likely that the reason for the narrative paintings related to Maitreya's career and previous lives, on the middle part of the north and south walls of Mogao Cave 275 was to facilitate the ritual of praising. In ancient India, the purpose of reciting the story of the Buddha's life is to perform the praising.⁶⁴⁸ It is therefore likely that the designers of Mogao Cave 275 followed this practice of building worship spaces that came from India. Finally, there is an obvious lampstand and burning residue on the floor of Mogao Cave 275 (Fig. 5.1-28). It is also implied that this cave was once used for some time for worship activities involving burning incense and lamps.

Although it is true that during the Northern and Southern Dynasties, the rite of confession with Maitreya as the object of worship and penance did become popular, there is no particularly detailed record of the rite of confession with Maitreya during that time. The “Six-Time Repentance of Maitreya (彌勒六時懺悔法)” already existed during the Northern Dynasties, but it is not known exactly what ritual procedures were involved. At present, we have only found a few texts in the Dunhuang manuscripts that record Maitreya's penance rituals, which were performed during the eighth and ninth centuries. These pieces of manuscripts are S.5433, S.4451, and P.3840, currently known as the “*shang sheng li* (上生禮)”.⁶⁴⁹ Sheng Kai points out that there are many similarities between the rituals recorded in the Dunhuang

⁶⁴⁸ In Yijin's *Nanhai yanggui neifa zhuan*, Volume 4, there is a reference to the “thirty-two rites of praise and chants.”

⁶⁴⁹ Wang Juan's proofreading and study of the Dunhuang text of the Upper Life Ritual, S.5433, S.4451, P.3840, provides the conditions for a discussion of Maitreya's rite of passage, which can be roughly divided into the following order: inviting the Buddha, sighing at the Buddha, saluting the Ci's, aspiring to repentance, aspiring to vows, reciting the Ci's, being in the world of the Brahmans, returning to the Buddha, returning to the Buddha, returning to the Buddha, returning to the Buddha, returning to the Three Prayers of Mercy, Ci's Upper Life Madhyamika, the Madhyamika of the Uncertainty of Actions, and the Madhyamika of RuLai's Nirvana, with seven forbidden incantations. and interspersed with seven forbidden mantras. For more details, see Juan Wang, *Dunhuang Lichan Wen Yanjiu* 敦煌礼忏文研究[A Study of Dunhuang Ritual Confessions] (Taibei: Dharma Drum Cultural Enterprise, 1998), 235-288.

manuscripts and the “Four Rites of Praise for Maitreya”, translated by Xuanzang, and assumed that the rituals recorded in the “Rites of the Upper Life(贊彌勒四禮文)” in the Dunhuang documents were formulated under the procedures of the rituals of confession that performed in Buddhist activities.⁶⁵⁰ The procedure of the “*shang sheng li* 上生禮” consists of the following eleven parts: 1. Invitation to the Buddha, 2. Praising the Buddha, 3. Revering the Buddha, 4. Heartfelt Vows, 5. Reciting the appropriate mantra(“念慈氏”), 6. Do noble practices(Brahmacharya), 7. Returning to the World, 8. Receiving the three refuges, 9. Recites the appropriate mantra (“慈氏上生偈”), 10. Recites the appropriate mantra on impermanence (“諸行無常偈”), 11. Recites the appropriate mantra(“如來涅槃偈”). “*Shang Sheng Li*” is mainly about worship, repentance, and wishing to be reborn in the Tusita Heaven.⁶⁵¹ Whether or not this wish can be fulfilled ultimately depends on Maitreya Buddha, the master of the Tusita Heaven. It can be assumed that the penitential activities of the fifth to sixth centuries at Dunhuang included at least two parts: saluting the Maitreya Buddha and repenting in front of the Maitreya Buddha. Therefore, the Maitreya Buddha sculpted and painted in the Mogao Cave 275 is very likely to be the object of worship and repentance.

In summary, this dissertation argues that if we consider the content of the murals in Cave 275, the traces of its use, the context in which it was constructed, and the religious practices popular at this time as recorded in Dunhuang manuscripts, there is one more possibility for the function of Mogao Cave 275, namely, the Maitreya repentance rituals that centered around Maitreya. The Dunhuang people at this time would have spent enormous manpower and resources to build such a Mogao Cave 275 in the middle of the cliffs with many images of the Bodhisattva Maitreya and the stories of his acts, and it is indeed possible that their motivation was also based on

⁶⁵⁰ Kai Sheng, *Zhongguo Fojiào Chānfǎ Yánjiū* 中国佛教忏法研究[A Study of Chinese Buddhist Confession] (Beijing: Religious Culture Press, 2004), 340.

⁶⁵¹ Mingfen Yang, *Tāngdài Xīfāng Jìngtǔ Lìchān Fǎ Yánjiū* 唐代西方净土礼忏法研究 Study of Western Pure Land Rituals in the Tang Dynasty,(Beijing: Mingzu Chubanshe, 2007), 254.

their belief in Maitreya. The Maitreya Rituals and Confessions are also related to the “creation of images, praising and reciting”. The mural paintings in this cave are set up in such a way that they are perfectly suited for those activities. During the Maitreya confession ceremony, the images in Cave 275 are painted in the cave as objects to be confessed and used for worship. There is a direct correlation with the penance rituals.

Next, we will investigate Mogao Cave 272, the last addition between Mogao Cave 275 and Mogao Cave 268 (Fig. 5.1-29). Cave 272 is regarded as the earliest surviving truncated pyramidal-ceiling cave in the Mogao Caves.⁶⁵² Regarding the identity of the seated Buddha in the niche on the west wall and the cross-legged seated Buddha in the center of the north and south walls of Mogao Cave 272, Kengo Higashiyama first suggested in 1991 that the combination of these three Buddhas on the three walls could be considered to correspond to the “Buddhas of Three worlds”.⁶⁵³ Later, He Shizhe and other scholars agreed that this view was very appropriate. At present, most scholars agree that the statues and images in Mogao Cave 272 represent the Three Buddhas. But, scholars still have different views on the specific identities of the three Buddhas. Some scholars believe that the seated Buddha in the center of the west wall of Mogao Cave 272 is the Maitreya Buddha because there are several statues of seated Buddhas with a clear inscription “Maitreya” during the fifth-sixth century.⁶⁵⁴ While there is also a clear inscription for the “Shakyamuni”

⁶⁵² The exact construction period of the cave was dated by Yin Guangming to 436-439 AD based on a comparison with the Beiliang Chronological Stone Pagoda, see Guangming Yin, “Cong Beiliang Shita Kan Mogaoku Zaoqi Sanku de Jianzao Niandai 从北凉石塔看莫高窟早期三窟的建造年代[The construction dates of the three early Mogao Grottoes from the Beiliang Stone Pagoda],” in *Dunhuang Xue Guoji Xueshu Taolun Hui Tiyaoyi 2000 年敦煌学国际学术讨论会提要集[2000 Dunhuang Studies International Symposium Abstracts]* (Dunhuang: Dunhuang Yanjiu Yuan, 2000).

⁶⁵³ Higashiyama Kengo, Xiaoping He, “Dunhuang Mogaoku Foshu Xia Shuofa Tu Xingshi de Wailai Yingxiang Jiqi Bianqian 敦煌莫高窟佛树下说法图形式的外来影响及其变迁[Foreign Influences on the Forms of Sayings under the Buddha Tree in the Dunhuang Mogao Caves and Their Changes],” *Dunhuang Yanjiu 敦煌研究* Dunhuang Research, no.1(1991):48-56.

⁶⁵⁴ He Shizhe has counted at least nine instances of clear inscription of “Maitreya” statues from the 5th-6th centuries. See Shizhe He, “Guanyu Shiliuguo Beichao Shiqi de Sanshifo yu Sanfo Zaoxiang Zhu Wenti 关于十六国北朝时期的三世佛与三佛造像诸问题—[On the problems of the three Buddhas and their statues during the Northern Dynasties of the Sixteen Kingdoms (I)],” *Dunhuang Yanjiu 敦煌研究* Dunhuang Research, no.4 (1992):10-11. Liu Yongzeng, on the other hand, believes that the seated Buddha in the west niche of Cave 272 is the Maitreya Buddha, and also believes that most of the main Buddha statues in the west niches of the Mogao Caves during the Northern Dynasties period should be the Maitreya Buddha. See Liu Yongzeng, “千佛围绕式说法图”与《观佛三昧海经》[A Thousand Buddhas Around a Figure of Preaching and the Scripture of Contemplating the Buddha and the Samadhi Sea], *Dunhuang Yanjiu 敦煌研究*[Dunhuang Research], no.1

sitting Buddha statue at the same time.⁶⁵⁵ Therefore, some scholars believe that the seated Buddha on the west wall of Cave 272 with the light of the Buddha's head should represent the present Buddha Sakyamuni Buddha,⁶⁵⁶ and the Buddha sitting on the lion's seat on the south wall may represent the future Buddha Maitreya, and the Buddha sitting on the Sumeru seat in the north wall represents the past Buddha.⁶⁵⁷ Therefore, the three Buddhas that appear on three walls can be combined to form the “Buddhas of Three Worlds” as well.⁶⁵⁸

Regarding the function of these three Buddhas in caves, previous scholars such as He Shizhe and Ning Qiang still believed that they were the objects of meditation and concluded that the caves in which the three Buddhas appeared were used for meditation.⁶⁵⁹ However, some of these scholars also admit that in the practice of Mahayana Dharma, whether it is “meditation, precepts, penance, or even tantra,” all of them are inseparable from the Three Worlds Buddhas and the Ten Directions Buddha.⁶⁶⁰ It is also worth noting that there are only two references to “contemplation of the Buddhas of the Three Worlds” in the sutras translated during the Northern and Southern Dynasties, and a careful examination of the complete texts of these two references does not mention that one has to observe the Buddhas of the Three Worlds

(1998):15-17.

⁶⁵⁵ Shizhe He, “Guanyu Dunhuang Mogaoku de Sanshi Fo yu Sanfo Zaoxiang 关于敦煌莫高窟的三世佛与三佛造像[On the Three Buddhas and Three Buddha Statues in the Mogao Caves of Dunhuang].” *Dunhuang Yanjiu* 敦煌研究[Dunhuang Research], no.2(1994): 68-69.

⁶⁵⁶ He, “Guanyu Dunhuang Mogaoku de Sanshi Fo,” 70; Deling Yuan, “Shishi Mogao Ku Di 272 ku de Neirong 试释莫高窟第 272 窟的内容[Trial interpretation of the contents of Mogao Cave No. 272],” *Dunhuang Yanjiu* 敦煌研究[Dunhuang Research], no.5(2002):15-20.

⁶⁵⁷ He, “Guanyu Dunhuang Mogaoku de Sanshi Fo,” 70.

⁶⁵⁸ Professor Li Song questioned the criteria for identifying a Buddha image proposed by Hiroshi Sofukawa as early as the end of the last century, and finally pointed out that the meanings represented by a particular stylized Buddha image are not static, but change according to the specific scenario in which it is used. See Song Li, “Lun Tangdai Amituo Fo Tuxiang de fouding Wenti yu Zengbu Chuan Kuan Jiaoshou Shangque 论唐代阿弥陀佛图像的否定问题与曾布川宽教授商榷[On the Negative Problems of Amitabha Images in the Tang Dynasty with Professor Hiroshi Sofukawa],” *Meishu Yanjiu* 美术研究[Art Research], no.2(1996):29-36.

⁶⁵⁹ In addition to He Shizhe, there are also scholars such as Wei Wenbing who have argued in recent years that the main function of Cave 272 was meditation practice. Tongshu Yang, and Wenbin Wei, “Gansu Shiliu Guo Shiqi Shiku Si de Changuan Linian yu Biaoxian 甘肃十六国时期石窟寺的禅观理念与表现[The Concept and Performance of Zen Concepts in the Cave Temples of the Sixteen Kingdoms Period in Gansu],” *Xibei Mingzu Daxue Xuebao Zhexue Shehui Kexue Ban* 西北民族大学学报(哲学社会科学版)[Journal of Northwest Minzu University(Philosophy and Social Sciences)], no.5 (2019):82-83.

⁶⁶⁰ Wenyong Lai, “On the ‘Three Buddhas in Ten Directions’ in the Northern Wei Grottoes of Bingling Temple--The Examples of Caves 126, 128 and 132,” in *Proceedings of the 2002 International Symposium on the Art of the Maijishan Caves and Buddhist Culture on the Silk Road*, ed. Institute of Dunhuang Studies (Lanzhou University Press, 2002), 327.

with one's physical eyes before entering into meditation; rather, it is recorded that one finally enters into the meditation and observes them in mind.

Reading again the original text involving “Visualizing the Buddhas of the Three Worlds” in the Buddhist sutra mentioned by previous scholars. In the *Large Sutra on Perfect Wisdom* (*Mahaprajnaparamita sastra sutra* 大智度論) which was translated by Kumārajīva around 402-405A.D., the reference to “Samādhi of the contemplation of the Buddhas of the three worlds (觀三世諸佛三昧)” actually states that Bodhisattva visualizing the Buddhas of the three worlds in a meditative state, and it is not mentioned that using the “Buddhas of the three worlds” as an object of meditative practice in the case of an unsuccessful meditation session.⁶⁶¹ Similarly, in the *Flower Garland Sūtra* translated by Buddhahadra in the Eastern Jin Dynasty (ca.418-420 A.D.) , it is also mentioned that in the thought of seeing the three Buddhas by the eye of the mind.⁶⁶²

Moreover, in volume 2 of *Wenshu Shili Suoshuo Mohe Bore Boluomi Jing* (*Saptaśatikā-prajñāpāramitā*, 文殊師利所說摩訶般若波羅蜜經) translated in 503A.D. by Mandra, it is also stated that it is the eye of mind that sees the three Buddhas in thought.⁶⁶³ This sutra describes what a person who wishes to practice samadhi should do to see the Buddhas of the past, future, and present in his or her mind. It is clearly stated here that one must first hear the Prajnaparamita, which means the wisdom to reach the other shore, and then go to a quiet place and abandon all chaotic thoughts, refrain from taking on the appearance of the Buddha, and concentrate on the name of the Buddha. Finally, one can see the Three Buddhas in the

⁶⁶¹ The original text in 《大智度論》卷 34: 「菩薩有三昧，名「觀三世諸佛三昧」，菩薩入是三昧中，悉見三世諸佛，聞其說法。譬如外道神仙，於未來世事，未有形兆、未有言說，以智慧力故，亦見、亦聞。」 (CBETA 2023.Q3, T25, no. 1509, p. 308c12-16)

⁶⁶² The original text in 《大方廣佛華嚴經》卷 2 〈之二〉: 「若念一切三世佛，廣能觀察佛境界，諸佛國土成敗事，以佛神力皆悉見」 (CBETA 2023.Q3, T09, no. 278, p. 401a20-21)

⁶⁶³ The original text in 《文殊師利所說摩訶般若波羅蜜經》卷 2: 「法界一相，繫緣法界，是名一行三昧。若善男子、善女人，欲入一行三昧，當先聞般若波羅蜜，如說修學，然後能入一行三昧。如法界緣，不退不壞，不思議，無礙無相。善男子、善女人，欲入一行三昧，應處空閑，捨諸亂意，不取相貌，繫心一佛，專稱名字。隨佛方所，端身正向，能於一佛念念相續，即是念中，能見過去、未來、現在諸佛。」 (CBETA 2023.Q3, T08, no. 232, p. 731a26-b5)

mind. The word “see” here refers to seeing with the eye of the mind, i.e., remember or think. It does not refer to the actual viewing of the actual constructed statue of the Buddha with the physical eyes.

In any case, there is no mention of viewing the images of the three Buddhas with the naked eye in any of the meditation sutras that had been translated before the sixth century. The other sutra that mentions “Contemplating the Three Worlds Buddhas (traiya-dhivika) 觀三世諸佛” is *Sarvāstivādinayavibhāṣā* (薩婆多毘尼毘婆沙), which was translated between 350A.D. and 431A.D., in the ninth volume of “*Si Hui Guo* (四悔過)”, it explicitly mentions that the “Buddhas of the three worlds” are related to the activity of repentance.⁶⁶⁴

In addition, there is also the *Scripture of Contemplating the Buddha and the Samadhi Sea*, translated by Buddhahadra in the Eastern Jin Dynasty, which records in detail how to do penance in front of the Buddha. That is, put your palms together and praise the Buddha for all his virtues, and then chant the penance law, and remember the light of the white between the Buddha's eyebrows, from one day to seven days. And if you did not see the white light between the Buddha's eyebrows in your mind, you need to go into a pagoda and look at the eyebrows on the statue of the Buddha, and you need to respectfully cry and confess to remove the sinfulness.⁶⁶⁵

This dissertation therefore suggests that the images of three Buddhas that appear on the three walls of Mogao Cave 272 were most likely set up for the rite of penance. Moreover, neatly arranged seated Buddha statues also appear on the four walls of this cave (Fig. 5.1-30, Fig.5.1-31). The north wall contains 131 small seated Buddhas, one

⁶⁶⁴ The original text in 《薩婆多毘尼毘婆沙》卷9：「佛結五篇戒，皆應觀三世諸佛及淨居天。但年歲久遠，文字漏落，餘篇盡無此中獨有。復次結五篇戒，此最在初，[10]結後集藏者[11]鈐次在後，以此篇貫初故，餘篇不說。復次此戒於餘篇是輕者，將來弟子不生重心，是故如來以佛眼觀去來諸佛及淨居天[12]也而後結也，使來世眾生不生慢罪。復次三世諸佛結戒有同不同，於五篇戒中不必盡同，此著泥洹僧袈裟，三世諸佛一切盡同，是故此戒觀諸佛及淨居天，餘篇不觀也。」(CBETA 2023.Q3, T23, no. 1440, p. 561c10-20)

⁶⁶⁵ The original text in 《佛說觀佛三昧海經》卷2：「作是思惟已，如太山崩，五體投地號泣兩淚，合掌向佛，讚歎如來種種德行。作是讚已，誦懺悔法，繫念在前，念佛眉間白毫相光，一日至[13]七日，前四種罪可得輕微，三七日時罪相漸滅，七七日後，然後羯磨，事在他經。若比丘，犯不如罪，觀白毫光闇黑不現，應當入塔觀像眉間，一日至三日，合掌啼泣一心諦觀，然後入僧說前罪事，此名滅罪。前五種罪，念白毫光經八百日，然後復有別羯磨法。」(CBETA 2023.Q3, T15, no. 643, p. 655b15-24)

more than the total number of “Seven Buddhas of the Past,” “Twenty-five Buddhas,” “Thirty-five Buddhas,” “Fifty-three Buddhas,” “Ten Buddhas of the ten directions”(Fig. 5.1-31a). In the south wall, there are 112 small seated Buddhas, one less than the total number of “Twenty-five Buddhas,” “Thirty-five Buddhas,” and “Fifty-three Buddhas” combined (Fig. 5.1-31b). This is probably to make up for the missing small seated Buddha on the north wall. On the east wall, there are 98 small images of seated Buddhas, which is equal to the total number of “Thirty-five Buddhas,” “Fifty-three Buddhas,” and “Ten Buddhas of the ten directions” combined (Fig. 5.1-31c). The same rows of seated Buddhas as on the north and south walls were originally painted under the surface of the west wall, but are now covered by seated figures of celestial beings and Bodhisattvas (Fig.5.1-30).⁶⁶⁶ According to the Buddhist sutra examined earlier, these “Seven Buddhas of the Past,” “Twenty-five Buddhas,” “Thirty-five Buddhas,” and “Fifty-three Buddhas” are all closely related to the idea of repentance. The names of the “Seven Buddhas of the Past,” “Twenty-five Buddhas,” “Thirty-five Buddhas,” “Fifty-three Buddhas,” and “Ten Buddhas of the Ten Directions” are all different and do not overlap. Therefore, they were painted here as specific objects of worship and repentance. This again suggests that the function of the cave may have been related to penance and the elimination of sins.

Moreover, the size of Mogao Cave 272, with a width of 3.1 meters from north to south, a length of 2.8 meters from east to west, and a height of 2.3 meters, also allowed for both “hu-kneeling (*hu gui* 胡跪)” and “Walking (*xing dao*, 行道)” confessional activities. The specific method of “Walking” is described in detail in the “*Zhuanjing Xingdao Yuan Wangsheng Jintu Fashi Zan* (转经行道愿往生净土法事赞)” written by Shan Dao at a later time.⁶⁶⁷ According to this record, the reason why

⁶⁶⁶ Rong Zhao, “Dunhuang Mogaoku Beiliang Sanku Kaizao Cidi Shulun 敦煌莫高窟北凉三窟开凿次第述论 [On the Excavation Sequence of the Three Northern Liang Caves at Mogao in Dunhuang],” *Dunhuang Yanjiu* 敦煌研究 [Dunhuang Research], no.2(2022):72.

⁶⁶⁷ The original text in 《转经行道愿往生净土法事赞》卷1:「奉请既竟即须行道七遍。又使一人将华在西南角立。待行人至即尽行华与行道众等。即受华竟不得即散。且待各自标心供养。待行道至佛前。即随意散之。散竟即过至行华人所。更受华亦如前法。乃至七遍亦如是。若行道訖即各依本坐处立。待唱梵声尽即坐。」(CBETA 2023.Q3, T47, no. 1979, p. 427c8-14)

Mogao Cave 272 has a niche in the west wall is because it is the ideal place for the above method of walking. When the person with the flower stands in the southwest corner and gives the flower to the walker, the walker can walk clockwise to the niche on the west wall offer the flower to the Buddha, and then continue to walk clockwise to the flower walker position to receive the flower again and walk to the Buddha again to offer the flower (Fig. 5.1-32). In this way, the walker traveled in a clockwise direction seven times in Mogao Cave 272. During this rightward circuit, the penitent passes by the groups of seated Buddhas and statues of Buddhas painted on the four walls. There is a particularly close interaction between the images and the person. The images are treated as objects in their own right, participating in the actual act of penance ritual.

Therefore, it is very likely that the combination of the three Buddha images on the three walls of Mogao Cave 272 and the successive seated Buddha images on the four walls represent the Buddhas of the three worlds and the Buddhas of ten directions prepared for the kind of penance in the Liu Shi Li Wen, which involves worshipping the Buddhas in all directions. The Buddha images on the four walls of the cave were painted as direct objects of penance for use in the ritual activity.⁶⁶⁸ Besides, the traces of burning lamps or incense in Mogao Cave 272 further imply that penitential activities might be taking place (Fig. 5.1-33a). In addition, the rows of worshippers in the lower part of the west wall niche of Mogao Cave 272 also suggest that the worship and penance activities were once conducted here (Fig. 5.1-33b,c).

In summary, It has been speculated that the function of the group of Mogao Caves that is Mogao cave 268, Mogao cave 272, and Mogao Cave 275, was related to the penitential activity of worshipping the Buddhas and praying before them for rebirth in the Pure Land of Maitreya in the West. In Cave 268, small chambers filled with seated Buddhas on the north and south walls could facilitate the worship and

⁶⁶⁸ In the original Buddhist texts of the Ahanas, there are two kinds of objects of repentance: one is to face Sakyamuni Buddha or the virtuous bhikkhu monks in the sangha, the “pure bhikkhus,” and the other is for the bhikkhu to face himself and repent alone. In the Mahayana classics, the objects of repentance are not only Sakyamuni Buddha, but also the Buddhas of the Ten Directions, the Thirty-five Buddhas, and even the Thousand Buddhas of the Three Worlds, as well as all the Bodhisattvas and Mahasattvas. For details, see Darei Shi, “The Formation and Development of Penance Thought in Early Chinese Buddhism,” *Chinese Buddhist Studies*, no.2, (1998): 313-337.

penitent acts (Fig. 5.1-34). These successive images of seated Buddhas, which appear on all four walls in four directions, participate in ritual activities similar to those recorded in the “Liu Shi Ritual Texts.” The cross-legged Maitreya on the west wall of this Mogao Cave 268 may also have been portrayed as an object of “praise ritual” to Maitreya. Similarly, Mogao Cave 275 with Maitreya as the main statue and the narrative painting of Maitreya's career on the middle part of the north and south walls, could also provide a more spacious place for the “praise ritual” to be performed to Maitreya. Here, Maitreya’s life and the many good deeds he did in his previous life are depicted as the direct objects of praise (Fig. 5.1-35). In cave 272 (Fig 5.1-32) , the successive images of seated Buddhas appear on the four walls in all directions, which could provide a suitable place for the activities of “Revering along the road (行道礼拜)” and “Kneeling for sincere repentance (胡跪忏悔).”

(2) Group B: Mogao Cave 249, and Cave 248, Cave 251

This group of mogao caves to be analyzed is located on the second floor of the cliff face (Fig.5.1-10). This group is centered on Mogao Cave 249, a truncated pyramid-ceiling cave, which is flanked on the left and right by the central-pillar caves: Mogao Cave 248 and Mogao Cave 251 (Fig. 5.1- 36). Mogao Cave 249 and Mogao Cave 248 are dated by Dunhuang scholars to the Western Wei period. Cave 251 is thought to have been built in the Northern Wei period.

Currently, based on the classification of the architectural form and painting style of Mogao Cave 249, it is assumed that its excavation date is earlier than that of Mogao Cave 285, which is dated 538-539 A.D. So it could be speculated that Mogao Cave 249 was built in the early stage of the Western Wei Dynasty.⁶⁶⁹ The earliest suggestion by Su Bai is that Mogao Cave 249 was built under the patronage of Yuan Rong, the Guazhou governor at this time.⁶⁷⁰ This view has since been largely favored

⁶⁶⁹ Jinshi Fan, Shichang Ma, and Youhui Guan, “The Staging of the Northern Caves of the Mogao Grottoes at Dunhuang,” in *Collected Works on Dunhuang Studies*, ed. Dunhuang Cultural Relics Research Institute (Beijing: Cultural Relics Publishing House, 1982), 365.

⁶⁷⁰Su Bai first pointed out that Cave 249 should be built by Yuan Rong, the King of Dongyang, during the Western

by the Dunhuang scholarship. Yuan Rong was appointed King of Dongyang in the second year of Yong'an (529 A.D.). The time of his appointment as the supreme executive of Guazhou is between the first year of Xiaochang era of the Northern Wei Dynasty (525 A.D.) and the eighth year of Datong era of the Western Wei Dynasty (542 A.D.), which was on the occasion of the transition between the Northern Wei and Western Wei Dynasty.⁶⁷¹ However, there are no inscriptions related to Yuanrong in the inscriptions of the donors in Mogao Cave 249. There are 20 figures of donors along the lower edge of each of the north and south walls, all of which are slender. The female donors are dressed in Han Chinese dress with large sleeves and skirts, while the male donors wear Han Chinese dress with large sleeves and long robes. The content of the inscriptions next to the donors is now unrecognizable. Even when Paul Eugène Pelliot visited the cave in 1908, he could only identify the inscription of a “female believer (*xinnv* 信女).”⁶⁷²

If Mogao Cave 249 was financed by Dongyang Wang Yuanrong, as previous scholars have speculated, then Yuanrong's copying of sutras between the third year of Yong'an and the second year of the Yongxi era in the Northern Wei Dynasty (530-533 A.D.) is of particular note in the first place. Thirteen inscriptions of Yuan Rong's copying of sutras have been found in Dunhuang manuscripts. Four of these inscriptions were written on the 5th day of the third month of the second year of the Pu Tai era (532 A.D.), and the purpose of copying sutras is mentioned as “wishing for the early return of Shu He”.⁶⁷³ Yuan Rong hopes that his son Shu He will return from the capital as soon as possible. In addition, there are also three other earlier sutra-copying inscriptions that record Yuan Rong's plea for prolonging his life by

Wei period, slightly earlier than the date of construction of Mogao Cave 285 Daitong five years (539). See Bai Su, “Dongyang Wang and Jianping Gong (two drafts),” in *Studies on Chinese Cave Temples* (Life. Reading. Xinzhi Sanlian Bookstore, 2019), 305- 326.

⁶⁷¹ Mengxia Wen, “Revisiting the time when Dongyang Wang Yuanrong led the Guazhou Assassins,” *Dunhuang Studies*, no.2 (2006):101-105.

⁶⁷² Bergschwer, Geng Sheng, *Notes on the Dunhuang Caves* (Lanzhou: Gansu People's Publishing House, 2007),169.

⁶⁷³ Shanghai library collection number 111 of a written in the Putei two years (A.D.532), see Shanghai Library, *Shanghai Library Collection of Dunhuang Tulufan Literature* (Shanghai: Shanghai Ancient Books Publishing House, 1999), 57.

performing this merit.⁶⁷⁴ The remaining two later sutra-copying inscriptions record that Yuan Rong's appeal for this merit is to eliminate illnesses.⁶⁷⁵ These specific wish claims are all written after the general pattern of wish claims. Another noteworthy aspect of Yuanrong's sutra copying is that the time of his copying activities was concentrated during the tumultuous period of regime change at the end of the Northern Wei Dynasty, that is during the period from the third year of Yong'an era (530 A.D.) and the second year of the Yongxi (533 A.D.).⁶⁷⁶ After 534 A.D. when the Northern Wei regime was divided into the Eastern Wei ruled by Yuan Shan Jian and the Western Wei ruled by Yuan Bao Ju, there is no trace of Yuan Rong's copying of sutras. This also means that Yuan Rong's involvement in religious activities, such as copying various Buddhist sutras, apart from the general purpose of accumulating merit for the next life,⁶⁷⁷ was still to obtain some specific worldly benefits for the needs of the present life. For example, when the Northern Wei regime was in a sensitive period of division, Yuan Rong's son, Shuhe, was asked to travel from Dunhuang to the capital, and Yuan Rong was so worried that he engaged in religious activities and prayed for the accumulation of merits to bring his son back safely.

According to Sheng Kai's research, one of the most important reasons for the popularity of penance rite among the people in the Northern and Southern Dynasties, apart from the need for the ordination of the Bodhisattva precepts, was precisely to fulfill the worldly prayers for the elimination of calamities and curing of illnesses for the benefit of the masses in the present life.⁶⁷⁸ Therefore, it is entirely possible that

⁶⁷⁴ This request for merit is written at the end of the Rinwang Prajna Sutra in the library collection BD.09525: "Begging for an extension of one's life," written on the 3rd day of the 7th lunar month of the 3rd year of the reign of Yong'an (530); at the end of the Rinwang Prajna Sutra in the collection of the Kyoto Museum, "I wish for an extension of one's life. "Written on the third day of the seventh month of the third year of Yong'an (A.D.530); S.4528, end of the Rinwang Prajna Sutra: "My family, slaves and servants, and the six animals of my disciple, will be able to protect their lives," written on the fifteenth day of the fourth month of the second year of Jianming (A.D.531).

⁶⁷⁵ This claim of merit is written at the end of the *Da Fang Da Jie Jing* (The Great Collection of Sutras) in the Goshima Museum of Art, Japan: "My disciple's sufferings will be removed forever, and my four bodies will be at peace," written on the seventh day of the fifth month of the second year of the Yong Xi reign (A.D.533); and at the end of the Maha Nirvana Sutra (The Great Nirvana Sutra) in Dunhuang, the Dunhuang document in the British collection, S. 4415A, "My disciple's sufferings will be removed forever, and my four bodies will be at peace. This was written on the 13th day of the 7th month of the 2nd year of the Yongxi reign.

⁶⁷⁶ Bai Su, "Dongyang Wang and Jianping Gong (two drafts)," in *Studies on Cave Temples in China* (Beijing: Heritage Publishing House, 1996), 305--326.

⁶⁷⁷ Huimin Wang, "Early Cave Staging and Problems at Dunhuang," *Journal of Shihezi University (Philosophy and Social Science Edition)* 29, no.6 (2015): 4.

⁶⁷⁸ Sheng Kai. *Studies on Chinese Buddhist Confession* (Beijing: Religious Culture Press, 2004), 108.

Yuan Rong funded the excavation of Mogao Cave 249 for penance to eliminate calamities and illnesses that might befall his son or himself. This is because only after repentance can one expiate all the sins in the past, and then one can obtain blessings by accumulating merit through worship, copying sutras, and so on.

When re-examining the interior mural settings of Mogao Cave 249, it finds several connections between the cave and the repentance ritual titled “Fang Guang Chan 方广忏.” The so-called “Fang Guang Chan” is a kind of repentance ritual based on the *Datong Fangguang Chanhui Miezui Zhuangyan Chengfo Jing* (大通方廣懺悔滅罪莊嚴成佛經), which was once popular in the northern region during the Northern Dynasties. The contents of the mural paintings on the ceiling and four walls of Mogao Cave 249 can all be found in perfect correspondence with the *Datong Fangguang Chanhui Miezui Zhuangyan Chengfo Jing*.

Although previous scholars have identified several sutras as potential textual referents for the iconography of murals in Mogao Cave 249. For example, Professor Li Song found that two of the twelve sutras with Yuan Rong's inscription in the Dunhuang manuscripts are the *Infinite Life Sutra* (*Longer Sukhāvātīvyūha Sūtra* 無量壽經). Moreover, in P.2143 manuscripts, it is also clearly written that Yuan Rong copied one hundred volumes of the *Infinite Life Sutra* in the second year of the Western Wei Dynasty's Putai (532 A.D.). Therefore, Professor Li Song suggested that the murals on the ceiling of Mogao Cave 249 were depicted based on the content of this sutra. Professor Li explains the ceiling painting of Mogao Cave 249: Amitabha Buddha is depicted on the west slope of the cave ceiling; the Mani jewel is depicted on the east slope; on the left and right side of Amitabha, the sons of the sun and the moon, who symbolize Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva (觀音菩薩) and

Mahāsthāmaprāpta Bodhisattva (勢至菩薩), are depicted; thus constituting a very harmonious whole, the “Three Saints of the West(西方三聖).”⁶⁷⁹

But at the same time, Yuan Rong also copied a hundred volumes of the *Moheyan* (摩訶衍). Moreover, in the Dunhuang manuscripts collected in Shanghai Library, No.111, Yuan Rong copied a hundred volumes of *Weimo Shu* (維摩疏), one volume of the *Infinite Life Sutra*. Moreover, S.4415A records that Ruan Rong copying of “The Bodhisattva Aśvaghōṣa (馬明菩薩品)” the apocryphal thirtieth chapter of the *Lotus Sūtra*, and *The Sutra of the Wise and Foolish, the Scripture of Contemplating the Buddha and the Samadhi Sea*, the *Golden Light Sutra* (觀佛三昧海經), the *Vimalakīrti Sūtra*, and the *Yao Shi Jing* (*Bhaiṣajyaguru-vaiḍūryaprabha-rāja-sūtra*, 藥師經).

Therefore, in addition to Professor Li Song, several scholars have also tried to interpret the mural paintings of Mogao Cave 249 in terms of other Buddhist sutras copied by Yuan Rong. For example, both He Chonghua and Ning Qiang interpreted the images in the pavilions in the lower section of the western ceiling slope of Mogao Cave 249 in the light of the *Vimalakīrti Sūtra*, and they believed that the figures in the pavilions represent the debate between the layman Vimalakīrti and Mañjuśrī. In addition, He Chonghua suggests that the murals in the western niche of Mogao Cave 249 are also related to the *Vimalakīrti Sūtra*, and regarding the old laymen (*waidao* 外道) on either side of the Buddha in the western niche as a reference to the third Chapter of “The Disciples” in the *Vimalakīrti Sūtra*.⁶⁸⁰ However, the Vasistha painted in the west niche does not appear in the third Chapter of the *Vimalakīrti Sūtra*. He Chonghua also believed that the images on the ceiling of the Mogao Cave 249, are not

⁶⁷⁹ Song Li, “Mogaoku di 249ku kuding tuxiang xinjie 莫高窟第 249 窟窟顶图像新解[A New Interpretation of the Cave Top Image of Cave 249 of Mogao Caves],” *Xibei Meishu* 西北美术[Northwest Art], no.04(1995):21.

⁶⁸⁰ Chung hua Ho, *Dunhuang Cave 249: A Representation of the Mimalakirtinindesa* Volume 1.(Yale University, 1985).

directly related to the *Vimalakirti Sutra*, but rather to the legend of the Asura. But later Zhang Yuanlin insisted that the gods of wind, rain, thunder, and lightning, and other celestial beings on the west slope of Mogao Cave 249 were the scenes described in chapter 13 of “Seeing Akshobhya Buddha” in the *Vimalakirti Sutra*.⁶⁸¹ However, the scene depicted in the original text of this passage from “Vimalakirti’s Sutra on Seeing Aksobhya, the Twelfth (維摩詰所說經見阿闍佛品第十二)” does not fully correspond to the content of the mural on the west slope of Mogao Cave 249.⁶⁸²

In addition, some other scholars have attempted to interpret the murals in Mogao Cave 249 in the light of the scene described in the preface to the *Lotus Sūtra*. For example, Bai Wen speculates that the seated figures in the two buildings at the lower part of the west ceiling of Mogao Cave 249, can be seen as Shakyamuni and Prabhūtaratna seated side by side in “The Emergence of the Treasure Tower” in *The Lotus Sutra*.⁶⁸³ However, these two figures in the two buildings at the lower part of the west ceiling do not have the characteristics of a Buddha, for example, their heads do not appear to have a high chignon. There is also a flaw in Bai Wen’s view of the role of two figures flanked on both sides of the Buddha statue in the west wall of Mogao Cave 249, he believes they have great powers and can travel through the six paths of reincarnation. Therefore Bai Wen believes that the role of these two appeared at Mogao Cave 249, firstly as the protector of Shakyamuni, and secondly as the coordinators and harmonizers of the roles of all kinds of deities from the three realms.⁶⁸⁴ But this speculation is not yet supported by some definite original text of the sutra and therefore remains in the realm of the author’s subjective conjecture.

⁶⁸¹ Yuanlin Zhang, “Jingtu Sixiang yu Xianjie Sixiang de Heliu 净土思想与仙界思想的合流——关于莫高窟第249窟窟顶西披壁画定名的再思考 [The Merging of Pure Land Thought and Immortal World Thought—Rethinking the Naming of the West Phi Mural at the Top of Cave 249 in Mogao Caves],” *Dunhuang Yanjiu 敦煌研究* [Dunhuang Research], no.4 (2003):1-8.

⁶⁸² The original text in 《維摩詰所說經》 Vol 3 〈12 見阿闍佛品〉: 「於是維摩詰心念: 「吾當不起于座, 接妙喜國鐵圍山川、溪谷江河、大海泉源、須彌諸山及日月星宿、天龍鬼神、梵天等宮, 并諸菩薩、聲聞之眾, 城邑聚落、男女大小乃至無動如來, 及菩提樹、諸妙蓮華, 能於十方作佛事者——三道寶階從閻浮提至忉利天, 以此寶階諸天來下, 悉為禮敬無動如來, 聽受經法; 閻浮提人亦登其階, 上昇忉利, 見彼諸天: 妙喜世界成就如是無量功德——上至阿迦[11]膩吒天, 下至水際, 以右手斷取, 如陶家輪, 入此世界, 猶[12]持華鬘, 示一切眾。」作是念已, 入於三昧現神通力, 以其右手斷取妙喜世界, 置於此土。」 (CBETA 2023.Q3, T14, no. 475, p. 555b18-c1)

⁶⁸³ Wen Bai, “The Sacred Meeting on the Spirit Mountain and the Two Buddhas Sitting Together: Image Structure and Themes in Cave 249 of Dunhuang Mogao Caves,” *Artwork*, no.4(2019):61-67.

⁶⁸⁴ Bai, “The Sacred Meeting on the Spirit Mountain and the Two Buddhas Sitting Together,” 61-67.

Therefore, it has to be said that the previous attempts of scholars to find an interpretation of the murals of Mogao Cave 249 in the 14 volumes of the sutra copied by Yuan Rong have not been very successful. There are still some content of murals that do not find a perfect correspondence with the above sutras which was copied by Yuan Rong. This also has led many scholars to continue the old views of the old generation of Dunhuang scholars such as Duan Wenjie who believes these murals in Mogao Cave 249 “truly reflect China's 'nationalization' merging with Taoist and Confucian ideologies during the Wei, Jin, Northern and Southern Dynasties”.⁶⁸⁵

Among the many sutra sources for Cave 249 that have been identified by previous scholars, there are still many that do not correspond to the murals in Mogao Cave 249. This suggests that it may not be necessary to continue searching for a reference in the sutras copied by Yuan Rong to explain the pictorial program of the murals in Mogao Cave 249.

In recent years, some scholars have begun to look beyond the sutras copied by Yuanrong to find a basis for the murals of Mogao Cave 249 in the sutras that were popular at this time. For example, Ma Zhaomin and Zhao Yanlin proposed to use the popular *Great Vaipulya Dhāraṇī Scripture* (大方等陀羅尼經) to interpret the murals on the ceiling of Mogao Cave 249.⁶⁸⁶ However, the content of the murals on the four walls of Mogao Cave 249 is not yet explained under this sutra. More recently Daniel Ryan Tuzzeo, in his doctoral dissertation, used the Buddhist cosmology described in the *Sūtra of the Record of the Cosmos* (*shiji jing* 世紀經) in *Dīrghāgama* (Chang Ahan Jing 長阿含經) to interpret the contents of the murals on the west ceiling slope of Mogao Cave 249, argues that “The western slope's depiction of the Buddhist cosmos is paired with indigenous Chinese cosmological imagery on the northern and southern slopes.”⁶⁸⁷ But he still does not quite give the content of the

⁶⁸⁵ Duan, *Dunhuang Art*, 115.

⁶⁸⁶ Zhaomin Ma, and Yanlin Zhao, “The Popularity of the Western Wei Dynasty's Da Fang Wa Dharani Sutra and the Construction of Cave 249 in Mogao Caves,” *Chinese Art Research*, no.4(2017):31-38.

⁶⁸⁷ Daniel Ryan Tuzzeo, “Crafting cosmologies: Buddhist cartography and the spatial imagination in medieval china” (PhD diss., Stanford University, 2020), 106.

sutras that correspond to the mural paintings in the north and south slope at the ceiling of the Mogao Cave 249.

Therefore, this dissertation suggests that if we no longer look for the sutra source of the murals in Mogao Cave 249 within the scope of the sutras copied by Yuan Rong, it is a worthwhile direction to start with the purpose of copying the sutras shown in the aforementioned sutras copied by Yuan Rong at this point. Considering that Yuan Rong's ultimate goal, as clearly stated in these inscriptions, was to eliminate the sins he had committed and to ensure that he would be blessed and kept away from calamities after sincere repentance. It can be assumed that Mogao Cave 249, which was associated with Yuan Rong, was built at this time for some kind of repentance activity. The next question is what kind of repentance activity could Mogao Cave 249 have served? This dissertation speculates that it could have served the “*fangguang* confession rite (方廣懺)”, which was popular at this time, based on the *Datong Fang Guang Chanhui Miezui Zhuangyan Chengfo Jing* (大通方廣懺悔滅罪莊嚴成佛經). This dissertation finds that there are many close correspondences between the contents of the *Datong Fang Guang Chanhui Miezui Zhuangyan Chengfo Jing* and the murals in Mogao Cave 249. These correspondences will be listed in detail below.

First of all, the first part of the *Datong Fang Guang Chanhui Miezui Zhuangyan Chengfo Jing* describes the scene when the Buddha is about to preach.⁶⁸⁸ This scene of the Buddha's body shining brightly as he preaches can be matched with the images depicted in the west niche of Mogao Cave 249. For example, the seated Buddha in the west niche has a brilliant backlight that magnifies the light and is surrounded by several Bodhisattvas who have come to listen to the Buddha's teaching (Fig. 5.1-37).

⁶⁸⁸ The original text in 《大通方廣懺悔滅罪莊嚴成佛經》卷1:「釋迦牟尼如來。放大光明。必說妙法。度苦眾生。汝等今者。應往彼土。供養彼佛。請決所疑。聽受經法。彼土眾生。昔來剛惡。虛偽不實。不信一乘。釋迦大慈。萬善方便。為開三乘。度脫三有。雖說三乘。上語亦善。中語亦善。下語亦善。義味甚深。純備具足。彼佛世尊。百千萬劫。不可值見。所說經法。不可得聞。彼諸大眾。不可時會。釋迦所生。殊妙金華。不可得見。是故汝等。今往彼土。得見彼佛。請問所疑。自得利益。復利眾生。作是語已。十方佛土。一一各有。十億菩薩。即從座起。為佛作禮。俱同發來。一一菩薩。各有百千音樂。兩寶妙華。來到佛所。到佛所已。遶佛七匝。為佛作禮。却坐一面。俱共發聲。異口同音。而白佛言。世尊。我等今者。欲有所問。唯願世尊。當為說之。」(CBETA 2023.Q3, T85, no. 2871, p. 1340a1-17)

Previous scholars always stressed that the sight of the Buddha's body emitting light indicated that he was sinking into progressively deeper meditative trances.⁶⁸⁹

However, according to the content of the sutra *Datong Fang Guang Chanhui Miezui Zhuangyan Chengfo Jing*, it is also possible that this scene may represent the light emanating from the Buddha's body when he was preaching. Furthermore, this sutra, records that when the Buddha was preaching, each Bodhisattva was accompanied by a hundred thousand pieces of music, this scene mentioned in the sutra is also represented by the images of Bodhisattvas wearing precious crowns and celestial beings holding different musical instruments at the top of each wall of the Mogao Cave 249 (Fig. 5.1-37,38a,b,c) .

As for the scenes and the various beings depicted in the four slopes at the ceiling of Mogao Cave 249, they can be found in the next narrative of this sutra as well.⁶⁹⁰

This section of the sutra begins with the account of the various heavenly beings who would appear to protect Buddha during his preaching. These heavenly beings are depicted in the four slopes at the ceiling of the Mogao Cave 249. The “Mahā-brahmā-deva 大梵天王” first mentioned in this portion of the sutra is represented by the celestial figure riding in the goose-chariot at the top of the north and south slope (Fig. 5.1-39, Fig. 5.1-40a).⁶⁹¹ The many feathered figures flying around them represent the

⁶⁸⁹ For example, in Howard's words, “It is present in the depiction of Mara's temptation, in which, prior to reaching Enlightenment, the Buddha's body emanates flames to indicate that he is sinking into progressively deeper meditative trances.” See Angela F. Howard, “On ‘Art in the Dark’ and Meditation in Central Asian Buddhist Caves,” *The Eastern Buddhist* 46, no.2 (2015):35.

⁶⁹⁰ The original text in 《大通方廣懺悔滅罪莊嚴成佛經》Vol 1: 「爾時。復有大梵天王。三十三天。護世四天王。金剛密跡。諸鬼神王。散脂大將。那羅龍王等。難陀龍王。婆難陀龍王。阿修羅王。迦樓羅王。大辯天王。九子母天。山神王。樹神王。河神王。海神王。地神王。水神王。火神王。風神王。如是等無量無邊諸神王等。及大諸天。即從坐起。頭面禮佛。合掌恭敬。而白佛言。世尊。我等今者。常當護持。世尊所說。方廣經典。有是經處。我等神王。常在於前。為作清淨。若在塔中。若在坊中。若在白衣舍。若在空處。或復有人。以不淨手。拏捉是經。或不恭敬。讀誦是經。我使是人。行住坐臥。身心不安。處處怖畏。橫羅惡事。現世不安。死入地獄。若人恭敬清淨。捉持此經。洗浴燒香。讀誦受持。或復書寫。憶念不忘。憶是經典。不行惡事。若能如是。我等神王。為是經故。守護是人。是人若臥。立其人前。不使見惡。亦復不為。惡人惡鬼。橫害其人。若其住處。護其宅舍。若欲行來。我等神王。於其人前。為作開導。須者給與。四方行來。無所障礙。常見善事。命終生天。因是值佛。不失大乘。」 (CBETA 2023.Q3, T85, no. 2871, p. 1340b21-c12)

⁶⁹¹ The goose bird travelled freely between the heavenly and earthly realms, and was therefore the mount of Brahma, the Lord of the Brahma world. For an example of an Indian statue of Lord Brahma travelling on a goose bird, see Akira Miyaji, “Nirvana and Maitreya: From India to Central Asia,” in *Iconography of Nirvana and Maitreya: From India to Central Asia* (Heritage Publishing House, 2009), 184.

“thirty-three gods(三十三天)” mentioned in the sutra, who ride on a goose-bird. The Four Great Kings (Catur-mahārāja-kāyikāh) mentioned in the sutra may be represented by the strong figures with blue feathers on their shoulders in front of carriages on the north and south slope of the ceiling of Mogao Cave 249 (Fig.5.1- 39, Fig.5.1-40), and the strong figures with blue feathers on the east slope of the ceiling of Mogao Cave 249 (Fig.5.1-41). The “Vajrapani” referred to in the sutra could be represented by the strong figure in the center of the east slope at the ceiling of Mogao Cave 249 (Fig.5.1-41). Although he is not holding a pestle here, the figure with blue and green feathers or flames is very similar to the image of Vajrapani holding a vajra pestle that appears on the northern slope of Mogao Cave 285 (Fig.5.1-60c).⁶⁹²

Some other heavenly beings mentioned in this sutra are organized according to Buddhist cosmology and appear in the ceiling of Mogao Cave 249, centering on the Mount of Sumeru. The image of a four-armed, four-eyed, bare-chested figure standing in a sea in front of Sumeru represents what is referred to in the sutra as “Asura King” (Fig. 5.1-42a). The two serpentine figures encircling Sumeru represent what is referred to in the sutra as “Naga kings Nanda and Upanand (難陀龍王, 婆難陀龍王)”

(Fig. 5.1-42a) . The figure with a human face and a bird's body with a beak like an eagle on the right side of the “Asura King” corresponds perfectly to the characteristics of the “Garuḍa King” mentioned in the sutra (Fig. 5.1-32b.). The image to the left of the Asura King, which resembles a celestial maiden Bodhisattva, is in line with the image of the “the King of the Heavenly King of Great Argumentation(Sarasvatī 大辯天王)” as described in the sutra (Fig. 5.1-42c) .⁶⁹³

The “king of the ghosts 諸鬼神王” referred to in the sutra lie in the Naraka could be represented by the dark-skinned topless figures below Mount Meru on the west slope of Mogao Cave 249 (Fig. 5.1-42d,e) . According to Buddhist cosmology, the

⁶⁹² This image of a flaming warrior is also in line with the description of the Vajrapani in the Dafang and other Great Collections Sutra, Volume 18 (CBETA 2023.Q1, T13, no. 397, p. 124b1-5).

⁶⁹³ Akira Miyaji, *The Iconography of Nirvana and Maitreya: From India to Central Asia* (Heritage Press, 2009), 52.

two buildings that appear at this location below Jambudvīpa are most likely the two official palaces that represent the entrances to the hells located below Jambudvīpa. The position of the figures seated in these buildings is consistent with Buddhist cosmology, which places them in the position of the king of the ghosts in charge of the evil spirits in hell. Therefore, this dissertation suggests that the dark-skinned figures at the bottom of Mount Sumeru represent the “kings of the ghosts”. Although some scholars have suggested that the two figures appearing symmetrically in two buildings could represent Manjushri and Vimalakirti. This view is inappropriate and already has been challenged by scholars in recent years. Daniel Ryan Tuzzeo, for example, disagrees and suggests that the two buildings are more likely to represent two of the four continents. He believes that not all four continents are depicted in the Mount Sumeru-centered universe here, but only two of them, are represented as pavilions at the bottom of the picture. He has elaborated that the realm of desire depicted in the western ceiling slope of the mogao cave 249 is based upon the *Sūtra of Explaining the Cosmos* (*Shiji Jing* 世紀經), a scripture included in the *Dīrghāgama* (*Chang Ahan Jing* 長阿含經).⁶⁹⁴ He gives a restoration about a portion of the physical world as a container for sentient beings (bhājana-loka), which is depicted in the western ceiling slope of the Mogao Cave 249. But according to the plan of the cosmos described in the *Treasury of Abhidharma* (阿毗達摩俱舍論), the size of these four continents can be almost omitted compared to the Seven Golden Mountain Ranges surrounding Mount Sumeru (Fig. 2.30a). Therefore it would be inconsistent with the Buddhist cosmology to represent the four continents in a mural by painting a building larger than the Seven Golden Mountain Ranges. Moreover, he has not fully considered the different types of sentient beings who inhabit different realms. He omits from his discourse a type of sentient being who is in charge of the hells. Indeed, the murals on the ceiling of Mogao Cave 249 depict the various types of sentient beings dwelling within the hierarchically arranged realms more comprehensively.

⁶⁹⁴ Daniel Ryan Tuzzeo, “Crafting Cosmologies: Buddhist Cartography and the Spatial Imagination in Medieval China” (PhD diss., Stanford University, 2020), 79-106.

This dissertation therefore disagrees with Daniel Ryan Tuzzeo's view that the lowest buildings on the east ceiling of Mogao Cave 249 are two of the four continents. As they are located under the Mountain and Jambudvīpa on the outside of the mountain ranges, they are more likely to be the places of the ghosts. The dark-skinned figures seated in these two buildings are more likely to represent the Ghost Kings, who are in charge of the evil spirits of Hell.

As for the “King of Earth, King of Water, King of Fire, and King of Wind” mentioned in this sutra *Datong Fang Guang Chanhui Miezui Zhuangyan Chengfo Jing*, they are depicted on the middle part of the western ceiling slope of Cave 249. Among them, the figure of the king of fire is appropriated from the traditional Chinese image of the god of thunder striking drums with his hands and feet to create fire (Fig. 5.1-42 f). Opposite the king of fire is the king of Water (Fig. 5.1-42g). The image below the king of fire in the stomping position is likely a representation of the Earth King (Fig. 5.1-42f.). The figure blowing vigorously with a pouting mouth on the opposite side might represent the King of Wind at this time (Fig. 5.1-42h). A similar image of the King of Wind also appears on an East Wei Dynasty stele with a clear inscription (Fig. 5.1-43a). The image of a figure with red flames in the north corner of the lower part of the west slope may represent the “Pāñcika” mentioned in the sutra (Fig. 5.1-42i).

As for what the sutra *Datong Fang Guang Chanhui Miezui Zhuangyan Chengfo Jing* mentioned “King of Mountains, The King of Trees, King of the Rivers, King of the Sea (地神王,水神王,火神王,風神王)” are located in the lower part of the Western slope, Northern slope and Southern slope of ceiling in Mogao Cave 249. The “king of the mountains” is represented by the image of a celestial being with a head and long ears beside the mountains (Fig. 5.1-42j). The “King of the Trees” is represented by a celestial figure with a head and long ears at the foot of a tree (Fig. 5.1-42k). Since the Buddhist stele of the East Wei Dynasty is clearly inscribed as “King of Mountain 山神王” and “King of Tree 树神王”, there are also images of mountains and trees, respectively (Fig. 5.1-43b). The figures of dragons with multiple heads on the

southern and northern ceiling slope of Mogao Cave 249 may represent the “King of River” and the “King of Sea “ mentioned in the sutra (Fig. 5.1-39, Fig. 5.1-40).

Furthermore, it is worth noting that it is also written in the sutra *Datong Fang Guang Chanhui Miezu Zhuangyan Chengfo Jing* that where the sutra is present, the aforementioned heavenly beings will also appear around it to protect the sutra.⁶⁹⁵ This scene is represented in the eastern slope of the ceiling of Mogao Cave 249, where the Mani jewel in the center might represent this sutra. Since the image of Dharma transmission with a clear inscription on the side of the gate of Dashengzhu Cave shows a similar mani jewel between two monks to represent the Dharma (Fig. 5.1-44.), this dissertation also suggests that the mani jewel between two monks is the same as the mani jewel above the gate of Mogao Cave 249 on the east ceiling.

Therefore, this dissertation also believes that the mani jewel between the two devas on the eastern ceiling of Mogao Cave 249 above the door of the cave is representative of the Buddha's Dharma, as first suggested by Prof. Li Song.⁶⁹⁶ Therefore, the heavenly beings surrounding the mani jewel appear as protectors of the sutra on the eastern ceiling slope of Mogao Cave 249 (Fig. 5.1-41).

The sutra *Datong Fang Guang Chanhui Miezu Zhuangyan Chengfo Jing* then goes on to mention that if someone shows disrespectful behavior towards the sutra, the aforementioned celestial beings will cause them to suffer a terrible experience.⁶⁹⁷ This content is expressed in the scene depicted in the north ceiling slope at the lower part of the ceiling of Mogao Cave 249 (Fig. 5.1-40). In the lower part of the northern ceiling where the kings of celestial beings appear, a herd of deer fleeing for their lives is aimed at by a hunter on a fast horse. After he has forced the herd to the foot of the mountain and succeeded in killing them, a terrifying beast suddenly appears behind

⁶⁹⁵ The original text in 《大通方廣懺悔滅罪莊嚴成佛經》Vol 1: 「如是等無量無邊諸神王等。及大諸天。即從坐起。頭面禮佛。合掌恭敬。而白佛言。世尊。我等今者。常當護持。世尊所說。方廣經典。有是經處。我等神王。常在於前。為作清淨。若在塔中。若在坊中。若在白衣舍。若在空處。」(CBETA 2023.Q3, T85, no. 2871, p. 1340b26-c2)

⁶⁹⁶ Song Li, “Mogaoku Diersijiu Ku Kuding Tuxiang Xinjie 莫高窟第 249 窟窟頂圖像新解[A New Interpretation of the Image of Mogao Cave 249],” *Xibei Meishu* 西北美術[Northwest Art], no. 4(1995):20.

⁶⁹⁷ The original text in 《大通方廣懺悔滅罪莊嚴成佛經》Vol 1: 「若在塔中。若在坊中。若在白衣舍。若在空處。或復有人。以不淨手。拈捉是經。或不恭敬。讀誦是經。我使是人。行住坐臥。身心不安。處處怖畏。橫羅惡事。現世不安。死入地獄。」(CBETA 2023.Q3, T85, no. 2871, p. 1340c1-5)

him, and the hunter suddenly turns from a hunter into an object of prey, and cannot escape being devoured (Fig. 5.1-40b) .

Moreover, it is also said that if someone honors the sutra and refrains from evil deeds, the heavenly beings will protect that person at all times and in all places.⁶⁹⁸ This part is illustrated by the peaceful and joyful scene depicted on the lower part of the heavenly beings on the southern slope of the ceiling. There are no hunters, no deer are being hunted down, and they are happily jumping and playing freely in the mountains (Fig. 5.1-39). This peaceful scene is made possible by the guardianship of the heavenly beings above them.

In the next part of the sutra *Datong Fang Guang Chanhui Miezui Zhuangyan Chengfo Jing*, through the question of Xinxiang Bodhisattva, the Buddha said that the names of the Buddhas in the ten directions could not be exhausted, but only some of them could be mentioned. Buddha said that by worshipping the immeasurable Buddhas of the past, present, and future, they would be able to get rid of “the grave sins of birth and death since immeasurable kalpas.”⁶⁹⁹ In the second part of the sutra, the importance of worshipping the names of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas is re-emphasized, and in the second part of the sutra, it is stated that Sakyamuni Buddha became a Buddha because he had heard the names of the Buddhas of the Ten Directions and the Three Worlds in the immeasurable kalpas of the past. Those parts of the sutra could explain why the north and south walls of Mogao Cave 249 are painted with rows of seated Buddhas, 313 images of seated Buddha on the north wall, and 248 images of seated Buddha on the south wall. The west wall contains a seated Buddha, while the center of the north and south walls are each painted with a Buddha standing on a lotus flower. In the center of the north wall are one Buddha and four Bodhisattvas, all standing on the lotus flower (Fig. 5.1-38b). In the center of the south

⁶⁹⁸ The original text in 《大通方廣懺悔滅罪莊嚴成佛經》卷1：「若人恭敬清淨。捉持此經。洗浴燒香。讀誦受持。或復書寫。憶念不忘。憶是經典。不行惡事。若能如是。我等神王。為是經故。守護是人。是人若臥。立其人前。不使見惡。亦復不為。惡人惡鬼。橫害其人。若其住處。護其宅舍。若欲行來。我等神王。於其人前。為作開導。須者給與。四方行來。無所障礙。常見善事。命終生天。因是值佛。不失大乘。」(CBETA 2023.Q3, T85, no. 2871, p. 1340c5-12)

⁶⁹⁹ The original text in 《大通方廣懺悔滅罪莊嚴成佛經》卷1：「南無過去一佛十佛百佛千佛萬佛。能除無量劫以來生死重罪。」(CBETA 2023.Q3, T85, no. 2871, p. 1342b16-17)

wall are a standing Buddha and four Bodhisattvas, all standing on a lotus flower (Fig. 5.1-38c). Hence, the murals on the west, south, and north walls of Mogao Cave 249 form the “Three Worlds and Ten Directions of the Buddha”. It is also said that worshipping the Bodhisattvas can also remove the grave sins of birth and death that have occurred since the beginning of the infinite number of kalpas.⁷⁰⁰ Therefore, in the west wall of the cave, inside and outside the Buddha niche, as well as the north and south walls, bodhisattvas were painted as objects of worship.

Furthermore, in the next part of the Sutra *Datong Fang Guang Chanhui Miezui Zhuangyan Chengfo Jing*, it is repeatedly emphasized to the public that worshipping the Buddhas of the three worlds and the ten directions, the twelve sutras, and the great Bodhisattvas can get rid of all kinds of evil karma.⁷⁰¹ It is also worth noting that the *Datong Fang Guang Chanhui Miezui Zhuangyan Cheng Fo Jing* mentions the *Great Vaipulya Dhāraṇī Scripture* as many as fourteen times, constantly stating the evils of slandering the *Great Vaipulya Dhāraṇī Scripture* and the benefits of revering the *Great Vaipulya Dhāraṇī Scripture*. The reason why the sutra always mentions slandering the *Great Vaipulya Dhāraṇī Scripture* is probably because one of the difficult-to-understand and often criticized episodes of the *Great Vaipulya Dhāraṇī Scripture* is the one in which Buddha allows Vasistha who has been freed from hell to have the opportunity to appear with bodhisattvas and to hear the Dharma at the Buddha's side. This violates the cause-and-effect temporality. Therefore, this deed of doing evil but still receiving good rewards easily attracted the slander of the public who could only understand the concept of the cause-and-effect temporality. The reason for these people to slander the *Great Vaipulya Dhāraṇī Scripture* is that they do not yet understand the Mādhyamaka that the sutra preaches, and that they have not broken the obscurantism of the extreme thinking of the dichotomy between good and

⁷⁰⁰ The original text in 《大通方廣懺悔滅罪莊嚴成佛經》Vol 1: 「南無萬萬億諸大菩薩摩訶薩。能除無量劫以來生死重罪。南無一那由他十那由他百那由他千那由他萬那由他。南無萬萬那由他諸大菩薩摩訶薩。能除無量劫以來生死重罪。南無一恒河沙。南無二恒河沙。南無三恒河沙。南無四恒河沙。南無五恒河沙。南無六恒河沙。南無七恒河沙。南無八恒河沙。南無九恒河沙。南無十恒河沙。南無百恒河沙。南無百億無量恒河沙諸大菩薩摩訶薩。能除無量劫以來生死重罪。」 (CBETA 2023.Q3, T85, no. 2871, p. 1345a8-17)

⁷⁰¹ The original text in 《大通方廣懺悔滅罪莊嚴成佛經》Vol 3: 「禮拜三世十方諸佛。十二部經。諸大菩薩。心念大乘。思第一義。是人一念。一彈指頃。十惡五逆。及謗方等。一切惡業。悉皆除滅。無有遺餘。」 (CBETA 2023.Q3, T85, no. 2871, p. 1350a18-21)

evil. The reason for the painting of a bird-wielding Vasistha in the niche on the west wall of Mogao Cave 249, juxtaposed with the Buddha and Bodhisattvas (Fig. 5.1-38a), could indicate that the worshippers in this cave were people who understood the Buddhist teachings of the Mādhyamaka in *Great Vaipulya Dhāraṇī Scripture*.

However, in recent years, some scholars have also noted that most of the thirty pieces of the *Great Vaipulya Dhāraṇī Scripture* found in Dunhuang manuscripts were written during the Northern Dynasty and have suggested that the construction of Mogao Cave 249 was related to the beliefs of this sutra.⁷⁰² For example, some scholars believe that the murals on the ceiling of Mogao Cave 249 are the world of four directions as mentioned in the *Great Vaipulya Dhāraṇī Scripture*, Volume 2.⁷⁰³ But scholars who further analyze the Vasistha and Mrgasirsa, which appear on the side of the Buddha statue in the western niche of the cave, are taking into account several other sutras, and give different opinions on the reasons for their presence here. These views have not paid enough attention to the *Great Vaipulya Dhāraṇī Scripture*, and still only emphasize the Buddhist concept of cause-and-effect temporality, without going into the concept of Mādhyamaka that the sutra is meant to preach. For example, Professor Wang Eugene argues that “Its force resides in a stick-and-carrot mode of address. Nirgrantha signals the consequence of the failure to renounce the world. Jiva hints at the possibility of a higher reincarnation. Together they spell a cause-and-effect temporality, thereby opening up a window to the past and future”.⁷⁰⁴ What is inappropriate about this view is that these two antagonists in Buddhism can

⁷⁰² Zhaomin Ma, and Yanlin Zhao, “The Popularity of the Western Wei Dynasty's Dafangwa Dharani Sutra and the Construction of Cave 249 in Mogao Caves,” *Chinese Art Research*, no.4(2017):38.

⁷⁰³ The original text of the sutra reads: “At that time, the Buddha told the Son of Heaven in the East: 'Listen carefully and I will tell you the cause of Buddhahood. There is a world in the East called the Day of Separation, and in this world thou shalt attain Adornment and become All Wisdom. The Buddha said to the Son of Heaven in the South: 'There is a world called the Day of Colour, in this world thou shalt attain Adoration and become all wisdom.' The Buddha said to the Son of Heaven in the West: 'There is a world called Ri Miao. In this world thou shalt attain Avalokiteshvara and become all-wise.' The Buddha said to the Son of Heaven in the North: 'There is a world called Rizhongnang, in this world you shall attain Adornment and become all-wisdom.' The Son of Heaven said to the Buddha: 'Why is the world called Rizhongnang?' The Buddha said: 'There was no Buddha in this world in the past. That is why it is called the Difficulties of the World. The Buddha said to the Son of Heaven below: 'There is a world called Rizhongsong, and in this world you will attain Adornment and become all-wise.' Buddha told the upper son of heaven: 'There is a world called the day of the many wonderful, you in this world when the hoe three contemptuous Bodhi. You will become all wisdom.' The Buddha told all the sons of heaven in the ten worlds: 'You too shall each become a Buddha.’”

⁷⁰⁴ Eugene Wang, “Painted Statue in an Optical Theater: a Fifth-century Chinese Buddhist Cave.” *Source: Notes in the History of Art* 30, no. 3 (2011): 27.

appear together with the Bodhisattvas at the Buddha's side, which is exactly not under the law of cause-and-effect temporality. It is also to explain this phenomenon, which violates the karma of good and evil, that some passages appear in the *Great Vaipulya Dhāraṇī Scripture* that explain this phenomenon from the view of mādhyamaka in detail.

In addition, He Shizhe once thought that the image of Vasistha in the Mogao Caves was the protector of the Dharma in Tantric Buddhism.⁷⁰⁵ However, Rao Zongyi argued that the image of Vasistha in Dunhuang murals has nothing to do with Tantric Buddhism, based on the record in the *Mo Deng Qie Jing* (摩登伽經) that Vasistha used to be a good meditator, and that it was because of women's lust that he lost his divine powers and the ability of meditation.⁷⁰⁶ Then He Shizhe proposed that Vasistha is one of the guardian deities of Sakyamuni, and believed that the Buddha statue with the image of Vasistha could be identified as Sakyamuni.⁷⁰⁷ Stanleyk Abe also holds a similar view, arguing that Vasistha was used to refer to Śākyamuni's career.⁷⁰⁸ However, Yan Juanying points out that the Vasistha image is not a fixed occurrence with the image of Sakyamuni.⁷⁰⁹ Duan Wenjie argues that the figure of the Vasistha appears in the murals as an antithesis of Buddhism, adding a playful dimension to the solemnity of the preaching.⁷¹⁰ Wang Huiming later also held a similar view, suggesting that the Vasistha was painted to illustrate the Buddhist doctrine against the

⁷⁰⁵ He Shizhe, "Dunhuang Mogao Grottoes Cave 285 west wall content interpretation," in *1987 Dunhuang Cave Research International Symposium Proceedings Cave Archaeology* (Shenyang: Liaoning Fine Arts Publishing House, 1990), 374.

⁷⁰⁶ Liangfu Jiang, and Zaiyi Guo, *Collected Research Papers on Dunhuang Tulufan Studies* (Shanghai: Hanyu Da Dictionary Press, 1990), 22

⁷⁰⁷ Shizhe He, "Guanyu Dunhuang Mogaoku de Sanshifo yu Sanfo Zaoxiang 关于敦煌莫高窟的三世佛与三佛造像[on the three Buddhas and three Buddha statues in the Mogao Caves of Dunhuang]," *Dunhuang Yanjiu 敦煌研究*[Dunhuang Research], no.2 (1994), 2.

⁷⁰⁸ Stanleyk Abe just mentions that the brahmins Vasu and the Mrgaśīrsa both were converted by Śākyamuni: "Vasu was a King of Kosala who sacrificed animals. He was converted by Śākyamuni and is shown holding a bird, symbolic of preserving life. Mrgasīrsa practiced the art of "skull spells," in which he tapped the skull to make it look like an animal. Mrgasīrsa practiced the art of "skull spells," in which he tapped the skulls of the dead in order to ascertain their future life and is therefore depicted holding a skull. He was also converted by Sakyā muni." See Stanleyk Abe, "Art and practice in a fifth-century Chinese Buddhist cave temple," *Ars Orientalis* (1990): 2.

⁷⁰⁹ Juanying Yan, "An examination of the images in the Zen Guan Cave of the Northern Qi," *Journal of Oriental Studies*: Vol. 70, 1998. It is also possible to see that Brahmacharya and Deer-head Brahmacharya do not appear exclusively on either side of Shakyamuni Buddha in Northern Zhou statue stelae, such as the statue stelae numbered S.1.109, now in the collection of the Freer Museum of Fine Arts in the United States.

⁷¹⁰ Wenjie Duan, "A Brief Discussion on the Content and Art of the Mural Paintings in Cave 249 of the Mogao Grottoes," *Dunhuang Research*, no.00(1983):1.

killing of living beings, and at the same time used the obscene appearance of Vasistha as a counterpoint to the greatness of the Buddha next to him.⁷¹¹

Wang Huiming also rejects the idea that the Vasistha are Sakyamuni's companions and instead argues that their appearance beside the Buddha on behalf of the laymen represents Buddhism's subjugation of the laymen. Thus again, it is argued that this is also an episode of meditation.⁷¹² Zhang Yuanlin also argues against seeing the Vasistha as a criterion for judging the statue as Sakyamuni and thus argues that the Vasistha appears as a layman rather than as a protector of the Dharma.⁷¹³ In Zhang Yuanlin's view, the appearance of these topless laymen next to the Buddha statues is meant to belittle the laymen led by Taoism.⁷¹⁴ This view, however, does not explain why this lay figure was painted closest to the statue of the Buddha and was qualified to appear alongside the Bodhisattvas.

Overall, previous scholars have overlooked the fact that Vasistha is the key figure in the *Great Vaipulya Dhāraṇī Scripture* used to elucidate Buddhist “Mādhyamaka(中观).” Also, the Mrgasirsa that appeared on the side of the Buddha's niche at the same time as the Vasistha are related to the Buddhist wisdom of Mādhyamaka as well. According to a Buddhist sutra translated into Chinese before the sixth century, the Mrgasirsa first appeared in the *Fo Shuo Guan Ding Jing*(佛說灌頂經), translated by Śrīmitra in the Eastern Jin Dynasty (ca.317-322 A.D.). This sutra records the events of Mrgasirsa's voluntary renunciation of Tirthika(外道) and his acceptance of the Precepts from the Buddha. Mrgasirsa then appeared in the *Zen Yi Āhan Jing* (also written as *Ekottarika Āgama*) translated by Saṃghadeva in the Eastern Jin Dynasty (397-397 A.D.), and in the *Large Sutra on Perfect Wisdom*

⁷¹¹ Huiming Wang, “Posou Xian yu Lutou Fanzhi 婆藪仙与鹿头梵志[Brahmacharya and the Deer-Headed Brahmacharya],” *Dunhuang Yanjiu* 敦煌研究[Dunhuang Research], no.2 (2002): 69.

⁷¹² Wang, “Posou Xian yu Lutou Fanzhi,” 70.

⁷¹³ Yuanlin Zhang, “Mogao Ku Beichao Ku Zhong de Posouxian he Lutoufanzhi Xingxiang Zaishi 莫高窟北朝窟中的婆藪仙和鹿头梵志形象再识[A Reconsideration of the Images of Brahmacharya and Deer-Headed Brahmacharya in the Northern Dynasty Caves of the Mogao Caves],” *Dunhuang Yanjiu* 敦煌研究[Dunhuang Research], no.2(2002):73.

⁷¹⁴ Zhang, “Mogao Ku Beichao Ku Zhong de Posouxian he Lutoufanzhi Xingxiang Zaishi,” 74.

(*Mahaprajnaparamita sastra sutra* 大智度論) translated by Kumārajīva in the Later Qin Dynasty (ca. 402-405 A.D.). In both of the latter two sutras, Mrgasirsa serves as a counterexample to illustrate the *mādhyamaka*. In the Buddha's view, the Mrgasirsa despite being wise enough to cure all kinds of diseases in the world and able to diagnose from the bones of the dead what they had done in their past lives, was unable to judge the past and present lives of the Arahant. This shows that Mrgasirsa still does not have the vision of a Buddha, and thus he still easily falls into the bias of extreme dichotomies and needs to convert to Buddhism to study *madhyamakā*. This is explained in Volume 7 of the *Mohe Zhi Guan* (摩訶止觀), composed later by Zhi Yi (538-597 A.D.).⁷¹⁵

If this concept of *madhyamakā* is considered, the reason why Vasistha and Mrgasirsa appeared at the Buddha's side was not to promote the Buddhist view of karma, not to promote the greatness of the Buddha's teachings to be able to indoctrinate the Tirthika, and not to reflect the context of the Buddha-Doctrine struggle or the context of the struggle between materialism and idealism at that time. It is more likely that the reason why the Vasistha and Mrgasirsa were painted alongside the Bodhisattvas in the Buddha niche on the west wall of Mogao Cave 249 was to show the concept of *madhyamakā*. This idea is closely related to the penance rituals practiced in this cave. More specifically, the fact that the people who worshiped in this cave were able to accept the worship of Vasistha and Mrgasirsa suggests that they were also able to understand the wisdom of *Madhyamakā*. Being able to understand the *Great Vaipulya Dhāraṇī Scripture* and not slandering it is one of the basic prerequisites for repentance to be able to remove sins.

Finally, we can already see that all the murals and sculptures set up in Mogao Cave 249 have a close correspondence with the *Datong Fang Guang Chanhui Miezui Zhuangyan Cheng Fo Jing* and its reference to the *Great Vaipulya Dhāraṇī Scripture*,

⁷¹⁵ The original text in 《摩訶止觀》Vol 7: 「又外道打觸體作聲。聽知生處知無量事。香味觸等亦復如是。故言即假。假不定假。空不定空。則非空非假。若眼一法非空非假。則一切法非空非假。猶如虛空有無永寂。亦如日月無幽不照。雖無空假雙照空假。照因緣麤色名肉眼。照因緣細色名天眼。照因緣色空名慧眼。照因緣色假名法眼。照因緣色中名佛眼。」 (CBETA 2023.Q3, T46, no. 1911, p. 101a1-9)

on which the “*Fang Guang Confession*(方廣懺)” is based. Then this dissertation will take advantage of the Dunhuang manuscripts preserved in Dunhuang, and examine the specific procedure of the “*Fang Guang Confession*”, which was popular in Dunhuang during the Northern Dynasties.

In the Dunhuang manuscripts S.4494, there is a passage that reads “repeating the confessions of the *Fang Guang Classics*(復行方廣經典懺悔)”, indicating that what is being recorded here is the penance rite based on the *Daitong Fang Guang Chanhui Miezuizhuangyan Chengfojing*.⁷¹⁶ *Fang Guangchang* also refers to this text as the “*Fang Guang Classical Repentance Text*(方廣經典懺悔文).”⁷¹⁷ At the end of this manuscript, there is a date inscription “written on the 29th day of the 5th month of the 11th year of the Da Tong era (545 A.D.)”.⁷¹⁸ The sentence “repeating confessions of the *Fang Guang Classics*” indicates that similar repentance activities based on the *Fang Guang Jing* had already been popular before A.D.545. It is therefore possible to speculate the repentance ritual of “*Fang Guang Chan*” held in Cave 249, which was built during the Western Wei Dynasty, based on this “*Fang Guang Classical Repentance Texts*” from Dunhuang’s manuscript S.4494.. This “*Fang Guang Classical Repentance Texts*” records some rites of “*Fang Guang Chan*.”⁷¹⁹ It shows that this penance ritual includes: worship, kneeling, offering incense, solicitation, and

⁷¹⁶ Yongwu Huang, *The Treasures of Dunhuang*, Volume 36, (New Manfred Publishing Company), 338.

⁷¹⁷ Guangchang Fang, “An Initial Exploration of the Worship Method in the Liu Shi Li Wen,” *Studies in World Religions*, no.01(2008):21.

⁷¹⁸ According to the inscription on the scroll, this text was written in the eleventh year of the reign of Emperor Daitong of the Western Wei Dynasty (545 A.D.). There is an inscription at the end of the scroll: “Written and begged on the twenty-ninth day of the fifth month of the eleventh year of the Daitong era (finished), by Dao Yang Xu of the Pingnan Temple.” Examining the paper, font, and general style, scholars have also determined that the relics were written during the Northern and Southern Dynasties.

⁷¹⁹The original text: “次行*****是*****十方*****利如是*****次行请佛*****弟子等今发阿耨多罗三藐三菩提心复行方***忏悔访法五逆十恶无间根本障道重罪以是回录沈生死河没烦恼海无由得出沈没罪*不能自救是故今日无量怖丧无量惭愧依此经兴忏悔请**灯王佛, 宝王佛, 宝胜佛, 多宝佛, 阿弥陀佛, 毗*尸佛, 释迦牟尼佛及十方三世常住诸佛***经方等正典*****大菩萨文殊师利***虚空藏菩萨药王菩萨药*****菩萨为我证明证知我心我* 无有救护愿作**证知我心受弟子请来勤业无上菩提道意作是语**已各意念重罪荡泣交流五体投地至心**请*****余登王记至一于大慈父已来自各供养敬作礼*过一子大慈父还唱*跪香***养是诸大众各各胡跪香***行请佛我弟子等今请过去十方无量诸佛我弟子今发阿耨多罗三藐三菩提心, 复行方广经典忏悔, 或犯五逆四重、访(妨)法耶(邪)见、无间重罪, 唯愿过去无边十方诸佛为我证明,我今无有救护愿作救护证知我心更弟子请来勤业无上道意作是.....泣交流五体投地至心**请” see Huang Yongwu, *Dunhuang Treasure Book 36, No. 4401-4595* (New Manfred Publishing Company), 338.

repentation. Although this text is missing some of the first paragraphs. However, according to the popular penance activities in the Dunhuang area, it is known that the first five-fold repentance is common to general penance and other Buddhist activities. And because these five stages are part of a familiar convention they are also often omitted in the production and transcription versions of the ritual. The five ritual accouterments include: (1) revering the three jewels of Buddha, dharma, and saṃgha; (2) offering of flowers and incense; (3) doing Brahma, (4) reciting the mantra of the Buddha, (5) making a vow and dedication.⁷²⁰ Moreover, based on the content of this “Fang Guang Classical Repentance Texts”, the method of repentance used in this repentance ritual belongs to the repentance of “*quxiang* (取相忏).” It is a penance rite that needs to be performed in a place where there is a statue of Buddha.

Therefore, This dissertation suggests that Cave 249 was indeed capable of performing the repentance rituals that were prevalent at Dunhuang during the Northern Dynasties. The specific repentance ritual performed in Cave 249 was very likely following the “Fang Guang Chan” repentance ritual. The mural paintings and statues in this cave correspond exactly to the contents of the *Daitong Fang Guang Chanhui Miezu Zhuangyan Cheng Fo Jing*, thus providing a suitable ritual atmosphere for the “Fang Guang Chan” performed in this Mogao Cave 249. The Mogao Cave 249 is 5.85 meters long, 5.5 meters wide, with walls 4.5 meters high and a ceiling height of 5 meters (Fig. 5.1-45a). It is large enough to perform the first five accouterments of Buddhist ritual, namely, (1) revering the three jewels of Buddha, dharma, and saṃgha; (2) offering of flowers and incense; (3) doing Brahma, (4)

⁷²⁰ According to the two Dunhuang texts of the Rituals of Rizhong, P.272R2, S.2659, the Rituals of Rizhong was a popular penance in the Dunhuang region. Thirteen penance rituals are recorded in the Rizong Ritan: paying homage to the Three Jewels, making offerings of incense and flowers, making a brahm, sighing at the Buddha's mantra, returning to the vow, paying homage to the Three Jewels, paying homage to the sixteen koans, making heartfelt repentance, making a brahm, saying a verse to make a vow, making the threefold vow, saying the verse on impermanence, and making a vow. According to the research of Yang Mingfen (Shih Jiemin), the first five links here are common in general confessions and pujas, and they are often omitted in the production and transcription of rituals, but they are not missing in the actual holding of the event. See Yang Mingfen, *Tangdai Xifang Jintu Lichan Fa Yanjiu Yi Mogaoku Xifang Jintu Xinyang wei Zhongxin* 唐代西方净土礼忏悔法研究-以敦煌莫高窟西方净土信仰为中心 [Study on the Western Pure Land Rituals of the Tang Dynasty Focusing on the Western Pure Land Beliefs of the Dunhuang Mogao Caves] (Beijing: Minzu Publishing House, 2007), 233.

reciting the mantra of the Buddha; (5) making a vow and dedication. Moreover, there are traces of burning materials at the lower edge of the niche on the west wall of Cave 249, which may be the remains of the incense-burning activities that were once performed here during the Buddhist rituals mentioned above. The penance activity that follows can be performed in the two central-pillar caves adjacent to Mogao Cave 249, that is Mogao Cave 248 and Mogao Cave 251 (Fig 5.1-36).

Mogao Cave 248, adjacent to the south side of Mogao Cave 249, is the central pillar cave with a pre-designed route designed in advance for the “penance walking 行道懺悔” activity. With a length of 5.2 meters from east to west, a width of 3.75 meters from north to south, and a wall height of 3.4 meters, Mogao Cave 249 is also large enough to meet the space requirements for this penance activity. The center pillar of Mogao Cave 248 has a niche on each of the four sides, with a total of four Buddha statues (Fig 5.1-46). The east-facing seated Buddha is the future Buddha Maitreya (Fig. 5.1-46a), and there is also a figure of a lotus flower incarnation above it (see Fig. 5.1-46b). On the west-facing side, the statue of Sakyamuni Buddha is the past Buddha (Fig 5.1-46c).⁷²¹ Moreover, seven rows of small seated Buddhas are set up in the central area of the four walls. When the penitent performs “penance walking” around the center pillar, he or she does so under the watchful eyes of these Buddha images, thus fulfilling the requirement that the penitent must do so in front of the Buddha for the repentance of “*quxiang* 取相懺”. There is also a procession of donors in respectful poses around the lower part of the center pillar (Fig. 5.1-46d),⁷²² which also implies that worship and offerings rites during the repentance activity might take place here in cave 248. In addition, there is a row of respectful celestial figures on the front of the north and south walls of Mogao Cave 248, each below the roof (Figs. 5.1-47). On the east side of the herringbone roof at the top of the cave is a

⁷²¹ Pengju Lai, *Silu Fojiào de Tuxiàng yu Chanfa* 丝路佛教的图像与禅法 [The Quest for meditation Practice: Iconography in silk Road Buddhism] (Zhongli City: Yuan Guang Institute of Buddhist Studies, 2002), 66.

⁷²² Dunhuang Wenwu Yanjiusuo [Dunhuang Cultural Research Institute] ed., *Dunhuang Mogaoku Gongyangnen Tiji* 敦煌莫高窟供养人题记 [Donor inscriptions at the Mogao Caves, Dunhuang] (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1986), 108-109.

row of celestial beings with headlights (Fig. 5.1-48a). The celestial figures with headlights, whose hands seem to be holding a huge neck of flowers, and who also seem to be performing the “crossed hands salute.” (Fig. 5.1-48b)⁷²³ The celestial beings depicted on the west side of the herringbone roof are also in the clasped or crossed hands salute (Fig 5.1-48c). Overall, they are all in a saluting posture. It is therefore possible that the building space under the herringbone roof is implied to have been used for worship rites in the repentance activities. In addition, there are traces of burning materials under the niche on the east side of the center pillar, which may be traces of incense-burning activities. The space to the east of the center pillar is also enough for people to kneel performing the worship and offering incense. In this way, the “Fang Guang Chan” repentance ritual activities including worship, kneeling, offering incense, solicitation, and repentance can be carried out in Mogao Cave 248.

In Mogao Cave 251, the center-pillar cave adjacent to the north side of Mogao Cave 249, the same penitential activities of the above-mentioned “Fang Guang Chan” can also be carried out. The north wall of this cave is 9.8 meters long, the south wall is 8.8 meters long, the east wall is 6.70 meters long, the west wall is 6.3 meters long, the height of the front wall is 4.2 meters, the height of the back wall is 4.4 meters, and the height of the roof is 5.0 meters (Fig 5.1-36). The area is also sufficient for performing the activities of “repentance by walking.” Moreover, there is a niche for a seated Buddha on the east side of the center column, and two niches for two Buddhas on each of the other three sides, for a total of seven Buddha statues (Fig 5.1-49 a,b,c). Seven rows of small seated Buddhas are set up on the four walls. It is possible that these painted and sculpted statues of Buddha were also set up as objects for people to use when they performed their repentance activities here. Moreover, the front roof of Mogao Cave 251 is decorated with images of a lotus flower, which seems to imply that the believers who worship here will eventually be born into the world of the Buddha from the lotus flower. The rows of donors below the east side of the center

⁷²³ Jing Li, “Cong Fanhan Duikan He Tongjing Yiyi Zaitan Hanyi Fodian Zhong De Chashou yu Hezhang 从梵汉对勘和同经异译再谈汉译佛典中的‘叉手’与‘合掌,’” *Nixia Daxue Xuebao Renwen Shehui Kexue Ban* 宁夏大学学报(人文社会科学版) 40.Z1(2018):34-39.

pillar, however, have been repainted in the Five Dynasties period, and these repainted donors are much larger than those in the Northern Dynasties period, almost twice as large, with heights ranging from 31-32 cm (Fig. 5.1-49b).⁷²⁴ The figures depicted here are also in a reverent posture of worship, again suggesting that this was a place of worship. And there are also seated Buddhas painted in the center of the north and south walls (Fig. 5.1-50a,b,c,d). These images of Buddha provide a clear object of worship for the ritual confessions performed here.

In short, the architectural form and mural settings of the group of caves surrounding Mogao Cave 249 would have provided a suitable setting for the repentance ritual of “Fang Guang Chan” that was practiced at this time following the *Daitong Fang Guang Chanhui Miezui Zhuangyan Cheng Fo Jing*. The Buddhas and Bodhisattvas that appear in these group of caves, as well as the figures and storylines that reveal Buddhist teachings, were painted as objects of worship and penance. These images are physically involved in the religious activities that took place here.

(3) Group C: Mogao Cave 285 and Mogao Cave 288

This group of caves consists of Mogao Cave 285, the truncated pyramid-ceiling cave, and the adjacent Mogao Cave 288, the center-pillar cave, both of which are located on the second floor of the cliff face (Fig. 5.1- 51). On the north wall of Mogao Cave 285, there are three date inscriptions: “The fourth year of Da Tong of the Western Wei Dynasty (538 A.D.),” “on the 21st day of the fifth year of Da Tong of the Dai Dai Da Wei Dynasty (539 A.D.),” and “ Dai Dai Da Wei Dynasty”.⁷²⁵ Cave 288 is likewise thought to have been built during the Western Wei period (535-556 A.D.)by Dunhuang scholars.

⁷²⁴ The recognizable donor inscription reads: “妙高寶龕寺弟子王和供養,” “妙高勝嚴寺弟子*神奴供餐,” “妙高**寺弟子尹*,” The content of these inscriptions similarly declares only one's religious identity, not one's secular identity. See Dunhuang wenwu yan jiusuo [Dunhuang Cultural Research Institute] ed., *Dunhuang Mogaoku Gongyangnen Tiji* 敦煌莫高窟供养人题记 [Donor inscriptions at the Mogao Caves, Dunhuang] (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1986), 109.

⁷²⁵ Dunhuang wenwu yan jiusuo [Dunhuang Cultural Research Institute] ed., *Dunhuang Mogaoku Gongyangnen Tiji* [Donor inscriptions at the Mogao Caves, Dunhuang] (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1986), 1-5.

The construction of Mogao Cave 285 was also thought to be related to Dongyang Wang Yuanrong by scholars, but no trace of Yuanrong has been found in any of the recognizable dooner inscriptions preserved in the cave 285.⁷²⁶ Su Bai has also questioned the idea that Mogao Cave 285 was financed by Yuanrong, and has suggested that Mogao Cave 249 is more likely to have been financed by Yuanrong.⁷²⁷ Jin Weinuo, on the other hand, based on the location of Mogao Cave 285, was the first to suggest that Mogao Cave 285 may have been one of the “80 caves in the second to the third floor of the Seven Families “ mentioned in the Dunhuang manuscripts as being under the responsibility of Suo family.⁷²⁸ Jin Weinuo's view may be closer to the truth. The fieldwork by Suo Bai and others also found that the colors and stylistic features of the murals on the walls of Mogao Cave 285 indicate that they were done by different teams of artisans at different times. It is unlikely that the construction was intermittent if it was financed by an aristocrat such as Yuanrong. Some scholars also point out the variety of styles of the cave murals, such as the mural on the top of Mogao Cave 285 has traces of the art style of the Central Plains, the west murals have traces of the art style of the Western Regions,⁷²⁹ and the dress of the doors on the north wall has traces of the Zoroastrian art.⁷³⁰ All these hints suggest that Mogao Cave 285 was probably not built by a family from the Central Plains alone but by a group of patrons from different families in different regions who hired different teams of craftsmen to join forces in the construction of the cave.

⁷²⁶ Dunhuang wenwu yan jiusuo [Dunhuang Cultural Research Institute] ed., *Dunhuang Mogaoku Gongyangnen Tiji*, 32-49. He Shizhe believes that the costumes worn by the westernmost row of supporters in the north wall of Mogao Cave 285 are royal costumes, and speculates that they may be the king and his consort of Dongyang, but there is no inscription to prove this. See Shizhe He, “From the Supporter's Inscription on the Age of the Construction of Some of the Mogao Grottoes” in *Mogao Caves of Dunhuang: Supplier's Inscription* (Cultural Relics Publishing House, 1986), 198-191.

⁷²⁷ Bai Su, “King Dongyang and Jianping Gong (second draft),” in *Dunhuang Tulufan Literature Research Collection*, No. 4 (Beijing: China Book Store, 1987), 38-57.

⁷²⁸ Weino Jin, “Dunhuang Cave Niche Names and Numbers,” in *1987 Dunhuang Cave Research International Symposium Proceedings Cave Archaeology* (Shenyang: Liaoning Fine Arts Publishing House, 1990), 32-39.

⁷²⁹ Yinguang Li, “莫高窟第 285 窟西壁日天与月天图考源[Research on the Sun God and the Moon God in the Cave No. 285 of Mogao Grottoes],” *Zhuang Shi 装饰*[Decoration], no.3(2019):105-107; Hinoyama Tomomi, and Junru Lin, “敦煌莫高窟第 285 窟西壁壁画中的星宿图像与石窟整体的构想[On the Construction and Astral Deity Depictions of Mogao Cave 285],” *Dunhuang Yanjiu 敦煌研究*[Dunhuang Research], no.4(2022):51-65.

⁷³⁰ Yuanlin Zhang, “Dialogue Among the Civilizations: the Origin of the Three Guardian Deities' Images in Cave 285, Mogao Grottoes,” *The Silk Road*, Vol. 6, no. 2 (winter /Spring 2009), 33-48.

In previous scholarship, when scholars interpreted the murals in Mogao Cave 285, most of them were based on the function of meditation practice in this cave. They believe that the various types of murals appearing in this cave are set up for the practice of meditation. The possibility of these murals serving other religious activities is barely considered. For example, He Shizhe, regarding meditation as the basic function of Mogao Cave 285, believes that the tantric images on the west wall represent the Buddha's use of various dharani mantras to protect the monk's meditation practice by exorcising demons and subduing them in Volumes 1 and 2 of the *Fo Shuo Guanding Jing* (佛说灌顶经) and Volume 1 of the *Great Vaipulya Dhāraṇī Scripture* (大方等陀羅尼經).⁷³¹ However, in He Shizhe's interpretation based on the function of meditation, the content of the murals on the south wall of Mogao Cave 285 cannot be interpreted in its entirety. According to He Shizhe, the narrative painting of Five Hundred Bandits and the Karma Story Painting of a Sāmaṇera Committing Suicide for Abstinence painted on the south wall of Mogao Cave 285 is related to the “contemplation of impurity (*aśubha-bhāvanā*; *bujing guan* 不淨觀).”⁷³² But there is no correspondence between the rest murals of the south wall and the meditation.

Zhang Yuanlin later attempted a more holistic interpretation of the murals on the south wall. He argued that the narrative paintings from different sutras were brought together in one place to express the idea that “all beings have Buddha nature,” as espoused in *The Lotus Sūtra*.⁷³³ Zhang Yuanlin later followed this line of thought, suggesting that the entire setting of Cave 285 could be related to the *Lotus Sūtra*.⁷³⁴

⁷³¹ Shizhe He, “Dunhuang Mofgaoku Di 285ku Xibi Neirong Kaoshi 敦煌莫高窟第 285 窟西壁内容考释,” in *Dunhuang Shiku Yanjiu Guoji Taolun Wenji Shiku Kaogu Bian* 敦煌石窟研究国际讨论会文集石窟考古编 (Shengyang: Liaoning Meishu Chubanshe, 1990), 350-382.

⁷³² Shizhe He, “The Northern Dynasty Caves and Zen Concepts in the Mogao Grottoes at Dunhuang,” in *Dunhuang Research Anthology* (Lanzhou: Gansu People's Publishing House, 1982).

⁷³³ Yuanlin Zhang, “Fahuajing Foxing Guan de Xingxiang Quanshi 《法华经》佛性观的形象诠释——莫高窟第 285 窟南壁故事画的思想意涵[A Figurative Interpretation of the Buddhist View of Buddha Nature in The Lotus Sutra-The Ideological Meaning of the Story Paintings on the South Wall of Mogao Cave 285],” *Dunhuang Yanjiu* 敦煌研究 [Dunhuang Research], no.6(2004):7-13.

⁷³⁴ Yuanlin Zhang, Yingchun Wei, “Shilun Fahu Panjiao Sixiang Dui Dunhuang Beichao Sui Shiku de Yingxiang 试论法华判教思想对敦煌北朝—隋石窟的影响[The Influence of Fahu's Disciplinary Thought on Dunhuang's

However, Li Yinguang and Ryūsaku Nagaoka rejected Zhang Yuanlin's interpretation and offered an alternative overall interpretation of the murals of the south wall of Mogao Cave 285. Li Yinguang et al. points out that Zhang Yuanlin's interpretation of *The Lotus Sūtra* is too sweeping.⁷³⁵ Li Yinguang argues that the narrative paintings of “Five Hundred Bandits” and “A Sāmaṇera Committing Suicide for Abstinence” that dominate the south wall are based on the *Fo Shuo Mile Da Chengfo Jing* (佛說彌勒大成佛經), and it represents the “Maitreya’s Three Dharma Assemblies,” which are centered on Maitreya's beliefs (Fig.6.1.).⁷³⁶ However, this interpretation is also too sweeping, as the “Maitreya’s Three Dharma Assemblies” described in *Fo Shuo Mile Da Chengfo Jing* do not correspond to the scenarios depicted on the south wall of cave 285 very well. Moreover, the narrative paintings on the lower part of the south wall, namely the “Pindola Bharadvaja’s sister converted to Buddhism(宾头卢度跋提长者姊),” the “Buddha transforms a buffalo(佛度水牛生天緣),” “Shashin monge (*shisheng wen ji* 施身聞偈)” all cannot be included in the scene of the Maitreya’s Three Dharma Assemblies.

It is worth noting that Zhao Xiaoxing also argues that Zhang Yuanlin's interpretation is not quite appropriate, and emphasizes the need to be faithful to the

Caves of the Northern Dynasties and the Sui Dynasty],” *Dunhuang Yanjiu* 敦煌研究 [Dunhuang Research], no. 5 (2008): 69-75; Zhang Yuanlin, “The influence of Fahua's Judgmental Thought on the Dunhuang Caves of the Northern Dynasties and Sui Period,” *Proceedings of the 2008 Annual Meeting of the China Dunhuang Turpan Society and the Symposium on Dunhuang Sino-Tibetan Buddhist Art and Culture* (Xi'an: Sanqin Publishing House, 2011), 23-29; Yuanlin Zhang, “从《法华经》的角度解读莫高窟第 285 窟[Interpreting Mogao Cave 285 from the Perspective of the Lotus Sutra],” *Dunhuang Yanjiu* 敦煌研究 [Dunhuang Research], no. 2(2019):9-15.

⁷³⁵ Yinguang Li, Siyao Guo, and Ryusaku Nagaoka, “敦煌莫高窟第 285 窟南壁故事画所依经典之再研究——以宗教思想为中心[A Re-study of the Classics Underlying the Story Paintings on the South Wall of Cave 285 in Dunhuang Mogao Caves-Centred on Religious Thought],” *Wenbo* 文博[Relics and Museology], no.3 (2014): 92.

⁷³⁶ Yinguang Li, “Kongjian de Meishu Mogaoku Dierbawu Ku de Kongjian Buju Yu Beichao Yingzao Xingwei Yanjiu 空间的美术：莫高窟第 285 窟的空间布局与北朝营造行为研究[The fine art of space: a study of the spatial layout of Cave 285 of Mogao Caves and the creation behaviour of the Northern Dynasties],” *Meishu Dagan* 美术大观 [Art Panorama], no.11(2021):55-60; Li Yinguang, Guo Siyao, and Ryusaku Nagaoka, “弥勒三会思想在敦煌壁画中的表达——浅析第 285 窟南壁故事画的特色之处[The Expression of Maitreya's Three Association Ideas in Dunhuang Mural Paintings-An Analysis of the “Characteristic” Features of the Story Paintings on the South Wall of Cave 285],” *Huaxia Kaogu* 华夏考古[Huaxia Archaeology], no.4(2014):124-130; Yinguang Li, Siyao Guo, and Ryusaku Nagaoka, “敦煌莫高窟第 285 窟南壁故事画所依经典之再研究——以宗教思想为中心[A Re-study of the Classics Underlying the Story Paintings on the South Wall of Cave 285 in Dunhuang Mogao Caves-Centred on Religious Thought],” *Wenbo* 文博[Relics and Museology], no.3 (2014):92-96.

original Buddhist sutra on which these story paintings are based to interpret the ideas they originally expressed. Zhao Xiaoxing points out from the original Buddhist sutras on which each of these narrative paintings is based, that the narrative paintings appearing here together actually emphasize the Buddhist precepts. Those narrative paintings show the subject of the five precepts, the precepts for a bhikkhu, the precepts for a sāmaṇera, and the bodhisattva precepts.⁷³⁷ This interpretation by Zhao Xiaoxing is very convincing. However, Zhang Yuanlin later continued to follow his old line of thought that the entire setting of Mogao Cave 285 was related to *The Lotus Sūtra* and that the construction of the entire cave was a concrete embodiment of the “Lotus-samādhi contemplation method” created by Kumārajīva in the *Concise Essentials of Meditation (siwei lie yaofa 思惟略要法)*.⁷³⁸

In short, the basic function of Mogao Cave 285, which was set up by previous scholars as meditation, is only able to interpret some of the murals on the west and south walls, although it is the earliest breakthrough in the interpretation of individual images made by the early scholars. The entire wall paintings in Cave 285 cannot be properly interpreted in terms of meditation. For example, He Shizhe interprets the mural paintings on the ceiling of Mogao Cave 285 according to the content of *Xumi Siyu Jing* (須彌四域經), a pseudo-sutra that was popular in China around the 6th century. He interprets the content of the eastern slope on the ceiling of Mogao Cave 285 to mean that it was the bodhisattvas Bao Ying Sheng and Bao Jixiang, who were assigned by Amitabha Buddha, who together took the seven jewels from the Seventh Brahma Heaven to create the sun, moon, and stars to bring light to the world and to have the change of the seasons. Interpreting the various figures and animals depicted on the north and south slopes as running towards the west according to this sutra, “The sun, moon, and stars of the twenty-eight constellations are traveling westward”.

⁷³⁷ Xiaoxing Zhao, “The Composition of the Mural Paintings on the South Wall of Mogaoku Cave 285” in *Studies on the Wei-Jin Tomb of Gaotai and the History and Culture of the West of the River* (Lanzhou: Gansu Education Press, 2012), 516-526.

⁷³⁸ Yuanlin Zhang, “Cong Fahuajing de Jiaodu Jiedu Mogaoku Dierbawuku 从《法华经》的角度解读莫高窟第285窟 [Interpreting Mogao Cave 285 from the Perspective of the Lotus Sutra],” *Dunhuang Yanjiu 敦煌研究* [Dunhuang Research], no. 2(2019):9-15.

As for the thirty-five meditator figures at the edge of the ceiling of Mogao Cave 285, He Shizhe did not explain it based on this sutra.

Later, Liang Weiyong gave another interpretation of the mural on the ceiling of Mogao Cave 285. Based on the content of Volume 23 of the *Great Extensive Great Collection Sūtra (Dafang Dengda Jijing 大方等大集經)*, Liang Weiyong interpreted the scene depicted on the edge of the ceiling of Mogao Cave 285 as the “Twelve Beasts of the Hour” traveling around the Saha world to teach and educate their fellow creatures.⁷³⁹ Since in the Saha world, even animals can be educated, Bodhisattvas from other places should always respect this world, so the various celestial beings at the top of the ceiling were interpreted by Liang Weiyong as Bodhisattvas from other places come here to pay respect to this world. The correspondence between the overall mural content and the scriptures given by Liang Huiying based on the *Da Fang Da Jie Jing* is indeed quite close. However, the so-called “Twelve Beasts of the Hour” cannot all be found in the mountains and forests along the edge of the ceiling of Mogao Cave 285.

Recently, Satomi Hiyama also has attempted to integrate the murals on the ceiling of the cave with those on the four walls to provide a more holistic interpretation. However, what she has done so far is to interpret the images on the west wall and the ceiling in the light of the *Sutra of the Four Regions of Sumeru (須彌四域經)* and the *Dafang Dengda Jijing (大方等大集經)*. She does not provide an interpretation of the content of the murals on the other walls of the Mogao Cave 285. Satomi Hiyama also does not delve into the specific function of the cave and still treats Mogao Cave 285 as a meditation cave.

This also suggests that any attempt at a holistic interpretation of all the murals in a cave must be faithful not only to the original meaning of the sutra but also to the original function of the cave in which the murals are located. A holistic interpretation

⁷³⁹ The original text in 《大方等大集經》Vol 23 〈5 淨目品〉: 「是十二獸，晝夜常行閻浮提內，天人恭敬，功德成就，已於諸佛所發深重願。一日一夜常令一獸遊行教化，餘十一獸安住修慈，周而復始。七月一日鼠初遊行，以聲聞乘教化一切鼠身眾生，令離惡業勸修善事。如是次第至十三日，鼠復還行，如是乃至盡十二月。至十二歲，亦復如是，常為調伏諸眾生故。」 (CBETA 2023.Q3, T13, no. 397, p. 168a5-12)

of the murals in Mogao Cave 285 needs to be based on a faithful restoration of the function of the cave. The majority of the interpretations of Mogao Cave 285 in the past scholarship have not spent much effort on its function, but just have continued to be based on the views of the early scholars of the last century. In the hundreds of articles that have been written on Mogao Cave 285 in Chinese scholarship in the past, most scholars have tacitly assumed that the murals in Mogao Cave 285 were in the service of actual meditation practice.⁷⁴⁰ Most scholars have ignored the relationship between the murals in this cave and the other religious activities practiced at this time, such as ordination and repentance rituals.

As more and more scholars pay attention to the many details of Mogao Cave 285 that have been omitted in the past, it is time to reflect on the early scholarly definition of Mogao Cave 285 as a meditation cave. The details preserved in Mogao Cave 285 suggest, to varying degrees, that Mogao Cave 285 was probably not used as a meditation cave. For example, Li Yinguang noted during his fieldwork that traces of small statues still existed in the side chambers of Mogao Cave 285. He speculates that these small statues may have been placed during the Western Xia period(1038-1227), but it is also possible that the behavior of the Western Xia believers in placing statues in small caves may have been an emulation of earlier behavior before the eleventh century. Therefore, Li Yinguang suggests that the eight side chambers in Mogao Cave 285 may have been carved during the Western Wei Dynasty only to house statues, and were not meditation caves.⁷⁴¹ Furthermore, it is also worth noting that the side chambers of Mogao Cave 285 retain remnants of the enclosed stupa-shaped structures

⁷⁴⁰For example, Liu Huida speculates that the eight small side chamber in Mogao Cave 268, namely, Mogao Cave 267, Mogao Cave 269, Mogao Cave 270, Mogao Cave 271, and the side chamber in Mogao Cave 285 in the lower part of the north and south walls were the same as the Vihara-type caves in the Ajanta Caves in India. See Huida Liu, "Beiwei shiku yu chan 北魏石窟与禅[Caves of the Northern Wei Dynasty and Zen]," *Journal of Archaeology*, No. 3, (1978): 337-352. later, many scholars held a similar view, for example: Shizhe He, Mo Xiao, Shuqing Wang and Fuxue Yang believe that the square altar in the middle of the main chamber of Cave 285 was a place for Zen monks to chant around the statue after sitting for a long time. See Shuqing Wang, and Fuxue Yang, "Dunhuang Mogaoku Chanku de Lishi Bianqian 敦煌莫高窟禅窟的历史变迁[Historical Changes in the Meditation Caves of the Mogao Caves at Dunhuang]" in *Chinese Zen Studies*, vol. 4, (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 2006),310-318.

⁷⁴¹ Yinguang Li, "Kongjian de Meishu: Mogaoku di 285 ku de kongjian buju yu beichao yingzao xingwei 空间的美术: 莫高窟第 285 窟的空间布局与北朝营造行为研究[The art of space: a study of the spatial layout of Cave 285 of Mogao Caves and the creation behaviour of the Northern Dynasties]," *Meishu Dagan 美术大观*[Art Panorama], no.11(2021):59.

outside (Fig.5.1-52,53,54). Similar stupa-shaped structures are also found in the *Yi cave*(瘞窟) in the northern area of the Mogao Caves, e.g. in Mogao Cave B142 (Fig. 5.1-55).⁷⁴² Ashes of the deceased were found inside the small stupa-shaped structures in Mogao cave B142. This also hints at the possibility that these small side chambers in Mogao Cave 285 may have once been used as a place for burying the deceased. But the date of construction of the stupa-shaped remains in Mogao Cave 285 has not yet been given, so it is still impossible to speculate when the eight side chambers on the north and south walls of Mogao Cave 285 were used as a funerary place for the dead.

It is also important to highlight that Lai Pengju has already suggested that Mogao Cave 285 may have been used as a place for the “conferral of bodhisattva precepts” activity to teach the precepts of bhikkhus.⁷⁴³ He speculates the square platforms in the center of the Mogao Cave 285 was used for the ordination rites of this activity. In recent years, however, Li Yinguang challenged this view. Li Yinguang disagrees mainly about the function of the square platform in the center of the cave. Li Yinguang cites photographs of the Mogao Cave 285 taken by Charles Nouette, a photographer on the Paul Eugène Pelliot Expedition, that show visible remnants of a pagoda structure on the central square platform and a side chamber on the north wall as evidence to argue that the cave had been used as a place of worship (Fig.5.1-54).⁷⁴⁴ Li Yinguang ultimately rejects the possibility that the cave was used as a place for the ordination of precepts, and thus revisits the idea that Mogao Cave 285 was used for meditation practice.

However, according to the photographs taken by Charles Nouette in February 1908 (Fig 5.1-52, Fig 5.1-53, Fig 5.1-54), it can be seen that the tops of the pagoda-like buildings in front of the small side chambers overlay the murals of the Western

⁷⁴² Jinzhang Peng, and Costantino Moretti, “Les fouilles archéologiques du secteur nord de Mogao.” *Arts Asiatiques* 67.1 (2012): 115.

⁷⁴³ Pengju Lai, *Dunhuang Shiku Zaoxiang Sixiang Yanjiu* 敦煌石窟造像思想研究 [Studies on the Ideology of Dunhuang Cave Imagery] (Beijing: Cultural Relics Publishing House, 2009), 301-311.

⁷⁴⁴ Yinguang Li, “Kongjian de Meishu: Mogaoku di 285 ku de kongjian buju yu beichao yingzao xingwei 空间的美术：莫高窟第 285 窟的空间布局与北朝营造行为研究 [The art of space: a study of the spatial layout of Cave 285 of Mogao Caves and the creation behaviour of the Northern Dynasties],” *Meishu Dagan* 美术大观 [Art Panorama], no.11(2021):84-86.

Wei dynasty on the north wall (Fig 5.1-52a). The pagoda-like buildings in front of these small side chambers were added during later alterations.⁷⁴⁵ Although it is true that in the photographs taken by Charles Nouette, the remains of a pagoda-like building can be seen on a platform in the center of the cave at the time of the photographs (Fig 5.1-54). But this pagoda-like building was later removed and found to have some images on the platform below it, as recorded by Xiao Mo: “In the center of the floor of this cave (Mogao Cave 285) there is also a low square platform like the one seen in Cave 487, with a line engraving of an image of Mandala on the surface of the mud skin smeared by the Yuan Dynasty people.”⁷⁴⁶ This suggests that at least during the Yuan Dynasty, the pagoda-like building shown in Charles Nouette's old photo was not built on this square platform. The stupa-like building in the photographs taken by the photographer of the Paul Eugène Pelliot Expedition was added in the post-Yuan period. This means that in the time before the Yuan Dynasty, it is likely that Mogao Cave 285 in the Western Wei Dynasty did not have a stupa-like building on the center square platform at that time. Overall, the small pagoda-like structure in front of the niches on the north and south walls and the round pagoda-like structure on the square platform in the center are superimposed on top of the mural paintings, indicating that these buildings were added after the mural paintings were completed, and were not built during the Western Wei period. It is therefore inappropriate to speculate the original function of Mogao Cave 285 based on these later buildings in Mogao Cave 285. Li Yinguang's challenge to the idea that Mogao Cave 285 functioned as a place for the conferral of precepts in the Western Wei dynasty when it was first built is not valid. This means that Lai Pengju's argument that Mogao Cave 285 was associated with the activity of conferral of precepts is potentially valid.

Lai Pengju has argued persuasively that the setting of the images in Mogao Cave 285 does show various relationships with the activity of conferral of precept. Most of

⁷⁴⁵ Xiao Mo was the first to conclude that the towers in front of the small caves along the lower wall were built by the Yuan, based on inscriptions in Western Xia script written by the Yuan in the small caves along the lower wall. See Mo Xiao, “The Grotto Forms of the Mogao Caves of Dunhuang”, in *Chinese Caves - The Mogao Caves of Dunhuang (Volume II)* (Beijing: Cultural Relics Press, 1981), 193.

⁷⁴⁶ Xiao, “The Grotto Forms of the Mogao Caves of Dunhuang,” 193.

the murals and statues in Mogao Cave 285 can indeed be well explained on the premise of this activity. Only the recurring images of the Buddha of Immeasurable Life with clear inscriptions on the north and east walls of the cave and the content of the donor's inscriptions have not yet found a perfect counterpart in Lai Pengju's proposal. There is therefore scope for further discussion.

Firstly, the Buddha of Immeasurable Life appears at least twice in Mogao Cave 285, and clear inscriptions of the Buddha of Immeasurable Life can still be seen around the images of the Buddha on the north and east walls of Cave 285. It is also worth noting that of the four donor's inscriptions on the north wall of Cave 285 that are still legible today, for example, the donor's inscription below the first grouping of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas on the east side of the north wall mentions that the purpose of “creating a layout of the Buddha of Immeasurable Life and two Bodhisattvas” was “be free from the eight difficulties of the Three Paths and the sufferings of the present age and that they will be born in wonderful bliss and attain the highest enlightenment (後願含靈抱識離舍三途八難、現在老苦, 往生妙樂, 齊登正覺)” (Fig. 5.1- 56b).

Also, in the inscription of the donor below the fourth group of Buddha and Bodhisattva group portraits from the east side of the north wall, according to the records of Paul Eugène Pelliot, the purpose of “creating a layout of the Buddha of Immeasurable Life and two Bodhisattvas” is to “be free from the three paths of suffering and the eight difficulties (後願含靈抱識離舍於三途於八難).” (Fig. 5.1- 56c).⁷⁴⁷ In addition, the inscription below the group of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas in the sixth panel from the east side of the north wall, records the purpose of creating the images of Buddha and Bodhisattvas is for their deceased parents will travel to the Pure Land, and will be free from the Three Paths forever (Fig. 5.1-56d). These recurring inscriptions of prayers for the dead indicate that the function of the cave was also probably related to the activity of pursuit of blessings for the dead.

⁷⁴⁷ Paul Pelliot, *Boxihe Dunhuang Shiku Biji* 伯希和敦煌石窟笔记[Grottes De Touen-Houang Garnet De Notes De Paul Pellot] , trans. Geng Sheng (Lanzhou: Gansu renming Chuban She, 2007).

During the Northern and Southern Dynasties, this type of activity for the benefit of the dead was already widespread. For example, in an inscription on a stele made in the fourth year of Zhengguang of the Northern Wei Dynasty (523 A.D.), which is close to the date of the above inscription in cave 285, the purpose of making a statue of the “Buddha of Immeasurable Life” is also clearly stated: “wishing that the deceased would be free from sufferings”.⁷⁴⁸ Moreover, the purpose of making the “Buddha of Immeasurable Life” is also recorded in the inscription of the statue made by the monk Huang Fa in the third year of Xiaochang (527 A.D.) of the Northern Wei Dynasty: “May the deceased ascend to heaven.”⁷⁴⁹

In addition, this concept of pursuing blessings for the deceased already appeared as early as in the *Foshuo Guanding Jing* (佛說灌頂經) translated by the Eastern Jin Dynasty (317-322 A.D.). It is also mentioned here in the specific activity of pursuing blessings for the dead, that the living people “should repent for all sins on behalf of the dead.”⁷⁵⁰ Moreover, in the *Sūtra of the Perfect Net* (*Brahmajāla Sutta* 梵網經) translated by Kumārajīva in 406 A.D., it is also mentioned that in the activities of pursuing blessings for the deceased, one should invite a Venerable Master to preach the Bodhisattva Precepts.⁷⁵¹ This indicates that since the fifth century, the rituals of pursuing blessings for the deceased have included both “repenting for the sins of the deceased” and “inviting the Venerable Master to speak on Bodhisattva precepts”.

⁷⁴⁸ (Qing Dynasty) Zengxian Lu: *Baqionglu jinshi xianzheng* 八琼室金石补正, vol. 1.3 *Longmenshan zhuji ninety-eight duan* 龙门山造像九十八段 [Longmenshan statues] (Beijing: Cultural Relics Publishing House, 1985), 75.

⁷⁴⁹ (Qing Dynasty) Lu, *Bajionglou jinshi jinshi xiazheng*, 76.

⁷⁵⁰ The original text in 《佛說灌頂經》 Vol 11: 「若人臨終未終之日，當為燒香然燈續明，於塔寺中表刹之上，懸命過幡轉讀尊經竟三七日。所以然者，命終之人，在中陰中身如小兒，罪福未定應為修福，願亡者神使生十方無量刹土，承此功德必得往生；亡者在世若有罪業應墮八難，幡燈功德必得解脫。若善願應生，父母在異方不得疾生，以幡燈功德，皆得疾生無復留難。若得生已，當為人作福德之子，不為邪鬼之所得便，種族豪強。是故應修幡燈功德。諸過命者修行福業至心懇惻，應代亡者悔過眾罪罪垢即滅。為亡者修福，如餉遠人無不獲果。譬如世間犯罪之人，心中思惟望諸親屬，求諸大力救其危厄。今日燒香望得解脫，為亡者稱其名號修諸功德，以福德之力緣是解脫亦復如是，徑生十方無願不得。」 (CBETA 2023.Q1, T21, no. 1331, pp. 529c18-530a5).

⁷⁵¹ The original text in 《梵網經》 Vol 2: 「若父母兄弟死亡之日，應請法師講菩薩戒經福資亡者，得見諸佛生人天上。若不爾者，犯輕垢罪。如是十戒，應當學敬心奉持，如滅罪品中廣明一一戒相。」 (CBETA 2023.Q3, T24, no. 1484, p. 1006b16-20)

The Dunhuang manuscripts also contain a large number of ritual texts used for this kind of activity for the dead. For example, in manuscript S.5639, which is to be titled “Model Texts for the Dead” there is a reference to praying for the dead through the merits of keeping the precepts.⁷⁵² Keeping the precepts is also emphasized in the text of rituals reserved for the activities of pursuing blessings for the deceased in manuscript P.2058.⁷⁵³ The precepts are similarly mentioned in terms of the activities of pursuing blessings for deceased monks and nuns copied in manuscript P.2341.⁷⁵⁴ In the manuscript P.2313, which is to be titled “A Collection of Sentences and Paragraphs on Deceased Texts”, the precepts are also mentioned as a means of resisting the intrusion of evil things.⁷⁵⁵ In the text for the activities of pursuing blessings for his deceased wife, transcribed in P.2449, it is mentioned that a man who organized a fast for the welfare of his deceased wife asked the monks to state the numerous precepts that his deceased wife had violated and confessed in her behalf, and prayed to the Buddhas to save his wife.⁷⁵⁶ Moreover, on the reverse side of the “*lin kuang wen* 臨壙文” is copied the text of the “*Shou Shami Shijie Wen Ji Weiyi* 受沙彌十戒文及威儀” from the manuscripts B.7133(藏字 26). If this “Lin Kuang Wen” was read at the burial ceremony after the coffin had been moved to the cemetery, then the text about the precepts on the back may also have been used in burial ceremonies at Dunhuang.

⁷⁵² The original text: “齋主意公伏能遺生重命，請福祈恩；憑齋戒之功勳，保松筠之算壽。” See Huang zheng, and Wu Wei, *Dunhuang Yuanwen Ji* 敦煌愿文集[Dunhuang Prayer Text] (Changsha: Yuelu Shusha, 1995),204.

⁷⁵³ The original text: “唯亡大德乃釋門后德，才播人寰；定惠(慧)將水鏡而俱清，戒律比鵝珠而皎潔。” See Huang zheng, and Wu Wei, *Dunhuang Yuanwen Ji* 敦煌愿文集[Dunhuang Prayer Text](Changsha: Yuelu Shusha, 1995),249.

⁷⁵⁴ The original text: “惟尼師乃戒行清結(潔)” See Huang zheng, and Wu Wei, *Dunhuang Yuanwen Ji* 敦煌愿文集[Dunhuang Prayer Text](Changsha: Yuelu Shusha, 1995), 253.

⁷⁵⁵ The original text: “用此戒香，遍勳(薰)穢惡。” See Huang zheng, and Wu Wei, *Dunhuang Yuanwen Ji* 敦煌愿文集[Dunhuang Prayer Text] (Changsha: Yuelu Shusha, 1995), 256.

⁷⁵⁶ The original text: “破齋破戒，捨佛捨僧；因見非因，法見非法。如是等業，或是此世，或是多生，自作教他，見聞隨喜。今因齋(齋)次，僧眾齊心，普為申陳，待其懺謝。唯願諸佛，一切賢聖，為昨(作)救護，為其拔濟，願罪消滅。唯願以茲啓請懺悔設齋(齋)勝益，一一良田，並用莊嚴亡者魂路：即願昇神上界，放曠天宮，侍奉慈尊，得聞法要。質多樹下，快樂終拂石之期；歡喜苑中，果報盡空城之劫。” See Huang zheng, and Wu Wei, *Dunhuang Yuanwen Ji* 敦煌愿文集[Dunhuang Prayer Text] (Changsha: Yuelu Shusha, 1995),749.

The above Dunhuang manuscripts suggest that such “*Jian Wan* 薦亡” activities involving repentance and precepts have already taken place since the fifth century.⁷⁵⁷ The existence of this type of activity might explain why Mogao Cave 285, which was built around the Western Wei Dynasty (538 -539 A.D.), has inscriptions on the north wall recording the purpose of pursuing blessings for the deceased, and at the same time, all the images on the south wall of the cave are painted with images related to precepts. In the middle of the south wall, “The Cause of the Five Hundred Thieves Becoming Buddhas” is an expression of “the root power of charity,” which is the foundation of keeping the Bodhisattva's precepts, according to the original text of the *Sutra of The Great Nirvana* (Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra 大般涅槃經).⁷⁵⁸ The story of “Shisheng Wenji (施身聞偈)” painted on the lower west side of the south wall, is based on the “Sheng Xing Pin (聖行品)” in the *Sutra of The Great Nirvana* (Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra 大般涅槃經), and it is about the behavior of sacrificing one's body for the pursuit of the right Dharma. The story of “Pindola Bharadvaja's sister converted to Buddhism” painted on the east side of the lower part of the south wall is derived from the *Wu fen lü* (五分律),⁷⁵⁹ and the full narrative of the sutra is not intended to demonstrate the use of divine powers to enlighten the elder sisters of Mukti but to express the Buddha's warning to Bin Tou lu and the bhikṣu that the

⁷⁵⁷ After the Middle and Late Tang dynasties, the aspect of pursuing blessings for the dead was also explicitly included in the rituals of Pure Land Confession, as Yang Mingfen has already discussed. See Mingfen Yang, *Tangdai Xifang Jingtū Lichan fa Yanjiu* 唐代西方淨土禮懺法研究[Study of Western Pure Land Repentance Rituals in the Tang Dynasty] (Beijing: Min zu chu ban she, 2007), 305.

⁷⁵⁸ The original text in 《大般涅槃經》Vol 16: 「復次善男子！憍薩羅國有諸群賊，其數五百，群黨抄劫，為害滋甚。波斯匿王患其縱暴，遣兵伺捕，得已挑目，遂著黑闇叢林之下。是諸群賊，已於先佛殖眾德本，既失目已，受大苦惱，各作是言：『南無佛陀南無佛陀，我等今者無有救護。』啼哭號咷。我時住在祇洹精舍，聞其音聲，即生慈心，時有涼風，吹香山中種種香藥，滿其眼眶，尋還得眼，如本不異。諸賊開眼，即見如來，住立其前而為說法。賊聞法已，發阿耨多羅三藐三菩提心。善男子！我於爾時實不作風，吹香山中種種香藥，住其人前而為說法。善男子！當知皆是慈善根力，令彼群賊見如是事。」(CBETA 2023.Q3, T12, no. 374, p. 458b21-c4)

⁷⁵⁹ Xiaoxing Zhao, “Mogaoku Di Erbawu Ku Nanbi Bihua de Goucheng 莫高窟第 285 窟南壁壁畫的構成[The Composition of the Mural Paintings on the South Wall of Mogaoku Cave 285],” in *Gaotai Weijin Mu yu Hexi Lishi Wenhua Yanjiu* 高台魏晉墓與河西歷史文化研究[Studies on the Wei-Jin Tomb of Gaotai and the History and Culture of the West of the River] (Lanzhou: Gansu Education Press, 2012), 522.

uncontrolled use of divine powers is also a violation of the precepts.⁷⁶⁰ According to the complete original text about the story of the “buffalo was transformed by Buddha” in the *Scripture of a hundred Circumstance* (撰集百緣經), this story is about one of the Buddha's precepts namely “Cessation of Delusional Speech(戒妄語).” The full story is that even a bhikkhu who has attained a certain level of cultivation will be reborn as an evil buffalo in 500 lifetimes because of bad karma of the mouth, and therefore, he should strictly abide by the precepts of “Protecting the Karma of Body, Mouth and Mind”.⁷⁶¹ The Karma Story Painting of “a Sāmaṇera Committing Suicide for Abstinence” painted in the lower center of the south wall is taken from Karma Story in Volume 5 of the *Sutra of the Wise and Foolish*, and the importance of observing the precepts is repeated in the original text.⁷⁶²

⁷⁶⁰ The original text in 《彌沙塞部和醯五分律》Vol 26: 「時三聲聞語賓頭盧言:「我等已化跋提令其信樂,汝今宜行,次化其姊。」於是賓頭盧晨朝著衣持鉢入城乞食,次到其舍。時長者姊手自作餅,忽見賓頭盧,便低頭閉目。賓頭盧亦一心視鉢。便語言:「決不與汝!一心視鉢,欲以何為?」賓頭盧便身中烟出。復語言:「舉身烟出,亦不與汝!」賓頭盧便舉身火燃。復語言:「舉身火燃,亦不與汝!」賓頭盧便飛騰虛空。復語言:「飛騰虛空,亦不與汝!」賓頭盧便倒懸空中。復語言:「倒懸空中,亦不與汝!」賓頭盧作是念:「世尊不聽我等強從人乞。」便出去。去王舍城不遠有大石,賓頭盧坐其上,合石飛入王舍城。城中人見,皆大怖懼,恐石落地,莫不馳走。至長者姊家上,便住不去。彼見已即大恐怖,心驚毛豎,叉手白言:「願施我命,以石著本處,我當與食!」賓頭盧便持石,還著先處,至其前住。長者姊作是念:「我不能以大餅施,當更作小者與之。」更作小丸,轉反成大。如是三反,轉大於前。乃作念言:「我欲作小,皆反成大。我今便可趣與一餅。」即以餅授與,諸餅相連,至於餅器亦相連著;以手捉器,手亦著之,便語賓頭盧言:「汝若須餅,盡以相與,器亦不惜。何須我為,而令我手著器不離?」答言:「我不須餅及器,亦不須汝。我等四人共議,度汝及汝弟。三人已化汝弟,我應度汝,所以爾耳!」問言:「今欲令我何所施作?」答言:「姊妹可戴此餅,隨我施佛及僧。」即便戴餅隨賓頭盧,賓頭盧即化導,皆經他門使人見之。既至佛所,手自供佛及千二百五十比丘,皆悉飽滿,猶故不盡。持往白佛:「我此少餅供佛,及千二百五十比丘,皆悉飽滿,猶故不盡。今當持此著於何處?」佛言:「可著無生草地,若無虫水中。」彼女人便持著無虫水中,水沸作聲,如以熱鐵投于小水,便生恐怖,衣毛皆豎;還至佛所,頭面禮足,却坐一面。佛為說種種妙法,乃至得法眼淨,受三歸五戒,供給四眾,求道如弟無異。諸長老比丘以是白佛,佛以是事集比丘僧,問賓頭盧:「汝實爾不?」答言:「實爾。世尊!」佛種種呵責已,告諸比丘:「從今不聽現神足,若現突吉羅!」(CBETA 2023.Q3, T22, no. 1421, p. 170b13-c24)

⁷⁶¹ CBETA 2023.Q3, T04, no. 200, p. 232a7-c15.

⁷⁶² The original text in 《賢愚經》Vol 5 (23 沙彌守戒自殺品): 「沙彌受教,禮足而去。往到其家,打門作聲,女問:「是誰?」答言:「沙彌,為師迎食。」女心歡喜:「我願遂矣。」即與開門。是女端正,容貌殊妙,年始十六,姪欲火燒,於沙彌前作諸妖媚,搖肩顧影,深現欲相。沙彌見已念言:「此女為有風病、癲狂病、羊癩病耶?是女將無欲結所使,欲燒毀我清淨行耶?」堅攝威儀,顏色不變。時女即便五體投地,白沙彌言:「我常願者,今已時至。我恒於汝欲有所陳,未得靜便,想汝於我亦常有心,當與我願。我此舍中多有珍寶金銀倉庫,如毘沙門天宮寶藏,而無有主。汝可屈意為此舍主,我為汝婦,供給使令。必莫見違,滿我所願!」沙彌心念:「我有何罪,遇此惡緣?我今寧當捨此身命,不可毀破三世諸佛所制禁戒。昔日比丘至姪女家,寧投火坑,不犯於姪;又諸比丘,賊所劫奪,以草繫縛,風吹日曝,諸蟲咬食,以護戒故,不絕草去;如鵝吞珠,比丘雖見,以持戒故,極苦不說;如海船壞,下座比丘以守戒故,授板上座,沒海而死。如是諸人,獨佛弟子能持禁戒,我非弟子、不能持耶?如來世尊獨為彼師、非我師耶?如瞻蔔華并胡麻壓油,瞻蔔香;若合臭花,油亦隨臭。我今已得遇善知識,云何今日當造惡法?寧捨身命,終不破戒、污佛法僧父母師長。」又復思惟:「我若逃突,女欲心盛,捨於慚愧,走外牽捉及誹謗我,

It is also worth noting that in the memorial text for deceased monks and nuns preserved in the Dunhuang manuscripts, there are always metaphors in which the precepts are compared to jewels. For example, in the memorial text for a deceased monk copied in S.6417, it is mentioned that “the pearl of the precepts is the same as the bright moon.”⁷⁶³ In S.4474, the memorial text for a deceased monk, it is also stated “The pearl of precepts are round and pure.”⁷⁶⁴ S.4081 has a similar following: “The pearl of precepts is always purified.”⁷⁶⁵ In S.2832, it is also written “I wish that the precepts pearl be rounded and purified,”⁷⁶⁶ and “The pearl is bright as the precepts.”⁷⁶⁷ Moreover, it is also mentioned in the text for the deceased Śikṣamāṇā transcribed in P.2255, P.2358: “If you have consecrated the Pure Precepts, you are already in the resonance of the half-jewel”.⁷⁶⁸ In a text for the Dead Monk, it reads, “The Dharma mirror is on the platform of the heart, and the Precepts pearl are on the sea of nature.”⁷⁶⁹ In manuscript B. 8454 (Di Zi 17), the text used for deceased monks, there is also a reference to: “The precept pearl is colorful, and there is no trace of it with the morning dew.”⁷⁷⁰ It is also mentioned in the pray text used for deceased nuns in B. 8454 (Di Zi 17): “To hold the pure precepts with vigor as if one were guarding a pearl”.⁷⁷¹ In the model text for the deceased copied in S.5639, there is also: “may the precepts pearl bright and clean.”⁷⁷² These recurring phrases of “precepts pearls” from

街陌人見，不離污辱。我今定當於此捨命。」方便語言：「牢閉門戶，我入一房，作所應作，爾乃相就。」女即閉門。沙彌入房，關擲門戶，得一剃刀，心甚歡喜，脫身衣服，置於架上，合掌跪向拘尸那城佛涅槃處，自立誓願：「我今不捨佛、法、眾僧，不捨和上阿闍梨，亦不捨戒；正為持戒，捨此身命。願所往生，出家學道，淨修梵行，盡漏成道。」即刎頸死，血流滂沛，污染身體。時女怪遲，趣門看之，見戶不開，喚無應聲，方便開戶，見其已死，失本容色，欲心尋息，慚結懊惱，自撼頭髮，爪裂面目，宛轉灰土之中，悲鳴泣淚，迷悶斷絕。其父會還，打門喚女，女默不應，父怪其靜，使人踰入，開門視之，見女如是，即問女言：「汝何以爾？有人侵汝、污辱汝耶？」女默不答，心自思惟：「我今若以實對，甚可慚愧；若言沙彌毀辱我者，則謗良善，當墮地獄，受罪無極。不應欺誑。」即以實答：「我此獨守，沙彌來至，為師索食，我欲心盛，求饒沙彌冀從我心，而彼守戒，心不改易，方便入房，自捨身命。以我穢形欲壞淨器，罪覺若斯，故我不樂。」父聞女言，心無驚懼。何以故？知結使法爾故，即告女言：「一切諸法皆悉無常，汝莫憂懼！」即入房內，見沙彌身血皆污赤，如梅檀机。即前作禮，讚言：「善哉！護持佛戒，能捨身命。」（CBETA 2023.Q3, T04, no. 202, p. 381a18-c14）

⁷⁶³ Huang and Wu, *Dunhuang Prayer Text Anthology*, 759.

⁷⁶⁴ Huang and Wu, *Dunhuang Prayer Text Anthology*, 197.

⁷⁶⁵ Huang and Wu, *Dunhuang Prayer Text Anthology*, 171.

⁷⁶⁶ Huang and Wu, *Dunhuang Prayer Text Anthology*, 81.

⁷⁶⁷ Huang and Wu, *Dunhuang Prayer Text Anthology*, 101.

⁷⁶⁸ Huang and Wu, *Dunhuang Prayer Text Anthology*, 768.

⁷⁶⁹ Huang and Wu, *Dunhuang Prayer Text Anthology*, 10.

⁷⁷⁰ Huang and Wu, *Dunhuang Prayer Text Anthology*, 264

⁷⁷¹ Huang and Wu, *Dunhuang Prayer Text Anthology*, 266

⁷⁷² Huang and Wu, *Dunhuang Prayer Text Anthology*, 213.

the above Dunhuang manuscript can be used to explain the recurring image of the pearl in the center of the four slopes at the ceiling of Mogao Cave 285(Fig.5.1-60a,b,c.d).

Therefore, the murals in Mogao Cave 285 may be centered on the activities of pursuing blessings for the deceased. Since the Dunhuang manuscripts record the chanting of precepts and the performance of penance on behalf of the deceased they would have been involved in the activities of pursuing blessings for the deceased. Based on this practical function of Mogao Cave 285, it is more rational to interpret why these images and statues were brought together in Mogao Cave 285. It can be assumed that the images painted on the south wall of Mogao Cave 285 are all related to the precepts to serve the rite of reciting precepts in the activities of pursuing blessings for the deceased (Fig.5.1-59). The pearls guarded by various celestial beings that appear on all four slopes of the ceiling of cave 285 also symbolize the purity of the precepts (Fig.5.1-60). The Buddhas on the north, east, and west walls, as well as the statues of Buddhas and monks in the niches on the west wall, provide direct objects for the activity of repentance on behalf of the deceased.

Mogao Cave 288, adjacent to the north of Mogao Cave 285, is a center-pillar cave, which could provide a suitable site for the specific rite of repentance by the living on behalf of the dead. The north wall of the Mogao Cave 288 is 6.25 meters long, and the south wall is 6.35 meters long; the width of the west wall is 4.9 meters, and the width of the east wall is 4.85 meters; and the height of the wall is 3.4-3.9 meters (Fig.5.1-61). Taking into account the size of this cave, actual rituals also could have been convened within the available space. The center pillar in this cave sets the route for the performance of repentance by the religious practitioners (Fig.5.1-62). The six statues of Buddha on the four sides of the center pillar also provide direct objects of repentance when performing repentance around the center pillar. In addition, the walls around the center pillar are covered with seven consecutive rows of small images of seated Buddhas. When the penitent performs penance around the center pillar of Mogao Cave 288, he or she does so in the presence of the statues of the Buddhas. This is in line with the requirements of the activity of “qu xiang

repentance(取相懺)”. Also in Mogao Cave 288, in the upper part of the east-facing niche of the center pillar, there is a figure emerging from a lotus flower with a pearl in his hands, just as in the west slope of the ceiling of Mogao Cave 285 (Fig. 5.1-62b). And the roof in front of the center pillar of this cave 288 is also covered with pearls placed on lotus seats (Fig. 5.1-63, Fig. 5.1-64). The images of these pearls, representing the precepts, are placed in this worship space to be worshipped, seeming to imply again the importance of the precepts.

In short, the interior murals and statues in Mogao Caves 285 and Mogao Cave 288 show a close relationship with the activities of pursuing blessings for the deceased once practiced in the Dunhuang area. Together, these two neighboring caves provide an appropriate place for the chanting of precepts and the performance of penance on behalf of the deceased who is involved in an activity of pursuing blessings for the deceased. In the course of this activity, both the statues and the images in the caves participate in religious activity as the objects they represent themselves. The relationship between the image and the person is no longer merely one of viewing, but one of multi-sensory interaction that includes the entire physical senses.

(4) Group D: Mogao Cave 438 and Mogao Cave 290

Of this group of caves, Mogao Cave 438, located on the third floor of the cliff face, is a truncated pyramid-ceiling cave. Directly above it is a center-pillar Mogao Cave 290 (Fig. 5.1-65). Adjacent to Mogao Cave 438 on the north side is also a center-pillar cave, Mogao Cave 437, which was restored in the Song Dynasty, and the murals of the Northern Wei Dynasty inside the cave are now all covered by the murals of the Song Dynasty restoration and are therefore outside the scope of this dissertation.

The original construction of Mogao Cave 290 has been dated by the Dunhuang scholarship to the Northern Zhou period. Fan Jinshi and Ma Shichang once suggest that Mogao Cave 290 was built between the eleventh year of Da Tong of the Western Wei Dynasty and the fourth year of Kai Huang of the Sui Dynasty, that is, from 545

to 584 A.D., mainly during the Northern Zhou period.⁷⁷³ Li Chongfeng believes that Mogao Cave 290 was built between the second year of Wucheng and the third year of Jiande, that is, between 560 and 574 A.D.⁷⁷⁴ According to Zhao Qinglan, Mogao Cave 290 was built between the third year of Baoding in the Northern Zhou Dynasty and the third year of Jiande, that is, between 563 and 574 A.D.⁷⁷⁵ It is currently speculated that the owner of Cave 290 may have been Li Xian (501-569 A.D.), who was the executive of Gua Zhou from the second year of the Baoding to the fourth year of the Baoding period (562-564 A.D.) in the Northern Zhou Dynasty.⁷⁷⁶ Because in Mogao Cave 290, one of the 272 surviving images of donors is a relative of Li Xian's wife, Wu Hui, and one is Li Xian's granddaughter. In addition, He Shizhe also believes that the saddle in the so-called "Horse-Taming Scene" painted in the lower part of the west-facing niche of the center pillar may be the "Golden Saddle" given by Emperor Wu of the Northern Zhou Dynasty.⁷⁷⁷ Mogao Cave 290 is therefore currently considered to date from the middle of the Northern Zhou period. Cave 438 has also been dated to the Northern Zhou period.

First of all, it is worth noting that there is a special feature of the mural paintings in Mogao Cave 290, which are very detailed narrative paintings of the Buddha's career, painted only on the front roof of the cave (Fig.5.1-66a,b,c).⁷⁷⁸ Scholars have

⁷⁷³ Jinshi Fan, Shichang Ma, Youhui Guan, "Dunhuang Mogaoku Beichao Dongku de Fenqi 敦煌莫高窟北朝洞窟的分期[Dating of the Northern Caves of the Mogao Caves at Dunhuang]," in *Zhongguo Shiku Dunhuang Mogaoku Diyi Juan 中国石窟敦煌莫高窟第1卷*[The Mogao Grottoes at Dunhuang, China] (Beijing: Wenwu Chubanshe, 1996), 197.

⁷⁷⁴ Chongfeng Li, "Dunhuang Mogaoku Beichao Wanqi Dongku de Fenqi Yu Yanjiu 敦煌莫高窟北朝晚期洞窟的分期与研究[Dating and Research on the Late Northern Dynasty Caves in the Mogao Grottoes at Dunhuang]," in *Dunhuang Yanjiu Wenji Shiku Kaogu Bian 敦煌研究文集石窟考古编* (Lanzhou: Gansu Mingzu Chubanshe, 2004), 29-111.

⁷⁷⁵ Qinglan Zhao, "Mogaoku Zhongxin Tazhu Ku de Fenqi Yanjiu 莫高窟中心塔柱窟的分期研究[A Dating Study of the Central Pillar Cave of the Mogao Grottoes]," in *Dunhuang Yanjiu Wenji Shiku Kaogu Pian 敦煌研究文集石窟考古篇* (Lanzhou: Gansu Mingzu Chubanshe, 2000), 211-256.

⁷⁷⁶ Ru Li, "Dunhuang Lixian Jiqi Gongde Ku Xianguan Wenti Shilun 敦煌李贤及其功德窟相关问题试论[Issues related to Li Xian and his Cave of Merits at Dunhuang]," *Dunhuang Xue Jikan 敦煌学辑刊*[Journal of Dunhuang Studies], no.4 (2009): 112 - 126.

⁷⁷⁷ Shizhe He, "Shishi Zhaji 石室札记[Notes on the Stone Chamber]," *Dunhuang Yanjiu 敦煌研究*[Dunhuang Research], no.4 (1999):50-55; Ru Li, "Dunhuang Lixian Jiqi Gongde Ku Xianguan Wenti Shilun 敦煌李贤及其功德窟相关问题试论[Issues related to Li Xian and his Cave of Merits at Dunhuang]," *Dunhuang Xue Jikan 敦煌学辑刊*[Journal of Dunhuang Studies], no.4 (2009):112 - 126.

⁷⁷⁸ Jinshi Fan, and Ma Shichang, "Mogaoku Di Erjuling Ku de Fozhuan Gushi Hua 莫高窟第290窟的佛传故事画[Buddhist story paintings in Cave 290 of Mogao Caves]," *Dunhuang Yanjiu 敦煌研究*[Dunhuang Research],

now identified eighty-nine episodes in total. Thirty-three of these episodes show the auspicious phenomena of the birth of Prince Siddhāttha Gotama.⁷⁷⁹ During the 5th-6th century, when the *Ruiying*(瑞应) idea was already in vogue, the highest praise for something is shown by employing the auspicious phenomena that accompany its occurrence. Moreover, since the purpose of reciting the Jataka in ancient India was to perform the “rite of praise”,⁷⁸⁰ it is possible that the narrative painting of the Buddha's carer, accompanied by many auspicious phenomena, painted here at the roof of Mogao Cave 290, was also used to express praise for the Buddha. Therefore, it is likely that the space under the roof of Mogao Cave 290 was used as a place for this “rite of praise” at that time. Since the beginning and the end of the repentance rituals also involve a “rite of praise” to the Buddha, it is possible that Mogao Cave 290 was also used for the penance ritual. Therefore, it is speculated that Mogao Cave 290 may have been used for this type of penance ritual, which emphasizes the “rite of praise” to the Buddha.⁷⁸¹

Moreover, Mogao Cave 290 has a niche on each of the four sides of the center pillar, with a cross-legged Maitreya in the west niche (Fig. 5.1-67c), and a seated Buddha in each of the east, south, and north niches (Fig. 5.1-67 a, b, d). It is generally assumed that the four Buddhas on the four sides represent the Buddha of the Four Directions. However, it is also possible that the Three Worlds Buddhas(*traiya-dhvikā*) are represented here. Since the Northern Wei Dynasty, there have been many examples of steles of the Three Worlds Buddhas(*traiya-dhvikā*) in which the posture

no.00(1983):56-82.

⁷⁷⁹ Shizhe He, “Mogaoku Di Erjiulin Ku Fozhuan Hua Zhong de Ruiying Sixiang Yanjiu 莫高窟第 290 窟佛传画中的瑞应思想研究[A Study of the Ruiying Ideology in Buddhist Paintings in Cave 290 of Mogao Caves],” *Dunhuang Yanjiu* 敦煌研究[Dunhuang Research], no.1(1997):3-7.

⁷⁸⁰ The original text in 《南海寄歸內法傳》Vol 4: 「取本生事而為詩讚，欲令順俗妍美，讀者歡愛教攝群生耳。時戒日王極好文筆，乃下令曰：「諸君但有好詩讚者，明日旦朝咸將示朕。」及其總集得五百夾，展而閱之，多是社得迦摩羅矣，方知讚詠之中斯為美極。南海諸島有十餘國，無問法俗咸皆諷誦。如前詩讚，而東夏未曾譯出。又戒日王取乘雲菩薩以身代龍之事緝為歌詠，奏諧絃管令人作樂，舞之蹈之流布於代。又東印度月官大士作毘輸安咄囉太子歌，詞人皆舞，詠遍五天矣。」(CBETA 2023.Q3, T54, no. 2125, pp. 227c29-228a10)

⁷⁸¹ Yang Mingfen has discussed in detail that the biggest difference between Pure Land repentance and other repentance rituals is the form of ritual that focuses on rite of praise. See Mingfen Yang, *Tangdai Xifang Jingtu Lichan Fa Yanjiu* 唐代西方淨土禮懺法研究[Study of Western Pure Land Repentance Rituals in the Tang Dynasty] (Beijing: Mingzu Chubanshe, 2007), 214-218.

of Buddha is cross-legged.⁷⁸² There are also many similar examples in Mogao Caves.⁷⁸³ It is also possible that the eleven rows of consecutive images of seated Buddhas that cover the four walls of Mogao Cave 290 (Fig. 5.1- 68) represent the “Buddhas of the Ten Directions.” Thus, the statues and images of Buddhas on the center pillar and the four walls of Mogao Cave 290 may represent all the Buddhas of the three worlds and the ten directions. Therefore, it can be assumed that the statues and images of the “Buddhas of the three worlds and the ten directions” in Mogao Cave 290 may have been prepared for some kind of penitential activity that required worshipping all the Buddhas of the three worlds and the ten directions one by one and repenting in front of them.

It is also noteworthy that in Mogao Cave 290, the figures of the Vasistha and the Mrgasirsa appear on the north and south sides of the east-facing niche of the center pillar (Fig. 5.1-67a). In addition, Cave 438 also has the figures of the Vasistha and Mrgasirsa in the outside of the center niche of the west wall (Fig. 5.1-69b). The presence of the Vasistha and Mrgasirsa on both sides of the niches facing the entrance of caves suggests that the penance ritual performed in the caves is related to the *Great Vaipulya Dhāraṇī Scripture*. It is because this sutra uses the deeds of the Vasistha as an example to guide all beings to break down the inherent concept of the irreversible dichotomy between good and evil. This reveals the Mahayana wisdom of Madhyamaka. The fact that the Brahmacharya Immortals are painted in an important position directly opposite the entrance to the cave seems to indicate that the penance rituals held in this group of neighboring caves were also some kind of penance ritual related to the *Great Vaipulya Dhāraṇī Scripture*.

⁷⁸² For example, the Xinxiang City Museum collection of a gold and copper statue engraved with a clear inscription is a similar combination. On the front is a Buddha, 0.95 metres high, in a high chignon, bearing the seal of fearlessness and wishful thinking, sitting cross-legged on a waisted Sumeru seat. On the back, there is a hipped-roofed building with three Buddhas, one in the middle is slightly larger, sitting cross-legged, and the other two are slightly smaller, slightly sideways, sitting cross-legged. In the lower part of the Sumeru square four-legged seat is engraved with the text: “永平三年五月廿七日,尚元吉可造弥勒像一区,为父母兄弟,因缘眷属,常与佛会 Yongping three years (510 A.D.) May Ganzhi, Shang Yuan Ji can make Maitreya statue of a district, for parents and brothers, karmic dependents, often with the Buddha will be.”

⁷⁸³ For example, in addition to Mogao Cave 290 of the Northern Zhou there are Mogao Cave 260 of the Northern Wei, Mogao Cave 437 of the Northern Wei, Mogao Cave 435 of the Northern Wei, and Mogao Cave 288 of the Western Wei. An example of the Maitreya Buddha set in a central pillar niche is also found in the mural of Mogao Cave 263.

Given that Mogao Cave 290 and Mogao Cave 438 both contain images of the “Buddhas of the Three Worlds and the Ten Directions,” as well as murals related to the *Great Vaipulya Dhāraṇī Scripture*. This is reminiscent of a set of penance rituals created by Ling Yu (517-605 A.D.), a highly regarded monk in the north area at that time. This set of repentance rituals is currently preserved in the form of a sutra carved on the outer rock wall of the Da Zhu Sheng Cave, which is also known as the “The Brief Scripture of Buddha Worship and Confession (略禮佛懺悔等文)”. This special stone-carved scripture was created by Ling Yu, based on the *Sutra on Visualizing the Two Bodhisattvas Bhaisajyarāja and Bhaisajyasamudgata* (佛說觀藥王藥上二菩薩經) and the Indian Mahayana Buddhist classic *Fo shuo Jueding Pini Jing* (佛說決定毗尼經), a rite of text that requires worshiping the names of all three Buddhas of the past, present, and future.⁷⁸⁴ The fact that Ling Yu’s text “The Brief Scripture of Buddha Worship and Confession” was specially inscribed on the outer wall of the Da Zhu Sheng Cave shows that a set of northern Buddhist penance rituals did exist during the Northern Dynasties.⁷⁸⁵ The reason why this penance ritual created by Ling Yu is called the Northern Ritual Penance System by scholars is that it has a characteristic that is different from other Penance Ritual Systems. That is, at the beginning of this penance ritual, it is necessary to worship and recite the names of all the Buddhas of the Ten Directions and the Three Worlds exhaustively. Some traces of this Northern Ritual Penance System are still preserved in the Buddhist caves of the Northern Qi and Sui dynasties, such as the Xiao Nan Hai Grotto in Anyang, the Da Zhu Sheng Grotto in Baoshan, the Ba Hui Temple in Quyang, and the Lei Yin Cave at Shi

⁷⁸⁴ Zhao Luo, “Baoshan Dazhusheng Ku Kejing Zhong de Beifang Lichan Xitong 宝山大住圣窟刻经中的北方礼忏系统[The North System of Buddha Worship and Confession in the Buddhist Scripture of Dazhusheng Cave in Baoshan Mountain],” *Shiku Si Yanjiu* 石窟寺研究[Cave Temples Studies], no.00(2010):162-165.

⁷⁸⁵ Luo Zhao also noticed a close relationship between the northern system of Buddha worship confession and the rituals of the Sanjie Jiao. See Zhao Luo, “Baoshan Dazhusheng Ku Kejing Zhong de Beifang Lichan Xitong 宝山大住圣窟刻经中的北方礼忏系统[The North System of Buddha Worship and Confession in the Buddhist Scripture of Dazhusheng Cave in Baoshan Mountain],” *Shiku Si Yanjiu* 石窟寺研究[Cave Temples Studies], no.00(2010):163.

Jingshan.⁷⁸⁶ The “*qi jie l* 七階禮” ritual used by the San Jie Jiao, created by Xin Xing at the end of the Northern Dynasty, is also a continuation, to some extent, of the penance ritual system that emphasizes the recitation of the Buddha's name.⁷⁸⁷

In addition to the emphasis on the worship and recitation of the Buddha's name, it is also worth noting that in the first paragraph of the *sutra on Visualizing the Two Bodhisattvas Bhaisajyarāja and Bhaisajyasamudgata*, which is the basis of the set of penances ritual created by Ling Yu, the five prerequisites that must be fulfilled by all sentient beings who wish to hear the name of the bodhisattva and “not to fall into the path of evil” in the future are proclaimed.⁷⁸⁸ Here the sutra also mentions “Hearing of the Great Vaipulya Dhāraṇī Scripture, the mind does not wonder”. The reason for this reference to “Hearing of the *Great Vaipulya Dhāraṇī Scripture*, the mind does not wonder” is that there is something in the Great Vaipulya Dhāraṇī Scripture that tends to cause the general public to be astonished. This is about the reference that Vasistha, who was once called “the first of the sinners” by the Buddha, was permitted to appear in the world of the Buddha together with the Bodhisattvas. In many Buddhist sutras, Vasistha was recorded as an evil person who had committed “ungodly deeds and was sent to hell” and “entered hell with no prospect of ever leaving it.” But now in the *Great Vaipulya Dhāraṇī Scripture*, it is recorded that Vasistha came out of hell and appeared with the Bodhisattva at the side of the Buddha.⁷⁸⁹ The *Great Vaipulya Dhāraṇī Scripture* explains in detail the reasons behind this phenomenon. In this sutra, the Buddha also patiently guided people to see the benevolent side of Vasistha. For example, when Vasistha was the leader of the merchants, he survived a

⁷⁸⁶ Luo, “Baoshan Dazhusheng Ku Kejing Zhong de Beifang Lichan Xitong,” 174.

⁷⁸⁷ Xueyong Yang, “Sanjiujiao Qijieli yu Foming Lichan 三阶教《七阶礼》与佛名礼忏[The Qijie Li of the Three-Stage School and the Worship Rite of Chanting Buddha's Names],” *Dunhuang Yanjiu* 敦煌研究[Dunhuang Research], no.1(2016):94.

⁷⁸⁸ The original text in 《佛說觀藥王藥上二菩薩經》：「未來眾生具五因緣，得聞藥王、藥上二菩薩名。何謂為五？一者慈心不殺，具佛禁戒，威儀不缺。二者孝養父母，行世十善。三者身心安寂，繫念不亂。四者聞方等經，心不驚疑，不沒不退。五者信佛不滅，於第一義心如流水念念不絕。」佛告寶積：「若有眾生具此五緣，生生之處常得聞此二菩薩名，及聞十方諸佛菩薩名，聞方等經心無疑慮。以得聞此二菩薩名威神力故，生生之處五百阿僧祇劫不墮惡道。」(CBETA 2023.Q3, T20, no. 1161, p. 661a24-b5)

⁷⁸⁹ The original text in 《大方等陀羅尼經》卷 1：「爾時華聚默自思惟：以何為證？作是念已。爾時，婆莫從地獄出，將九十二億諸罪人輩，尋光來詣娑婆世界。十方世界各將九十二億諸罪人輩，亦復如是，尋光來至娑婆世界。」(CBETA, T21, no. 1339, p. 643a28-b3)

shipwreck, so he killed the goat as a sacrifice to heaven, and he helped 6,200,000 merchants, even after he had killed animals and gone to hell, he still helped the sentient beings, and thus was able to get out of the hells in the end.⁷⁹⁰ The *Great Vaipulya Dhāraṇī Scripture* uses the example of Vasistha to guide sentient beings to break away from the inherent concept of the dichotomy of good and evil, and to move towards the “middle way,” instead of clinging to the two extremes of the dichotomy. It is only when one understands the wisdom of the “middle way” that one can hear *Great Vaipulya Dhāraṇī Scripture*, One's mind will not wonder. Then the presence of Vasistha in the niches of Mogao Cave 290 and Cave 438 implies that those who enter the cave and worship the statue of Buddha accompanied by Vasistha are those who have understood the wisdom of the “middle way” without any doubt.

From the above, it can be hypothesized that Mogao Cave 438 and Mogao Cave 290 probably served the penance ritual created by Ling Yu. The next question is what was the exact procedure of the penance created by Ling Yu and how was it performed in this group of caves?

This set of penance rites created by Ling Yu, as shown in the inscribed sutra “The Brief Scripture of Buddha Worship and Confession” consists of the following four steps: Firstly, praising all the Buddhas and reciting their names one by one.⁷⁹¹ secondly, performing some act of deep repentance.⁷⁹² Thirdly, Make a wish.⁷⁹³

⁷⁹⁰ The original text in 《大方等陀羅尼經》Vol 1:文殊師利也因此讚嘆婆莫仙人：「善哉！善哉！大士有大方便，能化如是受苦眾生來至我所，不久當離一切諸患。」(CBETA, T21, no. 1339, p. 644c2-4.)

⁷⁹¹ The original text: “南无东方须弥灯光如来十方佛等一切诸佛、南无毗婆尸如来过去七佛等一切诸佛、南无普光如来五十三佛等一切诸佛、南无东方善德如来十方佛等一切诸佛、南无拘那提如来贤劫千佛等一切诸佛、南无释迦牟尼如来卅五佛等一切诸佛、南无十方无量佛等一切诸佛、南无过现未来十方三世一切诸佛。” see Jialiang Dong, “Anyang Lingquan Si Dazhusheng Ku Suidai Lifo Chanhui dengwen Shike 安阳灵泉寺·大住圣窟:隋代《礼佛·忏悔等文石刻》的清理发现及意义[Anyang Lingquan Temple-Dazhusheng Cave:the Discovery and Significance of the ‘Lifo chanhui deng wen Shike’ in Sui Dynasty],” *Foxue Yanjiu* 佛学研究[Buddhist Studies], no.00(2002):314.

⁷⁹² The original text: “归命忏悔文，如是等一切世界诸佛世尊常住在世，是诸世尊当慈念我，若我此生，若我前生，从无始生死已来所作□□众罪，若自作，若教他作，见作随喜，若塔若僧，四方僧物，若自取，若教人取，见作随喜，或作五逆无间重罪，若自作，若教他作，见作随喜，十不善道，自作，教他，见作随喜，所作罪郭，或有覆藏或不覆藏，应堕地狱饿鬼畜生及诸恶趣、边地、下贱及弥戾车如是等处，所作罪郭，今皆忏悔。” Jialiang Dong, “Anyang Lingquan Si Dazhusheng Ku Suidai Lifo Chanhui dengwen Shike 安阳灵泉寺·大住圣窟:隋代《礼佛·忏悔等文石刻》的清理发现及意义[Anyang Lingquan Temple-Dazhusheng Cave:the Discovery and Significance of the ‘Lifo chanhui deng wen Shike’ in Sui Dynasty],” *Foxue Yanjiu* 佛学研究[Buddhist Studies], no.00(2002):314.

⁷⁹³ The original text in t: “今诸佛世尊当证知我当忆念我△复于诸佛世尊前作如是言，若我此生、若于余

Finally, putting hands together to revere.⁷⁹⁴ Ling Yu used half of the text of “The Brief Scripture of Buddha Worship and Confession” to list in detail the names of the Buddhas to be confessed and worshipped, but did not state in detail the specific method of penance. Ling Yu’s abridged method of penance may be the one recorded in the *Fo Shuo Jueding Pini Jing* (佛說決定毗尼經). This sutra explicitly mentions that repentance should be done in solitude next to the thirty-five Buddhas, day and night.⁷⁹⁵

In addition, Dunhuang has preserved a large number of manuscripts that are classified as the rituals of the three levels of Buddhism. Many scholars have pointed out that there is a lot of overlap between “The Brief Scripture of Buddha Worship and Confession” in Da Zhu Sheng Cave Inscription and the ritual text preserved in Dunhuang’s manuscripts, such as “*qi jie li* 七階禮” and “Seven Levels of Buddhas’ Name(七階佛名).”⁷⁹⁶ Some scholars have suggested that the Qi Jie Li may not have been created by Xin Xing (540-594), the founder of the *San Jie Jiao*. Rather, after Ling Yu (517-605 A.D.) consolidated the penance ritual of the Buddha’s name throughout the Northern Liang, Northern Wei, and Sui Dynasty, Xin Xing adapted it to become the penance rite of the *San Jie Jiao*.⁷⁹⁷ This not only means that the

生，曾行布施，或守淨戒，乃至施與畜生一揣之食，或修淨行，所有善根成就眾生，所有善根修行菩提，所有善根求無上智，所有善根一切合集計校籌曠，悉皆回向阿耨多羅三藐三菩提，如過去未來現在諸佛所作回向，我亦如是回向，眾罪皆懺悔，諸福盡隨喜，及請佛功德，願成無上智。去未現在佛，于眾生最勝，無量功德海，” Jialiang Dong, “Anyang Lingquan Si Dazhusheng Ku Suidai Lifo Chanhui dengwen Shike 安陽靈泉寺·大住聖窟·隋代《禮佛·懺悔等文石刻》的清理發現及意義[*Anyang Lingquan Temple-Dazhusheng Cave: the Discovery and Significance of the ‘Lifo chanhui deng wen Shike’ in Sui Dynasty*],” *Foxue Yanjiu* 佛學研究[Buddhist Studies], no.00(2002):314.

⁷⁹⁴ Xueyong Yang, “Sanjiujiao Qijieli yu Foming Lichan 三階教《七階禮》與佛名禮懺[The Qijie Li of the Sanjie School and the Worship Rite of Chanting Buddha’s Names].” *Dunhuang Yanjiu* 敦煌研究[Dunhuang Research], no.1(2016):93; Jialiang Dong, “Anyang Lingquan Si Dazhusheng Ku Suidai Lifo Chanhui dengwen Shike 安陽靈泉寺·大住聖窟·隋代《禮佛·懺悔等文石刻》的清理發現及意義[*Anyang Lingquan Temple-Dazhusheng Cave: the Discovery and Significance of the ‘Lifo chanhui deng wen Shike’ in Sui Dynasty*],” *Foxue Yanjiu* 佛學研究[Buddhist Studies], no.00(2002):314.

⁷⁹⁵ The original text in 《佛說決定毘尼經》：「若有菩薩成就五無間罪，犯於女人、或犯男子，或故犯、犯塔、犯僧，如是等餘犯，菩薩應當三十五佛邊，所犯重罪晝夜獨處至心懺悔。懺悔法者：歸依佛、歸依法、歸依僧。」 (CBETA 2023.Q3, T12, no. 325, p. 38c17-20)

⁷⁹⁶ Luo Zhao has done detailed comparative work on both, see Zhao Luo, “Baoshan Dazhusheng Ku Kejing Zhong de Beifang Lichan Xitong 寶山大住聖窟刻經中的北方禮懺系統[The North System of Buddha Worship and Confession in the Buddhist Scripture of Dazhusheng Cave in Baoshan Mountain],” *Shiku Si Yanjiu* 石窟寺研究[Cave Temples Studies], no.00(2010):165-166.

⁷⁹⁷ Although the Sanjie Jiao flourished in the Sui Dynasty, it was actually already a culmination of popular beliefs

scripture “the brief scripture of Buddha worship and confession” inscribed in the Da Zhu Sheng Cave in Baoshan can be seen as a more primitive form of the Qi Jie Li than that practiced by the believer. It also means that we can use these Dunhuang manuscripts to further examine the specific ways in which Ling Yu practiced this penance ritual.

A large number of texts related to the penance rituals of the *San Jie Jiao* are preserved in the Dunhuang manuscripts. Including 127 manuscripts copies of what is referred to as the “*qi jie li* 七階禮,”⁷⁹⁸ about 17 manuscripts of the “Ten Direction Rites,”⁷⁹⁹ about 49 manuscripts of the “Yin Zhao Rites,”⁸⁰⁰ about 9 manuscripts of the “Twilight Rites,”⁸⁰¹ and the manuscripts of the “First Night Rites” B.8313. According to Wang Juan's research, the “Ten Direction Rites,” the “Yin Zhao Rite,” the “Twilight Rite,” and the “First Night Rite” in the Dunhuang manuscripts can all be

in the Northern Dynasties. See Yongtong Tang, *Hanwei Liangjin nanbeichao Fojiao shi* 汉魏两晋南北朝佛教史 [History of Buddhism in the Han, Wei, Jin, and North and South Dynasties] (Beijing: Peking University Press, 1997), 589-590; Xueyong Yang, “Youguan Dazhusheng Ku Yu Sanjiejiao De Guanxi Wenti 有关大住圣窟与三阶段的关系问题 [Issues concerning the relationship between the Dazhu Sacred Cave and the Three-Stage School],” *Zhongyuan Wenwu* 中原文物 [Cultural Relics of Central China], no.01(2008):70-72.

⁷⁹⁸ This is the list of the Hirokawa Yaomin's count of 127 written copies of the Seven Steps of the Ritual in the British, French, and National Library of China collections, as well as the collection of the Shudo Museum. Among them, there are 70 pieces of rituals belonging to the Qijie Li: B.8327 (翔 46) R1、S.4781R1、P.2873R1, B.8302 (宇 70) R1、B.8303 (洪 50)、B.8305 (日 73) R2、B.8306 (张 40) R1、B.8309 (闰 43)、B.8310 (调 81)、B.8311 (调 44) R1、B.8312 (云 19)、B.8314 (腾 20) R1、B.8315 (雨 72) R1、B.8316 (露 22)、B.8317 (玉 91) R1、B.8318 (昆 96) R2、B.8319 (号 13) R1、B.8320 (号 53) R1、B.8324 (碱 1)、B.8325 (碱 18) R1、B.8328 (师 19) R1、B.8329 (帝 2)、B.8330 (帝 91) R2、B.8334 (始 32)、B.8335 (制 62)、B.8337 (字 39) R2、B.8338 (字 80)、B.8339 (裳 15)、B.8340 (裳 26)、B.8341 (位 2)、B.8342 (丽 93) R3、B.8343 (鸟 96)、B.8344 (宇 16)、B.8422 (重 22) R1、S.59R1、S.1306R2、S.2360、S.2574、S.4514、S.4909R1、S.5484R2、S.6880R3、P.2869.

⁷⁹⁹ They are: B.8302 (宇 70) R2、B.8306 (张 40) R2、B.8314 (腾 20) R4、B.8317 (玉 91) R2、B.8319 (号 13) R2、B.8325 (碱 18) R2、B.8326 (河 55) R2、B.8326V、B.8328 (师 19) R2、S.59R2、S.4909R3 .These eleven volumes are consistent and belong to the basic form of the Ten Directions Ritual(十方礼); B.8321 (李 52) R1、B.8332 (人 71) R2、S.4781R2、P.2692R2 , P.2722R1 and P.3038R1. For detailed analyses, see Juan Wang, *Dunhuang Lichan Wen Yanjiu* 敦煌礼忏文研究 [Studies on Dunhuang Ritual Confessions] (Taipei: Fa Guan Cultural Enterprise Co., Ltd., 1998), 182, note 29.

⁸⁰⁰ They are: B.8302 (宇 70) R3、B.8305 (日 73) R3、B.8306 (张 40) R3、B.8307 (收 50) R1、B.8311 (调 44) R2、B.8313 (云 55) R1、B.8313 (云 55) R3、B.8315 (雨 72) R2、B.8317 (玉 91) R3、B.8318 (昆 96) R3、B.8320 (号 53) R2、B.8321 (李 52) R2、B.8323 (姜 91) R1、B.8325 (碱 18) R3、B.8327 (翔 46) R2、B.8330 (帝 91) R1、B.8331 (官 74)、B.8332 (人 71) R1、B.8333 (皇 21) R2、B.8336 (文 78) R2、B.8337 (字 39) R1、B.8363 (字 99) R3、S.2354R1、S.6880R2、S.59R3、S.236R2、S.5620R1、S.1306R3、S.5562R2、S.5490R2、S.4293R2、S.4909R2、S.1931R2、S.1084R2、S.1473V3、S.5552R1、S.6206R2、P.2873R2、P.2911R4、P.3166、P.3842R2、P.2991R1、.

⁸⁰¹ They are: B. 8313 (云 55) r4, S.5490r1, S.4293r1, S.5490r1, s.1473v2, P.2991r2, B. 8332 (人 71) R.2, P.2692r2, S.5620 R1.

regarded as part of the “*qi jie li* 七階禮,” and none of the objects of worship are beyond the scope of worship in the “*qi jie li*.”⁸⁰² The basic ritual procedures for the rites of worship of the names of all Buddhas in the ten directions and the three worlds are recorded in the “Repentance and Vow for the Six Hours of the Day and Night (zhouye liushi fayuan fa 晝夜六時發願法),” found in Dunhuang manuscripts in conjunction with the “Seven Levels Rites.”⁸⁰³ In the *Collection of Rituals of the Sutras*(集諸經禮懺儀) collected in *Taisho Shinshu Daizokyo*, there is a ritual text titled “Repentance and Vow for the Six Hours of the Day and Night(晝夜六時發願文).”⁸⁰⁴ Compared with the Dunhuang version of the “Zhou Ye Liu Shi Fa Yuan Fa,” there are only minor differences. Both of them also record that “offering of flowers and incense(晝三夜三各嚴香華),” “enter the pagoda to view the Buddhas and reveres the Buddhas(入塔觀像供養行道禮佛).” This indicates that specific penance activities need to be carried out in front of the statue of the Buddha and that incense and flowers are needed to make offerings to the Buddhas during the performance of the rituals.

Regarding the names of the Buddhas specifically involved in this set of rituals, in the Dunhuang version of the “Zhou Ye Liu Shi Fa Yuan Fa”, there is only a mention of the fifty-three Buddhas, the thirty-five Buddhas, and the twenty-five Buddhas, but there is no mention of the Buddhas of the Ten Directions or the seven Buddhas of the past. In recent years, Yang Xueyong has combined the Dunhuang version of the “Zhou Ye Liu Shi Fa Yuan Fa” with B.8342 “*Ri Mu Li*” and S.5490R1 “*Huang Hun*

⁸⁰² Juan Wang, *Dunhuang Lichan Wen Yanjiu* 敦煌禮懺文研究[A Study of Dunhuang Ritual Confessions] (Taipei: Dharma Drum Cultural Enterprise, 1998), 151.

⁸⁰³ The original text in Dunhuang manuscript: “六時禮拜佛大綱：晝三夜三各嚴香華，入塔觀像供養行道禮佛。平旦及午時，並別唱五十三佛，餘皆總唱。日暮初夜並別唱三十五佛，餘皆總唱。半夜後夜，並別唱二十五佛，餘皆總唱。觀此七階佛如在目前，思惟如來所有功德，廣作如是清淨懺悔。”

⁸⁰⁴ The original text in 《集諸經禮懺儀》 Vol 1: 「唱靜六時禮拜佛法大綱。晝三夜三各嚴持香華。入塔觀像默供養行道禮佛。平明及與午時。並別唱五十三佛。餘皆總唱。日暮初夜並別唱三十五佛。餘皆總唱。半夜並別唱二十五佛。餘皆總唱。觀此七階佛如在目前。思惟如來所有功德。廣作如是清淨懺悔。上來布置禮佛綱軌次第多少悉。是故信行禪師。依經自行此法。於今徒眾亦常相續依行不絕。但以現無正文流傳。恐欲學者無所依據。是以故集此文流通於世。願後學者。依文讀誦。不增不減。」 (CBETA 2023.Q3, T47, no. 1982, p. 465c2-13)

Li Chan,” to restore a relatively complete set of rituals of the “Seven Steps of the Buddha's Names(广七阶佛名).” There are 20 steps in total: (1)praising the three jewels; (2)offerings of incense and flowers; (3) universal chanting (Rudra's wonderful coloured body, etc.); (4) sighing for the Buddha's merits; (5) ten Buddhas of the Ten Directions of the Eastern Sumeru Light (general chants); (6) the seven Buddhas of the past (general chants); (7) fifty-three Buddhas, such as Dīpaṃkara (separate chants); (8) all Buddhas, such as the thousand Buddhas of the bhadrakalpa (general chants); (9) Buddhas of the Ten Directions, such as the Buddha of Shan De (general chants);(10) Thirty-five Buddhas (sung separately at dusk and at the beginning of the night); (11) Aksobhya; (12) Reveres twenty-five Buddhas (sung separately at the middle and end of the night); (13) Reveres two Buddhas (sung separately); (14) Penance; (15)Vows; (16) chants;(17) Recites the appropriate mantra and vows;(18) Vowed to be a lifelong believer in the three jewels (Tisarana); (19) Recites the impermanence verses at the six times of day and night respectively; (20) Recites the impermanence of all actions.⁸⁰⁵ Moreover, Hirokawa Yao Min previously also restored a set of ritual procedures for the “l'üe qijie fo ming (略七階佛名)” as follows: (1) praising the three jewels; (2) offerings of incense and flowers; (3) chanting Brāhma; (4) praising the Buddha's merits; (5) Reveres seven levels of Buddhas, which include Buddhas of the Ten Directions, the Seven Buddhas of the Past, the Fifty-Three Buddhas, all the Buddhas, the thousand Buddhas of the bhadrakalpa, Thirty-five Buddhas, Aksobhya; (6) Reveres twenty-five Buddhas; (7) Reveres Two Buddhas; (8) Penance; (9) Pariṇāmanā; (10) Praising the Merits of the Buddha; (11) chanting Brāhma;(12) chanting Brāhma Texts; (13) Recites the mantra to make vows); (14) Vow to be a lifelong believer in the three jewels (Tisarana); (15) Recites the mantra of the Seven Buddhas;(16) Recites the impermanence of all actions; (17) Vow in the six hours of day and night.⁸⁰⁶

⁸⁰⁵ Xueyong Yang, “Sanjiujiao Qijieli yu Foming Lichan 三阶教《七阶礼》与佛名礼忏[The Qijie Li of the Three-Stage School and the Worship Rite of Chanting Buddha's Names],” *Dunhuang Yanjiu* 敦煌研究[Dunhuang Research], no.1(2016):96.

⁸⁰⁶ Ibid.

As can be seen from the above, the first and foremost part of this penance ritual is to worship and honor the Three Jewels, including the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha, and to make offerings of incense and flowers. The specific operation details of the flower offering included in this ritual are not explained in detail in the above-mentioned text. However, in the *Fa Shi Zan* (法事贊), the specific method of how to make flower offerings to the Buddha is still preserved.⁸⁰⁷ This series of flower offerings first requires a flower-giver to stand at the south-west corner to give out flowers, and then allows the walker who has come to pay homage to the Buddha to respectfully receive the flowers at this flower-giver's place, and then respectfully take the flowers and walk to the Buddha's statue to scatter them, and then after scattering the flowers continue to walk to the person who has given out the flowers in the south-west corner to take the flowers once again. Repeat the above actions seven times to complete the ritual. As a whole, this ritual route of scattering flowers and making offerings to the Buddha is a repeating right-clockwise course of action.

Overall, It indicates that the Buddha statue in Cave 438 is perfectly suited for this flower-offering ritual. This is especially true because the statue of Buddha is located in the center of the west wall. There are no large statues of Buddha in the center of the south and north walls (Fig. 5.1-69). When a worshipper enters cave 438 from the east gate and takes flowers from the southwest corner, they continue to walk right-clockwise to the Buddha statue on the west wall, and then continue to walk right-clockwise to the southwest corner to take flowers again and repeat the activity of spreading flowers and making offerings to the Buddha statue. The whole process is a right-clockwise route. This also fulfills the highest mode of right-clockwise salutation. The restoration of this ritual route to Mogao Cave 438 can be shown in this picture (Fig. 5.1-70). Although the front part of Mogao Cave 438 has collapsed, the remaining north wall is 2.5 meters wide, the south wall is 2.3 meters wide, the west

⁸⁰⁷ The original text in 《轉經行道願往生淨土法事贊》 Vol 1: 「使一人將華在西南角立。待行人至即盡行華與行道眾等。即受華竟不得即散。且待各自標心供養。待行道至佛前。即隨意散之。散竟即過至行華人所。更受華亦如前法。乃至七通亦如是。若行道訖即各依本坐處立。待唱梵聲盡即坐」 (CBETA 2023.Q1, T47, no. 1979, p. 427c8-14).

wall is 3.0 meters wide, and the top height is 3.1 meters. It is also enough for people to worship and make flower offerings in Mogao Cave 438. Then the activity of chanting the names of Buddhas one by one can also be carried out in this cave. As the continuous images of seated Buddhas on the north and south walls of the cave 438 provide concrete objects for chanting the names of the Buddhas.

Given that the penance procedure of this set of penance rituals involves the worship of the Buddha's name one by one and takes place in front of the Buddha statue, it is fitting that Mogao Cave 290, the center-pillar cave below Mogao Cave 438, also provides an ideal place for this part of penance ritual (Fig.5.1-71). Cave 290 is about 5.5 meters long from east to west, 5.55 meters wide in the west wall, 4.6 meters wide in the east wall, 3.2 meters high in the west wall behind the central pillar, 3.4 high in the space in front of the central pillar, 4.6 meters wide, and almost 2.5 meters long. The size of Mogao Cave 290 is large enough for the penance activity. The installation of the center pillar also provides a fixed route for performing repentance along the road. It is convenient for people to perform penance by chanting the Buddha's name in a roundabout way. In the process of reciting the Buddha's name around the center pillar, the Buddhas of the three worlds and the ten directions that appear on the four sides of the center pillar and the walls of Mogao Cave 290 provide specific objects of repentance for those who perform penance here. There are also traces of burning materials below the niche of the center pillar in Mogao Cave 290, possibly from burning incense or candles. This might again suggest that religious rituals requiring the burning of incense were performed in this cave. It is also true that the last part of the penance ritual still requires worshiping the Buddhas involving a series of incense and flower offerings again.

Therefore, this dissertation speculates that the group of caves consisting of Mogao Cave 438 and Mogao Cave 290 may have been used for the penance ritual activities created by Ling Yu, which required worshiping the names of the Buddhas one by one and confessing in front of the Buddhas. Here, statues and images of the Buddhas are treated as explicit objects of repentance and participate in the actual ritual activities.

(5) Group E: Mogao Cave 432 and Mogao Cave 294

Moving on to a group of caves closer to the north area (Figs. 5.1-72). Of this group of caves, Mogao Cave 294 is a truncated pyramid-ceiling cave, located on the second floor of the cliff face. A center-pillar cave, Mogao Cave 432, is located vertically above Mogao Cave 294.

According to the archaeological dating work of Fan Jinshi and other scholars, Mogao Cave 294 was excavated from the eleventh year of Da Tong of the Western Wei Dynasty (545 A.D.) to the fourth year of the Kai Huang of the Sui Dynasty (584 A.D.). Mogao Cave 432 was excavated a little earlier during the Western Wei Dynasty.⁸⁰⁸ Mogao Cave 432 has been restored many times since then, with an inscription in the front chamber from the twenty-second year of Zhenguan (648 A.D.). It is not known what murals were painted on the four walls of Mogao Cave 432 during the Western Wei Dynasty, because they are now covered by Western Xia murals.

Although most of the Western Wei mural paintings remain in Mogao Cave 294, they are blackened by smoke and have not yet been completely cleaned. A seated Buddha appears on the west wall of the cave (Fig. 5.1-73a). On the south and north walls, a group of seated Buddhas and Bodhisattvas appears in the center of the consecutive rows of seated Buddhas on the south and north walls (Fig. 5.1-73c,d). An example of a cave with three buddhas on three walls similar to those in Mogao Cave 294, and a similar date, is the Dazhusheng Cave built at Baoshan. The Dazhusheng Cave was excavated after Emperor Wu's campaign to eliminate Buddhism in the Northern Zhou Dynasty (ca. 589 A.D.).⁸⁰⁹ The three walls of this cave also contain a seated Buddha and two standing Bodhisattvas on each wall (Fig. 5.1-74). On the north wall is Vairocana Buddha (Fig. 5.1-74b), on the east wall is Maitreya Buddha (Fig.

⁸⁰⁸ Jinshi Fan, Shichang Ma, Youhui Guan, "Dunhuang Mogaoku Beichao Dongku de Fenqi 敦煌莫高窟北朝洞窟的分期 [Dating of the Caves of the Mogao Grottoes at Dunhuang]," in *Dunhuang Yanjiu Wenji* 敦煌研究文集 [Dunhuang research anthology], ed. Dunhuang Institute of Cultural Heritage (Lanzhou: Gansu People's Publishing House, 1982), 381.

⁸⁰⁹ Henan Provincial Institute for the Preservation of Ancient Buildings 河南省古代建筑保护研究所, *Baoshan Lingquan Si* 宝山灵泉寺 [Bao Shan Ling Quan Temple] (Zhengzhou: Henan People's Publishing House, 1991), 15-18.

5.1-74c), and on the west wall is Amitabha Buddha (Fig. 5.1-74d). On each side of the Buddha statue carved two columns of small seated Buddha, each column of seven seated Buddha sitting on a lotus seat, a total of forty-two. It is now believed that the combination of the three Buddhas on the three walls of the Dazhusheng Cave represents the three Buddhas of the past, present, and future.⁸¹⁰

It is worth noting here that the precious original stone-carved scripts by Ling Yu mentioned earlier, “The Brief Scripture of Buddha Worship and Confession(略禮佛懺悔等文),” which was not collected in the *Taisho Shinshu Daizokyo*, was inscribed on the outer wall of this Dazhusheng Cave.⁸¹¹ In addition, the names of the Buddhas to be honored in the confession ceremony, which were inscribed outside the Da Zhu Sheng Cave, reappear in the inscriptions of the statues on the three walls of the cave and in the list of the 42 small seated statues of the Buddhas. Therefore, it can be assumed that these statues in Da Zhu Sheng Cave were used to perform the penance ritual created by Ling Yu, which involves paying homage to each of the three Buddhas of the past, present, and future.⁸¹² Whether or not the “The Brief Scripture

⁸¹⁰ Ge Gao, “Anyang Baoshan Lingquan Si Shiku Sanshi Fo Tanxi 安阳宝山灵泉寺石窟三世佛探析[The analysis of the Tryadhva Buddhas in Anyang Baoshan Lingquansi Grotto Temple],” *Wenbo 文博 [Relics and Museology]*, no.6(2022):67-68; Shizhe He, “Guanyu Shiliu Guo Beichao Shiqi de Sanshi Foy u Sanfo Zaoxiang Zhu Wenti 关于十六国北朝时期的三世佛与三佛造像诸问题(二)[On the three Buddhas and three Buddhas statues of the sixteen states and the northern dynasty period of the problems (II)],” *Dunhuang Yanjiu 敦煌研究 [Dunhuang Research]*, no.1(1993), 6-8.

⁸¹¹For a complete transcript of the text, see Henan Provincial Institute for the Preservation of Ancient Buildings 河南省古代建筑保护研究所, *Baoshan Lingquan Si 宝山灵泉寺 [Bao Shan Ling Quan Temple]* (Zhengzhou: Henan People's Publishing House, 1991), 296; Dong Jialiang, “Anyang Lingquan Si Dazhusheng Ku Suidai Lifo Chanhui dengwen Shike 安阳灵泉寺·大住圣窟:隋代《礼佛·忏悔等文石刻》的清理发现及意义[Anyang Lingquan Temple-Dazhu Sacred Cave:The Clean-up Discovery and Significance of the “Rituals to Buddha-Penance and Other Texts Carved in Stone” in Sui Dynasty],” *Foxue Yanjiu 佛学研究[Buddhist Studies]*, no.00(2002):315.

⁸¹² Most of the scholars in the recent scholarship have also come to agree on the ritual confession function of the Dazhusheng Grotto. See Yuqun Li, *Yecheng Diqiu Shiku Yu Kejing 邺城地区石窟与刻经 [Caves and Scriptures in Yecheng Area]*,” *Kaogu Xuebao 考古学报 [Acta Archaeologica Sinica]*, no.4(1997):443-479; Yumin Li, “Baoshan Dazhusheng ku Chutan 寶山大住聖窟初探[A Study of the Dazhusheng Cave Temple in Baoshan Mountain],” *Gugong Xue Jikan 故宮學術季刊 [The National Palace Museum Research Quarterly]* 16, no.2 (1998):1-52; Wenying Lai, “Tangdai Anxi Yulin Ershiwu Ku Zhi Lushinafo 唐代安西榆林 25 窟之卢舍那佛,” *Yuanguang Foxue Xuebao 圆光佛学学报 [Yuan Kuang Journal of Buddhist Studies]*, no.4 (1999): 325-349; Xueyong Yang, “Youguan Dazhusheng Ku Yu Sanjiejiao De Guanxi Wenti 有关大住圣窟与三阶教的关系问题[Issues concerning the relationship between the Dazhu Sacred Cave and the Three-Stage School],” *Zhongyuan Wenwu 中原文物 [Cultural Relics of Central China]*, no.01(2008):69-70; Xueyong Yang, *Sanjiujiao Qijieli yu Foming Lichan 三阶教《七阶礼》与佛名礼忏 [The Qijie Li of the Three-Stage School and the Worship Rite of Chanting Buddha's Names]*,” *Dunhuang Yanjiu 敦煌研究 [Dunhuang Research]*, no.1(2016):92-101; Sunkyung Kim, “Seeing

of Buddha Worship and Confession”, which records this penance, was written later than the completion of the statues in the Da Zhu Sheng Cave, it does not detract from the possibility that the penance ritual was performed in that cave during that time.⁸¹³

This also means that Mogao Cave 294, which has a similar setting to the three walls of the Da Zhu Sheng Cave, is also likely to be associated with the penance ritual created by Ling Yu, which involves worshiping and reciting the names of all the Buddhas of the Three Worlds. Based on the aforementioned review of the penance rituals created by Lingyu, this dissertation argues that Mogao Cave 294 displays a close relationship with this penance ritual in at least three aspects.

First of all, the west wall of Mogao Cave 294 is set up with a statue of a seated Buddha, the south and north walls are each painted with a Buddha and two Bodhisattvas in the center, and the four walls are filled with images of seated Buddhas in neat rows, which together make up the three Buddhas of the past, present and future (Fig.5.1-73). The set of penance rituals created by Ling Yu is exactly what is needed to pay homage to all the Buddhas of the past, present, and future one by one at the beginning of the ritual, and to be alone in front of them to perform penance.⁸¹⁴ Therefore, the reason why images of all the Buddhas of the three worlds and the ten directions were painted on the four walls in Mogao Cave 294 was probably to be used as objects of worship and penance rituals.

Secondly, in the first paragraph of *sutra on Visualizing the Two Bodhisattvas Bhaisajyarāja and Bhaisajyasamudgata*, on which the ritual penance created by Ling Yu is based, the five prerequisites that must be fulfilled by sentient beings if they wish

Buddhas in Cave Sanctuaries,” *Asia Major* (2011): 87-126; Stuart H. Young, *Conceiving the Indian Buddhist Patriarchs in China* (University of Hawaii Press, 2017), 96-108. Only a few scholars still believe that the Dazhusheng Cave-Temple was used for meditation practice, see Bruce C. Williams, “Seeing through images: Reconstructing Buddhist meditative visualization practice in sixth-century northeastern China,” *The Pacific world* 7 (2005): 33-89; Angela F. Howard, “Buddhist cave sculpture of the Northern Qi dynasty: Shaping a new style, formulating new iconographies,” *Archives of Asian art* 49 (1996): 20-25.

⁸¹³ Yi Liu, “Anyang Baoshan Dazhusheng Ku de Zhulu Tacha yu Yanjiu 安陽寶山大住聖窟的著錄、踏查與研究 [Catalogue, research and studies on the Dazhusheng Cave- Temple, Baoshan, Anyang],” *Tang Yanjiu 唐研究* [Journal of Tang Studies] 26. No.00(2021):267-326.

⁸¹⁴ The original text in 《略礼佛忏悔文》: “南无东[方][须][弥][灯]光明如[来][十][方]佛等一切诸佛△南无毗婆[尸]如来过去七[佛]等一切诸佛△南无普光如来五十[三]佛等一切诸佛△南无东方善德如来十[方][佛][等]一切诸佛△南无拘那提如来贤劫千佛[等][一][切]诸佛△南无释迦牟尼如来卅五佛[等][一][切]诸佛△南无十方无量佛等一切诸佛△[南][无]过现未来十方三世一切诸佛归命忏悔。”

to hear the bodhisattva's name in the future and “not to fall into the path of evil” are also shown in the ceiling mural of Mogao Cave 294. These five prerequisites are: the first is to have a merciful heart and not to kill; the second is to be filial; the third is to have a calm and unruffled mind; the fourth is that the mind is not alarmed at hearing the Fang Deng Sutra; the fifth is to believe that the Buddha does not perish.⁸¹⁵ Three of these conditions can be shown in the Sudāna jataka painted on the slopes of the ceiling at Mogao Cave 294 (Fig. 5.1-75). Prince Sudāna who always had a merciful heart, gave his country's protective elephant to an enemy country. Even though he was driven out of the palace by his father, he continued to be charitable and benevolent on the way and finally lived in peace in the mountains. These narrative paintings also vividly illustrate a neutral and peaceful state of mind that does not cling to the dichotomy of good and evil. The fourth condition, the mind is not alarmed at hearing the Dzogchen Sutra, is illustrated by the figure of Vasistha appearing next to the Buddha in the west niche of Mogao Cave 294 (Fig. 5.1-73b). Although Vasistha is often referred to as evil people in the Buddhist sutra, here they are allowed to appear alongside the Buddha and receive worship in *Great Vaipulya Dhāraṇī Scripture*. The fact that the worshippers who enter this cave 294 to worship Vasistha together with the statue of the Buddha demonstrates the state of mind of the worshippers who are not confused or alarmed when they hear the *Great Vaipulya Dhāraṇī Scripture*. The fifth condition, belief in the immortality of the Buddha, is represented by a continuous circle of seated Buddhas around the ceiling of the Mogao Cave 294 (Fig. 5.1-75a).

Finally, it is worth noting the existence of Hu-suited donors and inscriptions in the lower part of the north wall of Mogao Cave 294 (Fig. 5.1-76). Examples of these are the inscriptions “qingxinshang Huzhu “ and “Qingxinshang Huzhu...when making offerings to the Buddha.” It suggests that there were Hu merchants from the western region among the donors of Mogao Cave 294. Considering that Ling Yu's teacher,

⁸¹⁵ The original text in 《佛說觀藥王藥上二菩薩經》：「未來眾生具五因緣，得聞藥王、藥上二菩薩名。何謂為五？一者慈心不殺，具佛禁戒，威儀不缺。二者孝養父母，行世十善。三者身心安寂，繫念不亂。四者聞方等經，心不驚疑，不沒不退。五者信佛不滅，於第一義心如流水念念不絕。」佛告寶積：「若有眾生具此五緣，生生之處常得聞此二菩薩名，及聞十方諸[8]佛菩薩名，聞方等經心無疑慮。以得聞此二菩薩名威神力故，生生之處五百阿僧祇劫不墮惡道。」(CBETA 2023.Q3, T20, no. 1161, p. 661a24-b5)

Dao Ping, was a close disciple of the Indian master Hui Guang. Moreover, the other classic, the *Fo Shuo Jueding Pini Jing*, which is the basis for this penance ritual created by Ling Yu, is also a text that has been widely adopted by the Mahayana Buddhists of the Western region of India in their rituals of confession. The names of the thirty-five Buddhas in the *Fo Shuo Jueding Pini Jing* (佛說決定毗尼經) are used by Indian Mahayana Buddhists in their penance practice. It is clearly stated in the *Fo Shuo Jueding Pini Jing* that penance should be done in solitude next to the 35 Buddhas, day and night.⁸¹⁶

In summary, Mogao Cave 294, constructed during the Northern Zhou period, could provide an ideal ceremonial site for such a penance ritual involving Buddha name worship created by Ling Yu. As a truncated pyramid-ceiling cave, it is 4.15 meters long from east to west, 3.7 meters wide on the west wall, and 3.95 meters wide on the east wall; the wall height is 3.0 meters and the ceiling height is 3.8 meters. The size of this architectural form can fully satisfy the ritual of scattering flowers to pay homage to the Buddha at the beginning of the ritual confession ceremony. Moreover, since the statue of Buddha is placed in the west niche of the cave, it is possible to continue walking clockwise to the central statue of Buddha in the west wall to scatter flowers after taking flowers from the flower-giver standing in the southwest corner (Fig. 5.1-77).

Mogao Cave 432, located directly above Mogao Cave 294, as a center-pillar cave, provides a suitable place for the other main part of the penance rite. The west wall of the main chamber is 4.6 meters long and the west wall is 3.55 meters high; the south wall is 5.25 meters long and the north wall is 5.3 meters long; the east wall is 4.45 meters long and the east wall is 3.3 meters high, with a height of 3.9 meters at the top. There is a distance of 2.1 m between the east wall and the center pillar (Fig. 5.1-78). The space of Mogao Cave 432 can also fully satisfy the activities of performing penance and kneeling in this place. Although the four walls of Mogao

⁸¹⁶ The original text in 《佛說決定毗尼經》: 「若有菩薩成就五無間罪，犯於女人、或犯男子，或故犯、犯塔、犯僧，如是等餘犯，菩薩應當三十五佛邊，所犯重罪晝夜獨處至心懺悔。懺悔法者：歸依佛、歸依法、歸依僧。」 (CBETA 2023.Q3, T12, no. 325, p. 38c17-20)

Cave 432 have been covered with successive images of seated Buddhas painted by later generations, the statues on the central pillar are probably still based on the original statues. On the east side of the center pillar, there is a niche for a seated Buddha, and on the other three sides, there are two niches for six seated Buddhas, making a total of seven Buddha statues on all four sides (Fig. 5.1- 79). When people walk around the pillars in this cave, they perform penance under the watchful eyes of these seven Buddhas.

Therefore, in the process of this penitential activity, the images in this group of caves are also directly involved in people's religious practices as objects of worship and repentance. The relationship between the images and the people is no longer limited to the relationship between seeing and being seen with the eyes, but all the organs of the human body are closely interacting with each other.

(6) Group F: Mogao Cave 296, Cave 297, Cave 299 and Cave 431

Next, look at a group of caves located on the third and second floor of the cliff face. The immediately adjacent truncated pyramid-ceiling caves, Mogao Cave 296 Mogao Cave 297, and Mogao Cave 299 are smaller in size, with a larger center-pillar. Mogao Cave 431, is located directly above them vertically (Fig. 5.1-80).

Mogao Cave 296 was built between 560 A.D. and 574 A.D. according to archaeologists' dating analysis.⁸¹⁷ It is currently believed that Cave 431 was first excavated between the first year of Xiao Chang of the Northern Wei Dynasty (525 A.D.) and the eleventh year of Da Tong of the Western Wei Dynasty (545A.D.), during the reign of Yuanrong.⁸¹⁸ The cave was then restored during the Tang and Song dynasties.⁸¹⁹ In front of the cave, there is also a Song Dynasty eaves building,

⁸¹⁷ Chongfeng Li, "Dunhuang Mofaoku Beichao Wanqi Dongku de Fenqi yu Yanjiu 敦煌莫高窟北朝晚期洞窟的分期与研究[Dating and Research on the Late Northern Dynasty Caves of Mogao Caves in Dunhuang]," in *Dunhuang Yanjiu Wenji Dunhuang Shiku Kaogupian 敦煌研究文集.敦煌石窟考古篇*[Dunhuang Research Anthology Dunhuang Cave Archaeology] (Lanzhou: Gansu Nationalities Publishing House, 2000), 75.

⁸¹⁸ Jinshi Fan, Shichang Ma, and Youhui Guan, "Dunhuang Mogaoku Beichao Dongku de Fenqi 敦煌莫高窟北朝洞窟的分期[Dating of the Caves of the Mogao Grottoes at Dunhuang]," in *Dunhuang Yanjiu Wenji 敦煌研究文集* [Dunhuang research anthology], ed. Dunhuang Institute of Cultural Heritage (Lanzhou: Gansu People's Publishing House, 1982), 381.

⁸¹⁹ Dunhuang Research Institute, *Dunhuang Shiku Neirong Zonglu 敦煌石窟内容总录*[Dunhuang Grottoes Content Catalogue] (Beijing: Cultural Relics Press, 1996), 176.

on the front beam of which there is an inscription from the 5th year of Taiping Xingguo (980 A.D.) of the Northern Song Dynasty. In recent years, some scholars have noted that the function of Mogao Cave 431, which was built in the Northern Wei Dynasty, may have been related to the rite of confession. Since Mogao Cave 431 was restored by the Yin family of Dunhuang in the early Tang Dynasty. Some scholars have speculated that the cave was built in the early Tang Dynasty as a Pure Land Confessional Centre according to Shan Dao's *Zhuan Jing Xingdao Yuan Wangsheng Jingtū Fashizan* (轉經行道願往生淨土法事贊).⁸²⁰

Although the lower part of the four walls of Mogao Cave 431, which were painted during the Northern Wei Dynasty and covered by Tang Dynasty murals, have not yet been revealed. It can be assumed that the lower part was painted with the same successive images of seated Buddha as that of the upper part of the wall. It is possible that the cave was also used as a place for confessions of some kind during the Northern Dynasties. As to which sutra is based on the practice of penance activities cannot be determined at present. At present, we can only make some preliminary assumptions from the central pillar of Cave 431, which is still preserved with some wall paintings and statues from the Northern Dynasties period.

In Mogao Cave 431 there is one niche to the east of the center pillar (Fig. 5.1-81a) and two niches on each of the other three sides (Fig. 5.1-81b,c,d), with a total of seven seated Buddha figures. It is worth noting that the images on both sides of the upper niche on the south side of the center pillar were first thought to be “Riding an elephant into the womb” and “Out of the palace at midnight” (Fig. 5.1-82).⁸²¹

⁸²⁰ Jingfeng Zhang, “Mogaoku Di Sisanyi Ku Chutang Guan Wuliang Shou Jingbian yu Shandao ZhiFamen Zai Dunhuang de Liuchuan 莫高窟第 431 窟初唐观无量寿经变与善导之法门在敦煌的流传[The illustration to Amitayur-buddha-sutra in Cave 431 Mogao Grottoes in early Tang and Shandao's dharma-gate handed down in Dunhuang],” *Dunhuang Yanjiu* 敦煌研究[Dunhuang Research], no. 4, (2010), 34-42; Yanli Yang, “You Erfo Duizuo Tuxiang Kan Mogaoku Di Sisanyi Ku lichan Daochang Yingjian 由二佛对坐图像看莫高窟第 431 窟礼忏道场营建[The Cave 431 of the Mogao Caves: The Ceremony of Confession in the Cave from the Image of Two Buddhas Sitting Together],” *Sichou Zhilu Yanjiu Jikan* 丝绸之路研究集刊[Journal of the Silk Road Studies], no.1(2022):254-268.

⁸²¹ Shizhe He, “Guanyu Dunhuang Mogaoku de Sanshifo yu Sanfo Zaoxiang 关于敦煌莫高窟的三世佛与三佛造像[On the Three Buddhas and Three Buddhas Statues in the Mogao Caves of Dunhuang],” *Dunhuang Yanjiu* 敦煌研究[Dunhuang Research], no.2(1994): 72.

However, in recent years, Ma Zhaomin has pointed out that the images here are most likely the “*Qian Ji Luo* 乾基羅”⁸²² and “*Mao Chi Luo* 茂持羅”⁸²³ of the “Twelve Dream Kings” mentioned in the *Great Vaipulya Dhāraṇī Scripture*, translated by Ju Qiu Meng xun between 402-412 A.D., rather than the images of the “Riding an elephant into the womb” and “Out of the palace at midnight”.⁸²⁴ This dissertation agrees with Ma Zhaomin's view, because a stone carving unearthed in 1994 in Jincheng, Shanxi Province, in the first year of the Qian Ming of the Northern Qi Dynasty (560 A.D.), there is a clear inscription on the stone carving of the “Twelve Kings of Dreams,” which reads “Qian ji luo” and “Mao chi luo” is indeed very similar to the image on the central pillar of Mogao Cave 431 (Fig. 5.1-83). This suggests that the penance ritual that was performed in this cave may have been some kind of penance related to the *Great Vaipulya Dhāraṇī Scripture*.

This dissertation speculates that the most likely penance ritual performed in Mogao Cave 431 was the “Fangdeng Repentance” based on the *Great Vaipulya Dhāraṇī Scripture*. Firstly, this is because the requirement to do penance only after meeting one of the Twelve Dream Kings is recorded in Volume 3 of the *Great Vaipulya Dhāraṇī Scripture*.⁸²⁵ Secondly, a similar explanation is given in Volume 2 of the *Zhiguan Fuxing Chuanhong Ju* (止观辅行传弘决).⁸²⁶ In addition, in the second paragraph of the “Fangdeng Repentance,” which is included in the *Guo Qing Bai Lu* (国清百录), it is explicitly stated in “The Second Convenience,” that if one

⁸²² The original text in 《大方等陀羅尼經》卷3：「若有善男子善女人，於其夢中若見乘象渡於大江，見如是者即是乾基羅」(CBETA 2023.Q1, T21, no. 1339, p. 652a17-18)

⁸²³ The original text in 《大方等陀羅尼經》卷3：「若有善男子善女人，於其夢中見國王大臣，著淨潔衣單乘白馬，見如是者即是茂持羅。」(CBETA 2023.Q1, T21, no. 1339, p. 652a15-16)

⁸²⁴ Ma Zhaomin, “Mogaoku Di Sisanyi Ku Zhong de Qianjiluo He Maochiluo Qianjiluo Maochiluo yu Chengxiang Rutai Yebanyucheng Tuxiang de Duibi Fenxi Yanjiu 莫高窟第 431 窟中的“乾基罗”和“茂持罗”——乾基罗、茂持罗与乘象入胎、夜半逾城图像的对比分析研究[On the Images of Qianjiluo and Maochiluo in Mogao Cave 431 A Comparative Study between Qianjiluo and Maochiluo and Images of the Great Conception and the Midnight Departure],” *Dunhuang Yanjiu* 敦煌研究[Dunhuang Research], no.4 (2018):58-66.

⁸²⁵ The original text in 《大方等陀羅尼經》Vol 3：「爾時佛告文殊師利法王子：「若我在世若去世後，若有善男子善女人來詣汝所欲求陀羅者，汝當教求十二夢王。若得見一王者，汝當教授七日行法。」(CBETA 2023.Q1, T21, no. 1339, p. 652a5-8)

⁸²⁶ The original text: “《方等》云：佛告文殊：為信男女廣說九十二億諸陀羅尼，一一陀羅尼復九十二億陀羅尼門。佛告華聚：勿妄宣傳，當以神明為證。何者？神明有十二夢王，見一王者乃可為說此陀羅尼。”

does not see one of the Twelve Dream Kings, it will not be beneficial to perform the repentance ritual directly.⁸²⁷ Also, in the first part of the *Fang Deng Sanmei Xingfa* (方等三昧行法), it is mentioned that one should have seen the images of the twelve dream kings in a dream before performing the seven-day penance.⁸²⁸ The fact that one can see one of the Twelve Dream Kings here is proof of the extinction of sin and the birth of goodness.⁸²⁹ This rationally explains the appearance of the Twelve Dream Kings, “Qian Ji Luo” and “Mao Chi Luo”, on the center pillar of Mogao Cave 431. Their appearance hints at the “Fangdeng Repentance” that was carried out here.

For the details of the process of this repentance ritual, one can refer to the “Fangdeng Repentance” that Zhiyi (538 -598 A.D.) had made based on the *Great Vaipulya Dhāraṇī Scripture*. There are three records of this “Fangdeng Repentance,” which are preserved in the *Great Treatise on Concentration and Insight*

(*Mohe Zhiguan 摩訶止觀*), *Fangdeng Samādhi Xingfa*, and *Guo Qing Bai Lu*.⁸³⁰

Although the last two parts of the *Fang Deng Samadhi Xing Fa*, “practice(修行)” and “ordination 受戒”, are missing.⁸³¹ However, Zunshi of the Song Dynasty pointed out that the missing method of “Practice” was preserved in the *Guo Qing Bai Lu* and the *Mahabharata*. And the missing part of “ordination 受戒” was supposed to be the

⁸²⁷ The original text in: “念是事已歸依十二夢王。求乞瑞夢。若不感者徒行無益。倍加懇到餐啜無忘。隨見一王即是聽許。見是事已辦諸供具。”

⁸²⁸ The original text of 《方等三昧行法》：“七日行道。誦呪令利。至誠禮懺。請十二夢王，求乞見其形相。若感一一相者。方可得行如是懺法。”See Guo Liying. “Liushiji Shangbanye Dunhuang Xieben Dafangdeng tuoluoni Jing Xintan 六世紀上半葉敦煌寫本《大方等陀羅尼經》新探,” *Dunhuang Tulufan Yanjiu 敦煌吐魯番研究* [Journal of the Dunhuang and Turfan Studies]15,no.2(2015):257-278.

⁸²⁹ The original text in 《金光明經文句》Vol 3 〈釋懺悔品〉：「取相懺者，如《方等》求十二夢王，《菩薩戒》見華、光、摩頂，54《虛空藏》中唱聲、印臂，相起罪滅。雖不正明作法，兼得事用也。」CBETA, T39, no. 1785, p. 60c11-13. 《金光明經文句記》Vol 3：「二、取相。十二夢王者，《方等陀羅尼經》云：先求好夢，凡十二種，隨得一相，則許懺悔。《梵網經》云：若犯十戒者，應教懺悔，要見好相，好相者，佛來摩頂、見光、見華等，便得罪滅。『唱聲』下，彼經明：行者夢中、若坐禪中，現此菩薩，以摩尼珠印，印行者臂，作罪滅字，或聞罪滅聲。得此相起，知罪必滅。『雖不』下，以在道場，非不作法，俱從勝立，名為取相。言事用者。作法也。」CBETA, T39, no. 1786,p. 116a26-b5.

⁸³⁰ Fangfang Lv, “Zhiyi Chanfa Yanjiu 智顛忏法研究[Study on Zhiyi's Confessional ritual]”(PhD diss., Fudan University, 2014), 64; Darui Shi, *Tiantai chan fa zhi yan jiu 天台懺法之研究* (Taipei: Fagu Wenhua, 2000).

⁸³¹ Guiming Pan, *Zhiyi Pingzhuan 智顛評傳*[Commentary on Zhiyi] (Nanjing: Nanjing University Press, 1996), 323; Silong Li, “Luelun Zhiyi de Mijiao Sixiang 略论智顛的”秘教”思想[A Brief Discussion of Zhiyi's “Secret Teaching,” *Zhongguo Zhaxue Shi 中国哲学史*[History of Chinese Philosophy], no. 2(2009):25-31.

same as that in the *Great Vaipulya Dhāraṇī Scripture*. The specific “practice” method of this penance ritual, is described in the “Method III” of the “Fangdeng Repentance,” which is included in the *Guo Qing Bai Lu*.⁸³² This section first describes the preparations for setting up the altar, arranging the statues, making offerings, and preparing for the ceremony in terms of time, number of people, and demeanor. After all these preparations are made it is time to move on to the formal rite of confession.

The formal rite of confession will include (1) offering of incense with an incense burner in hand and revering Buddhas; (2) inviting the Three Jewels, including Ten Dharma Princes, Huju bodisava, leiyin bodisawa, the Twelve Dream Kings, Sāriputta Buddha and other ten Buddhas. (3) reciting the appropriate mantra about the Buddha, (4) bowing to the Dharma King, the ten Buddhas, and the ten princes. (5) kneeling and performing some act of deep repentance; (6) making a vow; (7) performing circumambulatory movement and chanting the mantra, 120 times for every 120 circumambulatory movements, (8) revering the ten Buddhas and ten Princes again; (9) making vow once again; (10) sitting and contemplating; (11) standing up and bowing to the Buddha once again; (12) performing circumambulatory movement and chanting the mantra once again, 120 times for every 120 circumambulatory movements; (13) revering the three jewels again; (14) stating the sins. This set of penance rituals is repeated for seven days.

Accordingly, this dissertation suggests that the cave structure and mural settings of Mogao Cave 431 can fully satisfy the above-mentioned set of repentance ritual

⁸³² The original text in 《國清百錄》卷1：「方法第三。前諸方便弄引淳熟。渴仰顯顯不惜身命。剋日定時道場行法。初入之始月有二日。道伴多少十人已還。香泥泥地散誕圓壇。彩畫莊嚴擬於淨土。燒香散華懸五色蓋及諸繒幡。請二十四軀像。設百味食。一日三時洗浴著新衣。手執香爐。一心一意散禮一拜。互跪運念念此香雲。遍覆十方普雨一切。寶一切味衣服臥具。樓閣殿堂絃出法聲。上供諸聖下施眾生。承佛神力廣作佛事。利益一切皆入佛道。與虛空法界等。作是念已當奉請三寶。使聲聲運念淚流于臉。如向死地求於大力。一心奉請南無寶王佛(乃至十佛具出經文)。一心奉請南無摩訶袒持陀羅尼方等父母。一心奉請十法王子華聚雷音。一心奉請舍利弗等一切聲聞緣覺。一心奉請梵釋十二夢王(凡三遍召請)。次歎佛。世尊智慧如虛空 悉觀眾生去來相 十方一切悉見聞 我當稽首禮法王 次一一禮十佛十王子等竟。互跪發露披陳哀泣。雨淚首悔三寶。具實志誠不諛不諂。不致覆藏。隨行者智力自在說。次發願。願共法界怨親。改革洗滌熏修清淨。次百二十匝旋。誦百二十遍呪。一匝一呪。聲不僂不細遲疾允當。旋誦訖當禮十佛十王子。更略披陳發願。然後却坐思惟。觀一實相。觀法出餘文。思惟竟更起整服。禮佛一拜。更旋百二十匝。誦百二十遍呪。呪旋訖禮三寶。自陳罪咎。還坐思惟。如是作已。周而復始。唯第二日略去召請。餘事終竟七日也。」(CBETA 2023.Q3, T46, no. 1934, p. 797b1-c2)

activities “*fang deng chan* 方等懺.” First of all, in Mogao Cave 431, there is a niche for a seated Buddha on the east-facing side of the center pillar (Fig.5.1-81a), and two niches for a meditating Buddha on each of the other three sides of the center-pillar, for a total of seven statues of Buddha (Fig.5.1-81b,c,d). In the center of the west wall, there is also a portrait of a seated Buddha (Fig. 5.1-84a), and a combination of one Buddha and two Bodhisattvas on each of the south and north walls (Fig. 5.1-84b, Fig. 5.1-84c). Together with the seven Buddhas on the center pillar, there are ten statues of Buddha in Cave 431. Those ten Buddha images can be used as the object of the “Revering the Ten Buddhas “ process in the fourth and eighth steps mentioned above. In addition, the central pillar in Mogao Cave 431 provides a ritualized route for performing circumambulatory movement and chanting the mantra during the seventh and twelfth steps mentioned above. Finally, the east side of the center pillar in Mogao Cave 431 is 2.0-2.1 meters away from the east wall and 1.15-1.2 meters away from the other three walls. The space to the east of the center column is also adequate for the tenth step mentioned above, sitting and contemplating an object and stating the sins.

Moreover, Of the three adjacent truncated pyramid-ceiling caves located below Mogao Cave 431: Mogao Cave 299, Mogao Cave 297, and Mogao Cave 296, the contents of the murals in two of them also related to the *Great Vaipulya Dhāraṇī Scripture*.

For example, in Mogao Cave 299, a Mrgasirsa is painted in the lower part of the south side of the niche in the west wall, and Vasistha is painted in the lower part of the north side (Fig. 5.1-85). The presence of these two figures on either side of the Buddha statue receiving worship shows that the cave may also be associated with the *Great Vaipulya Dhāraṇī Scripture*. Furthermore, there are no narrative paintings on the north or south walls, but rather on the ceiling of the Mogao Cave 299. The Jataka of Prince Sattva giving himself up to feed a tiger is depicted on the south slope of the cave ceiling (Fig. 5.1-86a), and the Śyāma Jataka is depicted from the north side of the west slope to the north and east slope of the cave ceiling (Fig. 5.1-86b). In the

past, when discussing the contents of these similar Jataka paintings on the north and south walls of Mogao Cave 275, He Shizhe argued that the paintings of Buddha's career or Jataka belonged to the object of the “contemplation of the Dharma body” and the “contemplation of the Buddha’s flesh-and-blood body of birth” in the practice of meditation.⁸³³ However, if the reason for the appearance of Jataka pictures in Cave 299 was that they were direct objects of visualization for meditation practice, why were they painted at the ceiling of Cave 299, where they could not easily be viewed? This suggests that He Shizhe's earlier speculation does not seem to apply to Mogao Cave 299. Indeed, if one considers further the scenes chosen to be depicted at the ceiling of Mogao Cave 299, all of them show the protagonists not clinging to the dichotomy between good and evil, but rather adopting a middle way of looking at things. For example, Śyāma does not regard the king, who was disgusted with shooting him as an animal, as completely evil, but believes that the king will help him continue to feed his blind parents after his death. Likewise, Prince Sattva did not see the tiger, which had devoured many small animals, as a completely evil beast, but as a mother who had given birth to a group of cubs, and thus Sattva gave up his own body to feed the mother tiger. All of these behaviors embody the important Buddhist wisdom that the *Great Vaipulya Dhāraṇī Scripture* is designed to proclaim: the wisdom of Madhyamaka.

In Mogao Cave 296, the niche in the west wall contains a seated Buddha, with Mrgasirsa in the lower part of the south side of the niche and Vasistha in the lower part of the north side of the niche (Fig. 5.1-87b).⁸³⁴ The presence of these two figures on either side of the Buddha statue receiving worship suggests that the Mogao Cave 296 may also be associated with the *Great Vaipulya Dhāraṇī Scripture* (*da fang deng tuo luo ni jing* 大方等陀羅尼經).⁸³⁵ In addition, Mogao Cave 296 is the only cave of this period to have Jataka paintings around the ceiling and walls. Mogao Cave 296 has

⁸³³Shizhe He, *Dunhuang Tuxiang Yanjiu Shiliuguo Beichao Juan* 敦煌图像研究 十六国北朝卷 [Dunhuang Image Research: Sixteen Kingdoms and Northern Dynasties Volume] (Lanzhou: Gansu Education Press, 2006), 169-262.

⁸³⁴He, *Dunhuang Tuxiang Yanjiu Shiliuguo Beichao Juan*, 60.

⁸³⁵ Liying Kuo, “The Da fangdeng tuoluoni jing (Vaipulya-dhāraṇī-sūtra) and Dunhuang Evidence,” *Bulletin de l'École française d'Extrême-Orient* 105 (2019): 179-228.

the Jataka of Sujata painted along the lower part of the north wall (Fig. 5.1-87d). The lower part of the south wall is painted with the story of the Five Hundred Bandits. The ceiling edge of Mogao Cave 296 is painted with scroll-like paintings of the story of the Weimiao Bhikkhuni, the “Fu Tian Jing Bian”, and the Jataka of Prince Shanshi (Fig. 5.1-88). Previous scholars have interpreted the reasons for the appearance of these Jataka paintings in the caves in general terms, based on the turbulent political situation in the Hexi region during the Northern Zhou period. For example, He Shizhe believes that the story of Five Hundred Bandits, which appeared in the Mogao Caves, is based on the hope that the group of thieves would put down their knives, to bring peace and stability to Dunhuang.⁸³⁶ Such interpretations are divorced from the basic religious context. If considering the context of the Buddhist sutra on which these Jataka paintings are based, it becomes clear that it is more likely that they appear together in Mogao Cave 296 to illustrate the Buddhist wisdom of Madhyamaka, which does not insist on the dichotomy of good and evil, as the *Great Vaipulya Dhāraṇī Scripture* reveals. For example, the “Five Hundred Bandits” story in the middle of the south wall of Mogao Cave 296 illustrates the Buddhist doctrine of non-attachment to the extremes of good and evil by describing a group of robbers who were saved and healed after they lost their eyes. In addition, the mural painted on the ceiling of Mogao Cave 296 is also an illustration of non-attachment to the extreme dichotomy of good and evil. According to the original sutra of the story of a Bhikkhuni named Wei Miao, which appears on the ceiling of Mogao Cave 296, the story illustrates the idea of karma, which is the idea that any evil deed will be rewarded by bad karma. The mural of the Fu Tian Jing on the ceiling of Mogao Cave 296 illustrates that doing good deeds is like planting a blessed field, which will certainly lead to good rewards. At the same time, the story of Shanshi Prince appears

⁸³⁶ Shizhe He, *Dunhuang Tuxiang Yanjiu Shiliuguo Beichao Juan* 敦煌图像研究十六国北朝卷 [Research on Dunhuang Images: The Sixteen Kingdoms and the Northern Dynasties] (Lanzhou: Gansu Education Publishing House, 2006), 255; Cai Weitang, “Dunhuang Mogaoku Wubai Qiangdao Chengfo Tu Yanjiu 敦煌莫高窟五百强盗成佛图研究 [A Study of the Five Hundred Robbers Who Became Buddhas in the Mogao Caves at Dunhuang],” in *Duan Wenjie Dunhuang Yanjiu Wushinian Jinian Wenji* (Beijing: Shijiie Tushu Chuban Gongsi, 1996); Gu Shuyan, “Dunhuang Mogaoku Wubai Qiangdao Chengfo Gushi Hua Zai Yanjiu 敦煌莫高窟五百强盗成佛故事画再研究,” *Sichou Zhilu Yanjiu Jikan* 丝绸之路研究集刊 [Journal of the Silk Road Studies], no. o(2018):217-229.

at the ceiling of Mogao Cave 296, further illustrating the Middle Way of not clinging to the dichotomy of good and evil by showing the Prince of Shanshi Prince praying to his father for the forgiveness of his elder brother for the many evil deeds he had done to poison himself. Finally, the Jataka of Sujata, painted on the middle part of the north wall, also illustrates that so many things cannot be categorized as purely good or purely evil through the story of Sujata's voluntary surrender of his life to provide for his father, who had become disgusted with the idea of killing his mother's flesh to sustain his own and Sujata's life when he had run out of food, and once again illustrates the non-dualistic way of viewpoint of Buddhist doctrine.

Mogao Cave 297 has no narrative paintings on the ceiling or the four walls, but the west wall has a niche with a seated Buddha and his disciples (Ananda and Kasyapa) with two bodhisattvas (Fig. 5.1-89a). The north and south walls are covered by 13 consecutive rows of images of seated Buddhas, with two rows of donors below (Fig. 5.1-89). The west wall has two rows of donors below the niches as well. These rows of donors holding offerings might be suggestive of the worship that took place in this cave as well.

In summary, the murals in Mogao Cave 431 and the adjacent truncated pyramid-ceiling caves below it are all closely related to the *Great Vaipulya Dhāraṇī Scripture*. Therefore, this group of caves has the possibility of performing the “Fang Deng penance” based on the *Great Vaipulya Dhāraṇī Scripture*. In the three small truncated pyramid-ceiling caves of this group of caves, the ritual accouterments can be performed by paying to revere the Three Jewels and making offerings of incense and flowers. Then, in Mogao Cave 431, the center-pillar cave above the truncated pyramid-ceiling caves, one can perform rotational mantra chanting and penance rituals. In this ritual process, the images and statues in this group of caves were made as objects of worship and penance. A close interaction between the images and the people took place.

(7) Group G: Mogao Cave 301 and Cave 428

Finally, a group of caves is located on the third and second floors of the most northerly area in the central part of the southern zone (Fig. 5.1-90). Above Mogao Cave 301, the truncated pyramid-ceiling cave in this area, is Mogao Cave 428, the center-pillar cave, which was excavated during the same period.

Of these caves, Mogao Cave 428 is the largest center-pillar cave built during the Northern Dynasties (Fig. 5.1-91). Angela F. Howard has argued that Mogao Cave 428 was built during the Northern Wei Dynasty, circa the first quarter of the sixth century.⁸³⁷ This cave is now hypothesized by Dunhuang scholars to have been built with the participation of Jianping Gong Yu Yi, who served as the county executive of Guazhou during the Northern Zhou Dynasty from the end of 558 A.D. to 578 A.D.⁸³⁸ The period from the third year of Jiande of the Northern Zhou Dynasty (574 A.D.), when Emperor Wu (Yu Wen Yi) promulgated the edict of abolishing both Buddhism and Taoism, to the reign of Emperor Xuan of the Northern Zhou Dynasty (579 AD), all belonged to the period of the abolition of Buddhism. Therefore, some scholars believe that Mogao Cave 428, which Jianping Gong Yu Yi participated in the construction of, should have been built before the third year of Jiande of the Northern Zhou Dynasty (574 A.D.).⁸³⁹ Professor Li Chongfeng believes that the reason why Mogao Cave 428 was not destroyed during the subsequent campaign for the abolition of Buddhism is also related to Jianping Gong Yu Yi's involvement in the construction of Mogao Cave 428.⁸⁴⁰ However, some scholars have pointed out that in addition to

⁸³⁷ Angela F. Howard, *The imagery of the Cosmological Buddha*. Vol. 13. (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1986).

⁸³⁸ Ba Su, "Dongyangwang Yu Jianpinggong Ergao 东阳王与建平公 (二稿) [King Dongyang and Jianping Gong (Second Draft)]," in *Zhongguo Shiku Si Yanjiu* 中国石窟寺研究[Studies on Chinese Cave Temples],(Beijing: Heritage Publishing House, 1996), 255; Ba Su, "Jianping Gong Yuyi Xukao 建平公于义续考," in *Zhongguo Shiku Si Yanjiu* 中国石窟寺研究[Studies on Chinese Cave Temples] (Beijing: Heritage Publishing House, 1996); Pingting Shi, "Jianpinggong Yu Mogaoku 建平公与莫高窟[Jianping Gong and the Mogao Caves]," in *Dunhuang Yanjiu Wenji* 敦煌研究文集[Dunhuang Research Anthology], ed. Dunhuang Institute of Cultural Heritage (Lanzhou: Gansu People's Publishing House, 1982), 144-150; Pingting Shi, and Shizhe He, *Dunhuang Shiku Mogaoku Di Sierba Ku* 敦煌石窟 3 莫高窟第四二八窟[Dunhuang Grottoes 3 Mogao Cave 428] (Beijing:Cultural Publishing Bureau, 2001), 56.

⁸³⁹ Quan Fan, "Zhouwu Miefu yu Dunhuang Beizhou Shiku Yingzao de Guanxi 周武灭法与敦煌北周石窟营造的关系——以莫高窟第 428 窟供养人图像为中心[The Relationship between Zhou Wu's Destruction of the Law and the Creation of the Northern Zhou Caves at Dunhuang - Focusing on the Images of the Feeders in Cave 428 of Mogao Caves]," *Dunhuang Xue Jikan* 敦煌学辑刊[Journal of Dunhuang Studies], no.4(2008):121.

⁸⁴⁰ Chongfeng Li, "Dunhuang Mofaoku Beichao Wanqi Dongku de Fenqi yu Yanjiu 敦煌莫高窟北朝晚期洞窟的

the Mogao Caves, there are no traces of vandalism in any of the Northern Zhou caves in the Maijishan Grottoes. The Maijishan Grottoes in Tianshui, close to Chang'an, still have a large number of preserved Northern Zhou statues, such as the seven-buddha niche built by Li Yunxin (or Li Chongxin), the governor of the city, for his dead father during the reign of Emperor Wu. Although according to the literature, Emperor Wu ordered “all of the Buddhist scriptures and images should be destroyed,” Longmen Grottoes in Luoyang are well preserved like the “Yao Fang Cave,” and “Lu Cave” with a definite date inscription. As for the caves before the Northern Qi Dynasty and Northern Zhou Dynasty, they are safe and sound, and so are the Dunhuang Mogao Caves. Therefore, some scholars speculate that the reason why the caves of this period were not destroyed during the campaign to eliminate Buddhism may be due to its geographical location, those caves did not occupy fertile land, and the statues and images did not use copper or iron, not affecting the Zhou Emperor's purpose of enriching the country and strengthening the army.

This indicates that it is possible that Mogao Cave 428 was not necessarily constructed with the participation of the Jianping Gong. It is worth noting that Mogao Cave 428 contains the largest group of donor portraits in the Mogao Caves of the 4th and 6th centuries. In the 1207 donor portraits painted on the lower part of the four walls and central pillar of the cave, there are no images and inscriptions involving Jianping Gong Yuyi or his family members. Among the inscriptions of these donors, the names of monks from temples outside of Dunhuang are found, for example, the inscription beside the third donor in the upper row on the south side of the east wall of Mogao Cave 428 is inscribed as “Qing Xian, a Buddhist monk from Jin Chang County, offering”, and the inscription beside the fourth donor in the same row is inscribed as “offering by Dao Ling, a Buddhist monk from Liangzhou County”. It is possible that these monks were forced to flee to Dunhuang from other places to seek refuge during the campaign of exterminating Buddhism, and that such a large

分期与研究[Dating and Research on the Late Northern Dynasty Caves of Mogao Caves in Dunhuang],” in *敦煌研究文集. 敦煌石窟考古篇 Dunhuang Research Anthology Dunhuang Cave Archaeology* (Lanzhou: Gansu Nationalities Publishing House, 2000).

congregation joined together to build Mogao Cave 428. The departure of these large numbers of monks from their previous places of life meant the abandonment of a large part of their original accumulation of fixed assets. Even though they still carried some of their movable assets with them, they had to use them to maintain their subsistence requirements in Dunhuang and were therefore not wealthy. The fact that they were still willing to finance the construction of such a large cave suggests the possibility that the cave had become a necessity for their daily lives. For Chinese monks, who have always valued a ritual atmosphere, a particular religious practice must take place in such a ceremonial space to be meaningful. It is therefore likely that Mogao Cave 428 was built to accommodate this important religious practice. The next part is to explore what specific religious practices might have been performed in Mogao Cave 428.

Firstly, examining the statues and mural settings within Mogao Cave 428. In this center-pillar Cave, there is a seated Buddha on each of the four sides of the center-pillar, with four Buddhas in total (Fig. 5.1-92a,b,c,d). Among the previous interpretations of the four Buddhas in the center pillar of the cave, Sekino Tadashi and other Japanese scholars have earlier suggested that the origin of the four Buddhas on the four-faced pillar may have been based on the Four-direction Buddhas of the *Golden Light Sutra*, and it can be inferred that this kind of four-faced Buddha pillar was continued in Gong Xian County and Mt. Xiang Tang.⁸⁴¹ Later, Yan Wenru also agreed that Four-direction Buddha statues appear on the upper four sides of the central pillar in Yungang Cave 6 and the four sides of the central pillar in Yungang Cave 11. The Four-Direction Buddha statues are mainly based on the Golden Light Sutra.⁸⁴² This dissertation also agrees with the speculation of the above scholars. Although the names of the Four-direction Buddhas mentioned in the *Golden Light Sutra* have disappeared in the inscription of Mogao Cave 428. the “Southern

⁸⁴¹ Sekino Tadashi, and Tokiwa Daiting, *Yungang Grottoes*, trans. Zhao Yide (Northern Dynasties Studies, no. 3, 1990).

⁸⁴² Wenru Yan, *Zhongguo Shiku Yishu Zonglun* 中国石窟艺术总论 [General Introduction to Chinese Grotto Art] (Tianjin: Ancient Books Publishing House, 1987), 83-84.

Ratnasambhava Buddha” is still recognizable next to the statue of the Buddha on the south wall of Mogao Cave 305.⁸⁴³ There is also an inscription of “Southern *Ratnasambhava* Buddha” on the south wall of Cave 12 in the West Thousand Buddha Cave. Moreover, on a stele of Bhikkhu Hongbao dating from the second year of Tianping of the Eastern Wei Dynasty (535), there is also a seated Buddha statue inscribed as “Southern Ratnasambhava Buddha”. From these repeated examples in the same period and the same region, it can be initially speculated that the setting of the Four-direction Buddhas on the center pillar of Mogao Cave 428 is likely to be related to the *Golden Light Sutra*.

The *Golden Light Sutra* was translated during the Xuanshi period (414-427 A.D.) of the Northern Liang Dynasty by Dharmakṣema, and in its preface, it mentions the Buddhas of the Four Directions as Akṣobhya in the East, Ratnasambhava in the South, Amitabha in the West, and the Weimiao Sheng Buddha in the North.⁸⁴⁴ The names of these Buddhas are different from the names of the Four-direction Buddhas in the *Scripture of Contemplating the Buddha and the Samadhi Sea*. In the *Scripture of Contemplating the Buddha and the Samadhi Sea*, the southern Buddha is named “Zhantan De Buddha (旃檀德佛),” the Eastern Buddha is named “Shande Buddha (善德佛),” the Western Buddha is named “Wuliang Ming Buddha (無量明佛),” the Northern Buddha is named “Xiang De Buddha (相德佛).”⁸⁴⁵

⁸⁴³ Yongzeng Liu, “Qianfo Weirao Shi Shuofa Tu yu Guanfo Sanmei Haijing 千佛围绕式说法图与《观佛三昧海经》 [Thousands of Buddhas Surrounding a Figure of Preaching” and the Scripture of Contemplating the Buddha and the Samadhi,” *Dunhuang Yanjiu* 敦煌研究 [Dunhuang Research], no.1 (1998):13-19.

⁸⁴⁴ The original text in 《金光明經》 Vol 1: 「是金光明，諸經之王！若有聞者，則能思惟，無上微妙，甚深之義。如是經典，常為四方，四佛世尊，之所護持：東方阿閼、南方寶相、西無量壽、北微妙聲。我今當說，懺悔等法，所生功德，為無有上；能壞諸苦，盡不善業，一切種智，而為根本；無量功德，之所莊嚴；滅除諸苦，與無量樂。諸根不具、壽命損減、貧窮困苦、諸天捨離、親厚鬪訟、王法所加、各各忿爭、財物損耗、愁憂恐怖、惡星災異、眾邪蠱道、變怪相續、臥見惡夢、晝則愁惱，當淨洗浴，聽是經典。至心清淨，著淨絮衣，專聽諸佛，甚深行處。是經威德，能悉消除，如是諸惡，令其寂滅。」 (CBETA 2023.Q3, T16, no. 663, p. 335b9-25)

⁸⁴⁵ The original text in 《佛說觀佛三昧海經》 Vol 6: 「如是諸佛，自說名字安慰佛母。東方善德佛，持妙寶花散釋迦牟尼及摩耶上，化成花蓋，此花蓋中百億化佛，合掌起立問訊佛母；南方栴檀德佛，持寶蓮花散釋迦牟尼及散佛母上，化成花蓋，於花蓋中無數化佛，合掌起立問訊佛母；西方無量明佛，以寶蓮花散釋迦牟尼及佛母上，化成花蓋，無數化佛合掌起立問訊佛母；北方相德佛，以寶蓮花散釋迦牟尼及佛母上，化成花蓋，無數化佛合掌起立問訊佛母。東南方無憂德佛、西南方寶施佛、西北方花德佛、東北方三乘行

Since the *Golden Light Sutra* belongs to the same category as *The Lotus Sūtra* and the *Humane King Sutra*, it is said that if one recites it with one's heart, one will be guarded by the Four Heavenly Kings in times of national distress.⁸⁴⁶ The Golden Light Confession, a Liturgical text based on the Golden Light Sutra, has also become the national protection confession.⁸⁴⁷ There are pieces of literature showing that the activity of the seven-day ritual confession of “Jin Guang Ming Zhai” based on the *Golden Light Sutra* was popular among the northern royal family as early as in the Northern Wei Dynasty. The earliest known penitential ritual is the “Seven-Day Repentance of the Golden Light Abstinence (金光明齋七日懇懺)” composed by Prince Tuoba Huang during the reign of Emperor Taiwu of the Northern Wei Dynasty (ca.439 A.D.).⁸⁴⁸ In the Biography of *Gao Seng Zhuan*, Volume 11 of the biography of Shi Xuan Gao, it is recorded that Emperor Taiwu of the Northern Wei Dynasty listened to the rumors and was going to abolish the prince Tuoba Kao. Xuan Gao then asked Tuoba Kao to perform the “Seven-Day Repentance of the Golden Light Abstinence” to eliminate this disaster.⁸⁴⁹ In Daoxuan's *Guang Hong Ming Ji*, it is also recorded that Emperor Wen of the Southern Chen Dynasty personally wrote the “Jin Guang Ming Chan Wen” to pray for the people's well-being.⁸⁵⁰ Moreover, in the second half of the sixth century, Zhiyi (538-597A.D.) wrote the “Jin Guang Ming Repentance (金光明懺法)” based on the *Golden Light Sutra*, which is stored in the

佛、上方廣眾德佛、下方明德佛，如是等佛各以寶花，散釋迦牟尼佛上及散佛母，化成花蓋，一一蓋中無數化佛，合掌起立問訊佛母。」(CBETA 2023.Q3, T15, no. 643, p. 678a7-21)

⁸⁴⁶ Guiming Pan, and Zhongwei Wu, *Zhongguo Tiantaizong Tongshi* 中国天台宗通史[A general history of the Tiantai Sect of China] (Nanjing: Jiangsu Ancient Books Publishing House, 2001), 237.

⁸⁴⁷ Fangfang Lv, “Zhiyi Chanfa Yanjiu 智顛忏法研究[A Study on Repentance Dharma Theory of Zhiyi]”(PhD diss., Fudan university, 2014), 117.

⁸⁴⁸ Darui Shi, “Zhongguo Fojiao Zaoqi Chanzui Sixiang Zhi Xingcheng Yu Fazhan 中国佛教早期忏罪思想之形成与发展[The Formation and Development of Repentance Thought in Early Chinese Buddhism],”*Zhonghua Foxue Yanjiu* 中华佛学研究[Chinese Buddhist Studies], no.2 (1998): 313-337.

⁸⁴⁹ The original text in 《高僧傳》Vol 11: 「偽太子[*]拓跋晃事高為師。晃一時被讒，為父所疑，乃告高曰：「空羅狂苦，何由得脫？」高令作金光明齋。七日懇懺，熹乃夢見其祖及父，皆執劍烈威，問汝何故信讒言，狂疑太子？熹驚覺，大集群臣，告以所夢。諸臣咸言，太子無過，實如皇靈降詔。熹於太子無復疑焉。蓋高誠感之力也。」(CBETA 2023.Q3, T50, no. 2059, p. 397c6-13)

⁸⁵⁰ Fangfang Lv, “Zhiyi Chanfa Yanjiu 智顛忏法研究[A Study on Repentance Dharma Theory of Zhiyi]”(PhD diss., Fudan university, 2014),121.

Guo Qing Bai Lu.⁸⁵¹ It is also recorded in the *Xu Gao Seng Zhuan* by Dao Xuan that Zhiyi personally performed a seven-day Jin Guang Ming Confession ritual for Princess Xiao who had failed to be cured in lots of ways. This “*Jin Guang Ming Confession* (金光明懺)” was widely practiced in the north and south regions from the first half of the fifth century to the end of the sixth century.⁸⁵²

The entire process of the “Jin Guang Ming Confession” ceremony is recorded in the “Jin Guang Ming Chan” by Zhiyi, which is included in the *Guo Qing Bai Lu*. After the solemnization of the dojo, the entire rite of penance ceremony can be divided into eight steps as follows. (1) holding an incense burner and performing a series of incense and flower offerings; (2) venerating the Three Jewels; (3) inviting the Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, ghosts deities, and the sutra to the consecration site, including Shakyamuni Buddha, Aksobhya Buddha in the East. Ratnasambhava Buddha in the south, Amitabha Buddha in the west, weimiao sheng Buddha in the north, and the Golden Light Sutra; (4) performing some act of deep repentance;⁸⁵³ (5) reciting the appropriate mantra; (6) Sprinkling of food and reversing the deities; (7) performing the circumambulatory movement three times; (8) chanting the Golden Light Sutra.

The reason why this dissertation speculates that this kind of Jin Guang Ming Repentance ritual is possibly performed in Mogao Cave 428 is because the contents of the murals in Cave 428 are in perfect correspondence with the specific ceremonial aspects of the Jin Guang Ming Repentance ritual. The following is a list of these correspondences.

First of all, the above penance ritual according to the Golden Light Sutra, after making offerings of incense and flowers, involves venerating the Three Jewels (ratna-traya): the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha. These objects of worship are shown

⁸⁵¹ Lv, “Zhiyi Chanfa Yanjiu,” 109.

⁸⁵² The Golden Light Confession was also very popular later on, and Zun Shi of the Song Dynasty also wrote the Golden Light Confession Aid Ceremony (金光明忏法补助仪), and Zhi Li wrote the Golden Light Most Prevailing Confession Ceremony (金光明最胜忏仪).

⁸⁵³ The original text in 《金光明經》 Vol 1: 「身口意惡，所集三業，如是眾罪，今悉懺悔。或不恭敬，佛法聖眾，如是眾罪，今悉懺悔。或不恭敬，緣覺菩薩，如是眾罪，今悉懺悔。以無智故，誹謗正法；不知恭敬，父母尊長；如是眾罪，今悉懺悔。愚惑所覆，驕慢放逸，因貪恚癡，造作諸惡；如是眾罪，今悉懺悔。」 (CBETA 2023.Q1, T16, no. 663, p. 337a17-25)

in the west wall of Mogao Cave 428. The first object of worship is “Buddha”. The worship content related to “Buddha” is expressed by the four great events of the Buddha's career, including “birth of the Buddha”, “attained enlightenment”, “initial preaching of the Buddha”, and “nirvana,” which are depicted on the west wall of Mogao Cave 428(Fig.5.1-93). It is recorded that Sakyamuni himself taught his followers that after the Buddha's nirvana, it is equally important to remember the four great events, to visit the four holy places, and to worship the Buddha's relics at the stupa.⁸⁵⁴ Therefore, the four most important events are depicted on the west wall of Mogao Cave 428, opposite the entrance. The depictions of the “attained enlightenment” and “initial preaching of the Buddha” on the west wall of this Mogao cave 428 are similar to the “attained enlightenment,” “initial preaching of the Buddha” depicted in the “Transformation of the four deeds of Gautama Buddha(四相圖)” of Amaravati in South India (Fig. 5.1-94).⁸⁵⁵ Also, the images of the four great events depicted herein in Mogao Cave 428 were very popular in the Gandhara region of the Northwest Indies.⁸⁵⁶ The images of Nirvana that appeared in Gandhara lasted from the second and third centuries to the fourth and fifth centuries.⁸⁵⁷ It is worth noting that in the west wall of Mogao Cave 428, these images are not arranged chronologically, but rather symmetrically. This symmetrical arrangement might suggest that the images were intended for worship. The images on the west wall of Mogao Cave 428 are centered on the central representation of the Buddha in the “initial preaching of the Buddha” (Fig. 5.1-93d). The first panel on the north side of this “initial preaching of the Buddha” depicts the Buddha in “Nirvana” with his right hand on the bottom, and Buddhist monks who have come to see the Buddha's nirvana (Fig. 5.1-93e). Four shorea robusta trees and twenty-three monks are depicted in this nirvana scene. These monks surrounding the Buddha can be seen as the object of

⁸⁵⁴ Miyaji Showa, *Niepan he Mile de Tuxiang Xue* 涅槃和弥勒的图像学: 从印度到中亚[Iconography of Parinirvana and Maitreya: from India to Central Asia], trans. Li Ping (Beijing: Wenwu Chubanshe, 2009), 125.

⁸⁵⁵ Showa, *Niepan he Mile de Tuxiang Xue*, 127.

⁸⁵⁶ Showa, *Niepan he Mile de Tuxiang Xue*, 82.

⁸⁵⁷ Showa, *Niepan he Mile de Tuxiang Xue*, 94-115.

worship: the Sangha. In the first scene adjacent to the south side of the Buddha in the “initial preaching of the Buddha”, the relics of the Buddha being collected to the stupa to receive offerings and worship is depicted, and the birth of the Buddha is also depicted inside the stupa (Fig. 5.1-93c).⁸⁵⁸ In the second scene adjacent to the southern side of the “initial preaching of the Buddha” is the scene of “attained enlightenment,”(Fig. 5.1-93b). The image of two Buddhas sitting side by side in the northernmost part of the west wall represents another object of worship: the Dharma (Fig. 5.1-93f).

After paying homage to the Three Jewels, the third step of the “Golden Light Confession” ritual involves inviting the presence of Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, and other deities to the consecration site three times. The names of the Buddhas to be invited in this ritual session are mentioned in the aforementioned “Golden Light Confession” liturgical texts. The Buddhas of the four directions with specific names mentioned therein are the Aksobhya Buddha of the East, the Ratnasambhava Buddha of the South, the Amitabha Buddha of the West, the Wei Miao Sheng Buddha in the North. Those Four Buddhas are indicated by the statues of the Buddhas in the niches opened on the four sides of the center pillar of Mogao Cave 428 (Fig.5.1 -92 a, b, c, d). There is also mention of an invitation to the Ten Buddhas. These ten Buddhas are represented by the ten images on the lower part of the southern and northern walls of Mogao Cave 428 (Fig. 5.1- 95, Fig. 5.1-96). The Śākyamuni Buddha is the image on the south wall of Cave 428 that has been referred to by scholars as the Cosmological Buddha (Fig. 5.1- 96b).⁸⁵⁹ Moreover, the rows of small seated Buddhas on the upper part of the three walls of Mogao Cave 428 are also likely to represent all the Buddhas of the *tryadhva-buddhāḥ* to be invited in the ritual confession, that is the Thousand Buddhas of *vyūhakalpa*, the Thousand Buddhas of this *Bhadrakalpa*, the Thousand Buddhas of the future (Fig. 5.1.-93,95,96,97). The total number of small seated

⁸⁵⁸ Showa, *Niepan he Mile de Tuxiang Xue*, 51.

⁸⁵⁹ Matsumoto Eiichi once argued this Cosmological Buddha could be Vairocana. Angela Falco Howard considers the cosmological imagery in relationship with the entire iconographic scheme of the cave, and points out this Cosmological Buddha should be Śākyamuni. See Angela F. Howard, *The imagery of the Cosmological Buddha*. Vol. 13. (Leiden:E.J. Brill, 1986), 111-12.

Buddhas in rows on the three walls of Mogao Cave 428 is 1,485. There are 415 seated Buddhas on the south wall, 425 seated Buddhas on the north wall, 335 seated Buddhas on the west wall, and 310 seated Buddhas on the east wall. This is comparable to the number of seated Buddhas in Mogao Cave 254 which preserved the clear inscription, so it can be assumed that Mogao Cave 428 is similar to Mogao Cave 254 in that it represents the *tryadhva-buddhāḥ*.⁸⁶⁰

As for the *Golden Light Sutra* to be invited in the third step of the “Golden Light Confession” ceremony, as well as the bodhisattvas, dvarapala, and devas, they are also shown in the mural paintings of Mogao Cave 428. The content of the *Golden Light Sutra* is shown in the narrative paintings on the east wall of Mogao Cave 428 (Fig. 5.1-97). These narrative paintings are included in the *Golden Light Sutra* which is translated by Dharmakṣema. In the first paragraph of the *Golden Light Sutra*, it is recorded the act of Prince Sattva who gave himself up to feed hungry tigers, and the act of Liu Shui who fed the fishes. This corresponds to the murals on both sides of the entrance to the east wall of Mogao Cave 428, namely, Prince Sattva Jataka, Isisiṅga Jataka, and Sudāna Jataka (Fig. 5.1-97b,c). All these jataka paintings illustrate the two themes of the Sutra: “no killing” and “giving food”. In Volume 1 of the *Golden Light Sutra*, it is clearly stated that the reason for the Buddha's immeasurable life span is because of the following: “First, no killing, and second, giving food.” In Volume 4 of the *Golden Light Sutra*, the story of Prince Sattva giving up his body to feed the tiger is again described in detail to illustrate the Buddha's past practice of donating his life for the good karma. The above-mentioned “food-giving” in the Golden Light Sutra corresponds exactly to the mural of Prince Sattva Jataka which is depicted in detail on the east wall of Mogao Cave 428.

The reason why “no killing” as proclaimed in the *Golden Light Sutra* can achieve immeasurable longevity, is explained in Volume 4 of the sutra through the

⁸⁶⁰ Qiang Ning, and Tongqing Hu, “Dunhuang Mogaoku Di Erwusi Ku Qianfo Hua Yanjiu 敦煌莫高窟第 254 窟千佛画研究[A Study of the Thousand Buddha Paintings in Cave 254 of the Mogao Caves at Dunhuang],” *Dunhuang Yanjiu* 敦煌研究[Dunhuang Research], no.4(1986):22-36; Peili Chen, and Qiang Ning, “Mogaoku Di Sierba Ku Yingsu Qianfo Xiangguan Wenti Kaoshu 莫高窟第 428 窟影塑千佛相关问题考述[A Study on the Clay-Molded Thousand Buddhas in Mogao Cave 428],” *Dunhuang Yanjiu* 敦煌研究[Dunhuang Research], no.01(2023): 56-64.

fascinating story of Zhang Judao, a butcher, who traveled to and from the underworld. A large number of copies of the “Chanhui Miezui Jin Guang Ming Jing Mingbao Zhuan (忏悔灭罪金光明经冥报传)” found in Dunhuang manuscripts have been copied in front of the sutra.⁸⁶¹ For example, S.364, S.1963, S.3257, S.4155, S.4984, and S.6514 were copied from the story of Zhang Judao, a butcher, in Volume 4 of the *Golden Light Sutra* translated by the Dharmakṣema. This suggests that the story of the butcher's retribution for entering and leaving the underworld was very attractive at that time and was often chosen by the monks as material for oral transmission.⁸⁶² The reason why this story was not painted in the Mogao Cave 428 is probably just because it was already widely spread through the monks' oral transmission and therefore did not need to be painted in the cave. And perhaps another reason is that the main character of the story, Zhang Judao, was not qualified to be painted in the cave to receive worship.

The fourth step of the “Jing Guang Ming penance” ritual, the confession of one's sins, is then performed in this cave with a specific object of confession. Finally, the center pillar of Mogao Cave 428 also provides a suitable route for the last two steps of the “Jing Guang Ming penance,” namely the circumambulatory movement and chanting rites. In short, the mural settings in Mogao Cave 428 are perfectly suited for the performance of the “Jing Guang Ming penance” ritual in this cave.

Next, we will examine the case of Mogao Cave 301, a truncated pyramid-ceiling cave below Mogao Cave 428, which has not yet been studied in detail by scholars.

⁸⁶¹ As far as the published Dunhuang manuscripts in Chinese are concerned, a total of twenty-six copies of the Repentance and Perdition of Sins Golden Light Sutra(忏悔灭罪金光明经冥报传) are known, of which eleven, nearly half the total number, are in the British Dunhuang collection: S.364, S.462, .S.1963, S.2981, .S.3257, S.4155, S.4487, S.4984, .S.6035, S.6514, .S.9515, B.1360 (藏 62), B.1361 (日 11), B.1362 (为 69), B.1363 (成 13), B.1364 (列 55), B.1365 (晨 61), B.1367 (生 99); B.1369 (河 66), B.1424 (海 69), B.1425 (寒 77) .B.1426 (玉 55), .P.2099, .P.2203.L.735 (Φ.260a), .L.2691 (Дx2325) . See Baoyu Yang, “Chanhui Miezui Jinguangming Jing Minbao Zhuan Jiaokao 《忏悔灭罪金光明经冥报传》校考.” in *Yingguo Shoucang Dunhuang Hanzang Wenxian Yanjiu* 英国收藏敦煌汉藏文献研究, ed. Song Jiayu, and Liu Zhong (Beijing: Zhongguo Shehui Kexue Chubanshe, 2000).

⁸⁶² Acai Zheng, “Dunhuang Xiejuan Chanhui Miezui Jinguangming Jing Minbao Zhuan 敦煌写卷《忏悔灭罪金光明经冥报传》初探[A preliminary exploration of the Dunhuang scroll 'Repentance and extinction of sins, golden light sutra,]” in *Pan Shichan Xiansheng Jiuzhi Huadan Dunhuang Xue Tekan* 潘石禅先生九秩华诞敦煌学特刊 [Special Issue on Dunhuang Studies for the Ninth Birthday of Mr Pan Shichan], ed. Liu Cunreng (Beijing: Wenjing Chubanshe, 1996).

The sculptures flanking the seated Buddha statue in the west niche of the west wall have been destroyed (Fig. 5.1-98). The other three walls are covered with continuous images of seated Buddhas. Although both the north and south walls were damaged by later generations (Fig. 5.1-99,100), it can be seen so far that a combination of one Buddha and two Bodhisattvas was set in the center of both the north and south walls. Together with the Buddha statues in the niches of the west wall, they constitute the Three Buddhas. Therefore, this cave also contains the three Buddhas of the ten directions to be invited in the “Jing Guang Ming penance” ritual.

Moreover, the murals on the ceiling of the Mogao Cave 301 are still well preserved (Fig. 5.1-101a). The narrative paintings on the ceiling are also closely related to the content of the *Golden Light Sutra*. The west, south, and east slopes of the ceiling are painted with Prince Sattva Jataka paintings (Fig. 5.1-101b,c). On the north slope of the ceiling, there is a painting of Śyāma jataka (Fig. 5.1-101 d). Although the interpretation of the Śyāma jataka in Mogao Cave 301 of the Northern Zhou Dynasty has been based on the fact that it deals with the theme of loyalty to the king and filial piety to one's parents, it is believed that the appearance of this kind of thematic painting in the caves excavated before and after the campaign of exterminating the Buddhism was related to the ideological background of criticizing Buddhism at that time. Therefore, some scholars have viewed this kind of Jataka painting, which emphasizes that Buddhists are filial to their parents, as a Buddhist response to the criticism that Buddhists do not take care of their parents after they become monks, in an attempt to reiterate that the traditional concepts of filial piety and fraternal duty are not in conflict with the concepts advocated by Buddhism.⁸⁶³ But the problem is that in Mogao Cave 301, along with the Śyāma jataka, there is also the Prince Sattva Jataka of Prince Sattva giving up his life to feed a tiger. This act of abandoning the body given to him by his parents and sacrificing it to a tiger is in clear contradiction to the theme of Chinese filial piety. This again demonstrates the

⁸⁶³ Weixiang Shi, “Guanyu Mogaoku de Shidai 关于莫高窟的时代[The Age of Mogao Caves],” in *Dunhuang Shiku Neirong Zonglu 敦煌石窟内容总录*[Dunhuang Grottoes Content Catalogue] (Beijing: Wenwu Chubanshe, 1996), 299.

ineffectiveness of the previous of interpretation those murals in a broad social context. This dissertation therefore argues that the murals on the ceiling of Mogao Cave 301 still need to be considered within the religious context in which they are located. The content of these murals is related to the teachings proclaimed in the *Golden Light Sutra*. In particular, the idea of giving to charity as a prerequisite for attaining unlimited longevity, as advocated in the *Golden Light Sutra*, is represented in this cave by the story of Prince Sattva, who gave up his own body to feed a tiger. This story is also reiterated at the end of the sutra. Moreover, the story of Śyāma, who was accidentally killed while fetching water for his blind parents and then regained his life, depicted on the slope of the ceiling in Mogao Cave 301, is another example of the idea of immeasurable longevity that can be attained by “giving unlimited amounts of food and drink,” as advocated by Golden Light Sutra.

It is therefore argued that these narrative paintings are painted in Mogao Cave 301 on behalf of the Buddhist teachings they illustrate. The fact that these images can be painted together with images of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas implies that the Dharma revealed in the images itself can also be used as an object of worship. Moreover, the jataka paintings at the ceiling of Mogao Cave 301, which imply Buddhist teachings, cover the entire plane of the cave from the highest dimension, as if to imply that the teachings revealed in the Golden Light Sutra dominate everything in a high latitude space.

In short, the murals and statues in Mogao Cave 428 and Mogao Cave 301 meet the requirements of the sacred settings that were to be emphasized in the ritual activities of the “Jing Guang Ming Confession,” with the presence of Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, deities, ghosts, and Buddhist scriptures. Moreover, it was at the end of the sixth century that the “Jing Guang Ming Confession” based on the Golden Light Sutra was practiced. Therefore, it can be assumed that Mogao Cave 428 and its neighboring Mogao Cave 301, which were also completed in the second half of the sixth century, were used as a ritual place for the confession ritual based on the Golden Light Sutra. The images in the caves were used as objects of worship, invocation, and

penance during the confession ritual, participating in the specific activities of the penance rituals, and interacting more closely with people at that time.

Summary

In summary, the 18 caves of the 4th-6th centuries at Dunhuang Mogao Grottoes mentioned above may indeed have served some religious activities other than meditation, such as repentance rituals. At this time, people performed repentance for a variety of ostensible purposes, such as to remove overt misfortune that they or their family members would experience in this world, to remove the disasters that the deceased would experience in the afterlife or to avoid being reborn in the three evil paths because of excessive sinfulness, or it may be to help a monk who has failed in his meditation to remove an obstacle in front of him.⁸⁶⁴ For people from the fourth to the sixth centuries, the ultimate goal of repentance all were to eliminate the sins accumulated by oneself or one's family members in the past to obtain eventual benefits. This is because, in the basic Buddhist concept of karma, religious benefits can only be obtained after the removal of sins through sincere repentance. Therefore, the activity of repentance is an essential religious practice for a wide range of people, both monks and laypeople at that time.

In the 4th-6th centuries, there was a proliferation of different repentance rituals based on different Buddhist sutras. There are some differences in the details of the different repentance rituals depending on the sutras on which they are based. The contents of the murals painted in the above-mentioned Mogao Cave groups of the Northern Dynasties period also correspond perfectly to the contents of the Buddhist sutras on which a specific repentance ritual is based. There is a Maitreya repentance ritual based on the Maitreya belief, which can be performed in Mogao Cave 268, Mogao Cave 272, and Mogao Cave 2275. There is the “Fang Guang Repentance” ritual based on the *Daitong Fang Guang Miezui Chengfo Jing*, which may be performed in the cave groups of Mogao Cave 249, Mogao Cave 248 and Mogao Cave

⁸⁶⁴ Eric M. Greene, *Chan Before Chan: Meditation, Repentance, and Visionary Experience in Chinese Buddhism* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2021), 162-194.

251. It is possible that the repentance ritual based on the *Sutra on Visualizing the Two Bodhisattvas Bhaisajyarāja and Bhaisajyasamudgata* and the *Fo Shuo Jueding Pini Jing*, created by Ling Yu, was performed in Mogao Cave 438 and Mogao Cave 290 of the Northern Zhou Dynasty, as well as in Mogao Cave 432 and Mogao Cave 284 of the Northern Zhou Dynasty. There is a possibility that the “Fang Deng Confession” based on the *Great Vaipulya Dhāraṇī Scripture* was performed in the cave groups of Mogao Cave 431, Mogao Cave 296, Mogao Cave 297, and Mogao Cave 299 of the Northern Zhou Dynasty. The “Golden Light Confession” based on the *Golden Light Sutra* is likely to be performed in the group of caves in Mogao Cave 301 and Mogao Cave 428. In addition, in Mogao Cave 285 and Mogao Cave 288, a group of neighboring caves, there is also the possibility that the “death recommending activity” also involves the repentance rite of the living on behalf of the dead.

In the above 18 caves, the recurring combination of the truncated pyramid-ceiling cave and the center-pillar cave can well meet the need for more efficient performance of the two basic parts of the ritual confessional activities, “worship” and “repentance” activities. The actual implementation of these two basic activities involves the dynamic activity of circumambulatory movement. According to the repentance liturgical texts that had been preserved in Chinese-language manuscripts in Dunhuang, some of the dynamic parts of the repentance rituals that were involved were the activity of right-circling worship, the activity of walking the path of repentance, and the activity of circling and chanting the mantra. The epigraphic and manuscript evidence reveals that in the image-covered Mogao Caves of the Northern Dynasties, the pursued repentance ritual is not a static activity, but is involved in a dynamic practice that involves the circling and scattering of flowers, walking the path of repentance and chanting mantras. This also means that the images distributed throughout those caves may not abstractly simply “related to the advanced stage of visualization in which the practitioner can visualize a chamber filled with Buddha images,”⁸⁶⁵ nor is it a “theater” that previews the content of the visualization for the

⁸⁶⁵ Stanleyk Abe, “Art and Practice in a Fifth-Century Chinese Buddhist Cave Temple,” *Ars Orientalis* 20 (1990): 8

meditation practitioner. Rather, the images in those caves are the object of worship and penance itself that participates in the specific procedure of the actual repentance activity and interacts with the religious practitioner.

In the functional restoration of the caves mentioned above, we can see repeatedly that the images that appear in the caves are involved in the ritual activities that people carry out in the caves, interacting with the religious practitioner in a close way. This is essentially different from the images in burial sites discussed in chapter four. Because what exists in the burial site is a virtual and incomplete viewing process, in which the producer of the image does not wait for another real viewer to receive the information carried by the image, but rather the producer of the image almost simultaneously acts as both the sender and the receiver. In other words, the “reader's intention” is equated with the “author's intention.” In the case of the Mogao caves, there is a more authentic and complete process of pictorial information dissemination involving the living people, where images are received by a large number of living bodies, and where there is a divergence between the viewer's interpretation of the image after receiving it and the producer's interpretation of the image. But it is precisely this process of reception, which generates interpretation discrepancies, that leads to the emergence of richer and more varied possibilities of artistic expression.

What follows, then, is a closer look at how the images that appear in these Northern Buddhist cave temples, which assume the function of religious practice as described above, deal with the spatial problem.

5.2 Image and Space in Cave Temples

In this section, we will begin by carefully examining the images in these cave-temple sites, which were the first to be exposed to Western art. Whether those images embraced techniques of space representation from ancient India, generating attempts to reproduce three-dimensional spatial effects on two-dimensional images. The discussion in this section focuses not on who influenced whom, but rather on the differences between the drawing methods used by these Dunhuang artisans and the

Renaissance perspective used by the European painters. Again this part of the discussion unfolds in image singletons and image groups respectively.

(1) Image Singletons

At the beginning of the last century, in 1906, the British explorer Stein found a mural of “winged angels” at the site in Milan, Xinjiang (Fig. 5.2-1).⁸⁶⁶ And later in 1989, the Xinjiang Archaeological Team found two side-by-side paintings of “winged angels” at the Milan Buddhist Temple in Xinjiang. Scholars generally believe that the painting method of these “winged angels” in Milan, has traces of the influence of Gandhara art in India, which was influenced by Ancient Greece, and believe that the contrast between light and dark is achieved with the help of a layer of weak and clear pigment coated with bright light used in these angels images.⁸⁶⁷ Therefore, some scholars also speculate that the painting method of these “winged angels” is probably the same as that used by Zhang Sengyou to paint the “receding-and-protruding flowers (Ao-tu hua 凹凸花)” at the Yicheng Temple in Jiankang (Nanjing) in the third year of Emperor Datong of the Liang Dynasty (537 A.D.), which is a “remnant of the Buddhist painting method.” These views seem to suggest that the painting of “winged angels” in Milan (Xinjiang), which originated around the 2nd century AD, had spread eastwards over four centuries to the 6th-century Chinese painter Zhang Sengyao (502-556 A.D.) in Nanjing. So, does this mean that during this eastward spreading process, the painters of Mogao Cave also generally accepted the influence of this “legacy of Tianzhu” and began to produce images with a three-dimensional sense? This remains to be examined carefully.

The first problem we encounter is that there is no physical preservation of the “receding-and-protruding flowers (Ao-tu hua 凹凸花)” painted by Zhang Sengyou to date. This means that modern scholars actually do not know exactly what kind of

⁸⁶⁶ M. Aurel Stein, *Serindia: Detailed Report of Explorations in Central Asia and Westernmost China Carried out and Described under the Orders of H. M. India Government*, Vol. IV Plates (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1921), PL.XL.

⁸⁶⁷ Mario Busagli, *Painting in Central Asia*, ed. Xu Jianying, and He Hanmin (Urumqi: Xinjiang Art & Photography Press, 1992), 30.

“Ao-tu hua” Zhang Senyou painted on the gates of Yicheng temple. Although *Jiankang Shilu*(建康實錄) records that Zhang Sengyou's “Ao-tu hua” which he painted in the early sixth century using the “legacy of *Tianzhu*(天竺遺法)” was admired by the general public at that time. However, the art critic Xie He (479-502 A.D.), who was active at about the same time, did not give any information about Zhang Sengyou's work that was praised by the people of the time. At present, modern scholars only from the record of Tang Dynasty Xu Song's *Jiankang Shilu*(建康實錄) to imagine so-called “receding-and-protruding flowers”:

These flowers were executed with a technique inherited from Tianzhu (ancient India): the vermilion and dark green applied to their composition give a sense of embossment when it is seen from a distance; on closer inspection, however, it appears like a flat surface. Everyone was astonished at this phenomenon, and the monastery became known as the 'Ao Tu Monastery'.⁸⁶⁸

While, in the Tang Dynasty art theorist Zhang Yanyuan's *A Record of Famous Painters of All the Dynasties*, Zhang yang yuan did not comment on all on Zhang Sengyou's “Ao-tu hua”, but only praised his “calligraphy-like brushes(書法用筆)”:

Zhang Sengyou made his dot, drag-strokes, hack-strokes and sweeping strokes, following the Lady Wei's ‘battle Array of the Brush’, so that every dot and every stroke was an art in itself. His hooked halberds and sharp swords bristle dense as forests, and from these too one can see that the use of the brush in writing and painting is the same.⁸⁶⁹

Rao Zongyi once discussed this “Ao-tu hua” in his book titled *The Line Drawing of Dunhuang*, which he made during his lectures at the Institute des Hautes Études in France in 1978. Rao argues that the technique of chiaroscuro (*aotu fa* 凹凸法) refers to the method of the “color spread(色暈法),” and this “Ao-tu hua” flowers are executed with “shading contrast technique(陰影烘托法),” which originated from India.⁸⁷⁰ Rao also cited the Sigiriya murals in Ceylon as an example of this “shading

⁸⁶⁸ Mary Font, “The Technique of 'Chiaroscuro' in Chinese Painting from Han through T'ang”, *Artibus Asiae* XXXVI, 2/3 (1976), 117. The original text in the *Jiankang Shilu*: “一乘寺，梁紹陵王綸造，寺門遍畫凹凸花，稱張僧繇手跡，其花乃天竺遺法，朱及青綠所成，遠望眼暈如凹凸，就視即平，世鹹異之，乃名凹凸寺雲。蓋吾國繪畫，向系平面之表，而無陰影明暗之法，自張氏試仿印度新壁畫之凹凸法後，至唐即有石分三面之說矣。”

⁸⁶⁹ Zhang Yanyuan, *Records of Famous Paintings of All Ages*, vol. 2; see Willam Acker, *Some T'ang and Pre-T'ang Texts in Chinese painting* (Leiden, 1954), 178-9.

⁸⁷⁰ Zongyi Rao, *The Line Drawing of Dunhuang* (HKU Jao Tsung-I Petite École, 2010), 77.

contrast technique” which is derived from Indian murals: “This technique executed on a lime surface as the base, which remains wet during the painting process; and then, the technique of chiaroscuro is applied to create the sense of embossment. The artists fill the outlines in black and thick color pastes, and the colors are then applied inward to form a rounded shape. Because the base is still wet, the ink and color will spread in a circular motion, producing a ‘color spread’ effect.”⁸⁷¹ The image of the goddess Apsaras preserved in the frescoes of the Lion Rock (Sigiriya) in Ceylon, probably dating from the end of the 5th century (Fig. 5.2-2), does show this sense of embossment by the use of chiaroscuro technique. This effect of “concave and convex(凹凸)” is mainly related to the method of wet frescoes. Griffiths, an archaeologist at the Bombay School of Art, has carefully studied the production process of frescoes, pointing out that the frescoes on the Lion Rock (Sigiriya) in Ceylon were made in a complicated way: they first chiseled on the stone wall a sharp tool to cut out the pockmarks, and then a layer of coarse mortar about half an inch thick was applied, which was made from a mixture of clay, cereal chaff, and coconut fiber; and then after waiting for a day to be sprinkled with water to keep it moist, they were painted with a layer of coarse mortar; Sprinkle water on this layer of coarse mortar to keep it moist, and then use a sharp tool to indent the surface before applying a layer of fine lime; then sprinkle water on it and wait for a day before using a small clay knife to smooth out the layer of lime to make it a smooth as a mirror painting base.⁸⁷² The base should also be kept moist during the process of drawing. Therefore, when drawing outlines on this wet base and applying colors from the outlines inwards, it is easy to create an effect of concave and convex that changes from thick to light.

Mr. Rao also cites the possible use of this technique of Chiaroscuro in the images of the figures in the mural of the Dunhuang Mogao Caves during the Northern Dynasties, such as in Mogao Cave 285 and Mogao Cave 263 (Fig. 5.2-3, Fig. 5.2-4).

⁸⁷¹ Ibid.

⁸⁷² Yinghui Su, “The Indian Origins of the Concave and Convex Methods Used in Dunhuang and Schicheria Mural Paintings,” *Palace Quarterly* 4.4 (1970): 13-17.

He speculated that “The outline and the postures of the figure were first brushed with thick vermilion strokes, and this sketch was then traced inside the contours with dark vermilion to produce three-dimensional effects. Today the vermilion has turned into black because of time, so that what was conceived as ‘color spread’ has become ‘ink spread’.”⁸⁷³ Although it is possible that the murals here at Dunhuang were painted in a similar way to the murals at the Lion Rock (Sigiriya) in Ceylon, they do not show the same effect of color spread. This is probably because the painting base on the walls was made differently from the wet frescoes. As Su Yinghui has pointed out, the Dunhuang murals were painted on a dry lime surface, which is “Tempera” rather than “Fresco”⁸⁷⁴. Therefore, even though the Dunhuang painters applied thicker dark-colored pigments to the contours of the human body and then used lighter-colored pigments on the inside of the contours, the dryness of the base of the murals prevented the formation of a gradation of coloring effects.

Mary H. Fong, in an earlier article on this issue written by Rao Zongyi, also cites the murals in Mogao Cave 285 as an example of the chiaroscuro technique. Mary H. Fong, argues that the Dunhuang painters used this chiaroscuro technique in their depiction of “the dhoti of the deities”(Fig. 5.2-4 a,b).⁸⁷⁵ But as in the discussion of similar images from tombs in the previous chapter, the so-called “chiaroscuro technique” of using two colors, light and dark, here in the grottoes is not used to show the unevenness of the clothing. It is also possible that two different colors were used to depict the original texture of the woven stripes on the garment. This striped fabric, which itself consists of two colors, also appears on statues of the Buddha during this period, for example, on the west wall of Mogao Cave 254, Mogao Cave 435, and Mogao Cave 431, where images of the Buddha wearing this two-colored striped garment (Fig. 5.2-5, Fig. 5.2-6, Fig. 5.2-7). This may be the “antuo hui (安陀會)”, also known as the white five-striped garment, recorded in the *Dharma Garden Pearl*

⁸⁷³ Zongyi Rao, *The Line Drawing of Dunhuang*, 78.

⁸⁷⁴ Yinghui Su, “Dunhuang Ji Shiqiliya Bihua Suoyong Aotu Fa Yuanyuan Yu Yindu Lue Lun 敦煌及施奇利亚壁画所用凹凸法渊源于印度略论[A Brief Discussion of the Indian Origin of the Concave and Convex Methods Used in Dunhuang and Schicheria Wall Paintings],” *Gugong Jikan* 故宫季刊[Palace Quarterly] 4, no.4 (1970): 14.

⁸⁷⁵ Mary H. Fong, “The Technique of ‘Chiaroscuro’ in Chinese Painting from Han through T’ang,” *Artibus Asiae* 38.2/3 (1976): 113.

Forest - Dharma Clothing(法苑珠林 法服篇). It is recorded that when Shakyamuni first attained Buddhahood, the god of the river handed him a piece of the “antuo hui” inherited from Kāśyapa Buddha, and when Shakyamuni put it on, the earth shook, and the four corners of the “antuo hui” emitted light.⁸⁷⁶ This striped garment can therefore be regarded as a token of the successive Dharma transmission.

Later, Fang Wen argued that another type of image in the Mogao Cave murals used the technique of Chiaroscuro. He argues that the Chiaroscuro technique used in the flowers painted by Zhang Senyou can be seen in the flowers painted on the roofs of Mogao Cave 288 and Mogao Cave 428 at Dunhuang, which date from the 540 A.D. to the 550A.D. He also argues that the curled and turned leaves of the flower images in Cave 428 are more successful than those in Cave 288 in showing the effect of concave and convex and that the flower images also show the artisan’s ability to master the Renaissance perspective.⁸⁷⁷ However, the floral motifs on the roofs of Mogao Cave 428 and Mogao Cave 288, as cited by Fang Wen, only show the soft branches of the flowers depicted in curved lines (Fig. 5.2- 8, Fig. 5.2-9). The visual effect, whether seen from a distance or up close, does not have the so-called concave-convex effect, nor does it show any perspective skill. It is difficult to agree that this kind of thick line outlining the petals and stamens of the flower could be the kind of “Ao-tu hua” that was made of “vermilion and lime green” using the technique of “chiaroscuro.” Those flower images that appear on the roof of the Mogao Caves during the Northern Dynasties are more likely to be an imitation of the type of carved floral motifs that are found in large numbers in the Southern Dynasties' stone reliefs tombs in the Xiangyang area, Hubei province (Fig 4.1-24,25,32,33a,34) .

This dissertation agrees with Fang Wen's view that one of the common painting techniques used by painters in depicting the figures in Mogao Cave 428 is the

⁸⁷⁶ The original text reads: “令依此法衣造八萬領，仍造塔供養，鎮後遺法……此衣賢劫中最初而造” See Shih Daoshi, *Fayuan Zhulin 法苑珠林 Dharma Garden Pearl Forest*. ed. Zhou Shujia, Su Jinren (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 2003), 1116.

⁸⁷⁷ Wen Fong, “Ao-t'u hua, or “receding-and-protruding painting” at Tun-huang,” in *Proceedings of the International Conference Sinology Section of History of Arts*, (Taipei: Academia Sinica, 1981),73 - 94; Wen Fong, *Images of the Mind: Selections from the Edward L. Elliott Family and John B. Elliott Collections of Chinese Calligraphy and Painting at The Art Museum* (Princeton University,1984),34.

presentation of calligraphy-like brushes. However, this dissertation does not agree that the use of this calligraphic technique is to obtain the effect of receding and protruding. Comparing the image of two celestial deities in the mural on the south side of the central pillar in Mogao Cave 428, cited by Fang Wen (Fig. 5.2-10), with the image of the flying goddess in the mural on the Sigiriya in Ceylon, mentioned earlier, it can be seen that Dunhuang artisans used a thicker and heavier contour line to depict the figure, which gave up the detail of resemblance, but still mimicked the overall elegance and calmness of the deva. Moreover, in the Nirvana image on the west wall of the same cave, the use of such calligraphy-like lines to depict the Buddha's disciples in various states demonstrates the great potential of calligraphy-like lines to express human emotions (Fig. 5.2-11). Similarly, the aging body of the old woman in the scene of Vanquishing Mara on the north wall of Mogao Cave 428 is also shown with the help of similar calligraphic lines (Fig. 5.2-12). This calligraphic brush technique allows the use of thick and thin lines to express the character's emotion. The expressive power of lines is brought into full play.

It is possible that Zhang Sengyou, who once painted a large number of “receding-and-protruding” flowers at the Yicheng Temple, discovered unstained ink lines have a highly generalized quality when he practiced the skill of “color spread” repeatedly on dry walls, and was able to convey subtle changes of figures as long as the brush strokes were precise. In this way, Zhang Senyou transformed the three-dimensional shading effect that was originally intended to be produced by “Ao-tu Hua.” It is also understandable why Zhang Yanyuan, when commenting on Zhang Sengyou's paintings, would link his paintings to Lady Wei's calligraphy, commenting that “the use of the brush in writing and painting is the same.” At the same time, one can also understand why painters in Medieval China preferred to speak of “*xie yi* 写意” rather than “*hua yi* 画意”.

Therefore, it seems that the artisans of Mogao Cave 428 also discovered the ability of this calligraphic brushwork to express the character's emotion. In the Jataka murals painted on the east wall of Mogao Cave 428, the painters also used

calligraphic-like brushstrokes to express the facial expressions of the various figures (Fig. 5.2-13). The use of calligraphic-like “dots, drag-strokes” on the faces of these figures are not intended to mimic the cheekbones.⁸⁷⁸ Rather, it is a calligraphic brush used to express the subtle changes in the facial expressions of the figures. These constantly changing dots are like the brush of “dots,drag-strokes, hack-strokes” in calligraphy. This kind of calligraphic brushwork is also used in the depictions of Buddhist disciples in the murals of Mogao Cave 290 (Fig. 5.2-14) and Mogao Cave 461 (see Fig. 5.2-15). It can be seen that in depicting the figure's facial expressions with lines, the face of the Buddha is no longer drawn with the same calligraphic-like brushstrokes that are used in the depiction of the Buddha's disciples, but with smooth calligraphic-like brushstrokes to show the calmness of the Buddha (Fig. 5.2-16). In Mogao Cave 288, the depictions of the donors again use the “dots,drag-strokes, hack-strokes” that were used for the expressions of the Buddha's disciples (Fig. 5.2-16b).

The example used by Fang Wen to demonstrate the “motivation to pursue three-dimensional resemblance, stimulated by foreign painting technique of Buddhist images”⁸⁷⁹ is a perfect example of how Dunhuang artisans skilfully transformed the foreign painting technique into Chinese calligraphic-like brushstrokes. A brush technique that can rely solely on the lines themselves to express the “divine essence” of the character in the painting. This Chinese calligraphic-like brush technique of depicting the figures is the result of the transformation of Chinese artists like Zhang Senyou after practicing the technique of “Chiaroscuro” or the “color spread” that came from Tianzhu (ancient India). Moreover, this transformation is a change in the facial expression of the figure rather than the form of the figure. It is therefore not a mechanical reproduction driven by the “motivation to reproduce three-dimensional illusion.”⁸⁸⁰

Next, we will re-examine the depiction of architectural singletons in the murals of grottoes. The image of a balustrade, which often appears at the edge of the cave

⁸⁷⁸ Wen Fong, “Ao-t'u hua, or ‘receding-and-protruding painting’ at Tun-huang,” *Proceedings of the Proceedings of the International Conference Sinology Section of History of Arts* (Taipei: Academia Sinica, 1981),13.

⁸⁷⁹ Fong, “Ao-t'u hua, or ‘receding-and-protruding painting’ at Tun-huang,”14.

⁸⁸⁰Fong, “Ao-t'u hua, or ‘receding-and-protruding painting’ at Tun-huang,” 6.

ceiling, has attracted a great deal of attention from scholars. For example, Ning Qiang has argued that the images of a balustrade around the edge of the ceiling in Mogao Cave 272 are painted in perspective with a strong sense of three-dimensionality, which is the first time that perspective has been used to depict architecture in ancient Chinese painting.⁸⁸¹ However, a closer look at the images of the balustrades shows that they do not follow the rules of perspective at all, as the parallel sides of the balustrades are still drawn parallel to each other, without intersecting the vanishing point (Fig. 5.2-21). This is a parallel projection of the axonometric drawing without vanishing points (Fig. 4.2-22). Moreover, the drawings of balustrades at other locations in the Mogao Caves at Dunhuang during the Northern Dynasties also indicate that the artisans were simply depicting a single building in an axonometric manner. For example, in the Northern Wei Mogao Cave 251 (Fig. 5.2-23), Mogao Cave 435 (Fig. 5.2-24 a,b), Mogao Cave 248 (Fig. 5.2-25), Mogao Cave 249 (Fig. 5.2-26 a,b,c), Mogao Cave 296 (Fig. 5.2-27), Mogao Cave 297 (Fig. 5.2-28), Mogao Cave 299 (Fig. 5.2-29), Mogao Cave 438 (Fig. 5.2-30), Mogao Cave 461 (Fig. 5.2-31), the images of balustrades were painted according to axonometric drawing method.

The fact that Dunhuang painters were not governed by perspective technique is further demonstrated in the image of the balustrade at the front of the north wall of Northern Wei Mogao Cave 435. Here the shape of the middle balustrade is depicted as a distorted and grotesque balustrade different from the two side balustrades (Fig. 5.2-32). Moreover, the middle balustrade painted on the south wall of Western Wei Mogao Cave 288 also remains untouched by perspective technique, and instead takes on a strange patchwork shape (Fig. 5.2-33). To avoid the awkwardness of drawing the balustrade in this position, another attempt was made to choose a different axonometric direction for the middle balustrade on the south wall of Mogao Cave 290 of the Northern Zhou Dynasty (Fig. 5.2-34). That is along the diagonal axonometric angle. In other Mogao Caves of the Northern Dynasties, the balustrade image in the same position as the caves also shows a lack of perspective technique. For example,

⁸⁸¹Qiang Ning, *Dunhuang Fojiao Yishu* 敦煌佛教艺术 [Dunhuang Buddhist Art] (Kaohsiung: Kaohsiung Fuben Book Publishing House, 1992), 84.

the artisans of Mogao Cave 251 and Mogao Cave 248 also produced a picture that violates the rules of Renaissance perspective when they painted the balustrade in the same position (Fig. 5.2-35, Fig. 5.2-36). In those cases, the image of the balustrade at the center does not conform to the laws of the Renaissance perspective at all but rather appears to be near-small and far-big.

In addition, some scholars have compared these images of balustrades in the Mogao Grottoes with similar images in the grottoes located in the west area of Dunhuang, and have come up with an alternative opinion. This opinion is that the Dunhuang painters did not use this method of painting to depict a real volume of balustrades, but merely imitated this pattern from the Buddhist cave located in the west of Dunhuang as a decorative pattern.⁸⁸² For example, the ceiling of Cave 530 in Cave I of the Bamiyan Caves in Afghanistan also depicts a balustrade on the lower part of the image of the devas figures (Fig. 5.2 -37), and in the Kizil Caves in Xinjiang, such as Cave 38 (Fig. 5.2-38), Cave 76 (Fig. 5.2-39), and Cave 117 (Fig. 5.2-40) also have balustrade images on the ceiling of the main chamber.

If one compares the balustrade images in the murals of Kizil cave76 with those in the Mogao cave272, one does find that the artisans of Mogao Cave completely ignored the subtleties of Renaissance perspective techniques. Although the images of the balustrades in the Mogao Caves show the front, side, and bottom of each protruding part of the balustrade as if they were drawn in imitation of the drawings of the painters of Kizil Cave 76, the balustrades could not be consistently connected to form a coherent architectural entirety. Unlike the Kizil Cave 76, where the balustrades are uniformly colored black upside and white underpart in the back rows of unprotruded parts, and the protruding balustrades are colored white upside and black underpart, Mogao Cave 272 breaks away from this regular arrangement of coloring to the different structure of the balustrades, and the front and back balustrades are colored under the coloring of the neighboring areas that are constantly changing to

⁸⁸² Genyu Wan, "Dunhuang Zaoqi Bihua Zhong de Tiangong Jiyue 敦煌早期壁画中的天宫伎乐 [Heavenly Palace Kabuki in Early Dunhuang Murals]," *Dunhuang Yanjiu* 敦煌研究 [Dunhuang Research], no.2 (1988),31-33; Pengju Lai, *Dunhuang Shiku Zaoxiang Sixiang Yanjiu* 敦煌石窟造像思想研究 [Dunhuang Grottoes: A Study of the Ideology of Statuary] (Beijing: Cultural Relics Press, 2009), 93.

avoid repeating themselves. This shows that the artisan of Mogao Cave 272 did not understand the technique of depicting buildings according to the laws of the Renaissance perspective.

Here it is worth noting that the Kizil Cave painters also did not draw balustrades under the law of perspective projection if we look more closely at the balustrade images in Kizil Cave 76. Evidence for this is the fact that the two sides of the balustrade pattern that appear in Kizil Cave 76, Kizil Cave 38, and Kizil Cave 117 are parallel and do not form a vanishing point in the picture plane. This suggests that this period of the Kizil Grottoes and Mogao Grottoes painters in the depiction of one building piece did not use linear perspective techniques to attempt to create a spatial illusion on the two-dimensional plane, but still used the principle of symmetry be synthesized in the image of the two sides together. The various parts of the building are still drawn separately using a painting skill similar to that of an axonometric drawing and finally assembled. Although no longer presenting a continuum of forms in space, the basic structural characteristics of what is being drawn are maximized in a two-dimensional picture plane.

This method of axonometric drawing has been used repeatedly in the Mogao Cave murals and is often seen in the figures of the pagodas, in addition to those of the houses and balustrades listed earlier. For example, in Mogao Cave 254, the upper part of the stupa and the lower part of the steps of the stupa are drawn using axonometric drawings in different directions (Fig. 5.2-41). Different architectural components of the same building seem to be broken down and compressed to be presented on a two-dimensional picture plane. There are many other similar examples in the Mogao Caves before the 6th century, such as on the east wall of Mogao Cave 428 (Fig. 5.2-42), on the two slopes of the ceiling of Mogao Cave 290 (Fig. 5.2-43), on the southern slope of the ceiling of Mogao Cave 296 (Fig. 5.2-44 a,b,c,d) and the central area of the north and south walls of Mogao Cave 296 (Fig. 5.2-45a,b), on the west slope of the roof of Mogao Cave 299 (Fig. 5.2-46), and the west slope of the ceiling of Mogao Cave 294 (Fig. 5.2-47).

Since the axonometric drawings are not intended to show a certain three-dimensionality to the human eye, but only the objective structure of the objects themselves. The choice of taking parallel projection method in the murals of Mogao caves seems to indicate that the Dunhuang painters were deliberately resisting a perspective projection. Rather than introducing the viewer into the picture as in the drawing of perspective projection, the Dunhuang painters used the parallel projection method of painting in the hope that the viewer would simply remain uninvolved in the picture as a third-person outside. Therefore, in the murals of Cave of the Northern Dynasties, it is constantly found that art at this time showed such an interest: not attempting to reproduce the three-dimensional effect on a two-dimensional plane, but rather to compress three-dimensional reality into a two-dimensional plane to convey at once the information that the naked eye was unable to fully capture at a fixed point of view. It was also in this process of resisting perspective projection that alternative representational strategies of space to linear perspective arose in the art of the Northern Dynasties. This representational strategy, as distinct from the Renaissance perspective, will be described in detail in the following section.

(2) Combinations of Image Singletons

In cave murals, how images of buildings are grouped together is most often used by scholars to illustrate that Dunhuang artisans had an interest in representing the illusion of three-dimensional space on a two-dimensional picture plane. For example, Fang Wen and some contemporary Chinese scholars, have argued that a “zigzag” arrangement of the walls of the buildings on the ceiling murals of Mogao Cave 296 and Mogao Cave 290 was a practice of the artisan's dedication to the “Ao-tu (receding-and-protruding)” chiaroscuro technique at this time.⁸⁸³ They argue that in the narrative paintings of these caves, the figures, horses, and buildings are treated as moving “receding” and “protruding” in space. Fang Wen suggests that the “zigzag”

⁸⁸³ Wen Fong, and Yunyan Shen, “Ao-tu-Hua or ‘receding and protruding’ painting at Tunhuang,” *Palace Museum Journal*, no.3 (2007): 14; Wen Fong, *Art as History: Calligraphy and Painting as One* (Princeton University Press, 2014), 148.

arrangement of the walled buildings is intended to convey a sense of retreat in space.⁸⁸⁴ However, if one looks closely at what Fang Wen calls the “zigzag” arrangement of buildings in the murals on the ceiling of Mogao Cave 290, one can see that there are both upward converging and upward dispersing groups of buildings (Fig. 5.2-48a,b). This suggests that the Dunhuang painters were deliberately refusing to create a depth of space that penetrated vertically to the picture plane of the wall. If the Dunhuang painters had attempted to create a sense of space, they would have assembled the buildings in such a way that they all converged in one direction.

About the combination of monolithic architectural images, Fang Wen invented a composition he named “parallel perspective”.⁸⁸⁵ He combines the parallel projection and the perspective projection to form a paradoxical new concept of “parallel perspective.” He argues that the space in Chinese paintings consists of multiple planes or parallelograms, which is different from the Western Renaissance perspective by using “parallel perspectives.”⁸⁸⁶ Here it is clear that Fang Wen has a misunderstanding of the term “perspective”, the full name of which is “perspective projection”, which creates at least one vanishing point on the picture plane. a vanishing point is a point where the projection line intersects the view plane. Classification of perspective projection is just based on vanishing points, there are three types of perspective projection: one-point perspective projection, two-point perspective projection, and three-point perspective projection (Fig. 5.2-49a,b,c). Fang Wen's so-called “parallel perspective” is itself an untenable and contradictory concept, because it is simply impossible to draw a set of lines on a two-dimensional plane that are both parallel and intersecting.

Later, Fang Wen renamed “parallel perspective” as “parallelogram perspective.”⁸⁸⁷ He believes that this painting technique was used as early as the Han Dynasty in tomb murals. The earliest example he cites is the Ningcheng map on the

⁸⁸⁴ Fong, and Shen, “Ao-tu-Hua or ‘receding and protruding’ painting at Tunhuang,” 14.

⁸⁸⁵ Wen Fong, “Why Chinese Painting Is History,” *The Art Bulletin* 85, no. 2 (2003): 272.

⁸⁸⁶ Wen Fong, *Zhongguo Yishushi Jiujiang* 中国艺术史九讲[*Nine Lectures on Chinese Art History*]. (Shanghai: Shanghai Calligraphy and Painting Press, 2017), 36.

⁸⁸⁷ Wen Fong, *Art as History: calligraphy and painting as one* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014), 264-266.

east wall of the middle chamber of a tomb in the Eastern Han Dynasty in Helinger (Fig. 5.2-50), which he argues: “a series of courtyard scenes created by parallelograms presents a bird's-eye view of enclosed spaces filled with rows of figures and buildings. Parallelograms also form the edges of a floor mat and the sides of a building to position the figures in space.”⁸⁸⁸ Zhang Jianyu, a Ph.D. student under Fang Wen’s supervision, also adopted this concept and redescrbe this concept as “hypotenuse” method of drawing space.⁸⁸⁹ Because, Zhang Jianyu believes that “ (parallel perspective) it is not only presented as a parallelogram, although this form is more common, sometimes as a triangle or trapezoid, as in the aforementioned 'Banquet and Music Picture' mural in the tomb of Xi'an University of Technology.”⁸⁹⁰

Along with this idea, Zhang Jianyu argues that the arrangement of mountains in the murals of Mogao Cave, such as Mogao Cave 257, Mogao cave 285, and Mogao Cave 428, are good examples of representing spatial depth in the form of “parallelograms, oblique parallelograms, triangles, or trapezoids.”⁸⁹¹ According to Zhang Jianyu, in the narrative painting of Mogao Cave 257 of the Northern Wei Dynasty (Fig.5.2-51), although Dunhuang painters used a “parallelogram perspective”, they did not have the “mode of seeing” held by the Han painters who created the “parallelogram perspective”.⁸⁹² He observes that although these images of mountains have constructed space, the Dunhuang artisan has failed to see this space, not placing the figures that appear here at different heights to suggest spatial depth, but still allowing them to be arranged at the lower edges of the picture. He argues that it was only during the Western Wei Dynasty, when Mogao Cave 285 was painted, that the “mode of seeing for these narrative paintings was revolutionized.”⁸⁹³

⁸⁸⁸ Wen Fong, “Why Chinese Painting Is History,” *The Art Bulletin* 85, no. 2 (2003): 272.

⁸⁸⁹ Jianyu Zhang, *Hantang Meishu Kongjian Biaoxian Yanjiu Yi Dunhuang Bihua Wei Zhongxin* 汉唐美术空间表现研究：以敦煌壁画为中心 [Representation of space in Chinese art from the Han to the Tang Dynasty-A Study Based on Dunhuang Murals] (Beijing: RenminUniversity of China Press, 2018),8-80.

⁸⁹¹ Jianyu Zhang, “Mogaoku Zaoqi Bihua de Kongjian Biaoxian 莫高窟早期壁画的空间表现——兼论早期重点洞窟的年代关系 [Spatial Representation of Murals in the Early Mogao Caves--Annotation on the Chronological Relationship of Early Key Caves,” *Meishu GuanCha* 美术观察 [Art Observations], no.01(2018):105-111; Fong Wen, and Yunyan Shen, “Dunhuang de Aotu hua,” *Journal of the Palace Museum*, no.3(2007):13-14.

⁸⁹² Zhang, *Hantang Meishu Kongjian Biaoxian Yanjiu Yi Dunhuang Bihua Wei Zhongxin*,121.

⁸⁹³ Zhang, *Hantang Meishu Kongjian Biaoxian Yanjiu Yi Dunhuang Bihua Wei Zhongxin*,194.

Because he believed in the mural of the South wall of Mogao Cave 285 (Fig.5.2-52), the Western Wei artisans adjusted the group of the mountains to a slanting angle to indicate the “recede” of space, giving it a stronger sense of spatial depth.⁸⁹⁴ He argues that this is a demonstration of how the so-called “hypotenuse” method of drawing was fully utilized by the Western Wei painters. He also cites the image of the palace (Fig. 5.2-53) and the diagonal arrangement of the figures (Fig. 5.2-54) in the upper of the south wall of Mogao Cave 285. However, these obliquely arranged similar objects are still parallel to each other. For example, in the narrative painting of the south wall of Mogao Cave 285, there are still two parallel rows of mountains (Fig. 5.2-52).

Zhao Shengliang of the Dunhuang Academy has also argued that the frequent use of mountain images in these wall paintings in the Mogao Caves of the Northern Dynasty was to represent a sense of spatial depth.⁸⁹⁵ For example, in the narrative painting of “Nine-Colored Deer(九色鹿)” depicted in Mogao Cave 257 of the Northern Wei Dynasty (Fig. 5.2-55), Zhao argues that the artisan used the oblique arrangement of mountains to represent a sense of spatial depth. At the same time, he believes that the mountains also serve the purpose of dividing a scene in a long, horizontal painting.⁸⁹⁶ However, as Fang Wen has also admitted later the images of the mountains are arranged parallel to each other in the picture, so they have neither “spatial recession” nor “three-dimensionality.”⁸⁹⁷

Anyway, this parallel, non-intersecting arrangement in the Mogao Cave murals indicates that the artisan at this time was not interested in showing spatial recession on the two-dimensional picture plane. In the murals of the Northern Zhou Dynasty after the Western Wei in the Mogao Caves at Dunhuang, one can also see more clearly those architecture groups with complete palace walls, where the two parallel sides are always parallel to each other and do not intersect. This is the case, for example, of the palace complex in the narrative painting of the Jataka of Sujata on the north wall of

⁸⁹⁴ Zhang, *Hantang Meishu Kongjian Biaoxian Yanjiu Yi Dunhuang Bihua Wei Zhongxin*,194.

⁸⁹⁵ Shengliang Zhao, *Dunhuang Shiku Quanji Shanshui Hua Juan* 敦煌石窟全集 18·山水画卷[Dunhuang Grottoes Complete Works 18 - Landscape Painting Volume] (Hong Kong: The Commercial Press),13-14

⁸⁹⁶ Zhao, *Dunhuang Shiku Quanji Shanshui Hua Juan*,13

⁸⁹⁷ Fong Wen, *Art as History: Calligraphy and Painting as One* (Princeton University Press, 2014), 148.

Mogao Cave 296 (Fig. 5.2-56). Here we can also clearly see that the length of the city wall near the upper edge of the picture plane is longer than that of the lower edge of the picture plane. This suggests that Dunhuang artisans did not intend to observe the rule of the Renaissance perspective that could create a spatial recession, but rather intentionally resisted the rule of the Renaissance perspective, in which the nearer is larger and the farther is smaller.

Therefore, it has to be pointed out here that the use of such an invented paradoxical concept of “parallel perspective” or “parallelogram perspective” to interpret the North Dynasty murals in the Mogao Grottoes has not been successful. There is no evidence that Dunhuang painters before the 6th century attempted to create an illusion of three-dimensional space on a two-dimensional picture plane. The examples of murals used by the above scholars all show that the painting method used by the Dunhuang artisans is not the so-called “parallel perspective with multiple vanishing points,” as Fang Wen claims. Instead, they use a parallel projection that has no vanishing point at all. That is to say, the difference between this parallel projection drawing method used in Dunhuang murals and the linear perspective method used in Renaissance painting is the difference between having no vanishing point and having vanishing points. Therefore, Fang Wen has misinterpreted Xie He's “arrangement of position “ which does not refer to the position of “moving focus”.⁸⁹⁸ There is no vanishing point in any of the images he cites before the 6th century, so there is no such thing as the arrangement of position of “moving focus.”

In addition, many other scholars in the past have used the image combinations of the palace buildings on the Sichuan wsz48 stele to illustrate the attempts of artisans at this time to create a sense of three-dimensional space on the picture plane (Fig.5.2-57). For example, Michal Sullivan once said: “The Szechwan reliefs, on the other hand, bring us face to face with a down-to-earth realism that has no parallel elsewhere. Their makers were primarily concerned with the literal, accurate description of an industrial process, of the activities of farmers and peasants, or of the

⁸⁹⁸ Wen Fong, *Zhongguo Yishushi Jiujiang* 中国艺术史九讲[Nine Lectures on Chinese Art History] (Shanghai: Shanghai Calligraphy and Painting Press, 2017), 36.

environment in which they lived and worked. In attempting to set these down they encountered certain specific problems in the delineation of three-dimensional space, of trees, birds, and plants, which had to be solved. Their tentative efforts to solve these problems constitute the first significant advance toward true landscape painting in China.⁸⁹⁹

However, the image on the back of another Sichuan stele wsz49, which was also excavated from the Wanfo Temple in Sichuan, does not support Michal Sullivan's view. On the back of this stele, a square image of land appears at the bottom of the left side of the stele, and its edges do not converge towards the center of the image, as the edges of the palace buildings above it do, but rather diverge (Fig. 5.2-58). This indicates that the reason why the artisan made the edges of the square architecture on both sides of the symmetrical position converge toward the center is not based on the result of observing the reality to produce a spatial effect with a vanishing point, but only to achieve the symmetry. The square architecture around the perimeter is simply arranged symmetrically around the center of Mount. There is no trace here of creating a spatial illusion that penetrates vertically in the direction of depth within the pictorial plane. The entire picture extends horizontally up and down, left and right along the picture plane, and does not extend vertically across the picture plane in the direction of depth.

This interest in creating perfect symmetry is again on full display in another stone carving from the Northern Qi period from the Nan Xiangtang Shan Grottoes in the Central Plains (Fig. 5.2-59). At first Bachhofer, in his controversial *A Short History of Chinese Art*, simply noted that the sidelines of the pavilions and the sidelines of the pool in the center of this stone reliefs converge towards the center of the picture, and concluded that this setting was intended to produce a spatial illusion.⁹⁰⁰

However, Bachhofer's assertion is based on ignoring the two other lotus ponds that flank the lower half of the picture. A closer look reveals that the edges of the two

⁸⁹⁹ Michael Sullivan, *The birth of landscape painting in China* (University of California Press, 1962), 72.

⁹⁰⁰ Ludwig Bachhofer, *A Short History of Chinese Art* (New York:Pantheon, 1946), 99.

ponds below the pavilions on either side of this stone relief are diverging rather than converging towards the center. To achieve a unified spatial effect, the edges of the two lower pools should have converged towards the center, as should the edges of the pavilions above. But, the artisan of this stone relief did not choose to do so. This indicates that the artisan's intention is not to make the whole picture achieve a spatial depth perpendicular to the picture plane, but still to obtain perfect balance and a hieratic symmetry between the various parts of the whole picture. This symmetry is unfolded in the direction of the horizontal plane parallel to the picture plane, including both the left and right sides of the building to form left-right symmetry, as well as the formation of up and down symmetry between the upper pavilion and the lower pool.

In the end, therefore, it can only be assumed that in those images, these different shapes enclosed by buildings or rocks and trees are also used only as a means of defining the field of action,⁹⁰¹ and are not used to create a sense of spatial depth. This means of separating the different episodes of the picture by groups of buildings has been used repeatedly in Buddhist narrative paintings in other media. It has also been used in some earlier steles in the south region, as can be seen in the stele dated to the second year of the Yuanjia reign of the Liu Song dynasty unearthed at the Wanfo Temple in Chengdu (Fig. 5.2- 59), where the grouping of trees and mountains serves only to delimit the plot of the story, with no attempt to create an illusion of three-dimensional space. On a more complete stone carving stele, numbered wsz48, from the Wanfo Temple in Chengdu, it can also be seen that the different scenes are enclosed in triangular zones formed by the mountains and forests, and the sizes of the trees in the zones do not conform to the perspective law of “large near and small far” (Fig. 5.2-57).

According to the above investigations, we can already see that the murals located in the cave temples are not attempting to create the illusion of three-dimensional space on a two-dimensional plane. It is worth noting that these narrative paintings in the Mogao Caves in Dunhuang during the Northern Dynasties often appear on the

⁹⁰¹ Alexander C. Soper, “Life-motion and the Sense of Space in Early Chinese Representational Art,” *The Art Bulletin* 30, no.3 (1948):182.

ceiling of the grottoes also let us further realize that these picture planes are likely to be intentionally avoided to create a spatial world compatible with the field of view of the human standing posture. When one enters the caves stands under the ceiling and looks up at these murals on the ceiling, one realizes that they are more like images placed on a flat surface with no distinction between near and far, where the different positions of these objects images here do not represent the spatial depth. The advantage of depicting things from this angle is to show breadth rather than depth. This means that here the artisan is focusing on a non-secular, sacred realm rather than reproducing the vision of the human eye in its quotidian viewpoint.

Leo Steinberg has astutely pointed out that the shift from the vertical to the horizontal plane of painting is the most fundamental in the subject matter of art, from nature to culture. And he puts it as follows: “I intend to regard the tilt of the picture plane from vertical to horizontal as expressive of the most radical shift in the subject matter of art, the shift from nature to culture”.⁹⁰²

Eventually, we notice a particular combination of square images on the ceiling of the seven cave groups described in the first part of this chapter, appearing in the ceiling of the truncated pyramid-ceiling cave, which is composed of diminishing squares rotated 45 degrees in turn and superimposed. For example, in Mogao Cave 272 (Fig. 5.2-60), Mogao Cave 249 (Fig. 5.2-61), Mogao Cave 285 (Fig. 5.2-62), Mogao Cave 294 (Fig. 5.2-63), Mogao Cave 296 (Fig. 5.2-64), Mogao Cave 297 (Fig. 5.2-65), Mogao Cave 299 (Fig. 5.2-66), Mogao Cave 301 (Fig. 5.2-67), and Mogao Cave 438 (Fig. 5.2-68). This group of images has not been found in any tombs in Gansu during the Wei, Jin, North, and South Dynasties.

Previous scholars have often compared the Wei and Jin Dynasties tombs at Dingjiazha in Jiuquan, Gansu Province, with the Northern Dynasties' truncated pyramid-ceiling cave at the Dunhuang Mogao Grottoes. This comparison is made on the premise of ignoring the set of rotating square images on the ceilings. If taking into

⁹⁰² Leo Steinberg, “Other Criteria,” in *Other Criteria: Confrontations with Twentieth-Century Art* (London: Oxford University Press, 1972), 84.

account this group of rotating square images, it can be found that there is still a big difference between the Mogao Grottoes and the Wei-Jin tombs in Dingjiazha, Jiuquan.⁹⁰³ Even among the scholars who noticed the rotating square images at the ceiling of the mogao cave in the past, most of them categorized the images as decorative patterns and did not think that these images could carry a certain meaning. Most modern scholars tend to look for the resemblance between this group of rotating square images and something seen by the human eye in their daily life experience under the inertia of linear perspective thinking. For example, scholars in the past have found similar objects such as lantern ceilings, canopies, Chinese wooden domes, and so on.⁹⁰⁴ It is therefore easy to overlook the existence of another angle of view, which is located above our bodies and which takes in the whole picture. This angle of view sees the structural similarities between whole groups of objects, rather than the apparent similarities that the human eye sees from the perspective of a single viewpoint. This could be called the third-person perspective which can be easily obtained in modern times by carrying a camera in a flying machine. For people before the 6th century, it was difficult to obtain this view through their naked eye, and they had to resort to a kind of abstract thinking outside of their limitations to obtain this view.

If this angle of view is taken into account in the context in which the rotating square images are situated, and consider the specific religious practices that have taken place on the site in which they exist, it becomes clear that those square images may also have been created from a higher-dimensional perspective that allows the images to convey a particular meaning. Considering the functional restoration of these mogao grottoes in the first section of this chapter, the set of rotating square images that appear in the Mogao Caves of the Northern Dynasty are practically involved in

⁹⁰³ Yuanyuan Duan, "Shilun Dunhuang Mogaoku Shiliuguo zhi Beichao Shiqi Fudou Xing Ding 试论敦煌莫高窟十六国至北朝时期覆斗形顶(上)——莫高窟覆斗顶与晋墓顶 A study on the Truncated Pyramidal Ceilings of Mogao Caves during the Sixteen Kingdoms Period and Northern Dynasties(I)-the Truncated Pyramidal Ceilings of Mogao Caves and the Jin Dynasty Tomb Ceilings," *Dunhuang Yanjiu* 敦煌研究[Dunhuang Research], no.2 (2021):85-96.

⁹⁰⁴ Alexander C. Soper, "The 'Dome of Heaven' in Asia," *The Art Bulletin* 29, no.4 (1947): 225-248; Di Luo, "Dome of Heaven: From the Lantern Ceiling to the Chinese Wooden Dome," *Silk Roads: From Local Realities to Global Narratives* (2020): 131-159.

the religious ritual activities that people performed there. These ritual activities, which include the offering of flowers to the right and the performance of penance, involve the act of rotating around the center. There is thus a structural likeness between this circumambulatory movement below the ceiling of the cave and the rotation of the superimposed square images on the ceiling of the cave. This set of rotating square images can therefore be categorized as “Xiang 相” images as discussed in Chapter 1. It can be assumed that this group of rotating square images is linked to the dynamic movement concept of space through this structural likeness. The dynamic concept of space is also in line with the space concept developed in the Six Dynasties period. Furthermore, the means of drawing images that the painters of the Northern Dynasties period were accustomed to, i.e., avoiding perspective projection and using parallel projection, also facilitated this kind of pictorial expression of the concept of rotating space in this group of square images. Here, it also could be understood why, in the same architecture with vertical walls, the Dunhuang artisans would not, like the European Renaissance craftsmen, choose to create a spatial illusion by playing with linear perspective on the walls that are perpendicular to the ground; instead, they chose to create another pictorial expression by using a third-person perspective on the ceiling of the grotto, which is parallel to the ground.

Additionally, how the rotating squares images express the concept of dynamic space may be supported by the idea that the rotating squares at the cave ceiling do not act according to an exact concept that has already been set in one's mind, but rather as an expression of a concept that comes out of a personal involvement in the actual circumambulatory movement. That is to say, in the caves with this set of rotating square images, it is the recurring ritual circumambulation that gives rise to a dynamic conception of space. It is in this movement of physical participation that the dynamic concept of space expressed in the rotating square images is created.

Such a way of pictorial expression has been shown by several scholars to exist in many cases. Nicole Boivin, for example, has elaborated on this idea: “Many accounts, no matter how much they might recognize the uniqueness of ritual experience, falter

in assuming that what ritual is trying to do is to take some preexisting social or cultural reality, or desired social state, and express or create it through ritual activity. What I wish therefore to assert, in contrast, is that a far more interesting argument can be made that, in many cases, ideas and cultural understandings do not precede but rather are helped into becoming by, the material world and human engagement with it during ritual activity. Human thought and experience have not only used the world as a prop for expressing itself but have, in fact, often been enabled by that world. Ritual can be a very creative act that does not just express or represent but does something; it can alter understanding, bodies, or the world itself, as understood by human beings.”⁹⁰⁵

In other words, there is a close correlation between the Buddhist ritual processes shown in the aforementioned liturgical text and the distribution of images on the four walls of the Mogao Caves in Dunhuang during the Northern Dynasty. Therefore, the process of ritual circumambulation, in which the individual's body is involved, is itself consolidated to give the set of rotating square images a dynamic spatial conception. Moreover, Dunhuang artisans also seem to take advantage of the implications of these groups of rotating square images. Dunhuang artisans repeatedly placed narrative paintings around the rotating square images in the center of the truncated pyramid-ceiling of late Northern Dynasty Mogao Cave in Dunhuang, such as Mogao Cave 294, Mogao Cave 296, Mogao Cave 299, Mogao Cave 301, and Mogao Cave 438. Those narrative paintings form a kind of schematic structure in which it is difficult to determine the starting point as well as the endpoint. This rotating structure also might illustrate the Buddhist idea of Transmigration (Samsāra).

In short, in this chapter's investigation of the images painted in the Mogao Caves at Dunhuang during the Northern Dynasty, it is found that the images located there established a rich interaction with the people of that time. The images on the walls of the caves assume their respective roles in the various processes of religious activity that take place in the caves. A rotating stack of square images on the ceiling of the

⁹⁰⁵ Nicole Boivin, “Grasping the elusive and unknowable: material culture in ritual practice,” *Material Religion* 5, no.3 (2009): 274.

cave is structured to express a conception of dynamic space. The property of this image is close to the property of the “*xiang* 相” that appeared during the Six Dynasties discussed in Chapter 1. Since the “*xiang* 相” belongs to the category of “diagrammatic icon”, the relationship between the “*xiang* 相” and its object is not a kind of likeness of appearance, but a kind of abstract likeness of the structure. There is a “structural homology” relationship between the “*xiang* 相” and its object.

Therefore, the square images at the ceiling of the cave do not use perspective to establish a superficial relationship with the concept of space in the Six Dynasties. Instead, it adopts a third-person viewpoint to overview the space, using an overall structural likeness to establish a relationship with the dynamic space. At the same time, the images that appear at the ceiling of the cave are also symbolic in the sense that the meaning of the dynamic space they express is only valid in the specific cultural context in which they are embedded. The idea of dynamic space conveyed by the images on the ceiling was repeatedly emphasized in the rituals performed in the cave. The concept of dynamic space expressed here is in line with the concept of infinite, constantly shifting relative space, rather than mathematically objective static absolute space, emphasized in the Buddhist cosmology introduced to China in the early fifth century, as discussed in Chapter 2.

Conclusion

In order to discuss Chinese art history as effectively as possible in the Chinese context, this dissertation has returned to the original context of the Six Dynasties to ask a basic question: How did images during this period deal with space? In order to faithfully return to the original context to answer this question, the first part of this dissertation returns to the intellectual background of the Six Dynasties period as far as possible with the help of written records to investigate image and space as they were understood at this time; the second part of this dissertation enters into the more specific historical context of the Six Dynasties to investigate how the physical images that have been heavily used in tombs and cave temples deal with the spatial problem in specific contexts.

In the first chapter of the first part of this dissertation, I begin by delving into the original context of the Six Dynasties period to explore what specific features and connotations were given to the image as it was constructed at this time. This chapter examines the various images that appeared during the Six Dynasties, focusing on the “*xuanji tu* 璇璣圖” and the “*bianxiang tu* 變相圖.” It finds that the first appearance of images named after “*xiang* 相” in Six Dynasties art criticism deserves special attention. Therefore, this chapter 1 compiled a total of ninety-two records of the images titled “*bian* 變,” “*bianxiang* 變相,” “*bianxiang tu* 變相圖,” and “*xiang* 相,” that have appeared in Chinese painting criticism since the Six Dynasties (see Appendix 1). Inspired by Peirce’s semiotics, this thesis argues that the images that have appeared during the Six Dynasties referred to as “*bianxiang* (變象, 變像, 變相)” can be organized into three categories. The nature of the “*bianxiang* 變象” is close to what Peirce called “index,” indicating an objective object that exists in nature and is not artificially generated. “*Bianxiang* 變像” could belong to the category of the “imaginal icon,” which is an artificial image according to a certain objective object, and there is an appearance of likeliness between the image and the object. The

“*bianxiang* 變相” could belong to the category of the “diagrammatic icon”; the relationship between the “*bianxiang* 變相” and its object is not a kind of likeness based on appearance but a kind of abstract likeness based on the structure. There is a relationship of “structural homology” between the “*bianxiang* 變相” and its object.

The pictorial material discussed in the first chapter is mostly preserved only in the written records of the Six Dynasties period. The next two chapters of the second part of this dissertation focus on pictorial physical materials that were not exactly recorded in writing but were preserved in tombs and caves physically. In the pictorial materials from the Mogao Caves of the Northern Dynasties, which is the focus of the discussion in the fifth chapter, there are also no “*bianxiang* 變相” found that are clearly labeled with inscriptions. However it was found that the artisans of some of these caves seemed to have tried to organize the placement of the images using a concept structure that they could already understand. It is possible that the concepts understood by these artisans included basic Buddhist notions of cosmology and reincarnation. For example, the arrangement of the ceiling murals in some of the caves created from the 5th to 6th centuries bears a structural likeness to the idea of a reincarnating world. These phenomena show that the non-linear structural characteristics of images from the 5th to 6th centuries were discovered and utilized to varying degrees by people of different cultural levels.

After the first chapter examining the image as it was understood in the Six Dynasties and the special properties assigned to it, Chapters 2 and 3 are devoted to the questions related to “space.” Chapter 2 first explores what basic knowledge of space had been accumulated by the people of the Six Dynasties, and what understanding of that spatial knowledge had been developed. In the basic investigation of these questions in Chapter 2, it was found that although the spatial knowledge accumulated during the Six Dynasties was not fundamentally different from that accumulated during the Han Dynasty, the difference was that people in the Six Dynasties had a different understanding of the same spatial knowledge. The theories of “*huntian shuo*

渾天說” and “*gaitian shuo* 蓋天說,” which were once favored by mainstream intellectuals in the Han Dynasty, have also been influenced by the “*xuanye shuo* 宣夜說” theory. The more magnificent and transcendent vision behind the *Xuanye* theory was more attractive to the intellectuals of the Six Dynasties period. In addition, the concept of infinite space brought by Buddhist cosmology and introduced to China at the beginning of the 5th century also made people at this time form a view of space different from that of the Han Dynasty. This is a relative, infinite, heterogeneous space, closer to Einstein’s concept of relative space. This kind of space is completely different from the absolute space on which the Renaissance perspective relied, that is, the homogeneous absolute space. The Renaissance perspective is only valid in the unchanging homogeneous, static, absolute space. In this heterogeneous, constantly changing, relative space, perspective law cannot be used, but another mathematical law is needed. There is no evidence that such a geometric law for relative space existed in China during the Six Dynasties. However the available information at least shows that there was no base of spatial knowledge about the unchanging homogeneous absolute space that bred the Renaissance perspective during the Six Dynasties.

The question to be explored in Chapter 3 regards what kind of spatial vocabulary was developed by the intellectual class at this time under the spatial concepts developed during the Six Dynasties. In particular, what kind of spatial vocabulary was used by art critics of the Six Dynasties? In the course of investigating these questions, Chapter 3 firstly finds that the term “*kongjian* 空間,” meaning “space”—although it had already appeared in Buddhist sutras from the 4th to 6th centuries—had not yet appeared in non-religious texts or in painting literature and art criticism. The terms often used in these non-religious texts at this time to denote space were “*shijie* 世界,” “*yuzhou* 宇宙,” “*liuhe* 六合,” “*qiankun* 乾坤,” “*weizhi* 位置,” etc. In the course of examining the spatial vocabulary used by art critics of the Six Dynasties, it is found that there are some different interpretations of spatial vocabulary used by art critics of

the Six Dynasties based on the concepts of relative space developed during this time. The terms “*yuan jin* 遠近” or “*chongdie milun* 重疊彌綸” appearing in the art criticism of the fifth century are not referring to the visual spatial illusions in the picture plane. For example, in the phrase “Going west from the mountain, carefully observe the near and far (曰西去山，別詳其遠近),” the term “near and far (*yuan jin* 遠近)” is not used to refer to the direction of the depth of visual space perpendicular to the picture plane, but rather to refer to the horizontal direction of the picture from east to west, from the direction of the near right hand holding the brush to the direction of the left hand, from near to far.

By “management of position (*jingying weizhi* 經營位置)” Xie He also did not intend to create a sense of spatial illusion that was perpendicular to the picture plane. The position of the pictorial objects in Chinese paintings was to serve the various complex concepts and ideas expressed by the painters; they may serve to convey with clarity an idea that the painting is intended to express. For example, if we reexamine Gu Kaizhi’s paintings titled “Palace Ladies Adoring Their Face” in The Admonitions Scroll in this viewpoint, rather than in Wu Hung’s analyses, we will realize that the efforts Gu Kaizhi expended in arranging the position of the figures were all aimed at expressing specific concepts rather than creating spatial illusion. In this painting, Gu Kaizhi arranged two women sitting opposite each other, but the two women are blind to each other, only watching their own faces in the mirror. This management of the position of the figures is exactly in line with the theme of the painting, that is, “females are not concerned with anything other than their appearance (女鹹知飾其容而不知飾其性).”

In other words, if the figures in a painting follow the positional relationship under the law of the Renaissance perspective in order to achieve a spatial illusionary effect, it is tantamount to forcing the position of the objects in the painting for this purpose only, and the many meanings expressed by their different positions in the painting will ultimately be disturbed. It would have greatly limited the ability of the

image to express meaning. Moreover, for Gu Kaizhi, the management of the position of a figure in a figure painting so that there is a counterpart for his or her eyes “look at the corresponding(以矚其對)” is for the purpose of making the figure vivid and evocative of aliveness, not for the purpose of achieving a spatial illusion on the surface of the picture plane.

The next two chapters in Part II of this dissertation delve into more specific contexts, namely the burial sites (Chapter 4) and cave-temple sites (Chapter 5) of the Six Dynasties period. Since no documentation of the producers of the images in the tombs and caves has been preserved for verification, it is not possible to identify the extent to which the producers of the images in those sites were exposed to the knowledge and concepts of “image” and “space” that were familiar to the Six Dynasties’ intellectual class, as discussed in the first part above, and gave the images a certain property. Therefore, this thesis can only start from the users of these images to deduce that the producers of the images gave them certain specific properties in order to satisfy the specific needs of the consumers or patrons of the images. The specific properties of these images can then be used to understand how the images deal with space in their original context.

After investigating the context of the use of images in tombs in Chapter 4, it is found that the properties of those images deliberately painted in tombs are closer to “*objects (xiang, 象)*” namely the images here existed in the tombs as objects themselves to satisfy the tomb owner’s actual needs. Since the images used in the burial places in the Six Dynasties had not yet gained the freedom of so-called “art for art’s sake,” these images were made by different groups of people for their own specific needs. Under the influence of the Buddhist concept of “transmigration (*samsāra*),” the specific function of the tomb changed somewhat. At this time, there appeared a number of burial facilities that were constructed to serve as a place of transit for the dead awaiting rebirth, for example, the Sarcophagus unearthed from a tomb of Xing Hejiang in the third year of the Huangxing of the Northern Wei Dynasty (469 A.D.). There are also those who build the structure of the tomb as a stupa-like

structure to satisfy the owner's wish to escape from the cycle of life and death and to reach the realm of Buddha's Nirvana—for example, a group of brick tombs with stupa-like structures that appeared in the Ezhou area of the Nanjing region during the Southern Dynasty.

In other words, the images used in these tombs exist as “objects” in their own right, and are meant to fulfill the material and spiritual needs of the owner of the tomb after his or her life is over. The images in these tombs have a specific user rather than a specific viewer, and therefore do not need to be gazed at or glanced at. They have meaning and value in their own right and do not need to be viewed in a certain way in order to acquire some kind of meaning and value. That is to say that the images painted in the tombs are not concerned with constructing the spatial unity in the picture plane, but rather with maximizing the clarity and completeness of their presentation. This also means that the artisans of tomb images do not need to master the tricks of illusionist art that can confuse the human eye. Nor, after the detailed investigation carried out on the images painted in tombs of Six Dynasties, were there any traces of these images reproducing the illusion of three-dimensional space on the picture plane. The so-called “parallelogram” method of representation of space that previous scholars believed to have been used in the tombs is similar to a way of parallel projection (axonometric drawing) in engineering drawings, which is intended to present the object as fully and objectively as possible rather than to simulate what the human eye would see from a certain angle. Even if some makers of high-level funerary artifacts, such as the designer (Jiang Shaoyou) of Sarcophagus of Prince Yuan Mi of Northern Wei Dynasty (ca. 524 A.D.), when designing images on the sarcophagus for the royal family, used the method of “look at the corresponding” to arrange the position of the figures, it was to make the figures exist in a reasonable manner in order to satisfy the spiritual needs of the deceased inside the sarcophagus. It was not intended to create a visual illusion of space for the viewer outside the sarcophagus.

An examination of the cave-temples covered with murals in Chapter 5 reveals that the images located here create a richer interaction with people. The images on

each wall of the cave-temples assume their own roles in the various phases of the religious rituals performed in the caves, including the offering of flowers to the right and the performance of penance, which involve the act of rotating around the center. It means that the people who entered the caves to participate in the rituals were not there to view the images but to interact with them in a way that had a particular religious significance. The images here have an intimate user rather than a static viewer. These images, therefore, also do not need to satisfy the needs of the viewer to achieve the goal of vividly reproducing the visual illusion of space. In analyzing these images in the caves, it is also necessary to abandon the formal criteria of the representational tricks of illusionist art that scholars insisted on using in the past discussion.

Based on the viewpoint of this dissertation after re-examining the images in the Dunhuang Mogao Caves of the Northern Dynasties period in Chapter 5, such a noteworthy set of rotating and superimposed square images appeared on the center of the ceiling of the truncated pyramidal ceiling cave. This set of images can be regarded as a hybrid symbol with the property of having both the “motivation” of a diagrammatic icon and the conventionality of a symbol. The “motivation” of this group of images is reflected in the structural similarity between it and space. It is similar to the nature of the “*bianxiang tu* 變相圖” that appeared during the Six Dynasties period. Located at the center of the cave ceiling, this group of rotating and superimposed square images does not use the first-person viewpoint to establish a visual relationship with the space, but rather a third-person outsider’s viewpoint to establish a relationship of structural similarity with the dynamic space. The conventionality of this group of images is reflected in the fact that the dynamic space it expresses is valid only in the specific cultural context in which it is embedded. The dynamic space to be represented here corresponds to the kind of constantly changing relative space rather than a static mathematically objective absolute space, which was emphasized in the Buddhist cosmology introduced to China in the fifth century.

From a semiotic point of view, such an alternative way of expressing space on the ceiling of the Mogao Caves is also reasonable. Grotto art, with its more interactive activities, is indeed more likely to produce more creative forms of pictorial expression than tomb art. In tombs, these fixed representations of space appear gravely in enclosed places and only produce fixed interpretations, much like legal clauses that do not allow for a second reading or any deviation in understanding. A receiver can only understand the images in accordance with the author's intentions and without any deviation. The images in the caves, however, are located in a place that is open to more interaction with people. Here the image allows for the deviation of understanding that arises on the side of the receiver. This open process of pictorial expression makes it easier to breed different manners of pictorial expression.

In the final analysis, some of the images that appeared during the Six Dynasties period show both an icon and a symbol. The way in which such images establish a relationship with an object depends on a variety of factors, including the attributes that the maker of the image assigns to the image itself, as well as the interaction between the receiver or user of the image and the image.

Appendix1. Statistics on the number of occurrences of "Bianxiang tu 變相圖"

Appendix1.1 Statistics on the number of occurrences of "Bian 變"

Title	Frequency	Author	Quotation
維摩詰變	1	袁倩(南宋)	歷代名畫記, 卷六: 「維摩詰變一卷, 百有餘事, 運思高妙, 六法備呈, 置位無差, 若神靈感會, 精光指顧, 得瞻仰威容, 前使顧陸知慚, 後得張閻駭嘆。」
維摩詰本行變	1	吳(唐)	歷代名畫記: 「薦福寺……吳畫維摩詰本行變。」
維摩變	1	吳(唐)	歷代名畫記: 「安國寺……維摩變吳畫。」
地獄變	6	張孝師(唐)	歷代名畫記: 「慈恩寺……塔之東南中門外偏張孝師畫地獄變, 已剝落。」
		陳靜眼(唐)	歷代名畫記: 「寶刹寺佛殿南楊契丹畫涅槃等變相……西廊陳靜眼畫地獄變, 又有楊廷光畫。」
		張孝師(唐)	歷代名畫記: 「三階院東壁張孝師畫《地獄變》, 杜懷亮書膀子。」
		吳道元(唐)	宣和畫譜: 「張孝師 嘗死而復生, 故畫地獄相為尤工, 是皆冥遊所見, 非與想象得之者比也。吳道元見其畫, 因效為地獄變相。」
		盧稜伽(唐)	歷代名畫記: 「化度寺……楊廷光、楊仙喬畫本行經變, 盧稜伽畫地獄變」
		吳(唐)	歷代名畫記: 「福先寺三階院吳畫地獄變有病龍最妙」
明真經變	2	吳(唐)	歷代名畫記: 「龍興觀大門內吳畫神已剝落。殿內東壁吳畫明真經變。」
		楊廷光(唐)	歷代名畫記: 「開元觀西廊院天尊殿前龍虎君、明真經變……明真經變楊廷光畫。」
降魔等變	1	尉遲(隋/唐)	歷代名畫記: 「光宅寺東菩提院內北壁東西偏尉遲畫降魔等變, 殿內吳生、楊廷光畫。又尹琳畫西方變。」
本行經變	1	董誥(唐?)	歷代名畫記: 「菩提寺佛殿內東西壁吳畫神鬼, 西壁工人布色……東壁董誥畫本行經變。」
西方變	4	尹琳	歷代名畫記: 「光宅寺東菩提院內北壁東西偏尉遲畫降魔等變, 殿內吳生、楊廷光畫。又尹琳畫西方變」
		吳(唐)	歷代名畫記: 「淨土院……院內次北廊向東塔院內西壁吳畫金剛變, 工人成色損。次南廊吳畫金剛經變及郝後等, 並自題。小殿內吳畫神、菩薩、帝釋, 西壁西方變亦吳畫。東南角吳弟子李生畫金光明經變。」

		吳(唐)	歷代名畫記:「安國寺……店內維摩變吳畫。東北《涅槃變》楊廷光畫。西壁西方變吳畫,工人成色,損。」
		蘇思忠(唐)	歷代名畫記:「東禪院殿內十輪變武靜藏描,東壁西方變蘇思忠描,陳慶子成。」
經變	2	姚景仙(唐)	歷代名畫記:「資聖寺……大三門東南壁姚景仙畫經變。寺西門直西院外神及院內經變,楊廷光畫」
		楊廷光(唐)	歷代名畫記:「資聖寺……大三門東南壁姚景仙畫經變。寺西門直西院外神及院內經變,楊廷光畫。」
涅槃變	1	楊廷光(唐)	歷代名畫記:「安國寺……殿內維摩變吳畫。東北涅槃變楊廷光畫。西壁西方變吳畫,工人成色,損。」
金剛變	1	吳(唐)	歷代名畫記:「淨土院……院內次北廊向東塔院內西壁吳畫《金剛變》,工人成色損。」
金剛經變	2	吳(唐)	歷代名畫記:「淨土院……次南廊吳畫金剛經變及禰後等,並自題」
		左全(唐)	益州名畫錄:「左全極樂院門兩金剛,西廊下金剛經變及金光明經變相。」
金光明經變	1	吳弟子李生(唐)	歷代名畫記:「淨土院……東南角吳弟子李生畫金光明經變。」
明真經變	2	楊廷光(唐)	歷代名畫記:「開元觀西廊院天尊殿前龍虎君、明真經變及西壁並楊廷光畫。」
		吳(唐)	歷代名畫記:「龍興觀……殿內東壁吳畫明真經變。」
淨土變	2	趙武端(唐)	歷代名畫記:「雲花寺小佛殿有趙武端畫淨土變。」
		程遜(唐)	歷代名畫記:「昭成寺西廊障日西域記,楊廷光畫。三門下……香爐兩頭淨土變、藥師變,程遜畫」
淨土經變	1	尉遲(隋/唐)	歷代名畫記:「大雲寺門東西壁鬼神,佛殿上菩薩六軀,淨土經變,閣上婆叟仙,並尉遲畫,黃犬及鷹最妙。」
本行經變	1	楊仙喬(唐)	歷代名畫記:「化度寺……楊廷光、楊仙喬畫本行經變……」
華嚴變	1		歷代名畫記:「懿德寺……中三門東西華嚴變並妙……失人名」
除災患變	1	吳(唐)	歷代名畫記:「天宮寺三門吳畫除災患變。板上二菩薩張僧繇畫。」

法華太子變	1	劉茂德	歷代名畫記:「東禪院般若臺內佛事, 敬愛寺……大殿內……法華太子變劉茂德成, 即行臣子」
閻羅王變	1	劉阿祖	歷代名畫記:「敬愛寺……法華太子變, 劉茂德成, 即行臣子。西壁……閻羅王變, 劉阿祖描。」
十輪變	1	武靜藏 (唐)	歷代名畫記:「敬愛寺……東禪院殿內十輪變武靜藏描, 東壁西方變蘇思忠描, 陳慶子成。」
日藏月藏經變	1	吳道子 (唐)	歷代名畫記:「敬愛寺……日藏月藏經變, 及業報差別變, 吳道子描, 翟暎成。」
藥師變	1	程遜	歷代名畫記:「昭成寺……香爐兩頭淨土變藥師變, 程遜畫。」
誌公變	1	王道真 (北宋)	圖畫見聞誌:「西門之南, 王道真畫誌公變、十二面觀音像;西門之北, 高文進畫大降魔變相, 今並存之, 皆奇跡也。」

Appendix1.2 Statistics on the number of occurrences of "Bianxiang 變相"

Title	Frequency	Author	Quotation
維摩變相	1	左全(唐)	益州名畫錄:「左全於大聖慈寺中殿畫維摩變相、師子國王、菩薩變相。」
維摩詰變相	1	左全(唐)	益州明畫錄:「大中初,又於聖寺大殿畫維摩詰變相一堵,樓閣、樹石、花雀、人物、冠冕、蕃漢異服,皆得其妙,今見存。」
地獄變相	3	朱繇(五代后梁 907~923年)	宣和畫譜:「朱繇:問疾維摩圖二地獄變相一」
		武靜藏(唐)	名畫獵精錄:「武靜藏善畫鬼神及地獄變相」
		左全(唐)	益州名畫錄:「多寶塔下仿長安景公寺吳道玄地獄變相,當時吳生畫此地獄相,都人鹹觀,懼罪修善,兩市屠沽,經月不售。」
大降魔變相	1	高文進(五代)	圖畫見聞誌:「西門之南,王道真畫誌公變、十二面觀音像;西門之北,高文進畫大降魔變相,今並存之,皆奇跡也。」
降魔變相	3	高文進(五代)	圖畫見聞誌:「相國寺大殿後擎塔王,如出墻壁,及殿西降魔變相,其跡並存。」
		左全(唐)	益州名畫錄:「三學院門上三乘漸次修行變相、降魔變相。文殊閣東畔水月觀音、千手眼大悲變相。」
		張景思(五代)	益州名畫錄:「於聖壽寺北廊下畫降魔變相一堵。」
西方變相	2	範瓊(唐 836-840)	益州名畫錄:「殿上小壁水月觀音,浴室院旁西方天王,大悲院八明王、西方變相,並大中畫。」
		範瓊(唐 836-840)	益州名畫錄:「浴室院旁西方天王,大悲院八明王、西方變相。」
天王變相	3	趙忠義	益州名畫錄:「今余王蜀先主祠堂正門西畔神鬼、大聖慈寺正門北墻上西域記、石經院後殿天王變相、中寺六祖院傍藥師經變相,並忠義筆,見存。」

		趙忠義	益州名畫錄：「廣政初，忠義與黃筌、蒲師訓合手畫天王變相十堵以來，各盡所能，愈於前輩。」
		範瓊(唐)	益州名畫錄：「範瓊：文殊閣下北方天王及天王變相。」
大悲變相	4	範瓊(唐)	益州名畫錄：「範瓊：聖興寺大殿東北二方天王、藥師、十二神、釋迦十弟子、彌勒像、大悲變相，並鹹通畫。」
		大悲變相(唐)	益州名畫錄：「中寺大悲院門上阿彌陀佛及四菩薩，院門兩畔觀音像、藥師像，石經板上七佛、四仙人、大悲變相。」
		左全(唐)	益州名畫錄：「左全：三學院門上三乘漸次修行變相、降魔變相。文殊閣東畔水月觀音、千手眼大悲變相。」
		張南本(唐 881-885)	益州名畫錄：「張南本：聖壽寺中門賓頭盧變相、東廊下靈山佛會、大聖慈寺華嚴閣下東畔大悲變相、竹溪院六祖、興善院大悲菩薩、八明王、孔雀王變相，並南本筆。」
涅槃等變相	1	楊契丹(隋)	歷代名畫記：「寶刹寺……楊契丹畫涅槃等變相……西廊陳靜眼畫地獄變。」
滅度變相	2	鄭法士(隋)	歷代名畫記：「鄭法士畫滅度(即涅槃)變相。」
		盧陵迦(唐)	歷代名畫記：「張孝師地獄變」「涅槃變，盧陵迦畫自題。」
金光明經變相	1	左全(唐)	益州名畫記：「左全：極樂院門兩金剛，西廊下金剛經變及金光明經變相。」
法華變相	1	展子虔(隋)	貞觀公私畫史：「法華變相一卷 南郊圖一卷 長安車馬人物圖一卷，雜宮苑圖一卷 弋獵圖一卷 王世充像一卷 右六卷，展子虔畫。」
菩薩變相	1	左全(唐)	益州名畫錄：「左全：於大聖慈寺中殿畫維摩變相、師子國王、菩薩變相。」
文殊菩薩變相	1	楊元真(五代前蜀 907年—925年)	益州名畫錄：「楊元真 四天王寺壁畫五臺山文殊菩薩變相一堵，元真筆，見存。」
藥師經變相	1	趙忠義(五代后蜀)	益州名畫錄：「趙忠義：今余王蜀先主祠堂正門西畔神鬼、大聖慈寺正門北

			墻上西域記、石經院後殿天王變相、中寺六祖院傍藥師經變相，並忠義筆，見存。」
修行變相	1	左全(唐)	益州名畫錄:「三學院門上三乘漸次修行變相、降魔變相。文殊閣東畔水月觀音、千手眼大悲變相。」
賓頭盧變相。	1	張南本(唐 881-885)	益州名畫錄:「今聖壽寺中門賓頭盧變相。」
孔雀王變相	1	張南本(唐 881-885)	益州名畫錄:「聖壽寺中門賓頭盧變相、東廊下靈山佛會、大聖慈寺華嚴閣下東畔大悲變相、竹溪院六祖、興善院大悲菩薩、八明王、孔雀王變相，並南本筆。」
羅漢變相	2	趙德玄(五代后蜀)	益州名畫錄:「趙德玄:今祖慶禪院隱形羅漢變相兩堵，德玄筆，見存。」
		趙德齊(五代后蜀)	益州名畫錄:「趙德齊:畫佛像羅漢、經驗變相。」
流傳變相	1	趙忠義(五代后蜀)	益州名畫錄:「趙忠義者，德玄子也，德玄自雍縑負入蜀。及長，習父之藝，宛若生知。孟氏明德年，與父同手畫福慶禪院東流傳變相一十三堵。」
經驗變相	1	趙德齊(五代后蜀)	益州名畫錄:「趙德齊:畫佛像羅漢、經驗變相。」
三災變相	1	僧智蘊	圖畫見聞誌:「僧智蘊，河南人，工畫佛像、人物。學深曹體。維中宮寺講堂有毗盧像，廣愛寺有定光佛，福先寺有三災變相數壁。周祖時進舞鐘馗圖，賜衣。」
牢度叉門聖變相	2	李用及(宋)、李象坤(宋)	圖畫見聞誌:「東門之北，李用及與李象坤合畫牢度叉門聖變相。」
		高文進(五代宋初)、王道真(宋)	圖畫見聞誌:「高文進、王道真同畫相國寺壁，並為良手。殿東畫《牢度叉門聖變相》，其跡見存。」
道經變相	1	馮清(北魏)	圖畫見聞誌:「馮清，陝郡閿鄉人，善畫橐駝。兼工平畫，景靈宮北廊墻壁道經變相，乃清之筆。」
護國除災患變相	1	石抱玉(唐)	圖畫見聞誌:「其七，閣內西頭有陳留郡長史乙速令孤為功德主時，令石抱玉畫護國除災患變相，為一絕。」

法華經二十八品功德變相	1	瑰師	圖畫見聞誌:「其九, 門下有瑰師畫《梵正帝釋》及東廊障日內有《法華經二十八品功德變相》, 為一絕。」
雜物變相	1	楊契丹(隋)	貞觀公私畫史:「雜物變相二卷 豆盧寧像一卷 隋朝正會圖一卷 幸洛圖一卷 貴戚遊燕圖一卷 右六卷, 楊契丹畫, 一卷是隋朝官本。」
僧伽及諸變相	1	辛澄(唐)	宣和畫譜:「辛澄 澄嘗於蜀中大聖寺畫僧伽及諸變相。」
不動尊(不動明王)變相	1	李公麟(北宋)	宣和畫譜:「文臣李公麟 不動尊(不動明王)變相一 華嚴經相六 金剛經相一 女孝經相二 孝經相一。」

Appendix 1.3 Statistics on the number of occurrences of "Bianxiang tu 變相圖"

Title	Frequency	Author	Quotation
道經變相圖	1	董伯仁(北周末隋初)	宣和畫譜:「董展字伯仁, 汝南人也。以才藝稱鄉裏, 號為智海。官至光祿大夫, 殿內將軍。尤長於畫, 雖無祖述, 不愧前賢。夙德名流, 見者失色。但地處平原而無江山之助, 與戎馬為鄰, 而無中朝冠冕之儀。非其不至也, 蓋風聲地氣之所習爾。然董造其微, 展得其駿。展於董之臺閣則不及, 董於展之車馬則乏所長焉。是則董之視展, 蓋亦猶詩家之李杜也。展作道經變相尤為世所稱賞。自非畫外有請, 參靈酌妙, 入華胥之夢, 與化人同遊, 何以臻此? 今禦府所藏一: 道經變相圖。」
寶積變相圖	1	張儒童(南朝梁)	貞觀公私畫史:「楞伽會圖一卷 寶積變相圖一卷 右二卷, 張儒童畫。」
彌勒變相圖	1	董伯仁(北周末隋初)	貞觀公私畫史:「周明帝畋遊圖一卷 彌勒變相圖一卷 雜臺閣樣一卷 隋文帝上殿馬圖一卷 農家田舍圖一卷 右五卷, 董伯仁畫, 一卷是隋朝官本。」
維摩詰變相圖	1	未知	貞觀公私畫史:「豫章王燕賓圖(《梁太清目》中有) 維摩詰變相圖。」
法華變相圖	1	展子虔(東魏-隋)	宣和畫譜:「展子虔 維摩像一 法華變相圖一」

Appendix1.4 Statistics on the number of occurrences of "Xiang 相"

Title	Frequency	Author	Quotation
金剛經相	1	李公麟(北宋)	宣和畫譜:「文臣李公麟 不動尊(不動明王)變相一 華嚴經相六 金剛經相一 女孝經相二 孝經相一。」
華嚴經相	1	李公麟(北宋)	宣和畫譜:「文臣李公麟 不動尊(不動明王)變相一 華嚴經相六 金剛經相一 女孝經相二 孝經相一。」
華嚴經	1	武靜藏(唐)	歷代名畫記:「十輪經變、華嚴經並武靜藏畫。」
女孝經相	1	李公麟(北宋)	宣和畫譜:「文臣李公麟 不動尊(不動明王)變相一 華嚴經相六 金剛經相一 女孝經相二 孝經相一。」
孝經相	1	李公麟(北宋)	宣和畫譜:「文臣李公麟 不動尊(不動明王)變相一 華嚴經相六 金剛經相一 女孝經相二 孝經相一。」

Appendix 2: Paleographical data

Appendix 2.1a The written forms of the character “east” 東

金文								
甲骨文								
简帛								
古陶								
古币								
石刻								

Appendix 2.1b The written forms of the character “west”西

金文								
甲骨文								
简帛								
古玺								
古币								
汉印								
石刻								

Appendix 2.1c The written forms of the character “north”北

甲骨							
金文							
简帛							
古币							
石刻							

Appendix 2.1d The written forms of the character “south”南

甲骨								
金文								
简帛								
古玺								
古币								
汉印								
石刻								
								

Appendix 3 "Records of Painting Yuntai Mountain 畫雲臺山記" by Gu Kaizhi

山有面，則背向有影，可令慶雲西而吐於東方清天中。凡天及水色，盡用空青，竟素上下以映之。（日）西去山，別詳其遠近，發跡東基，轉上未半，作紫石如豎雲者五六枚，夾岡乘其間而上，使勢蜿蟺如龍，因抱峰直頓而上。下作積岡，使望之蓬蓬然凝而上。次復一峰，是在東鄰向者，峙峭峰西，連西向之丹崖，下據絕澗。畫丹崖，臨澗上，當使赫巘隆崇，畫險絕之勢。

天師坐其上，合所坐石及蔭，宜澗中桃傍生石間。畫天師，瘦形神氣遠，據澗指桃，回面謂弟子。弟子中有二人臨下，倒身大怖，流汗失色。作王良，穆然坐，答問。而趙升神爽精詣，俯眄桃樹。又別作王趙趨，一人隱西壁傾，巖餘見衣裾。一人全見，室中使輕妙冷然。凡畫人，坐時可七分，衣服彩色殊鮮，微此不正，蓋山高而人遠耳。中段東面，丹砂絕嶠及蔭，當使嶮巖高驪，孤松植其上。對天師所壁以成澗。澗可甚相近，相近者，欲令雙壁之內，淒愴澄清，神明之居，必有與立焉。

可於次峰頭作一紫石亭立，以象左闕之夾高驪絕嶠，西通雲臺，以表路。路左闕峰以巖為根，根下空絕，並諸石重勢，與巖相承，以合臨東澗。其西石泉又見，乃因絕際通岡，伏流潛降，水復東出，下澗為石瀨，淪沒於淵。所以一西一東而下者，欲使自然為圖。

雲臺山西北二面，可一岡繞之，上為雙碣石，像左右闕。石上作孤遊生鳳，當婆娑體儀，羽秀而詳，軒尾翼以眺絕澗。後一段赤岫，當使釋弁如裂電。對雲臺西鳳所臨壁以成澗，澗下有清流。其側壁外面，作一白虎，匍石飲水，後為降勢而絕（降勢而勢）。

凡三段山，畫之雖長，當使甚促，不爾不稱。鳥獸中，時有用之者，可定其儀而用之。下為澗，物景皆倒作，清氣帶山下三分倨一以上，使耿然成二重。

——《歷代名畫記》第五卷

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Illustrations

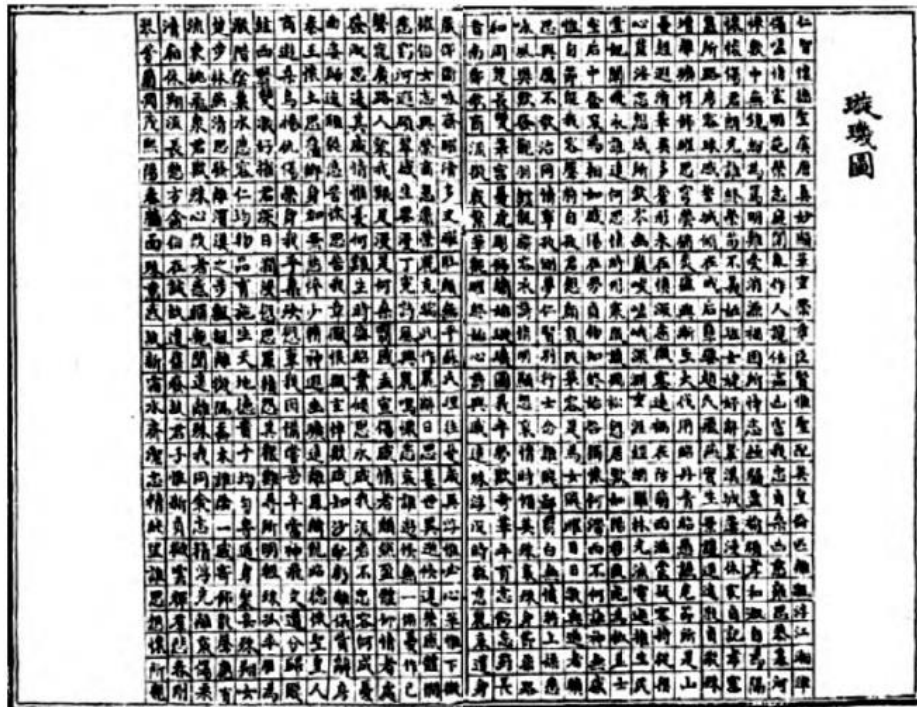


Fig. 1.1a. The Xuanji Palindrome poem.
 After Sang Shichang 桑世昌, *Huiwen Leiju* 回文类聚 [Palindrome Collection] (Taipei: Shangwu Yinshuguan, 1986).

	01	04	07	10	13	16	19	22	25	28																				
01	琴	清	流	楚	弦	商	秦	曲	发	声	悲	摧	藏	音	和	咏	思	惟	空	堂	心	忧	增	慕	怀	惨	伤	仁	01	
04	芳	靡	东	步	阶	西	游	王	凄	淑	窈	窕	伯	邵	南	凤	兴	白	后	纪	荒	经	离	所	怀	叹	智		04	
07	兰	休	桃	林	阴	静	桑	怀	归	思	河	女	卫	郑	长	歌	叹	不	能	奋	妄	清	帟	房	君	明	圣		07	
10	洞	翔	飞	燕	巢	双	鸪	土	卷	顺	其	人	硕	兴	齐	双	发	歌	我	衣	观	治	容	为	谁	想	华	仲	朝	010
13	熙	长	君	思	慈	好	归	乡	志	情	我	感	伤	情	微	宫	羽	同	声	相	地	所	多	思	感	谁	为	唐		13
16	阳	春	方	殊	仁	君	荣	身	苦	惟	艰	生	愿	多	股	忧	缠	情	将	如	何	钦	苍	穹	誓	终	志	唐		16
19	墙	俞	改	汉	物	日	兼	思	何	漫	漫	丁	丽	壮	观	饰	杏	制	君	在	时	岩	在	尖	在	不	受	乱		19
22	殊	意	诚	忍	步	高	深	翠	悴	或	生	何	怨	无	颜	耀	绣	衣	纱	想	旁	形	峻	惟	垂	后	烟	人		22
25	感	故	泥	眠	施	起	殊	少	章	时	希	诗	无	始	情	明	仁	颖	贞	少	峨	深	兴	后	烟	人	荣		25	
28	新	旧	闻	高	天	罪	神	恨	昭	感	兴	作	若	心	别	改	知	识	深	微	至	望	女	嫠	因	奸	臣		28	
01	霜	冰	齐	洁	志	清	纯	望	谁	思	想	怀	亲	所	亲	刚	柔	有	女	为	房	曲	处	己	微	身	长	路		01
04	冰	故	君	子	新	贞	望	谁	思	想	怀	亲	所	亲	刚	柔	有	女	为	房	曲	处	己	微	身	长	路		04	
07	冰	故	君	子	新	贞	望	谁	思	想	怀	亲	所	亲	刚	柔	有	女	为	房	曲	处	己	微	身	长	路		07	
10	冰	故	君	子	新	贞	望	谁	思	想	怀	亲	所	亲	刚	柔	有	女	为	房	曲	处	己	微	身	长	路		10	
13	冰	故	君	子	新	贞	望	谁	思	想	怀	亲	所	亲	刚	柔	有	女	为	房	曲	处	己	微	身	长	路		13	
16	冰	故	君	子	新	贞	望	谁	思	想	怀	亲	所	亲	刚	柔	有	女	为	房	曲	处	己	微	身	长	路		16	
19	冰	故	君	子	新	贞	望	谁	思	想	怀	亲	所	亲	刚	柔	有	女	为	房	曲	处	己	微	身	长	路		19	
22	冰	故	君	子	新	贞	望	谁	思	想	怀	亲	所	亲	刚	柔	有	女	为	房	曲	处	己	微	身	长	路		22	
25	冰	故	君	子	新	贞	望	谁	思	想	怀	亲	所	亲	刚	柔	有	女	为	房	曲	处	己	微	身	长	路		25	
28	冰	故	君	子	新	贞	望	谁	思	想	怀	亲	所	亲	刚	柔	有	女	为	房	曲	处	己	微	身	长	路		28	

Fig. 1.1b. Xuanji Palindrome structural schematic.
 After Qicheng Zhou, "Zhijin Qipa Huiwenshi Xuanjitu de Jieshao 织锦奇葩回文诗《璇玑图》的介绍[Introduction to the brocade marvelous iambic pentameter "Xuan Ji Palindrome]," *Fushi Daokan* 服饰导刊[Fashion Guide], no. 3 (2014): 4.

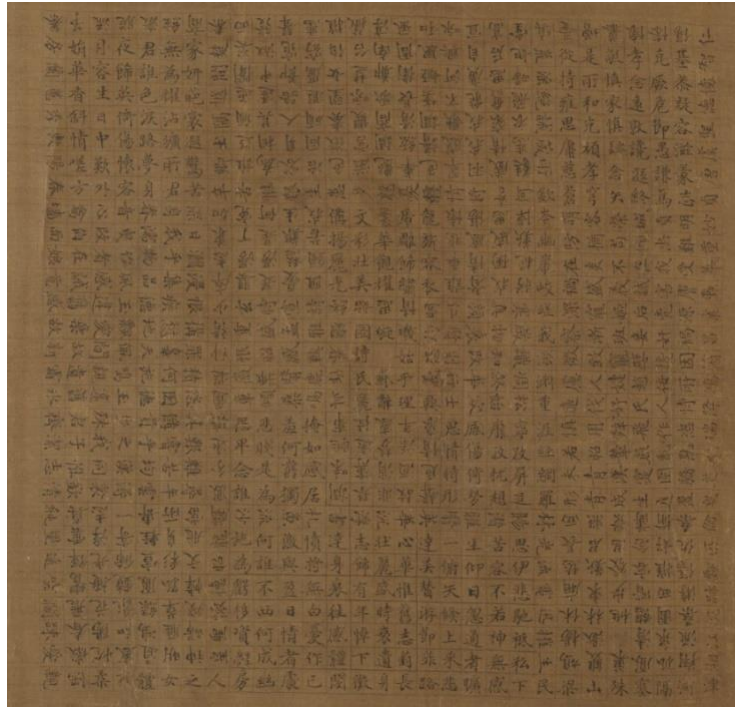


Fig. 1.1c. *Xuanji tu*.
H. 25.6 cm. Collected in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (Copyright Metropolitan Museum of Art)

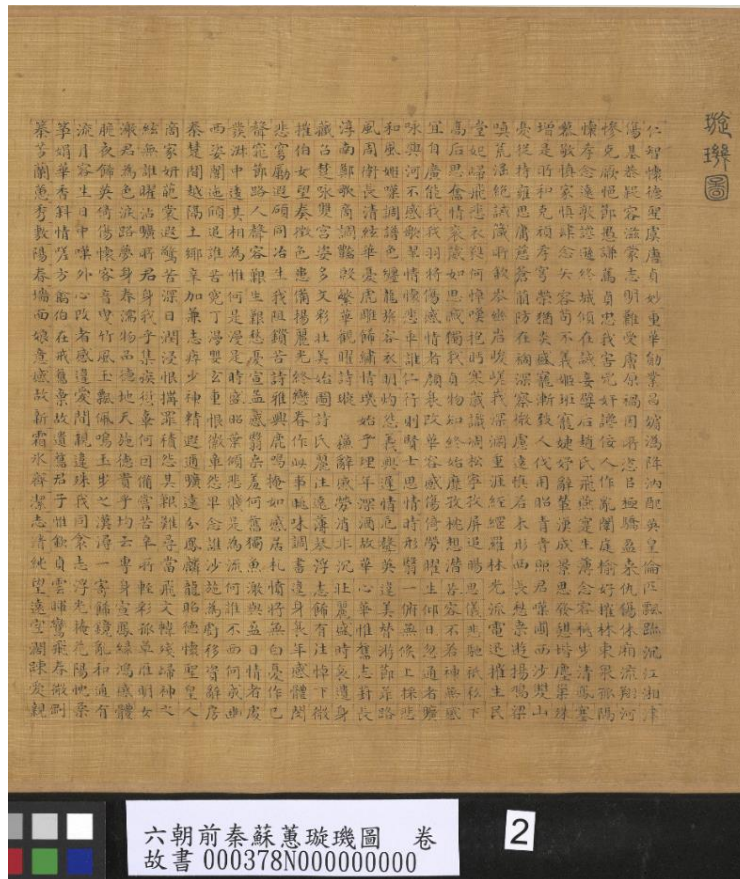


Fig. 1.1d. *Xuanji tu*
H. 28.1 cm. Collected in the National Palace Museum, Taipei (Copyright National Palace Museum)

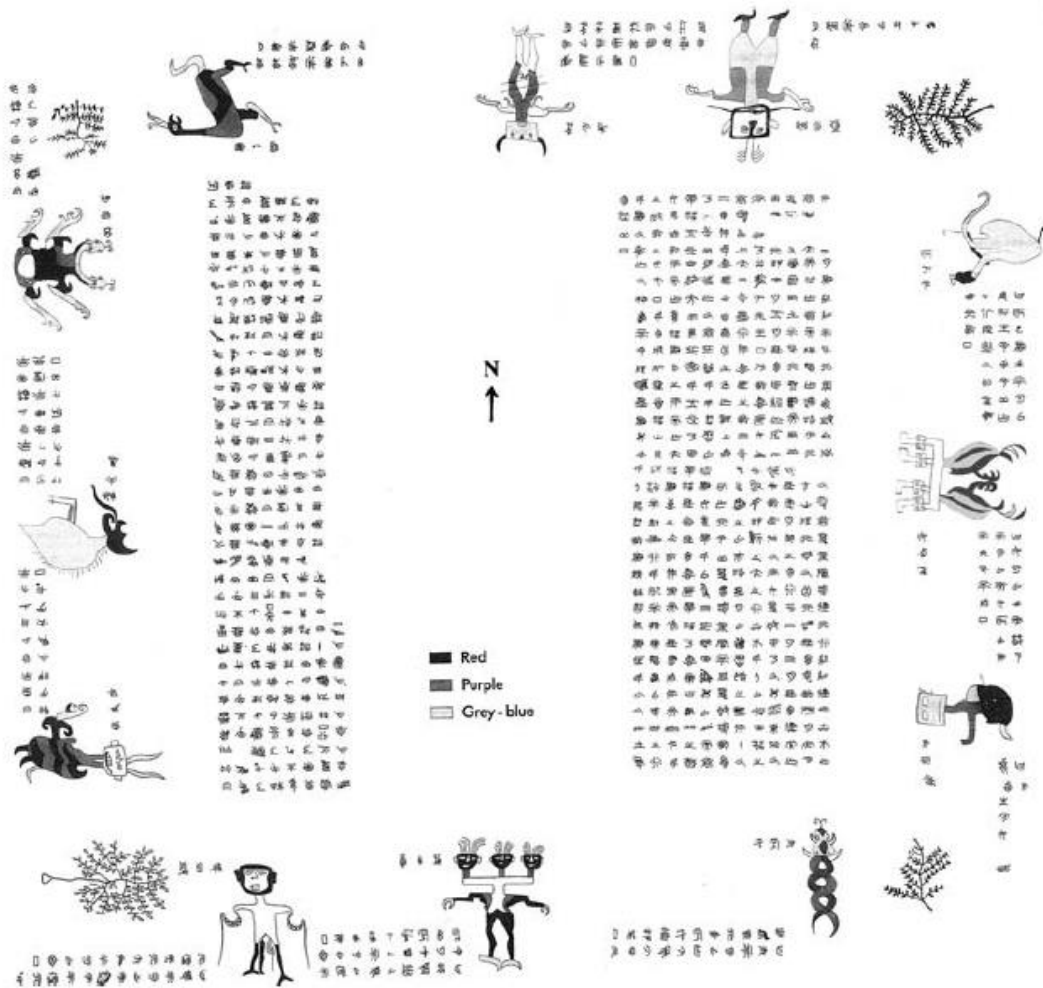


Fig. 1.2a. The Eastern Zhou Period Chu Silk Manuscript dated the middle of the Warring States period. After Noel Barnard, *The Ch'u silk Manuscript: Scientific Examination of an Ancient Chinese Document as a Prelude to Decipherment, Translation, and Historical Assessment* (Canberra: Australian National University, 1972), 2, fig. 1.

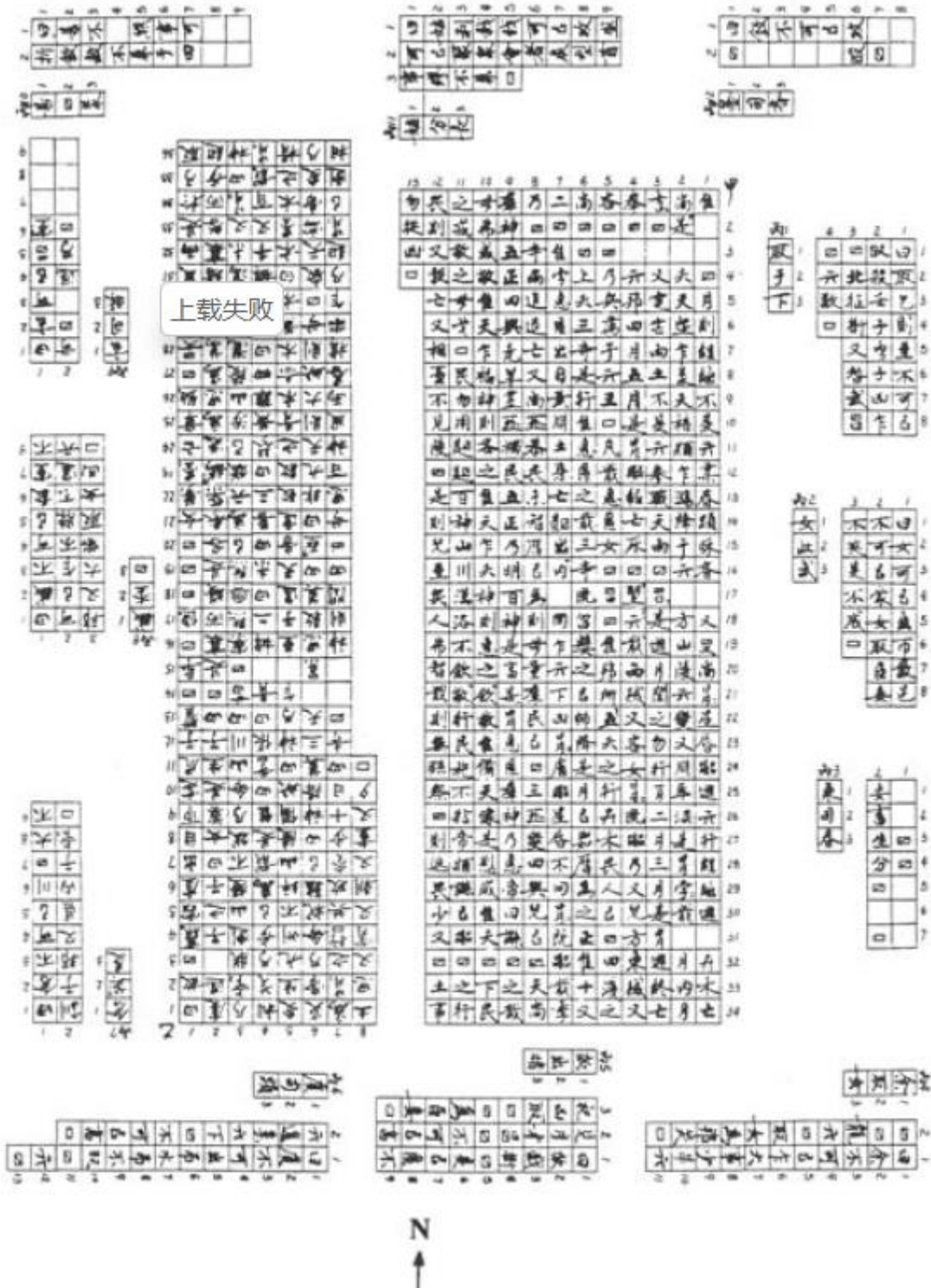
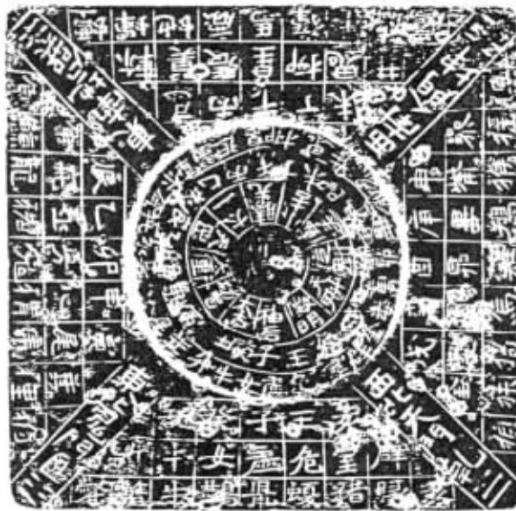


Fig. 1.2b. Transcription of the Chu Silk Manuscript by Li Ling
 After Lawton Thomas, "Discussion," in *New Perspectives on Chu Culture During the Eastern Zhou Period*, ed. Lawton Thomas (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), fig. 14, 180.



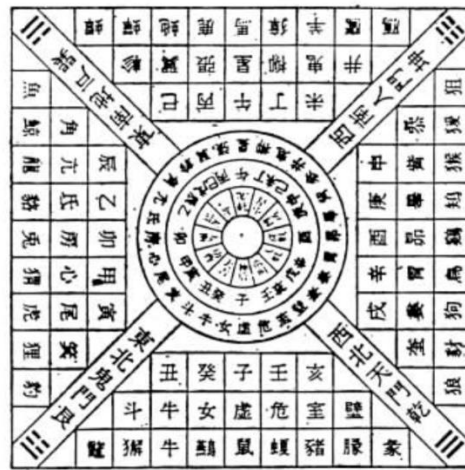
Fig. 1.3a. Liuren cosmographs
 After Ling Li, *Zhongguo Fangshu Kao* 中国方术考 (Peking: Renmin zhongguo chubanshe, 1993),
 Fig.2-12.



1



2



3

Fig. 1.3b. Liuren made by bronze from the Six Dynasty
 After Ling Li, *Zhongguo Fangshu Kao* 中国方术考 (Peking: Renmin zhongguo chubanshe, 1993),
 Fig.2-8.



Fig. 1.4. Vimalakīrti transformation in the Stele.
Commissioned by Helian Ziyue and a Devotional Society of Five Hundred Individuals. Collected in the
Metropolitan Museum of Art.(Copyright Metropolitan Museum of Art)



Fig. 1.4a. Detail of Vimalakīrti Transformation in the Stele.
Collected in the Metropolitan Museum of Art.(Copyright Metropolitan Museum of Art)

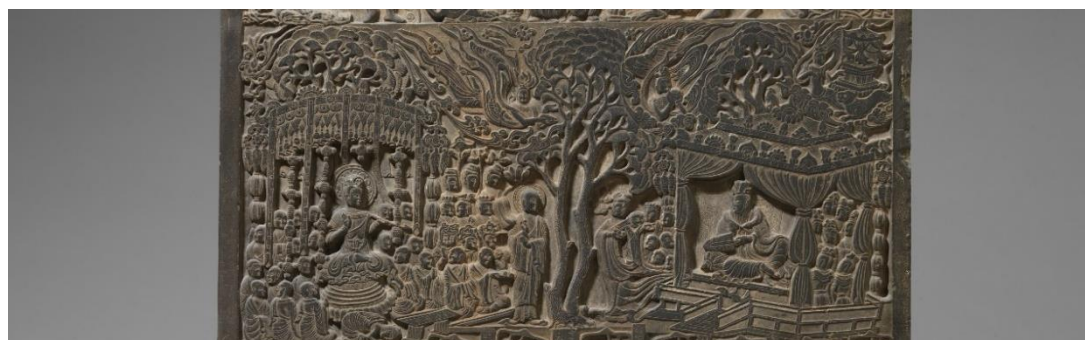


Fig. 1.4b. Detail of Vimalakīrti Transformation in the Stele.
Collected in the Metropolitan Museum of Art.(Copyright Metropolitan Museum of Art)



Fig. 1.4c. Detail of Vimalakīrti Transformation in the Stele.
Collected in the Metropolitan Museum of Art.(Copyright Metropolitan Museum of Art)



Fig. 1.4d. Detail of Vimalakīrti Transformation in the Stele.
Collected in the Metropolitan Museum of Art. (Copyright Metropolitan Museum of Art)



Fig. 1.5. Transformation tableau of the Lotus Sutra on the south wall of Dunhuang Mogao Cave 12.

After Zhongguo Dunhuang Bihua Quanjì Bianjiweiyuanhui, ed., *Zhongguo Dunhuang Bihua Quanjì Wantang* 中国敦煌壁画全集 8 晚唐 (Tianjin: Tianjin Renmin Meishu Chubanshe, 2006), fig. 74.

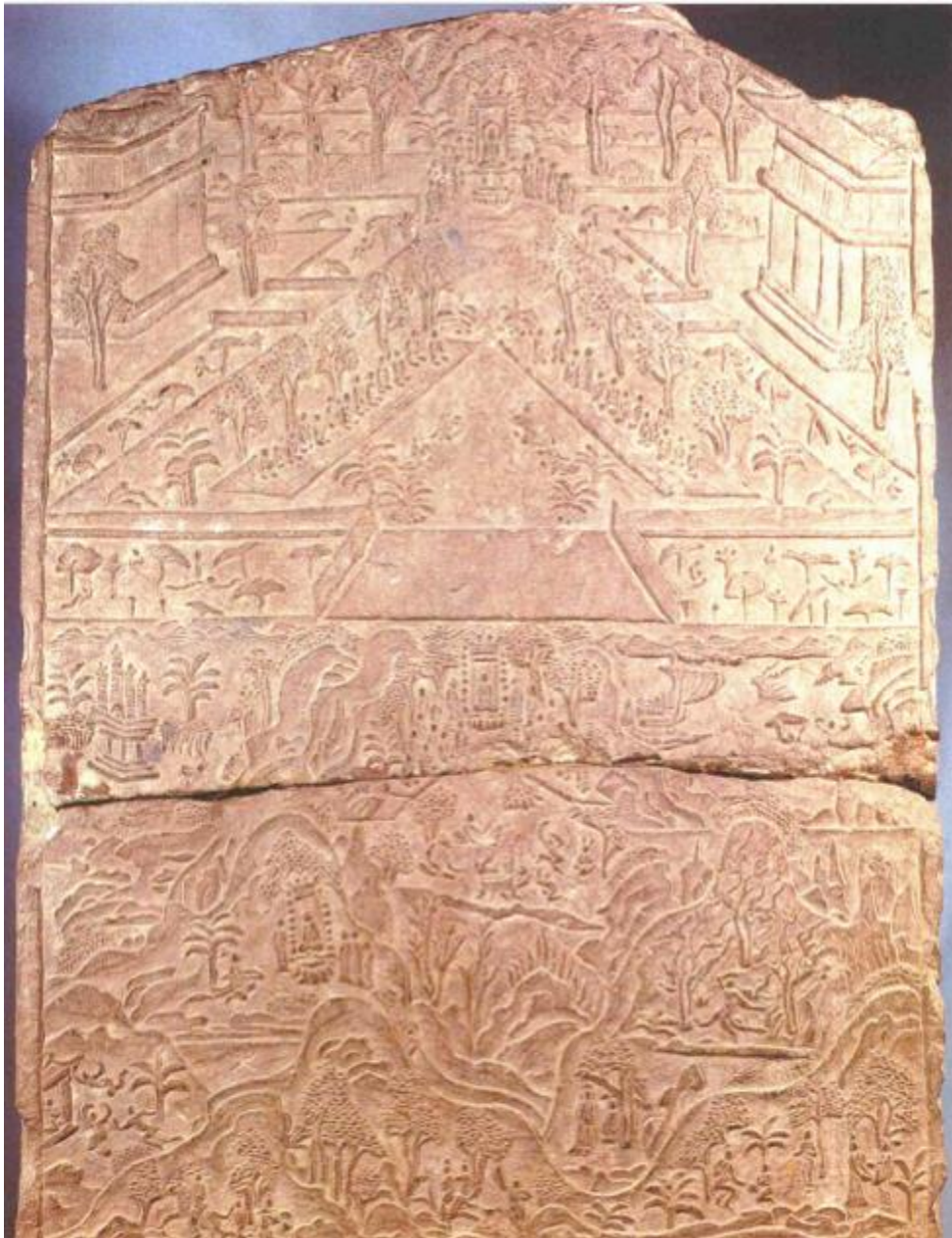


Fig. 1.6. "Transformation of Lotus Sutra "on a stone stele, numbered WSZ48
Unearthed from the Wanfo Temple of Liang Dynasty in Chengdu,Sichuan province

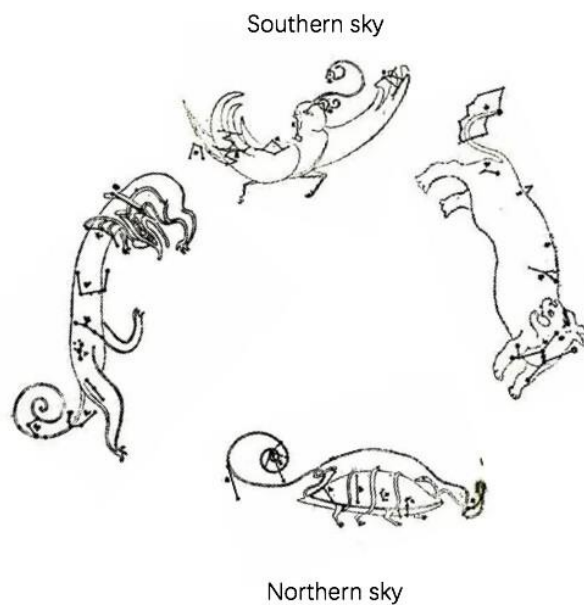


Fig. 2.1. The position of twenty-eight asterisms at “spring equinox”
 After Miansun Ding, *Zhongguo Gudai Tianwenlifa Jichuzhishi* 中国古代天文历法基础知识(Tianjin: Tianjin guji chubanshe, 1989), Fig. 31.

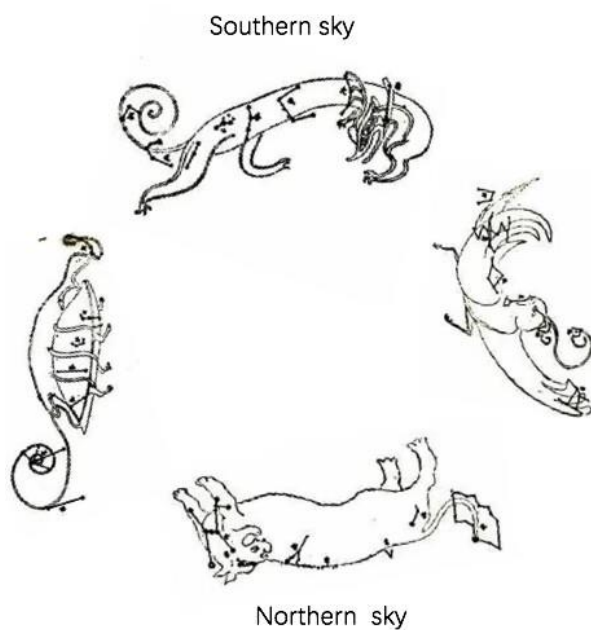


Fig. 2.2. The position of twenty-eight asterisms at “summer solstice”
 After Miansun Ding, *Zhongguo Gudai Tianwenlifa Jichuzhishi* 中国古代天文历法基础知识(Tianjin: Tianjin guji chubanshe, 1989), Fig. 32.

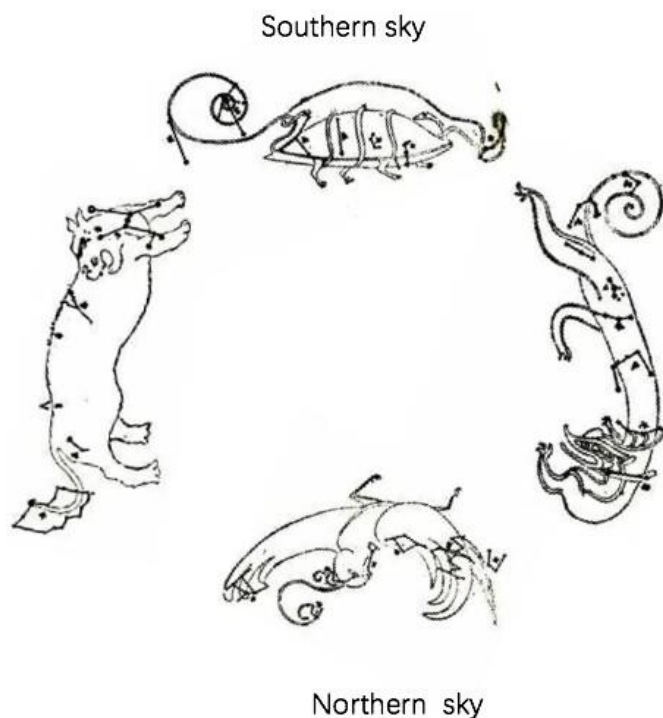


Fig. 2.3. The position of twenty-eight asterisms at “autumn equinox”
 After Miansun Ding, *Zhongguo Gudai Tianwenlifajichuzhishi* 中国古代天文历法基础知识(Tianjin: Tianjin guji chubanshe, 1989), Fig. 33.

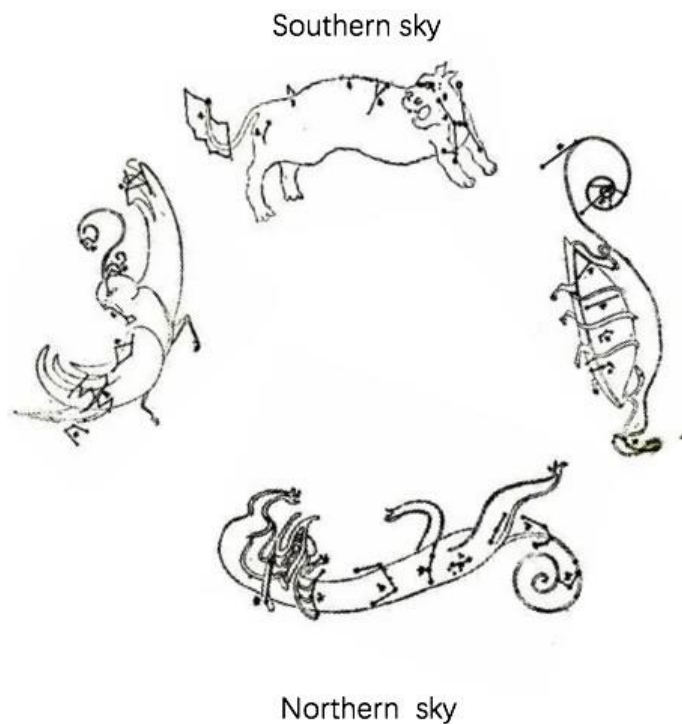


Fig. 2.4. The position of twenty-eight asterisms at “winter solstice”
 After Miansun Ding, *Zhongguo Gudai Tianwenlifajichuzhishi* 中国古代天文历法基础知识(Tianjin: Tianjin guji chubanshe, 1989), Fig. 34.



Fig. 2.5. The shape of Canglong asterisms which including seven asterisms: Citrā (Caitra), Svāti, Viśākhā (Vaiśākha), Anurādhā, Jyeṣṭha (Jyaiṣṭha), Mūla, and Pūrvāṣādhā (Āṣāḍha).
After Miansun Ding, *Zhongguo Gudai Tianwenlifā Jichuzhishi* 中国古代天文历法基础知识(Tianjin: Tianjin guji chubanshe, 1989), Fig. 35.

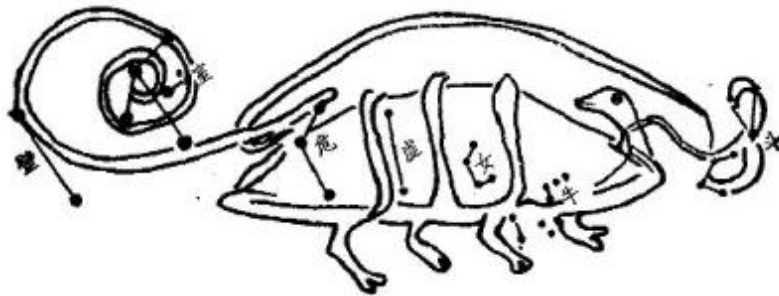


Fig. 2.6. The shape of Xuanwu asterisms which including seven asterisms: Uttarāṣādhā, Abhijit, Śravaṇa(Śrāvaṇa), Dhaniṣṭhā, Śatabhiṣaj, Pūrvabhādrapadā (Bhādrapada), and Uttarabhādrapadā.
After Miansun Ding, *Zhongguo Gudai Tianwenlifā Jichuzhishi* 中国古代天文历法基础知识(Tianjin: Tianjin guji chubanshe, 1989), Fig. 36.

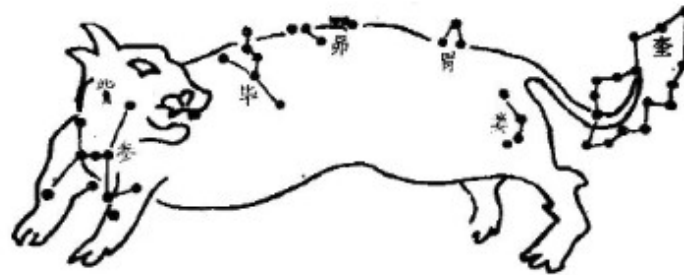


Fig. 2.7. The shape of Baihu asterisms which including seven asterisms: Revatī, Aśvinī (Āśvina), Bharāṇī, Kṛttikā (Kārttika), Rohiṇī, Mṛgaśīrṣa (Mārgaśīra), and Ārdrā”.
After Miansun Ding, *Zhongguo Gudai Tianwenlifā Jichuzhishi* 中国古代天文历法基础知识(Tianjin: Tianjin guji chubanshe, 1989), Fig. 37.



Fig. 2.8. The Shape of Zhusi which including seven asterisms: Punarvasū, Puṣya (Pauṣa), Aślesā, Maghā (Māgha), Pūrvaphālgunī, Uttaraphālgunī (Phālguna), and Hasta.
After Miansun Ding, *Zhongguo Gudai Tianwenlifajichuzhishi* 中国古代天文历法基础知识(Tianjin: Tianjin guji chubanshe, 1989), Fig. 38.



Fig. 2.9. Time mark on ceramic bottles unearthed at Fojia miao wan, Dunhuang.
After Hui Wang, Guoke Chen, and Xiaodong Yue, “Gansu Dunhuang Foyemiaowan Xindiantai Muqun Caowei Suitang Mu 2015nian fajuejianbao 甘肃敦煌佛爷庙湾—新店台墓群曹魏、隋唐墓 2015年发掘简报,” *Wenwu* 文物[Cultural Relics], no. 9 (2019): 29.

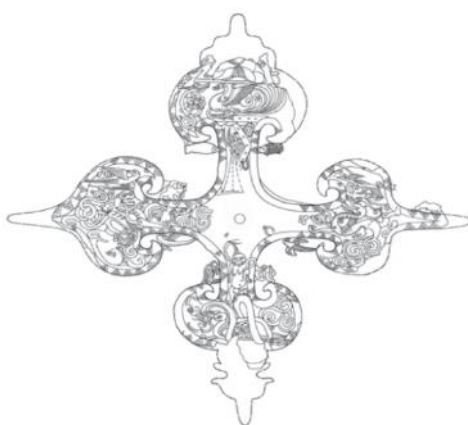


Fig. 2.10a. Four-petal flower-shaped gilt-bronze pieces inlaid with images of the four animals.
Unearthed in Eastern Han tombs in Taizhou Xinzhuang, Jiangsu Province. H. 50 cm, W. 50cm.



Fig. 2.10b. Four-petal flower-shaped gilt-bronze pieces inlaid with images of the four animals. Unearthed in Eastern Han tombs. H. 49.2cm, W. 48.8cm. Collected in Tianshui Museum, Gansu Province.



Fig. 2.10c. Four-petal flower-shaped gilt-bronze pieces inlaid with images of the four animals. Unearthed in Eastern Han tombs in Wushan Yanchang, Chongqing. H. 37cm, W. 37 cm. Collected in Wushan Museum.



Fig. 2.10d. Four-petal flower-shaped gilt-bronze pieces inlaid with images of the four animals. Unearthed in Eastern Han tombs in Wushan Lingfei factory in Chongqing. H. 50cm, W. 50cm. Collected in Wushan Museum.

After Dexin Cong, Zhihong Luo, “重庆巫山县东汉鎏金铜牌饰的发现与研究[Chongqing wushanxian donghan liujin tongpaifushi de faxian yu yanjiu],” *Kao Gu* 考古 [Archaeology], no. 12(1998): fig.7.



Fig. 2.10 e. Four-petal flower-shaped gilt-bronze pieces inlaid with images of the four animals. Unearthed in Eastern Han tombs in Wuwei Leitai, Gansu Province. W.49.2 cm, H.48.4 cm. Collected in Gansu Museum.

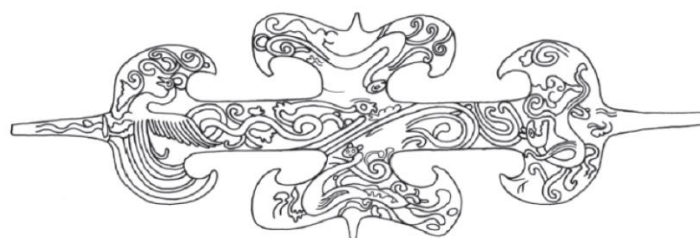


Fig. 2.10 f. Four-petal flower-shaped gilt-bronze pieces inlaid with images of the four animals. Unearthed in Eastern Han tombs. W. 67.3 cm, H.22 cm.

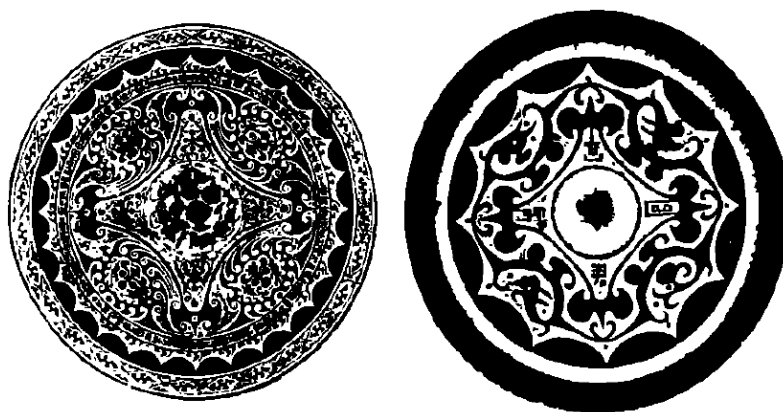


Fig. 2.11. Four-petal flowers on the bronze mirror of the Warring States period
After Ling Li, "Shuo yunwen wadang—jianlun zhanguo qinhan tongjingshang de sibanhua 说云纹瓦当——兼论战国秦汉铜镜上的四瓣花," *Shanghai wenbo luncong* 上海文博论丛, no. 04 (2004): 65.



Fig. 2.12a. Four-petal flowers representing the four directions on the bronze mirror of the Warring States period

After Ling Li, “‘Fanghua manchang, mingci yuechang’—wei ‘shidiwen’ zhengming 方华蔓长,名此曰昌”——为“柿蒂纹”正名,” *Zhongguo guojia bowuguan guankan* 中国国家博物馆馆刊 no. 07 (2012): 39,fig.8.



Fig. 2.12b. The inscription in four-petal flowers representing the four directions on the bronze mirror of the Warring States period. Diameter 21 cm.

After Ling Li, “‘Fanghua manchang, mingci yuechang’—wei ‘shidiwen’ zhengming 方华蔓长,名此曰昌”——为“柿蒂纹”正名,” *Zhongguo guojia bowuguan guankan* 中国国家博物馆馆刊 no. 07 (2012): 39, fig.10.



Fig. 2.13a. Four-petal flowers representing the four directions on the bronze mirror of the Warring States period.

After Ling Li, “Fanghua Manchang, Mingci Yuechang—wei ‘Shidiwen’ Zhengming 方华蔓长,名此曰昌——为“柿蒂纹”正名,” *Zhongguo guojia bowuguan guankan* 中国国家博物馆馆刊, no. 07 (2012):39, fig.9.



Fig. 2.13b. Inscription in four-petal flowers representing the four directions on the bronze mirror of the Warring States period.

Diameter 21 cm. After Ling Li, “Fanghua manchang, mingci yuechang—wei ‘shidiwen’ zhengming 方华蔓长,名此曰昌——为‘柿蒂纹’正名,” *Zhongguo Guojia Bowuguan Guankan* 中国国家博物馆馆刊, no. 07 (2012): 39, fig.11.



Fig. 2.14. Inscription of “Fanghua manchang Mingci yuechang”

After Ling Li, “Fanghua manchang, mingci yuechang—wei ‘shidiwen’ zhengming 方华蔓长,名此曰昌——为“柿蒂纹”正名,” *Zhongguo guojia bowuguan guankan* 中国国家博物馆馆刊, no. 07 (2012): 40.



Fig. 2.15. Four-petal flowers on the top of the sarcophagus.

Unearthed in the Maliuwan Cliff Tomb in Luzhou City. After Erhu Luo, “Handai huaxiang shiguan yanjiu 汉代画像石棺研究,” *Kaogu Xuebao* 考古学报[Acta Archaeologica Sinica] no. 01 (2000): fig.1.

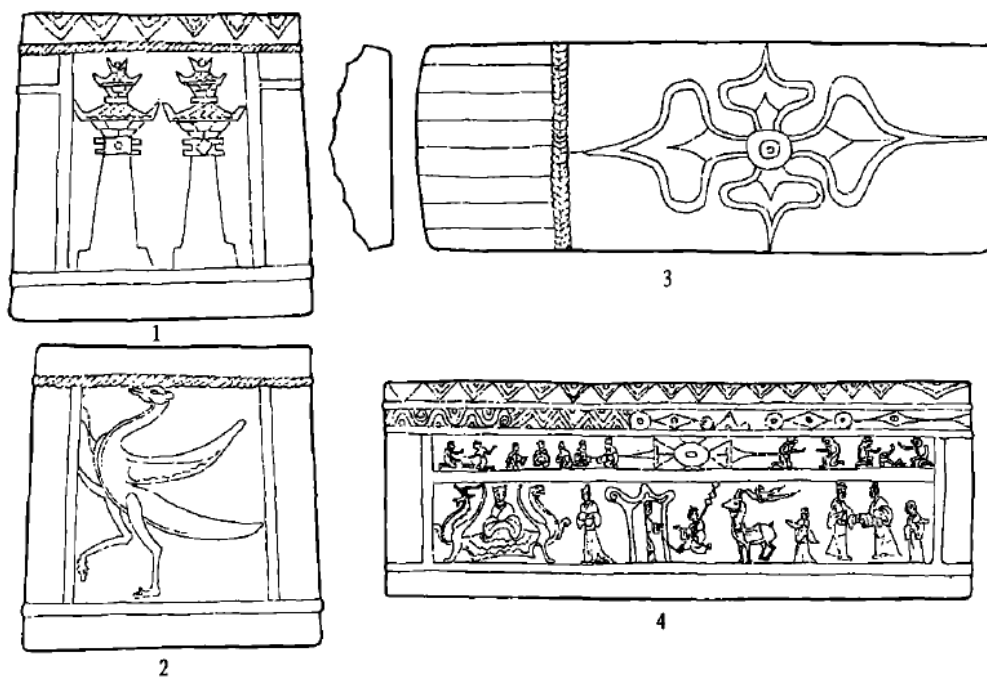


Fig. 2.16 Four-petal flowers on the top of the lid of the sarcophagus.
 Unearthed in the No.3 Brick Chamber Tomb in Changshunpo, Nanxi County.
 After Erhu Luo, "Handai huaxiang shiguan yanjiu 汉代画像石棺研究," *Kaogu Xuebao* 考古学报 [Acta Archaeologica Sinica] no. 01 (2000): fig.13.

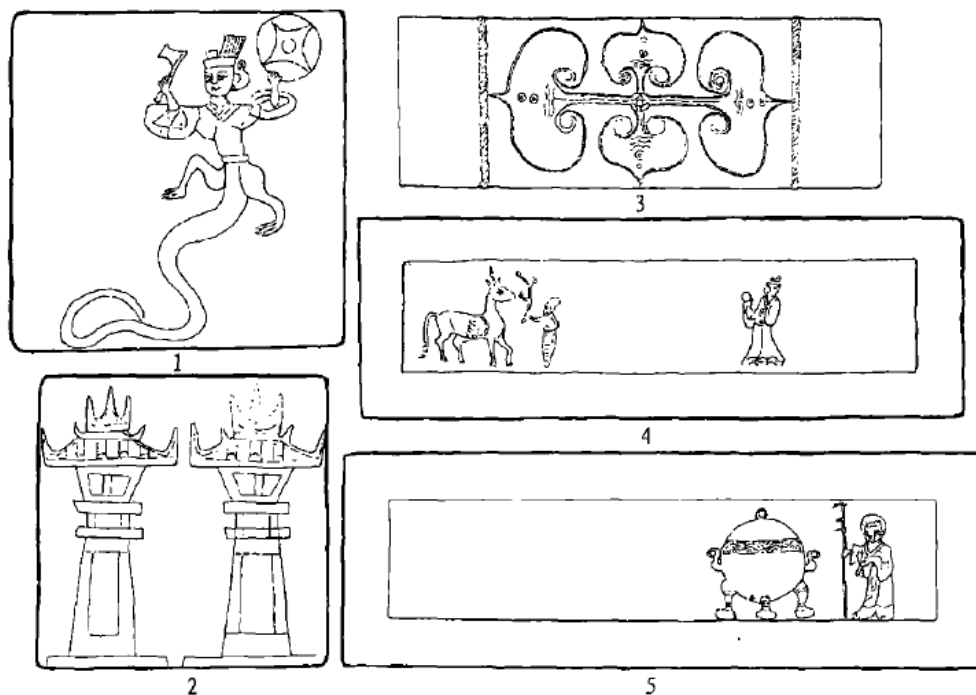


Fig. 2.17 Four-petal flowers on the top of the lid of the sarcophagus
 Unearthed in the No.1 Tomb in Dayiba, Luzhou City
 After Erhu Luo, "Handai huaxiang shiguan yanjiu 汉代画像石棺研究," *Kaogu Xuebao* 考古学报 [Acta Archaeologica Sinica] no. 01 (2000): fig.16.

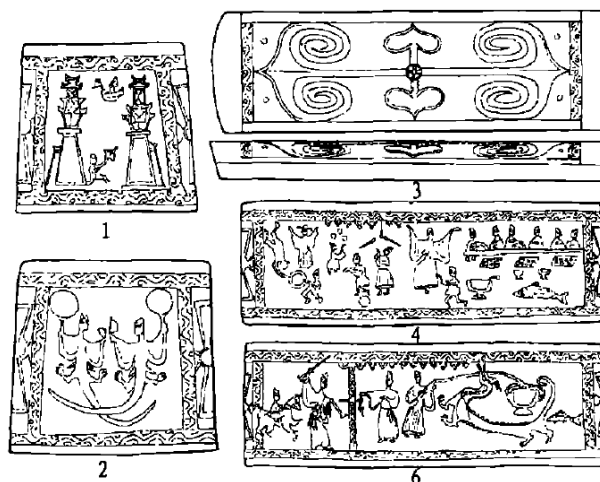


Fig. 2.18 Four-petal flowers on the top of the lid of the sarcophagus
Unearthed in the No.1 Tomb in Guihuacun, Jiang'an County.

After Erhu Luo, "Handai huaxiang shiguan yanjiu 汉代画像石棺研究," *Kaogu Xuebao* 考古学报 [Acta Archaeologica Sinica] no. 01 (2000): fig.18.

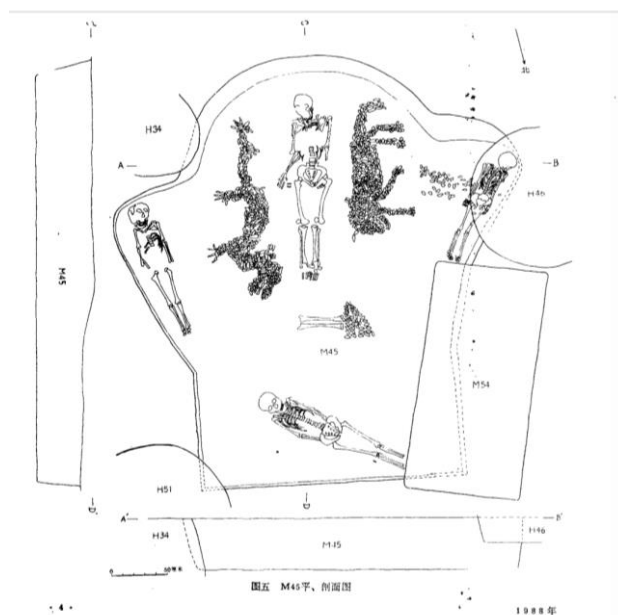


Fig. 2.19. Xishui Tomb M45, in Puyang, Henan province, dating from ca.3300B.C.
Collected in National Museum, Beijing.

After Shi Feng, "河南西水坡 45 号墓的天文学研究 [Henan Puyang Xishui 45 Mu de Tianwenxue Yanjiu]," *Wenwu* 文物 [Cultural Relics], no.3 (1990): 53.



Fig. 2.20. Diagrams showing the arrangement of the stars in the sky on a lacquer vessel from the tomb of Zeng Houyi in the Warring States period, in Xishui Po. H.47cm, W. 71cm. Collected in the museum of HuBei Province, Copyright Henei Museum.



Fig. 2.21. Astrological image located on the top of the tomb in a Han Dynasty tomb. Unearthed in Qushu Trench, Jingbian County, Shaanxi Province. After Yi Duan, “陕西靖边县杨桥畔渠树壕东汉壁画墓发掘简报[Shaanxi jingbianxian yangqiaopan qushuhao donghan bihuamu fajue jianbao],” *Kaogu yu Wenwu* 考古与文物[Archaeology and Cultural Relics], no.01 (2017):fig.23.

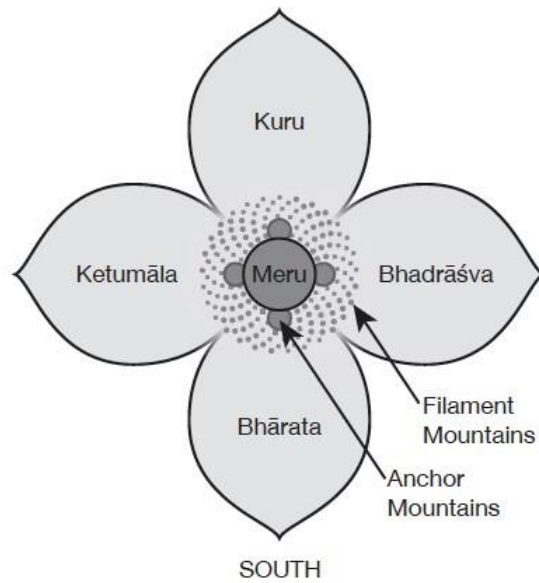


Fig. 2.22a. World-as-lotus cosmology of the Purāṇas.
 After Eric Huntington, *Creating the Universe: Depictions of the Cosmos in Himalayan Buddhism* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2019), 22.

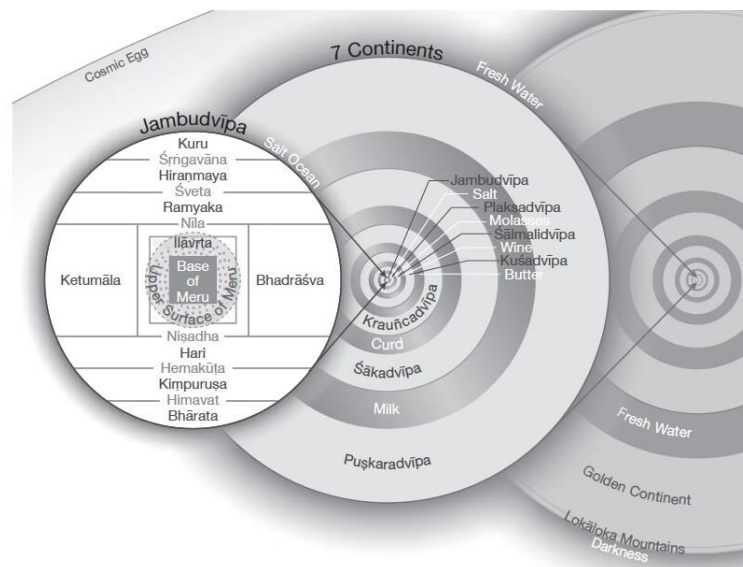


Fig. 2.22b. Seven-continent cosmology of the Purāṇas.
 After Eric Huntington, *Creating the Universe: Depictions of the Cosmos in Himalayan Buddhism* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2019), 22.

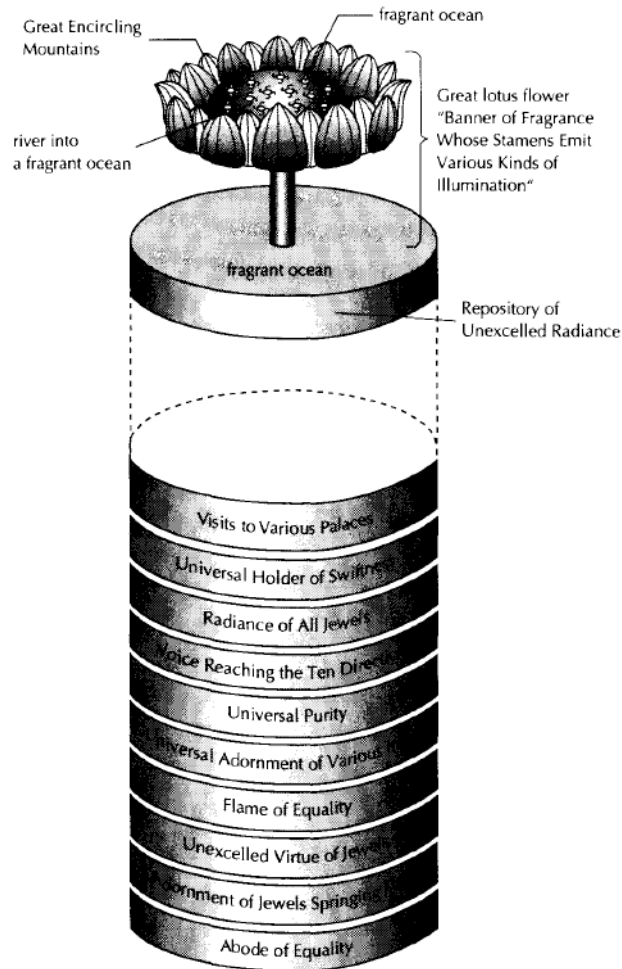


Fig.2.23. The universe contains layers of wind circles and the great lotus flower that blooms on them. After Sadakata Akira, *Buddhist cosmology: Philosophy and origins* (Japan: Kosei Publishing Co. 1997), 99, Fig. 25.

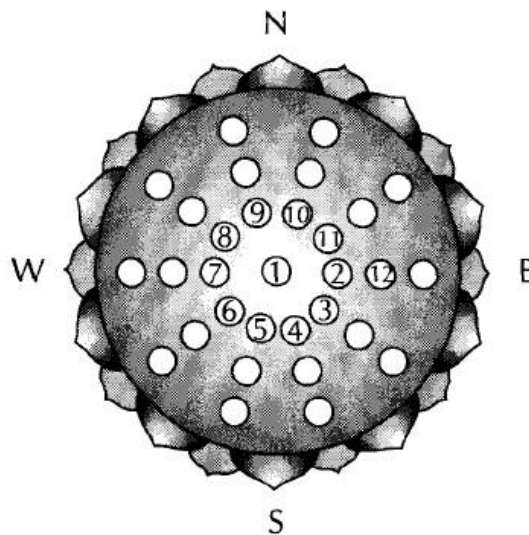


Fig.2.24. Simplified Arrangement of Fragrant Oceans in the Lotus Repository World. From: Sadakata Akira, *Buddhist cosmology: Philosophy and origins* (Japan: Kosei Publishing Co. 1997), Fig. 28.

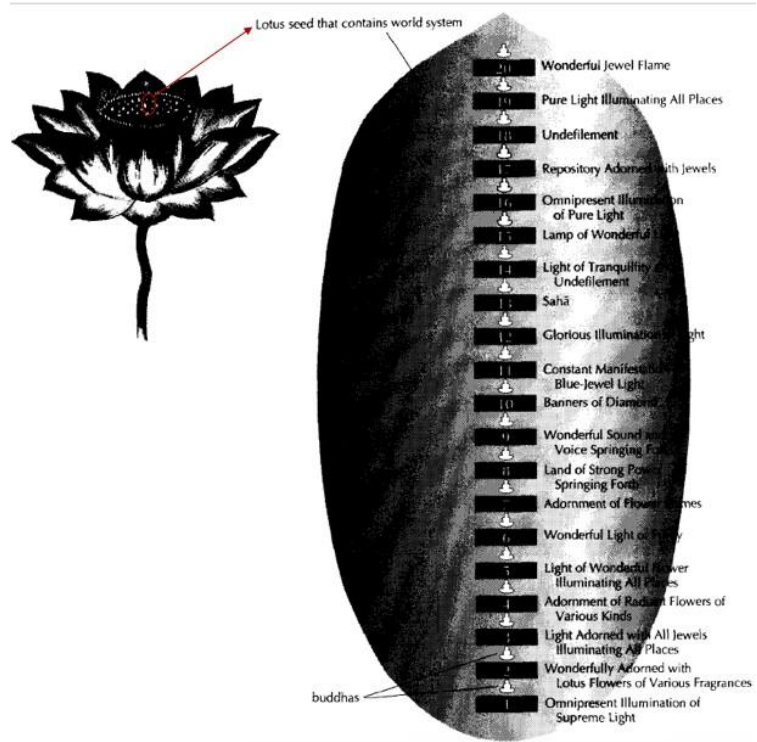


Fig. 2.25. The World System at the Center of the Lotus Repository World. After Sadakata Akira, *Buddhist cosmology: Philosophy and origins* (Japan: Kosei Publishing Co. 1997), Fig. 27.



Fig. 2.26. Lotus Pedestal World according to the Sūtra of the Perfect Net. After Sadakata Akira, *Buddhist cosmology: Philosophy and origins* (Japan: Kosei Publishing Co. 1997), 99, Fig.29.

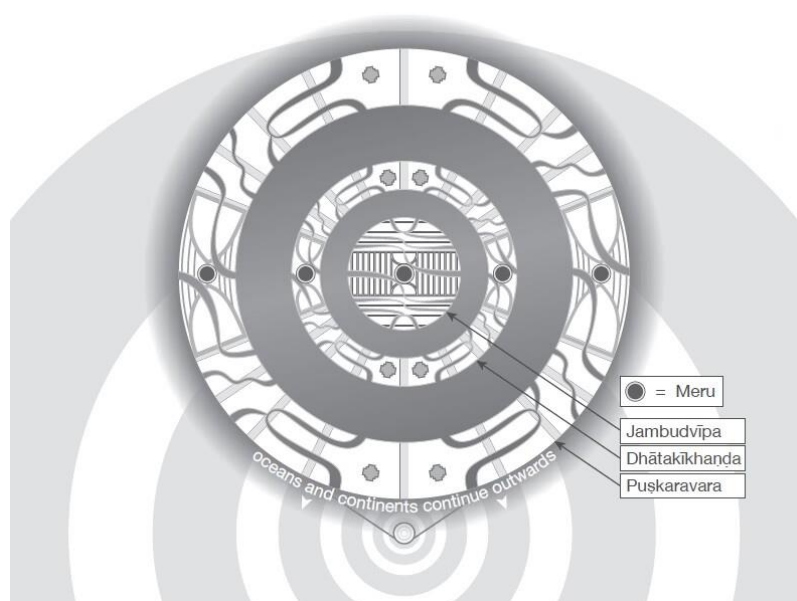


Fig. 2.27. Human-inhabited continents of the Jain cosmology.

Human civilization expands beyond Jambudvīpa to include all of the first ring continent and the inner half of the second one. Each of these two ring continents possesses its own Meru mountains along an east-west axis, making for a total of five.

After Eric Huntington, *Creating the Universe: Depictions of the Cosmos in Himalayan Buddhism* (Seattle : University of Washington Press, 2019), 26.

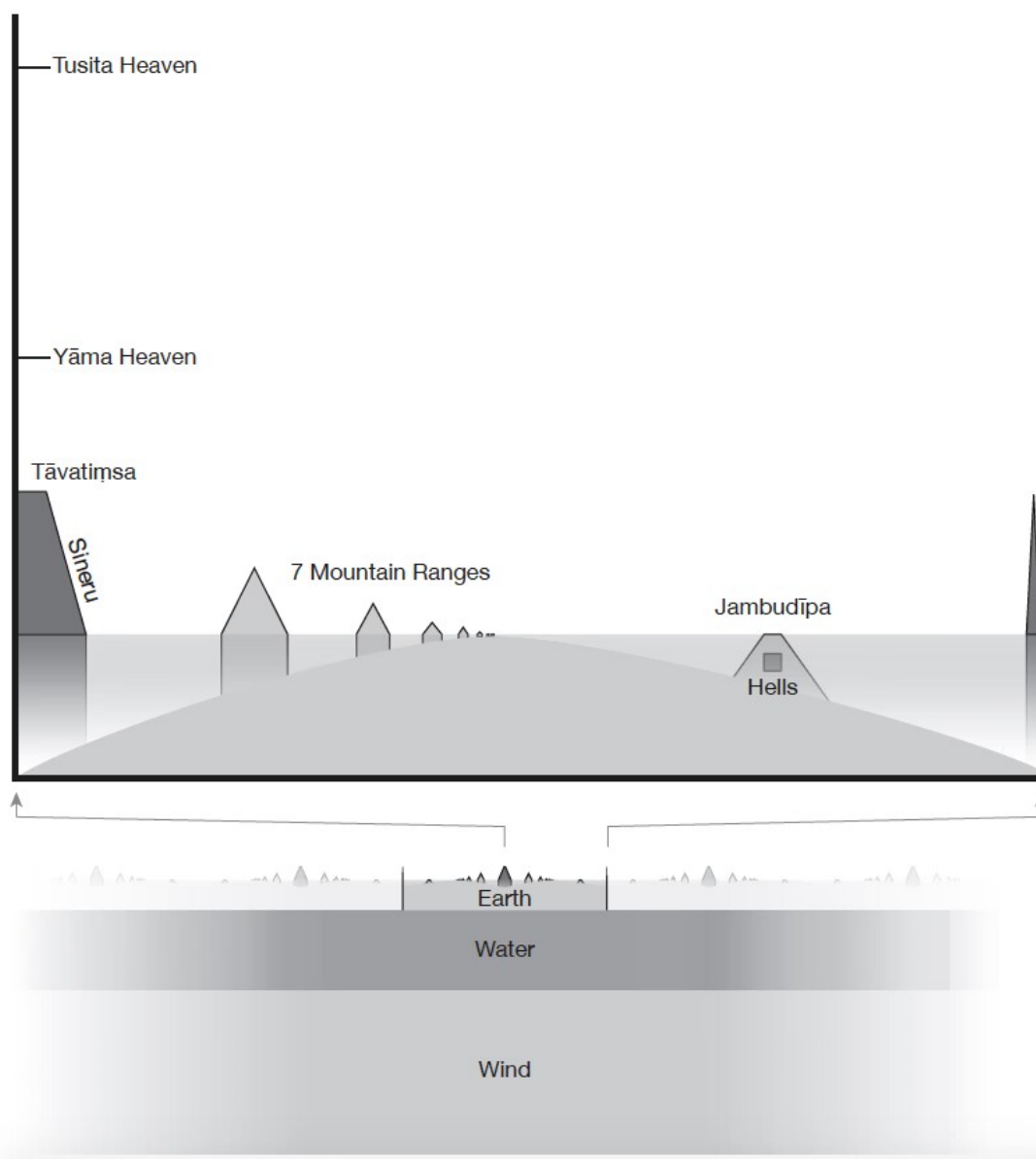


Fig. 2.28. Speculative elevation of the cosmos described in Buddhaghosa's Path of Purification. After Eric Huntington, *Creating the Universe: Depictions of the Cosmos in Himalayan Buddhism* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2019), 28.



Fig. 2.29. "Sanjie Jiudi Zhitu" P. 2824 according to the Treasury of Abhidharma.

Available from IDP:

<https://idp.bl.uk/collection/2075E9DB36BA564BA1012953271EC339/?return=%2Fcollection%2F%3Fterm%3DP.%25202824>

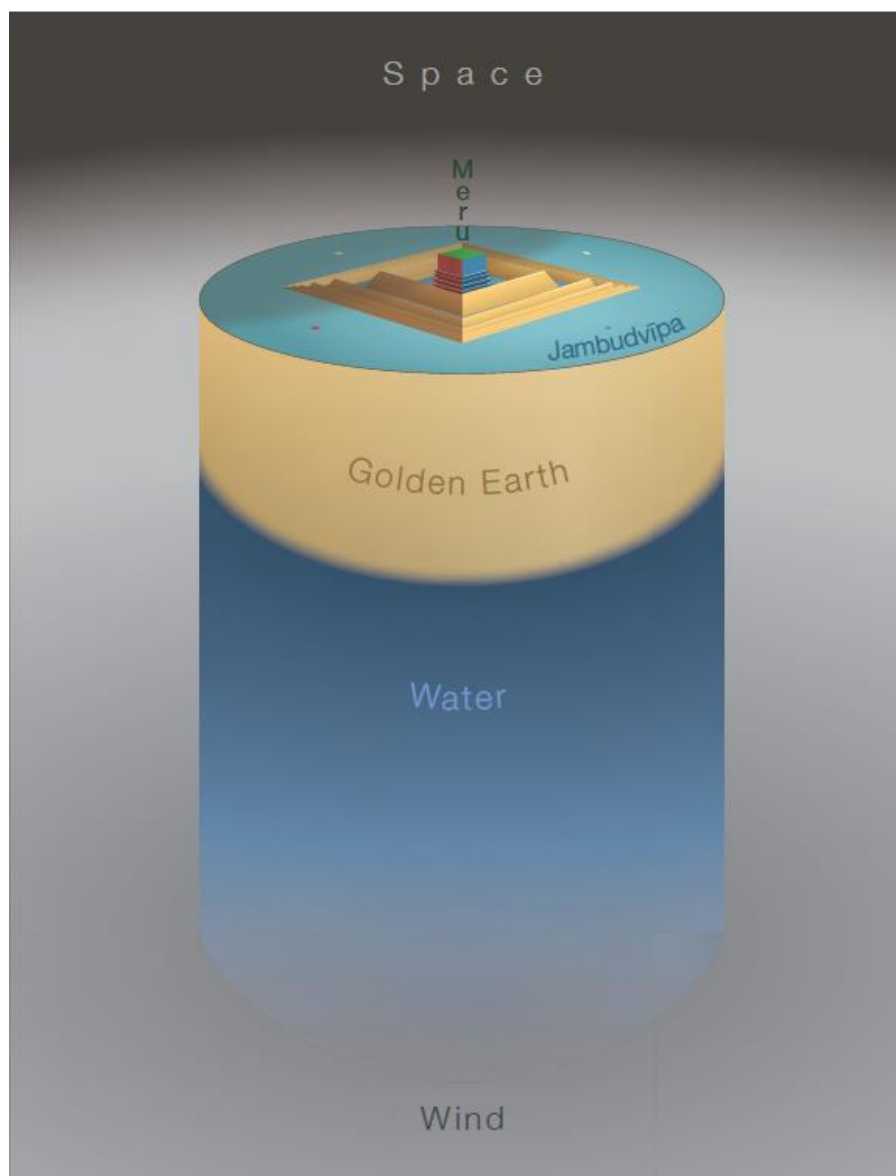


Fig. 2.30a. Perspective view of the geographic cosmos described in the Treasury of Abhidharma. After Eric Huntington, *Creating the Universe: Depictions of the Cosmos in Himalayan Buddhism* (Seattle : University of Washington Press, 2019), Fig.1.13.

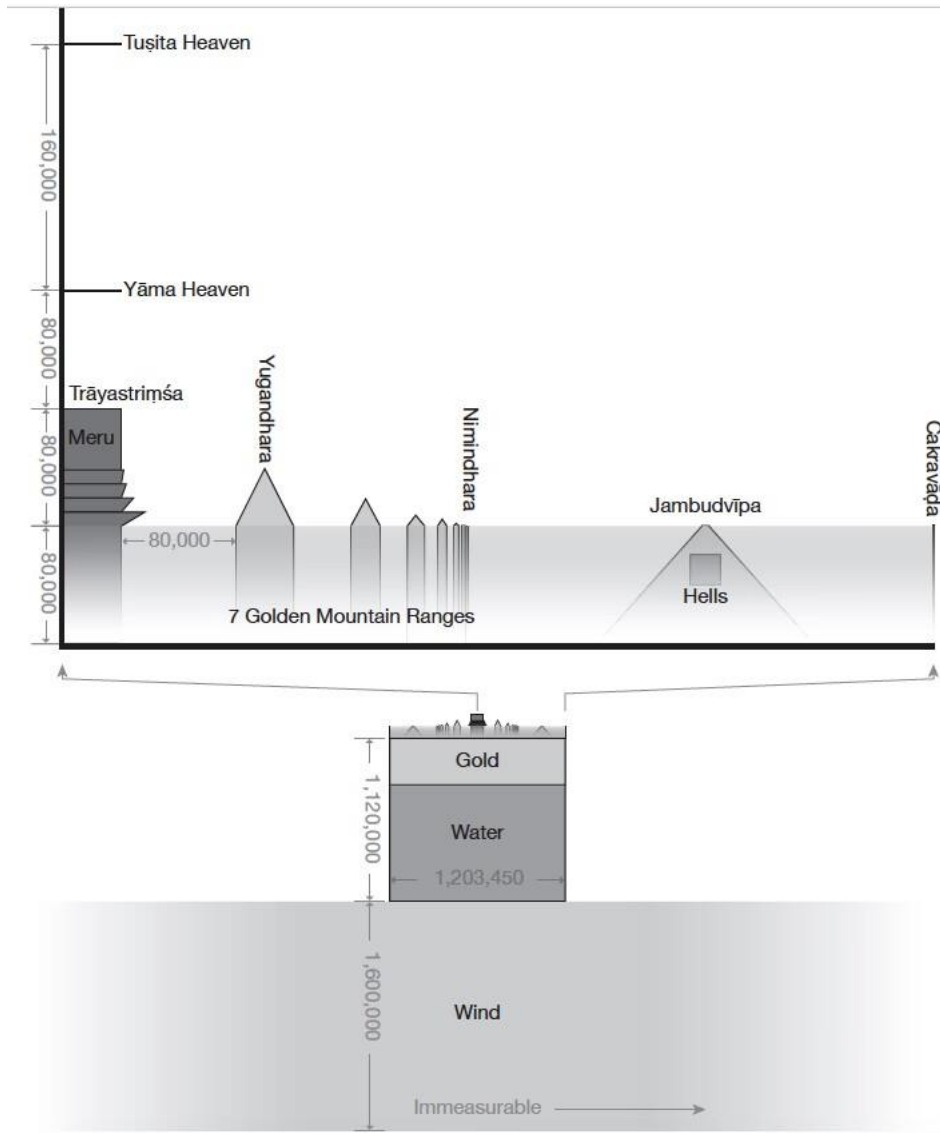


Fig. 2.30b. Elevation of the cosmos described in the Treasury of Abhidharma. After Eric Huntington, *Creating the Universe: Depictions of the Cosmos in Himalayan Buddhism* (Seattle : University of Washington Press, 2019), fig.1.8.

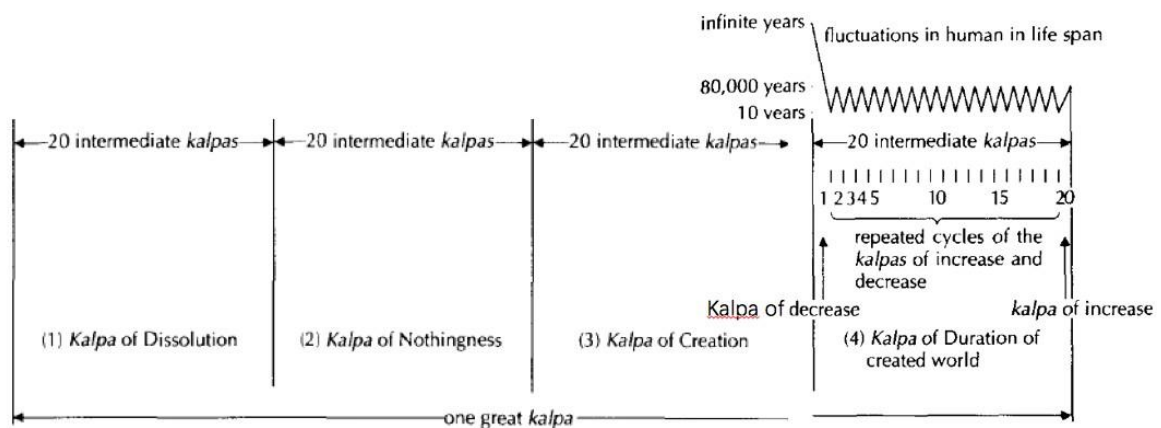


Fig. 2.31. Cycle of the universe in Hīnayāna cosmology. After Sadakata Akira, *Buddhist cosmology: Philosophy and origins* (Japan: Kosei Publishing Co. 1997),99. Fig.23.



Fig. 3.2-1. Record of Painting Yuntai Mountain painted by Fu baoshi.

After baoshi Fu, *Zhongguo Gudai Shanshuihuashi de Yanjiu* 中国古代山水画史的研究 (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin meishu chubanshe, 1960), 19-20.



Fig. 3.2-2a. "Palace Ladies Adoring Their Face" in *The Admonitions Scroll*.

Attributed to Gu Kaizhi. Collected in the British Museum (Copyright British Museum),



Fig. 3.2-2b. Detail of "Palace ladies adorning their face" in The admonitions scroll.



Fig. 3.2-2c. Detail of "Palace ladies adorning their face" in The admonitions scroll.



Fig. 3.2-2d. Wu hung's analyses of "Palace ladies adorning their face" in *The admonitions* scroll. After Hung Wu, *Monumentality in Early Chinese Art and Architecture* (California: Stanford University Press, 1995), 2.



Fig. 3.2-3. The Story of Liang widow Goxing, Northern Wei funerary couch screen, Collected in Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas.

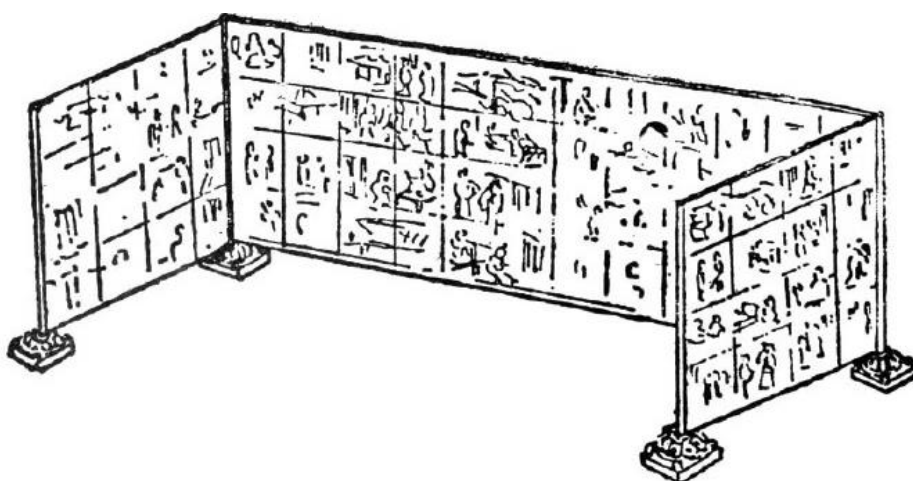


Fig. 3.2-4a Screen painting of Sima Jinlong Tomb
Unearthed in the tomb of Sima Jinlong in Datong, Shanxi, Dated Northern Wei Dynasty (484 A.D.)



Fig. 3.2-4b Screen painting in the tomb of Sima Jinlong.

Unearthed in the tomb of Sima Jinlong in Datong, Shanxi, Dated Northern Wei Dynasty (484 A.D.)

After Xian Yin, "北魏司马金龙墓屏风漆画题记[Beiwei Sima Jinlong Mu Pingfeng Qihua]," *Zhongguo Shufa* 中国书法[Chinese Calligraphy], no.7 (2014):133.



Fig. 4.1-1a. The image of Ruanxian on the south wall of a Tomb of Southern Dynasty. Unearthed in Xishanqiao, Nanjing, Jiangsu Province. Collected in Nanjing Museum, Photograph by Yuanyuan Duan.



Fig. 4.1-1b. The image of Liu Ling on the south wall of the Tomb of Southern Dynasty. Unearthed in Xishanqiao, Nanjing, Jiangsu Province. Collected in Nanjing Museum, Photograph by Yuanyuan Duan.



Fig. 4.1-1c. The image of Xiang Xiu on the south wall of a Tomb of Southern Dynasty Unearthed in Xishanqiao, Nanjing, Jiangsu Province. Collected in Nanjing Museum, Photograph by Yuanyuan Duan.

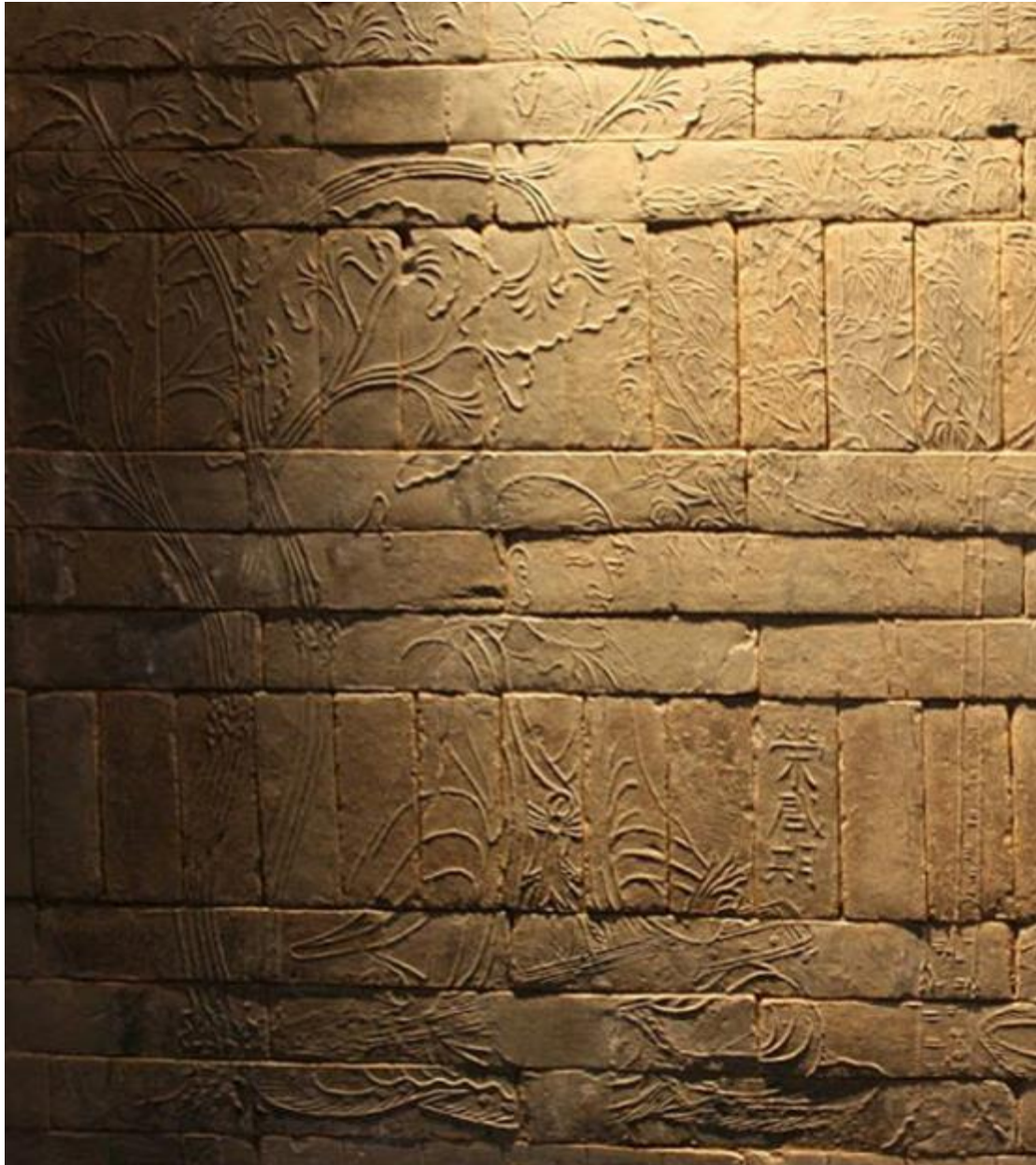


Fig. 4.1-1d. The image of Rong qiqi on the south wall of a Tomb of Southern Dynasty. Unearthed in Xishanqiao, Nanjing, Jiangsu Province. Collected in Nanjing Museum, Photograph by Yuanyuan Duan.



Fig. 4.1-1e. The image of Ji Kang and Ruan Ji on the north wall of a Tomb of Southern Dynasty. Unearthed in Xishanqiao, Nanjing, Jiangsu Province. Collected in Nanjing Museum, Photograph by Yuanyuan Duan.



Fig. 4.1-1f. The image of Shantao、Wangrong on the north wall of a Tomb of Southern Dynasty. Unearthed in Xishanqiao, Nanjing, Jiangsu Province. Collected in Nanjing Museum, Photograph by Yuanyuan Duan.



Fig. 4.1-2a. The images of sages under trees on the north wall of the tomb of Cui Fen.
Unearthed in Linqu ,Shandong Province.

After Shandongsheng wenwu kaogu yanjiusuo, “山东临朐北齐崔芬壁画墓[Shandong linqu beiqi Cui fen bihuamu],” *Wenwu* 文物[Cultural Relics], no. 04 (2002):21-24.



Fig. 4.1-2b. The images of sages under trees on the west wall of the tomb of Cui Fen. Unearthed from Linqu, Shandong province. After Shandongsheng Wenwu Kaogu Yanjiusuo, "Shandong Linqu Beiqi Cuifen Bihuamu 山东临朐北齐崔芬壁画墓," *Wenwu* 文物[Cultural Relics], no. 04 (2002):11.



Fig. 4.1-2c. The images of sages under trees on the east wall of the tomb of Cui Fen. Unearthed from Linqu, Shandong province. After Shandongsheng Wenwu Kaogu Yanjiusuo, "Shandong Linqu Beiqi Cuifen Bihuamu 山东临朐北齐崔芬壁画墓," *Wenwu* 文物[Cultural Relics], no. 04 (2002):17.



Fig. 4.1-3a. Xiaodang Mountain Stone Shrine.
Unearthed in jinan,Changqing. Photography by Zheng Yan

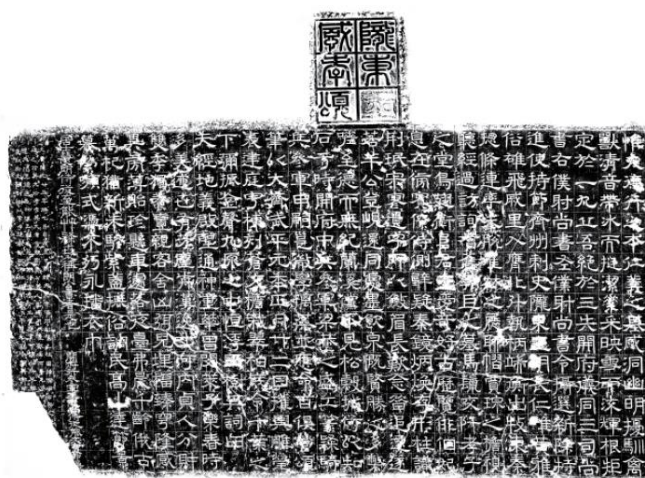


Fig. 4.1-3b. "Ode to the Longdong King's Feeling of Filial Piety" on the entire outside of the west wall of the Xiaodang Mountain Stone Shrine.
Photography by Zheng Yan.

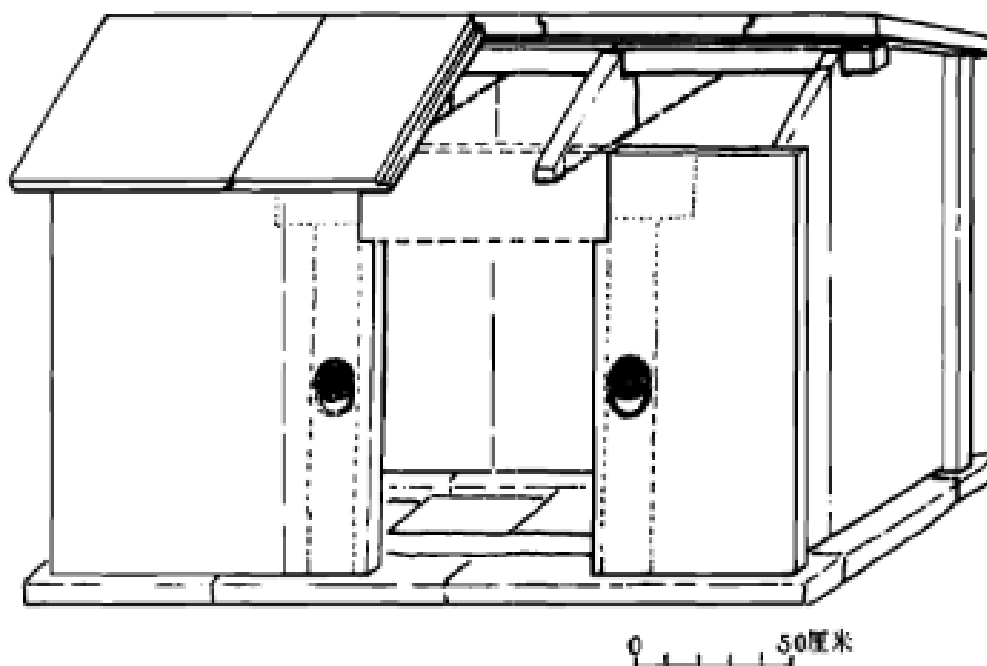


Fig. 4.1-4a. Stone house-shaped sarcophagi excavated from the Zhijiabao Tomb.
Unearthed in Datong, Shanxi province. Dated 484-489A.D.

After Yintian Wang and Junxi Liu, "Datong zhijiabao beiweimu shiguo bihua 大同智家堡北魏墓石椁壁画," *Wenwu* 文物 [Cultural Relics], no. 07 (2001): 41.



Fig. 4.1-4b. Figures holding lotus flowers on the east wall of stone house-shaped sarcophagi.
Unearthed in Datong, Shanxi province. Dated 484-489A.D.

After Yintian Wang, and Junxi Liu, "Datong zhijiabao beiweimu shiguo bihua 大同智家堡北魏墓石椁壁画," *Wenwu* 文物 [Cultural Relics], no. 07 (2001): 46.

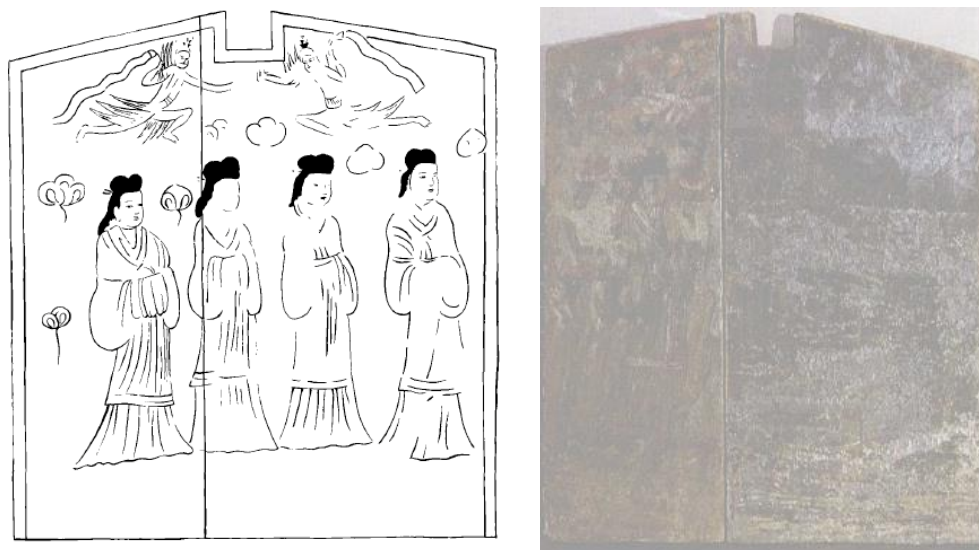


Fig. 4.1-4c. Figures holding lotus flowers on the west wall of stone house-shaped sarcophagi excavated from the Zhijiabao Tomb in Datong, Shanxi province. Dated 484-489A.D.
 After Yintian Wang, and Junxi Liu, “大同智家堡北魏墓石椁壁画[Datong zhijiabao beiweimu shiguo bihua],” *Wenwu* 文物 [Cultural Relics], no. 07 (2001): 44.



Fig. 4.1-5. Three large lotus flowers on the steps to the side of the coffin bed in a Northern Wei mural tomb in Datong, Shanxi Province
 After Junxi Liu, et al, “山西大同文瀛路北魏壁画墓发掘简报 Shanxi Datong Wenyinglu Beiwei Bihuamu Fajue Jianbao,” *Wenwu* 文物 [Cultural Relics], no. 12 (2011):fig.7.

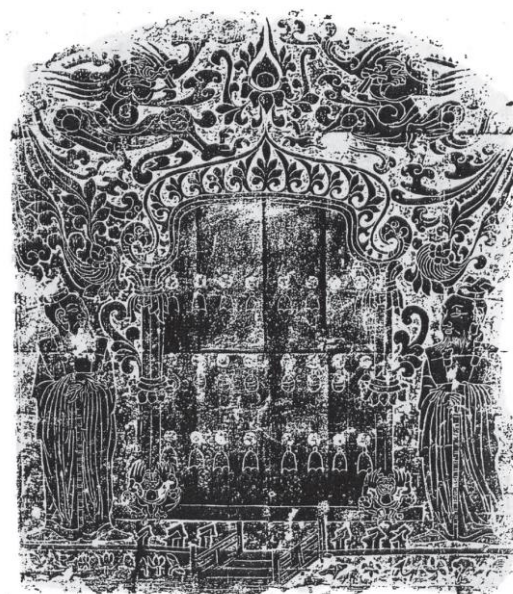


Fig. 4.1-6. Mani jewel on the center of headstall of The Northern Wei Sarcophagus
Collected in The Minneapolis Institute of Arts.

After Richard S. Davis, "A Stone Sarcophagus of the Wei Dynasty," *Bulletin of the Minneapolis Institute of Art* 37, no. 23 (1948): 110.



Fig. 4.1-7a. Ningmao stone chamber of Northern Wei dynasty

Dated early 6th century. Unearthed in Luoyang, Henan Province. H. 138cm, L. 200cm, W. 78cm.
Collected in the Museum of Fine Arts Boston (Copyright Museum of Fine Arts Boston)



Fig. 4.1-7b. A lotus flower appears in the hands of the middle group of figures on the outer side of the back wall of Ningmao stone chamber.

Collected in the Museum of Fine Arts Boston (Copyright Museum of Fine Arts Boston)



Fig. 4.1-8. Group of feathered figures holding lotus flowers appears on the left and right side panels of the sarcophagus.

Unearthed in Shangyao Village, Luoyang, Henan province. L. 224cm, H. 68cm. After Luoyang Museum 洛阳博物馆, "Luoyang beiwei huaxiang shiguan 洛阳北魏画像石棺," *Kaogu* 考古 [Archaeology], no. 03 (1980), 241.



Fig. 4.1-9. A seated couple in the centre of the north wall of stone room-shaped coffin
Unearthed in Zhijiabao, Datong, Shanxi Province. Dated Northern Wei Dynasty.
After Yintian Wang and Junxi Liu, "Datong zhijiabao beiweimu shiguo bihua 大同智家堡北魏墓石椁
壁画," *Wenwu* 文物 [Cultural Relics], no. 07 (2001): 45..

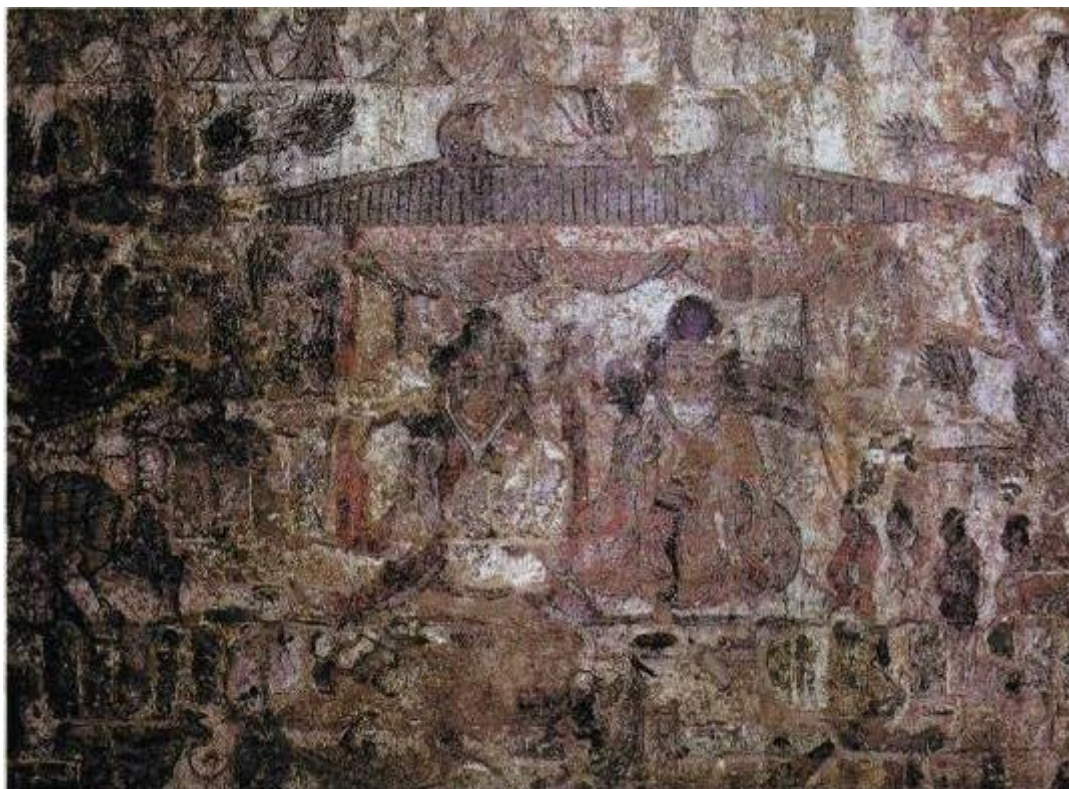


Fig. 4.1-10. A couple seated on the east wall of the chamber of a tomb with a clear date (A.D. 435).
Unearthed in Shaling, Datong, Shanxi province. After Feng Gao, et al, "Shanxi datong shaling beiwei
bihuamu fajuejianbao 山西大同沙岭北魏壁画墓发掘简报," *Wenwu* 文物 [Cultural Relics], no. 10
(2006): fig.40.



Fig. 4.1-11a. Images of the filial story of Ding Lan and Shun on the Ningmao stone chamber. Collected in the Boston's Art Museum (Copyright Boston's Art Museum)

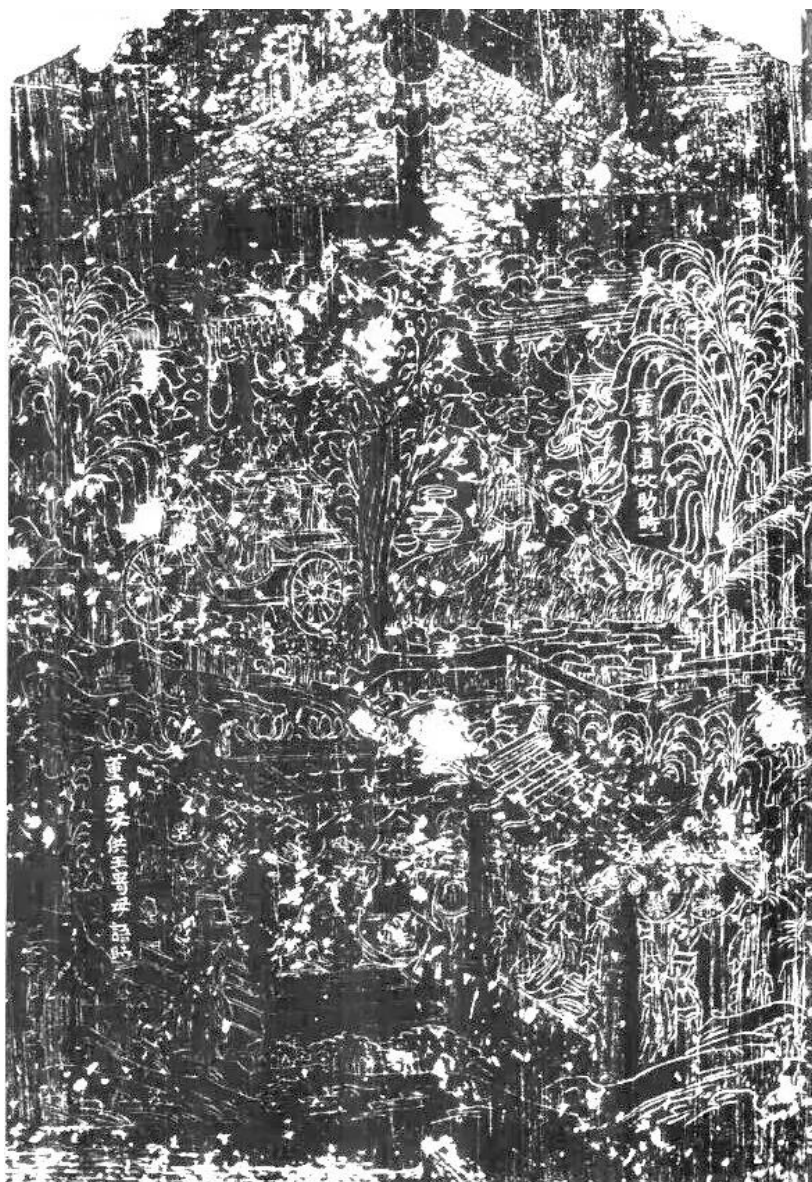


Fig. 4.1-11b. Images of the filial story of Dong Yong and Dong Yan on the Ningmao stone chamber. Collected in the Boston's Art Museum (Copyright Boston's Art Museum)



Fig. 4.1-12a. The image of a dragon carved on the left side of the sarcophagus. Dated 518-520A.D. After Taiming Wang, "榆社县发现一批石棺[Yushexian faxian yipi shiguan]," *山西省考古学会论文集*[Shanxi kaoguxuehui lunwenji], no. 3(2000): 120.



Fig. 4.1-12b. The image of a tiger on the right side of the sarcophagus.
After Taiming Wang, "Yushexian faxian yipi shiguan 榆社县发现一批石棺," *Shanxi kaoguxuehui lunwenji* 山西省考古学会论文集, no. 3(2000): 119.

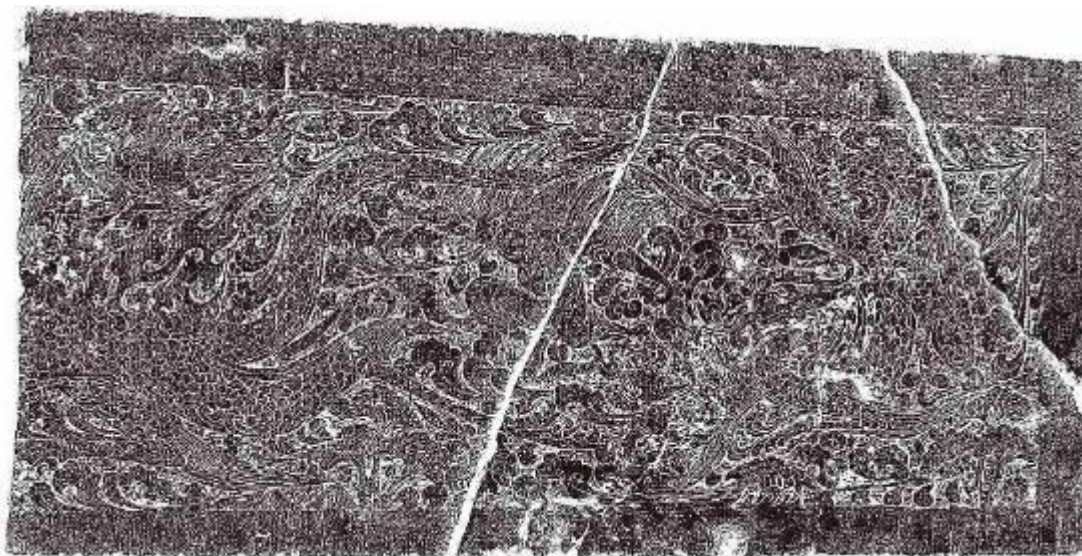
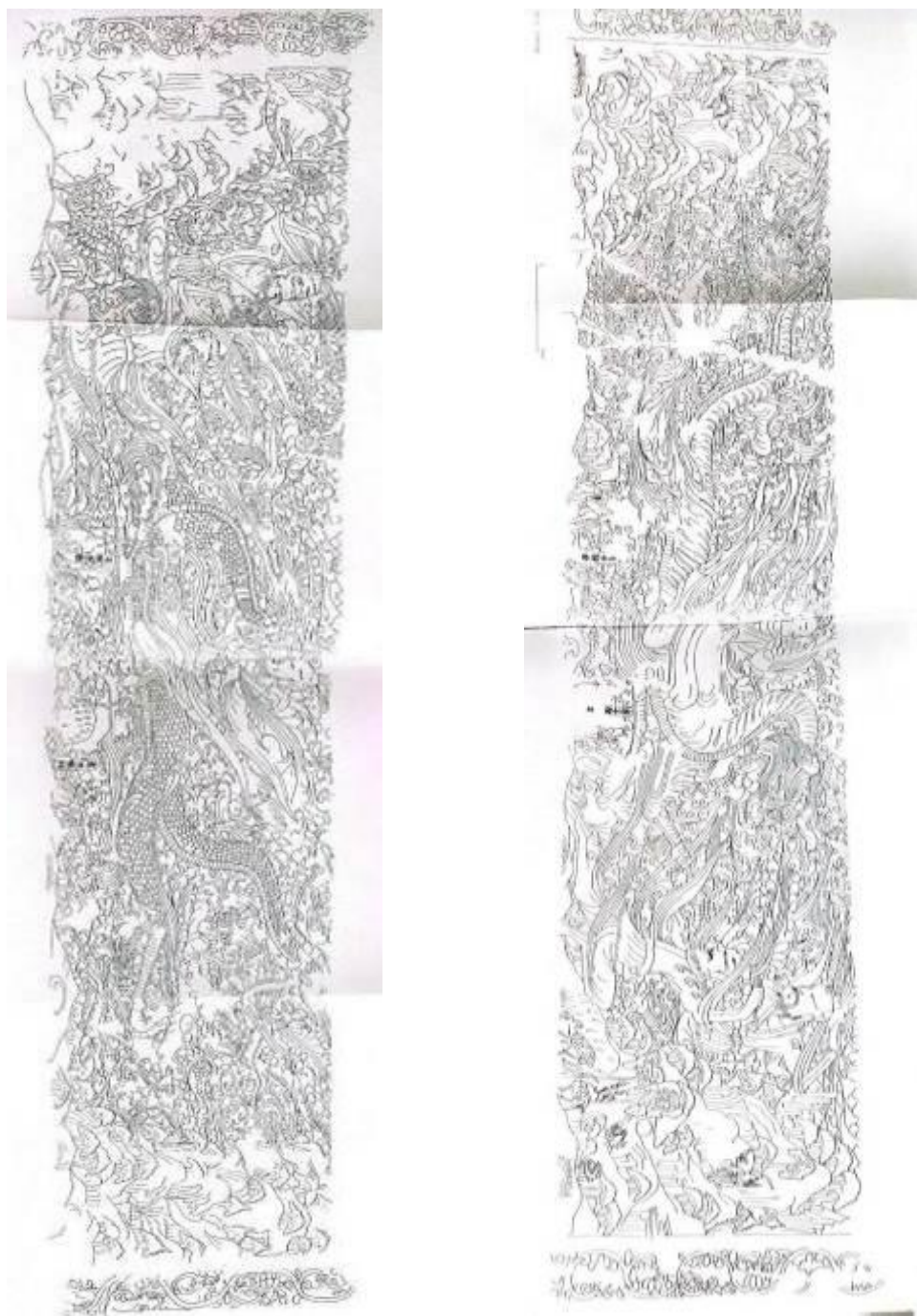


Fig. 4.1-13. The image of a dragon carved on the left side of the sarcophagus of Xue Huaiji.
Dated 523 A.D. Unearthed from a tomb in Wanrong, Shanxi Province. After Junhua Wu, Sheng Ma 马昇 and Longgang Zhong, "Shanxi Wanrong Xisiya Beiwei Xue Huaiji Mu Fajue Jianbao 山西万荣西思雅北魏薛怀吉墓发掘简报," *Wenwu* 文物[Cultural Relics], no. 01 (2023): fig.6.



Fig. 4.1-14 The images of Xuanwu and tiger on the fragmentary stone of the tomb's lid excavated from Xue Huaiji tomb

Dated 523 A.D. Unearthed from a tomb in Wanrong, Shanxi Province. After Junhua Wu, Sheng Ma and Longgang Zhong, "Shanxi wanrong xisiya beiwei Xue Huaiji mu fajue jianbao 山西万荣西思雅北魏薛怀吉墓发掘简报," *Wenwu* 文物[Cultural Relics], no. 01 (2023): fig.49.



Left side

Right side

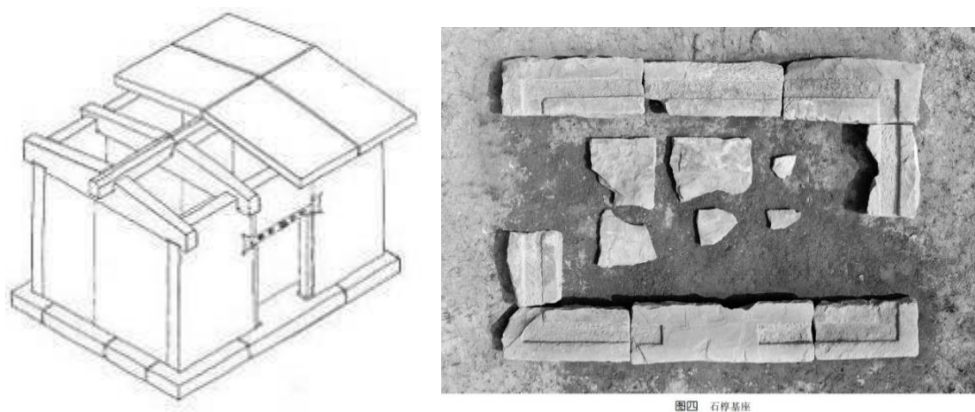
Fig. 4.1-15a,b. The image of dragon and tiger on Cao Lian sarcophagus
Dated the second year of Yong'an of the Northern Wei Dynasty (528 A.D.). Unearthed in the
tomb of Cao Lian, Luoyang, Henan Province. After Guohong Sima, *洛阳北魏曹连石棺墓*
[Luoyang Beiwei Caolian Shiguan Mu] (Beijing: Kexue Chuban She, 2019), Fig.24. Fig.31.



Fig. 4.1-15c The image of Xuanwu on the footplate of Cao Lian sarcophagus. Dated the second year of Yong'an of the Northern Wei Dynasty (528 A.D.). Unearthed in the tomb of Cao Lian, Luoyang, Henan Province. After Guohong Sima, *Luoyang Beiwei Caolian Shiguan Mu* 洛阳北魏曹连石棺墓 (Beijing: Kexue Chuban She, 2019), fig. 26-27.



Fig. 4.1-16. The images of Filial Piety Sons on the Northern Wei Sarcophagus. Collected in the Minneapolis Institute of Arts (Copyright The Minneapolis Institute of Arts)



图四 石椁基座

Fig. 4.1-17a. The Sarcophagus unearthed from a tomb of Xing Hejiang.

Dated the third year of the Huangxing of the Northern Wei Dynasty (469 A.D.) L. 223cm, W. 137cm H.170 cm. After Shunfang, Gu, and Xiaojing Lv, “Shanxi datong tongjiawan beiwei Xing Hejiang mu shiguo diaochajianbao 山西大同全家湾北魏邢合姜墓石椁调查简报,” *Wenwu* 文物[Cultural Relics], no .01 (2022): 19.

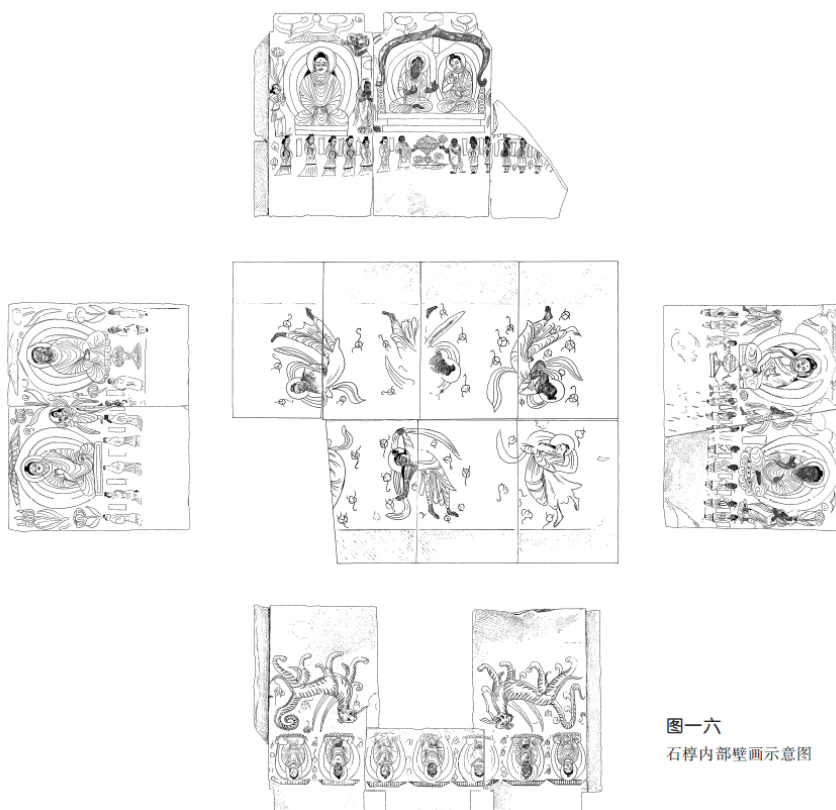
图一六
石椁内部壁画示意图

Fig. 4.1-17b. The images of Buddhist themes on the four walls of the Xing Hejiang sarcophagus. Unearthed from a tomb of Xing He Jiang in the third year of the Huangxing of the Northern Wei Dynasty (469 A.D.). After Shunfang Gu, and Xiaojing Lv, “Shanxi datong tongjiawan beiwei Xing Hejiang mu shiguo diaochajianbao 山西大同全家湾北魏邢合姜墓石椁调查简报,” *Wenwu* 文物 [Cultural Relics], no .01 (2022): fig.16.



Fig. 4.1-17c. Four Buddhas on the north wall of Xing Hejiang sarcophagus. Unearthed from a tomb of Xing Hejiang in the third year of the Huangxing of the Northern Wei Dynasty (469 A.D.). After Shunfang Gu, and Xiaojing Lv, “山西大同全家湾北魏邢合姜墓石椁调查简报[Shanxi datong tongjiawan beiwei Xing Hejiang mu shiguo diaochajianbao],” *Wenwu* 文物 [Cultural Relics], no.01 (2022): fig.21.



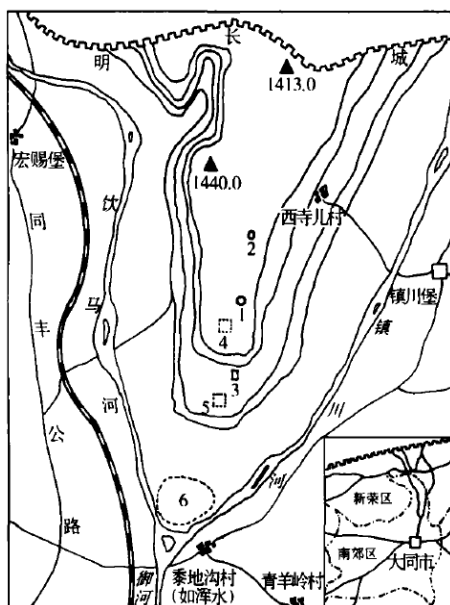
Fig. 4.1-17d. Seven Buddhas on the south wall of Xing Hejiang sarcophagus. Unearthed from a tomb of Xing Hejiang in the third year of the Huangxing of the Northern Wei Dynasty (469 A.D.). After Shunfang Gu, and Xiaojing Lv, “山西大同全家湾北魏邢合姜墓石椁调查简报 山西大同全家湾北魏邢合姜墓石椁调查简报,” *Wenwu* 文物 [Cultural Relics], no .01 (2022): fig.24.



Fig. 4.1-17e. The image of two Buddhas on the east wall of Xing Hejiang sarcophagus. Unearthed from the tomb of Xing Hejiang. Dated the third year of the Huangxing of the Northern Wei Dynasty (469 A.D.). After Shunfang Gu, and Xiaojing Lv, “Shanxi datong tongjiawan beiwei Xing Hejiang mu shiguo diaochajianbao 山西大同全家湾北魏邢合姜墓石椁调查简报,” *Wenwu* 文物 [Cultural Relics], no .01 (2022): fig.22.



Fig. 4.1-17f. The image of Two Buddhas on the west wall of Xing Hejiang sarcophagus. Unearthed from the tomb of Xing Hejiang, dated the third year of the Huangxing of the Northern Wei Dynasty (469 A.D.). After Shunfang Gu, and Xiaojing Lv, “Shanxi datong tongjiawan beiwei Xing Hejiang mu shiguo diaochajianbao 山西大同全家湾北魏邢合姜墓石椁调查简报,” *Wenwu* 文物 [Cultural Relics], no .01 (2022): 23.



图一 思远佛寺及陵园遗址分布示意图

- 1. 永固陵 2. 万年堂 3. 思远佛寺 4. 永固堂
- 5. 斋堂 6. 灵泉池(虚线为未发掘者)

图五
思远佛寺遗址平面图
1. 塔心实体 2. 佛殿
3. 僧房 4. 山门 5.
第一层平台 6. 第二
层平台 7. 第一层平
台甬道 8. 第二层平
台甬道

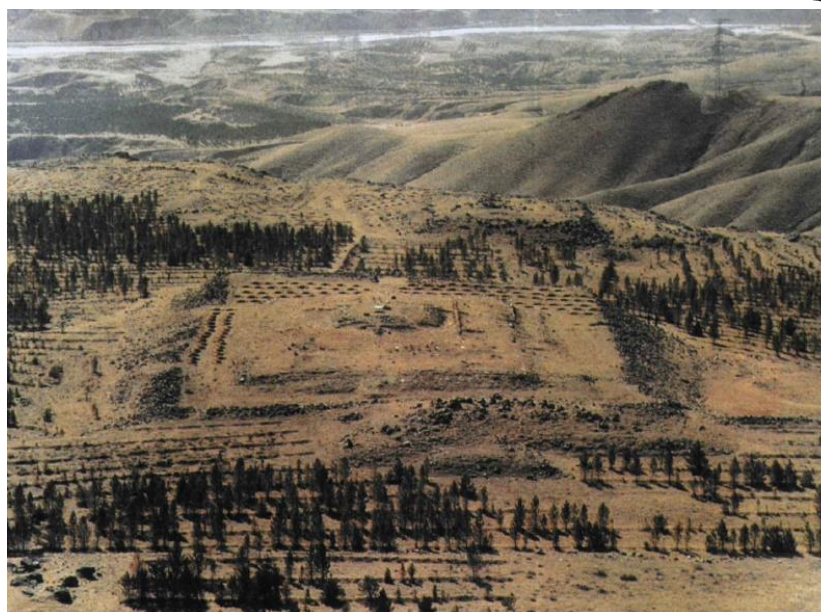
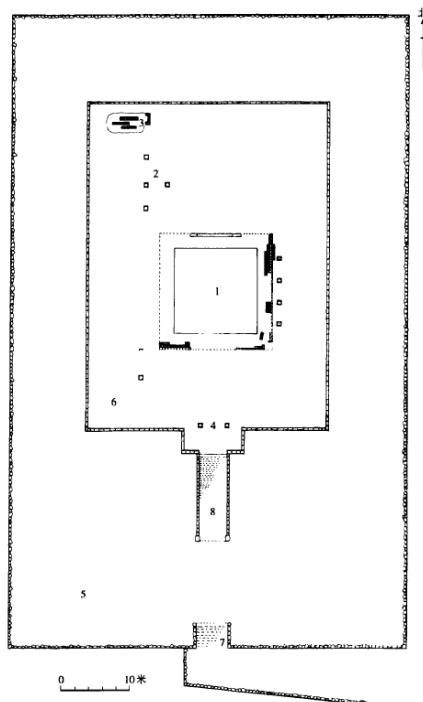


Fig. 4.1-18a The Siyuan Pagoda of Northern Wei Dynasty.
Located at the bottom of the southern slope about 800 metres away from the tomb of the Yonggu Mausoleum. After Ping Hu, "Datong beiwei fangshan siyuanfo yizhi fajue baogao 大同北魏方山思远佛寺遗址发掘报告," *Wenwu* 文物[Cultural Relics], no. 04 (2007): fig.6.

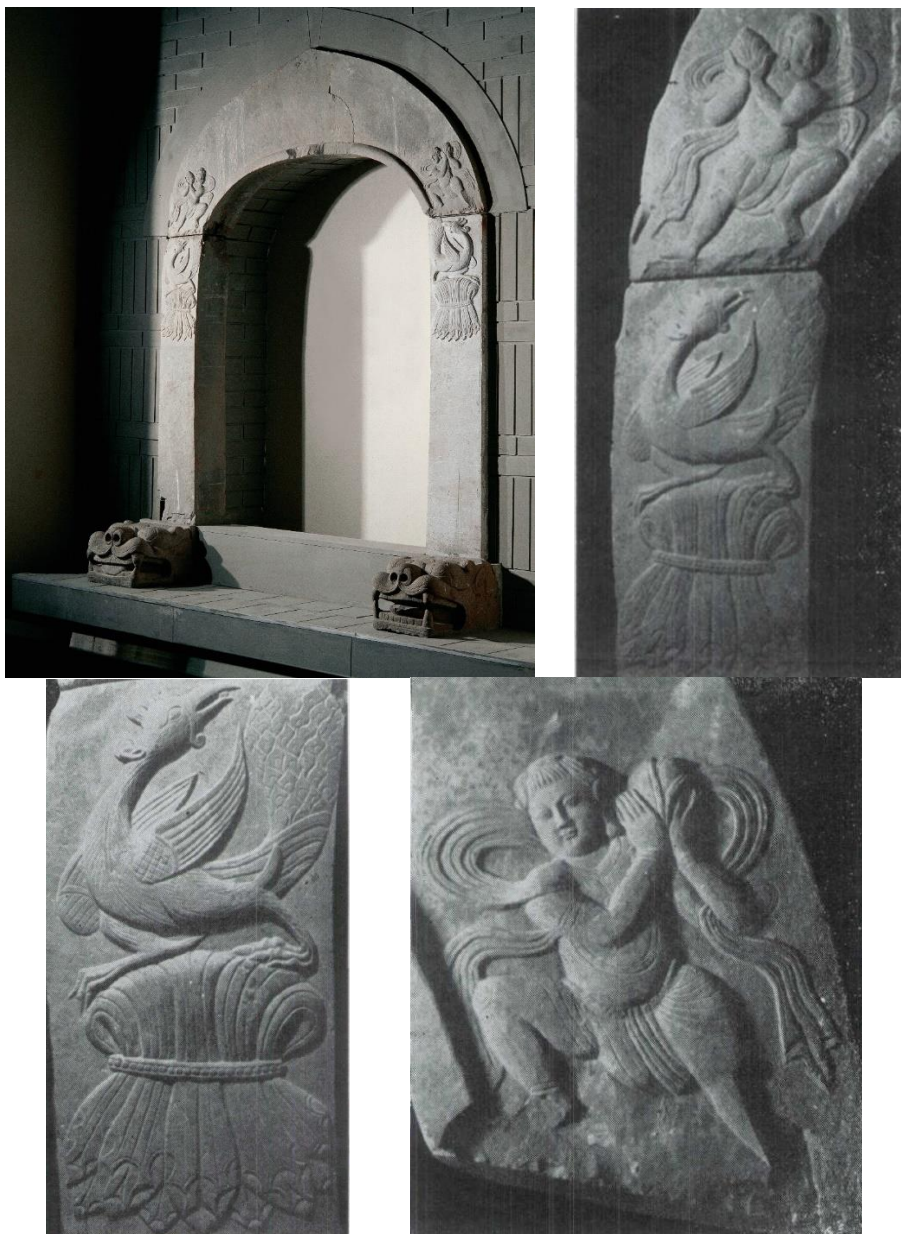


Fig. 4.1-18b The images on the stone door at the southern end of the Yonggu tomb chamber. The stone door, L.224 cm, W.50cm. Collected in National Museum of China. After Tingqi Xie, "Datong fangshan beiwei yongguling 大同方山北魏永固陵," *Wenwu* 文物[Cultural Relics], no. 07 (1978): 99.



Fig. 4.1-19a. Entrance of the tomb chamber in the late Northern Wei Dynasty tomb of Badaliang Cemetery M1.

Unearthed near Tongwancheng in Jingbian, Shaanxi Province. After Fulai Xing, et al, "Shaanxi jingbianxian tongwancheng zhoubian beichao fangmujiegou bihuamu fajuejianbao 陕西靖边县统万城周边北朝仿木结构壁画墓发掘简报," *Kaoguyuwenwu* 考古与文物 [Archaeology and Cultural Relics], no. 03 (2013):fig.1.



Fig. 4.1-19b A monk kneeling on a bed of ropes on the south wall of Badaliang Cemetery M1.

Dated the late Northern Wei Dynasty, unearthed near Tongwancheng in Jingbian, Shaanxi Province. After Fulai Xing, et al, "Shaanxi jingbianxian tongwancheng zhoubian beichao fangmujiegou bihuamu fajuejianbao 陕西靖边县统万城周边北朝仿木结构壁画墓发掘简报," *Kaoguyuwenwu* 考古与文物 [Archaeology and Cultural Relics], no. 03 (2013): fig.2.

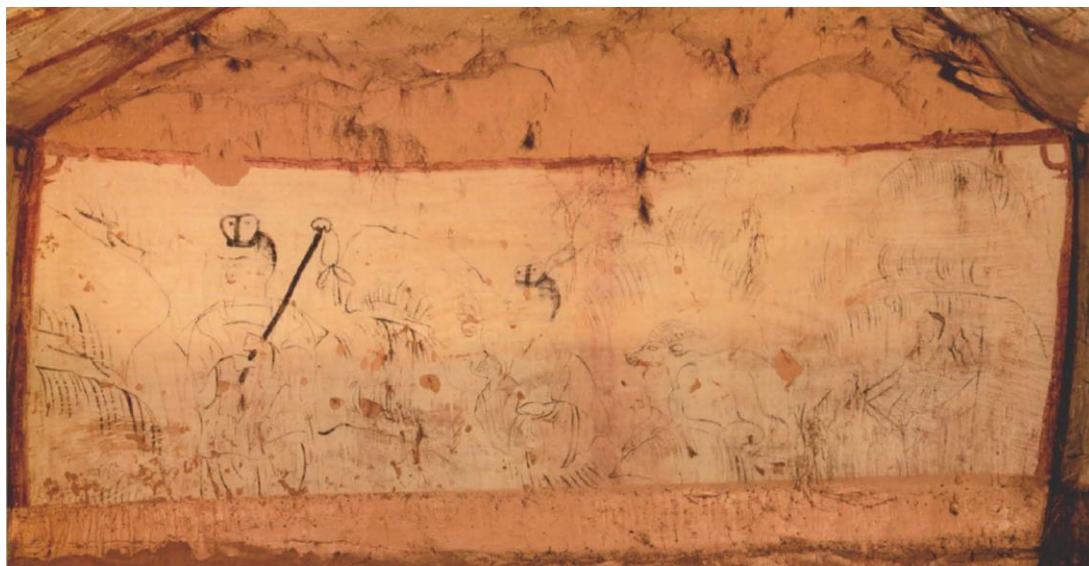


Fig. 4.1-19c. The east wall of the late Northern Wei Dynasty tomb of Badaliang Cemetery M1. Unearthed near Tongwancheng in Jingbian, Shaanxi Province. After Fulai Xing, et al, “Shaanxi jingbianxian tongwancheng zhoubian beichao fangmujiegou bihuamu fajuejianbao 陕西靖边县统万城周边北朝仿木结构壁画墓发掘简报,” *Kaoguyuwenwu* 考古与文物 [Archaeology and Cultural Relics], no. 03 (2013): 114.



Fig. 4.1-20a. An arched lintel supported by lotus column on the north wall of the anterior chamber of a Northern Wei tomb. Unearthed at Chenzhuang, Datong County, Datong City, Shanxi Province. After Feng Gao, et al, “Shanxi Datongshi Datongxian Chenzhuang Beiweimu Fajuejianbao 山西大同市大同县陈庄北魏墓发掘简报,” *Wenwu* 文物 [Cultural Relics] no.12 (2011): 98.



Fig. 4.1-20b. The image of lotus in the ceiling of the anterior chamber of a Northern Wei tomb. Unearthed at Chenzhuang, Datong County, Datong City, Shanxi Province. After Gao Feng, et al, “Shanxi Datongshi Datongxian Chenzhuang Beiweimu Fajuejianbao 山西大同市大同县陈庄北魏墓发掘简报,” *Wenwu* 文物 no.12 (2011): fig.7.



Fig. 4.1-20c. The astrological image in the ceiling center of the back chamber of a Northern Wei tomb. Unearthed at Chenzhuang, Datong County, Datong City, Shanxi Province. After Gao Feng, et al, “Shanxi datongshi datongxian chenzhuang beiweimu fajuejianbao 山西大同市大同县陈庄北魏墓发掘简报,” *Wenwu* 文物[Cultural Relics] no.12 (2011): fig.2.



Fig. 4.1-21. The lintel of the door of the tomb of Princess Ru Ru of the Eastern Wei Dynasty. Unearthed in Ci Xian, Hebei Province. After Chi Tang, "Dongwei Rurugongzhu Mu Bihua Shitan 东魏茹茹公主墓壁画试探," *Wenwu* 文物[Cultural Relics], no. 04 (1984): 16.

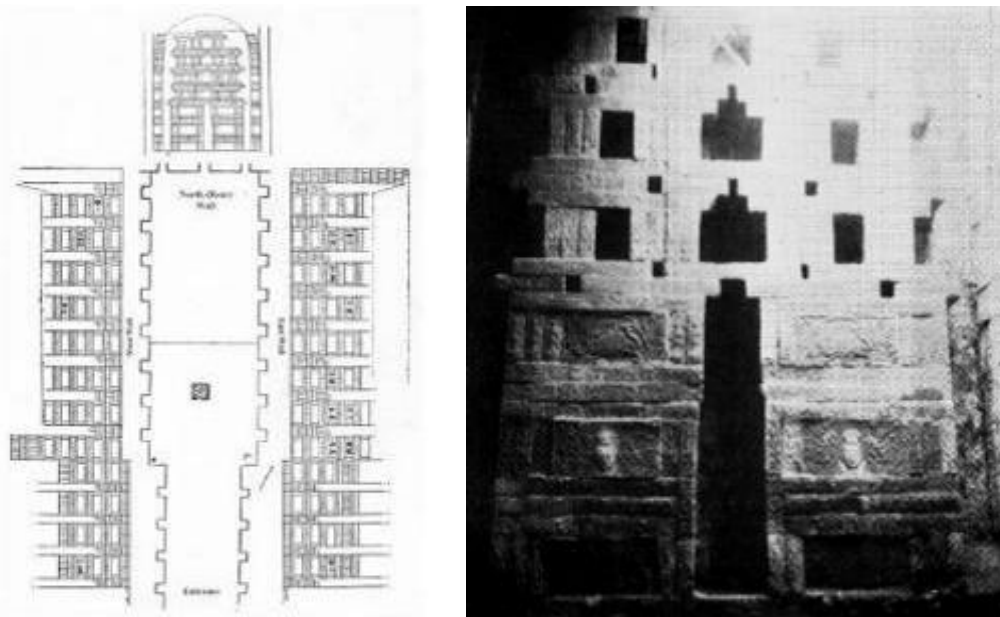


Fig. 4.1-22. The brick pagoda in the burial chamber of a tomb at Xue Zhuang. Unearthed at Xue Zhuang, Deng County, Henan Province. Dated Southern Dynasty (late fifth or early sixth century). After Henan Sheng wenhuaju wenwugongzuodui 河南省文化局文物工作队, *Dengxian Caise huaxiang zhuanmu* 邓县彩色画像砖墓(Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe 文物出版社, 1958), 11.



Fig. 4.1-23. The images on the facade of entrance of the tomb at Xuezhuang (Replica). Unearthed at southwest of Zhangcun in Xuezhuang, Deng County, Henan Province. Dated Southern Dynasties (420-589 CE). Facade of Tomb Entrance (Replica) H. 300 cm, W.270 cm. Preserved in Henan Provincial Institute of Cultural Relics and Archaeology. After Xu Guangji, *Zhongguo Chutu Bihua Quanji 5 中国出土壁画全集 5* (Beijing: Kexue chubanshe 科学出版社, 2012), 01.

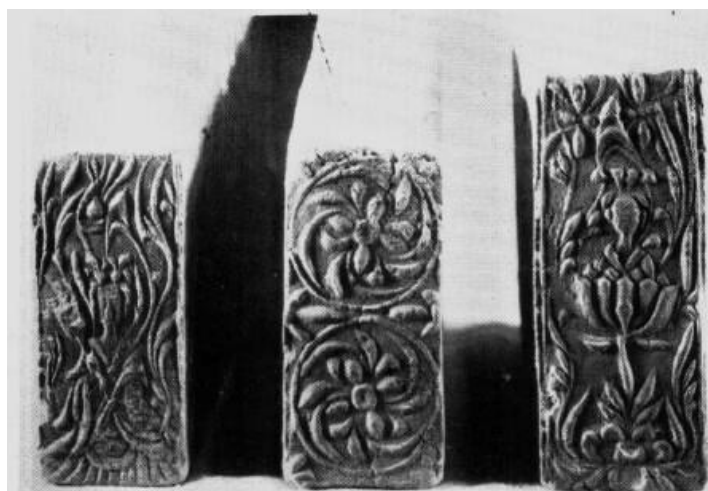


Fig. 4.1-24. The image of lotus and lotus incarnations on the bricks of Southern Dynasty tomb. Unearthed in Dengxian. After Henan Sheng wenhuaju wenwugongzuodui, *邓县彩色画像砖墓 [Dengxian Caise Huaxiang zhuanmu]* (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1958), 36.

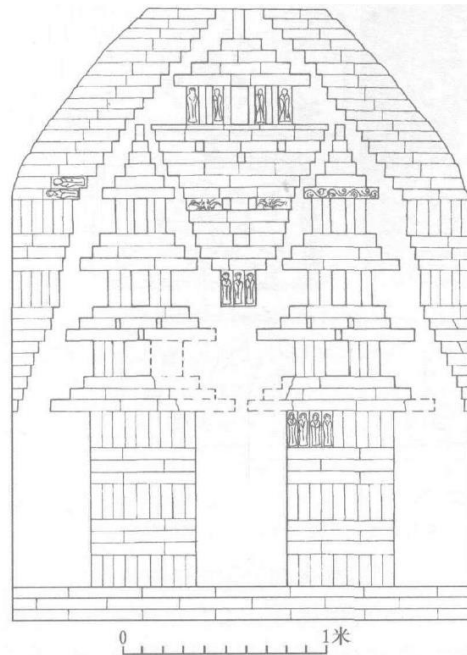


Fig. 4.1-25a. The brick pagoda in back wall of a tomb of Southern Dynasty. Unearthed in Hu Village, Jiangning District, Nanjing, Jiangsu province. After Xiang Li, “南京市江宁区胡村南朝墓[Nanjingshi Jiangningqu Hucun Nanchao Mu],” *Kaogu* 考古[Archaeology], no.06 (2008): fig.3.

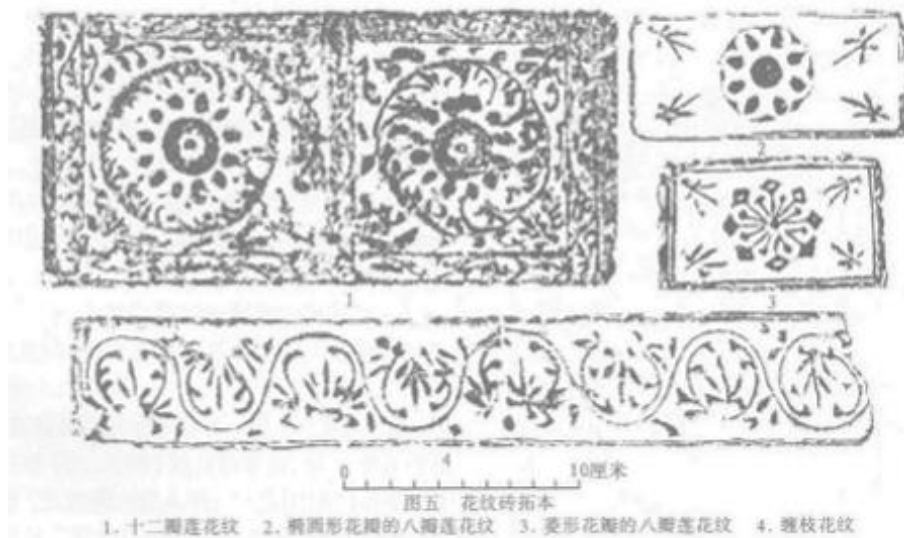


Fig. 4.1-25b. The image of lotus on the brick of a tomb of Southern Dynasty. Unearthed in Hu Village, Jiangning District, Nanjing, Jiangsu province. After Li Xiang, “南京市江宁区胡村南朝墓[Nanjingshi Jiangningqu Hucun Nanchao Mu],” *Kaogu* 考古[Archaeology], no.06 (2008): fig.5.

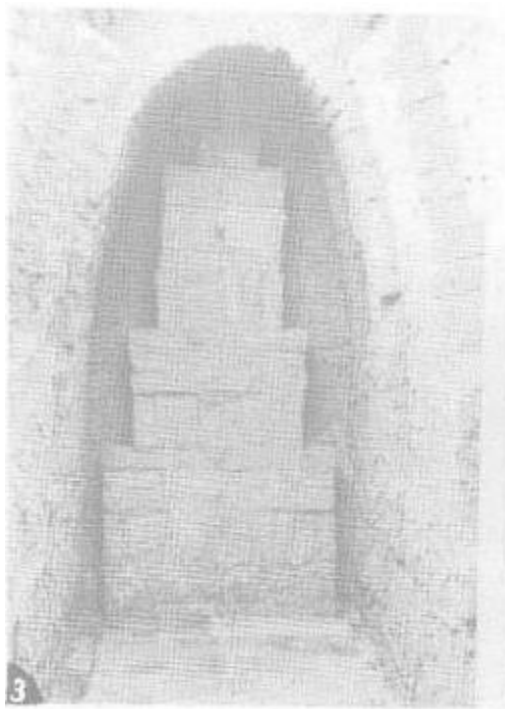


Fig. 4.1-26. Pagoda structures on the back wall of the chamber of Zelin tomb M5 Unearthed in Zelin, Ezhou City, Hubei Province. Dated Southern Dynasty. After Ezhou Shi Bowuguan 鄂州市博物馆, “鄂州市泽林南朝墓[Ezhoushi Zelin Nanchao Mu],” *Jiangnan kaogu* 江汉考古, no. 03 (1991):fig.3.

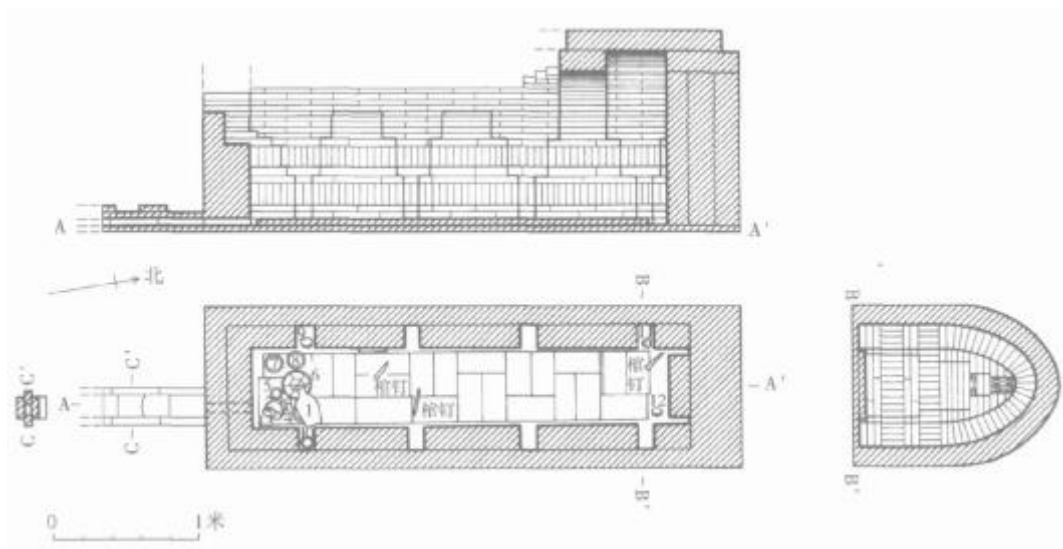


Fig. 4.1-27. Pagoda structure on the back wall of tomb M11 chamber of Six Dynasties in Ezhou. After Huang Yijun, Xu Jinsong and He Jianping, “湖北鄂州郭家细湾六朝墓[Hubei Ezhou Guojia Xiwan Liuchao Mu],” *Wenwu* 文物[Cultural Relics], no. 10 (2005): fig.5.

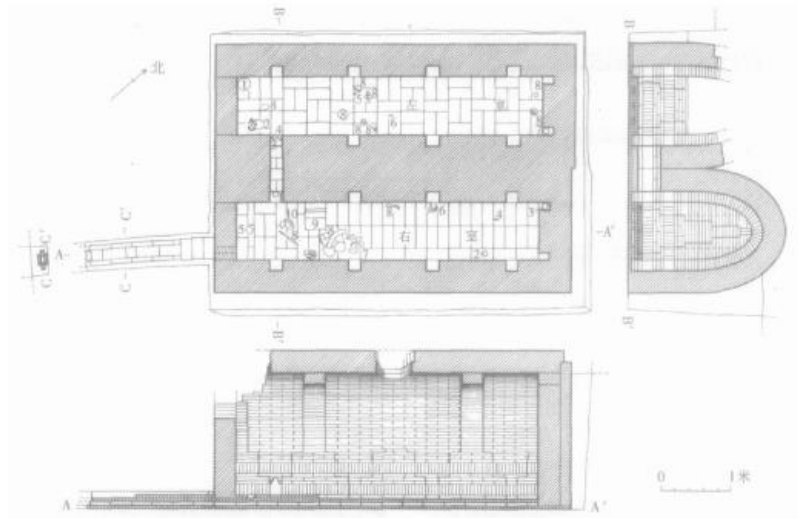


Fig. 4.1-28. Pagoda structure on the back wall of the tomb M8 chamber of the South Dynasty in Ezhou. After Huang Yijun, Xu Jinsong and He Jianping, “湖北鄂州郭家细湾六朝墓[Hubei ezhou guojiaxiwan liuchao mu],” *Wenwu* 文物, no. 10 (2005): fig.3.

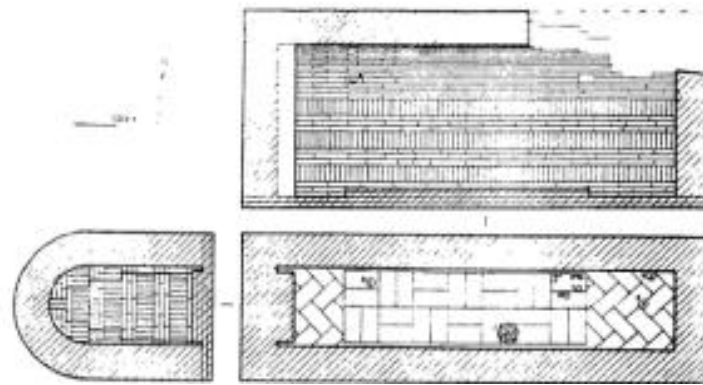


Fig. 4.1-29. Pagoda structure on the back wall of the tomb M1 chamber of the Southern Dynasty. After Ezhou Shi Bowuguan, “Ezhoushi guanyinlong nanchaomu fajuejianbao 鄂州市观音垅南朝墓发掘简报,” *Jianghankaogu* 江汉考古[Jianghan Archaeology], no.04 (1995),fig.2.

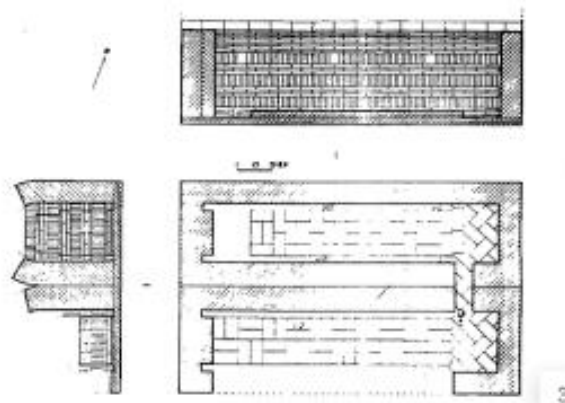


Fig. 4.1-30. Pagoda structure on the back wall of the tomb M2 chamber of the Southern Dynasty Unearthed in Guanyin Long, Ezhou, Hubei Province. After Ezhou Shi Bowuguan, “Ezhoushi guanyinlong nanchaomu fajuejianbao 鄂州市观音垅南朝墓发掘简报,” *Jianghankaogu* 江汉考古 [Jianghan Archaeology], no.04 (1995).fig.5.

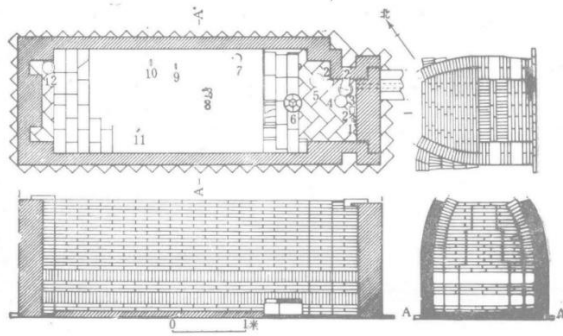


Fig. 4.1-31. Pagoda structure on the back wall of the tomb M13 of Six Dynasty. Unearthed in Tangjiaotou, Ezhou, Hubei Province. After Li Taoyuan , Xu Jingsong, “Hubei ezhoushi tangjiaotou liuchaomu 湖北鄂州市塘角头六朝墓,” *Kaogu* 考古[Archaeology], no. 11 (1996): fig.10.



Fig. 4.1-32a. Pagoda structure on the back wall of the Southern Dynasty brick tomb. Unearthed in Qingshui Gou, Xiangyang City, Hubei Province. After Yang Yi, and Liu Jiangsheng, “Hubei Xiangyang Qilin Qingshuigou Nanchao Huanxiang Zhuanmu Fajuejianbao 湖北襄阳麒麟清水沟南朝画像砖墓发掘简报,” *Wenwu* 文物[Cultural Relics], no.11 (2017): fig.4.

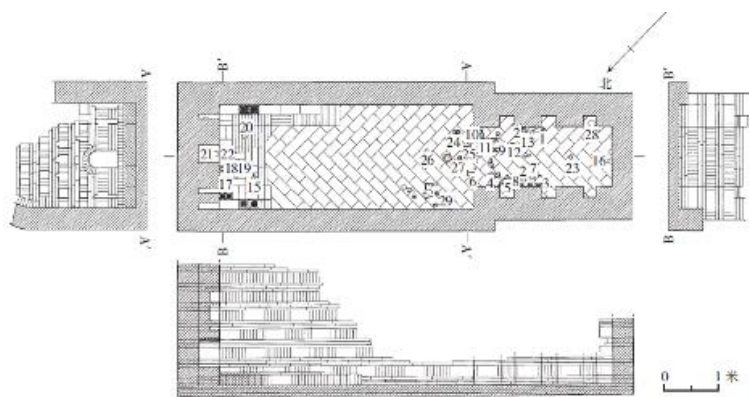


Fig. 4.1-32b. Pagoda structure on the back wall of the Southern Dynasty brick tomb. Unearthed in Qingshui Gou, Xiangyang City, Hubei Province. After Yang Yi, and Liu Jiangsheng, “Hubei Xiangyang Qilin Qingshuigou Nanchao Huanxiang Zhuanmu Fajue Jianbao 湖北襄阳麒麟清水沟南朝画像砖墓发掘简报,” *Wenwu* 文物[Cultural Relics], no.11 (2017): fig.2.



Fig. 4.1-32c. The image of a figure holding a lotus flower on a brick tomb of the Southern Dynasty. Unearthed in Qingshui Gou, Xiangyang City, Hubei Province. H. 19cm, W. 37.7cm. After Yang Yi, and Liu Jiangsheng, "Hubei Xiangyang Qilin Qingshuigou Nanchao Huanxiang Zhuanmu Fajuejianbao 湖北襄阳麒麟清水沟南朝画像砖墓发掘简报," *Wenwu* 文物[Cultural Relics] no.11 (2017): fig.7.



Fig. 4.1-33a. The image of a figure holding a lotus flower in the tomb M1 of Jiajiachong. Unearthed in Xiangyang, Hubei province. L.36.2cm, H.16.1cm, W. 6.4cm. After Xiangyangshi bowuguan 襄阳市博物馆, Xiangyang Wenwu Kaogu Yanjiusuo 襄阳市文物考古研究所, Guchengxian Bowuguan 谷城县博物馆, *天国之享 襄阳南朝画像砖艺术*[Tianguozhixiang Xiangyang Nanchao Huaxiangzhuan Yishu] (Beijing: Kexue Chubanshe, 2016), 128.



Fig. 4.1-33b. The image of a figure holding a lotus flower in tomb M1 of Jiajiachong. Unearthed in Xiangyang, Hubei province. After Xiangyangshi bowuguan 襄阳市博物馆, Xiangyang wenwu kaogu yanjiusuo 襄阳市文物考古研究所, Guchengxian bowuguan 谷城县博物馆, *Tianguozhixiang Xiangyang nanchao huaxiangzhuan yishu* 天国之乡 襄阳南朝画像砖艺术(Beijing: kexuechubanshe, 2016), 131



Fig. 4.1-33c. The image of a figure holding a lotus flower in tomb M1 of Jiajiachong. Unearthed in Xiangyang, Hubei province. L.37 cm, H.19cm. W.6 cm. After Xiangyangshi bowuguan 襄阳市博物馆, Xiangyang wenwu kaogu yanjiusuo 襄阳市文物考古研究所, Guchengxian bowuguan 谷城县博物馆, *Tianguozhixiang Xiangyang nanchao huaxiangzhuan yishu* 天国之乡 襄阳南朝画像砖艺术(Beijing: kexuechubanshe, 2016), 131.



Fig. 4.1-33d. The image of a figure holding a lotus flower in tomb M1 of Jiajiachong. Unearthed in Xiangyang, Hubei province. L.36.2 cm, H.19.1, W. 6.4 cm. After Xiangyangshi bowuguan 襄阳市博物馆, Guchengxian bowuguan 谷城县博物馆, *Tianguozhixiang Xiangyang nanchao huaxiangzhuan yishu* 天国之乡 襄阳南朝画像砖艺术(Beijing: kexuechubanshe, 2016), 130.



Fig. 4.1-33e. The image of a figure holding a lotus flower in tomb M1 of Jiajiachong. Unearthed in Xiangyang, Hubei province. L.37.5 cm, H.19 cm, W. 6.2 cm. After Xiangyangshi bowuguan 襄阳市博物馆, Guchengxian bowuguan 谷城县博物馆, *Tianguozhixiang Xiangyang nanchao huaxiangzhuan yishu* 天国之乡 襄阳南朝画像砖艺术(Beijing: kexuechubanshe, 2016), 129.



Fig. 4.1-34a. The image of Lotus in the Southern Dynasty brick tomb at Qingshuigou Unearthed in Xiangyang, Hubei Province. After Yang Yi 杨一 and Liu Jiangsheng, “Hubei Xiangyang qilin qingshuigou nanchao huanxiang zhuanmu fajuejianbao 湖北襄阳麒麟清水沟南朝画像砖墓发掘简报,” *Wenwu* 文物[Cultural Relics] no.11 (2017): fig.24.



Fig. 4.1-34b. The image of Lotus on the Southern Dynasty brick tomb at Qingshuigou. Unearthed in Xiangyang, Hubei Province. L. 18.5cm, H. 10cm, W. 6cm. After Xiangyangshi bowuguan 襄阳市博物馆, Guchengxian bowuguan 谷城县博物馆, *天国之享 襄阳南朝画像砖艺术* [Tianguozhixiang Xiangyang nanchao huaxiangzhuan yishu] (Beijing: kexuechubanshe, 2016), 133.

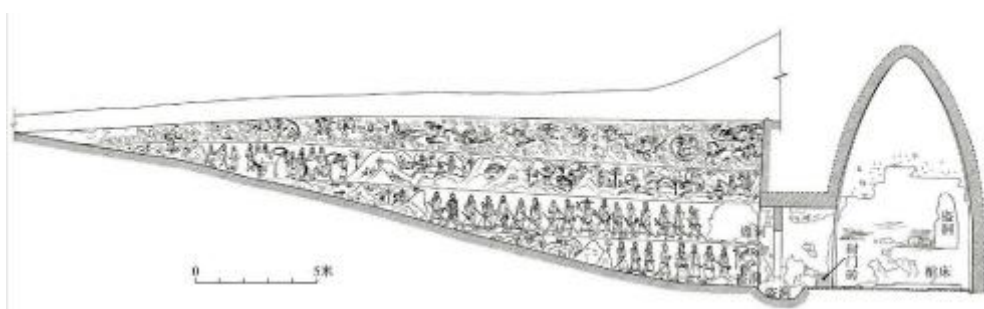


Fig. 4.1-35a. The image of processions on the west wall of the passage of Jiuyuan Gang Tomb. Dated Northern Dynasty, unearthed at Jiuyuan Gang, Shanxi province. After Zhang Qingjie, et al, “山西忻州市九原岗北朝壁画墓[Shanxi Xinzhoushi Jiuyuangang Beichao Bihuamu],” *Kaogu* 考古 [Archaeology], no.07 (2015): 11.

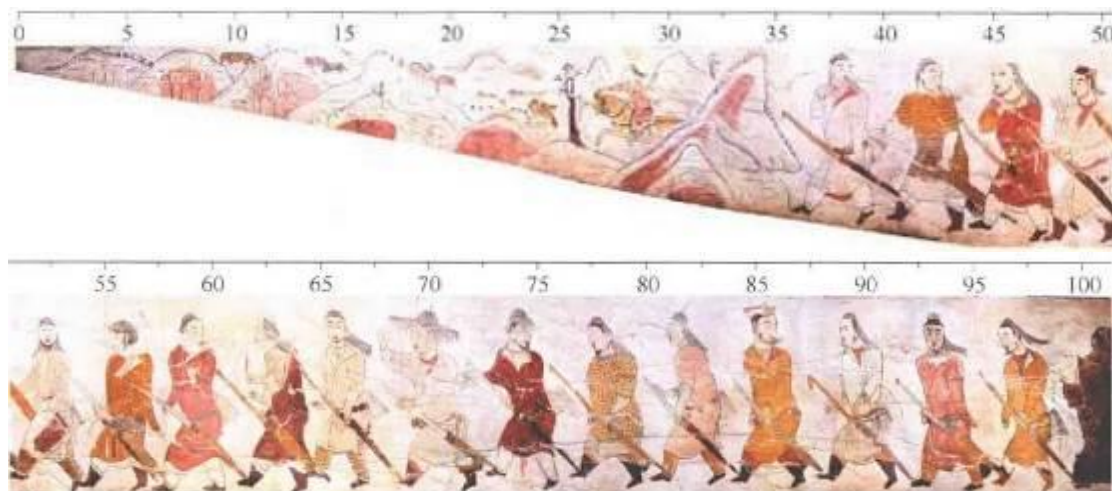


Fig. 4.1-35b. The image of processions departing from the direction of the tomb door.
 Located on the west wall of the passage of the Northern Dynasty tombs. Unearthed at Jiuyuan Gang,
 Shanxi Province. After Shanxi bowuyuan 山西博物院, *Shanxi jiuyuangang beichao muzang bihua
 banqian baohu* 山西九原岗北朝墓葬壁画搬迁保护, (Beijing: Kexue chubanshe, 2018), Plate W-3-1,
 Plate W-3-2.



Fig. 4.1-35c. The image of processions returning towards the tomb door,
 Located on the west wall of the passage of the Northern Dynasty tombs, unearthed at Jiuyuan Gang,
 Shanxi province. After Shanxi bowuyuan 山西博物院, *Shanxi jiuyuangang beichao muzang bihua
 banqian baohu* 山西九原岗北朝墓葬壁画搬迁保护, (Beijing: Kexue chubanshe, 2018), Plate W-4-
 1, Plate W-4-2.

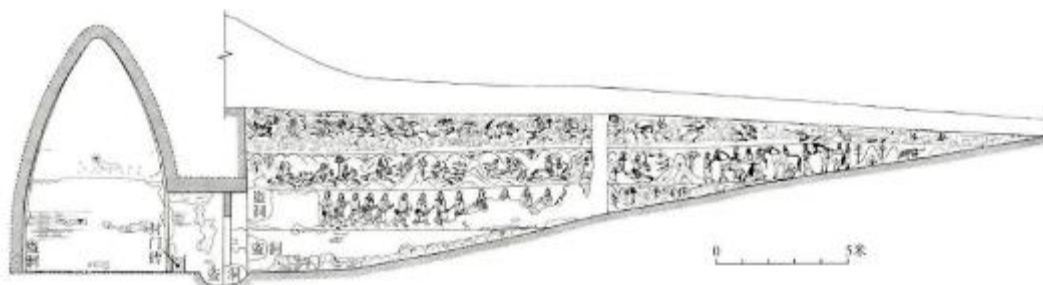


Fig. 4.1-36a. The image of processions on the east wall of the passage of the Northern Dynasty tomb.
 Unearthed at Jiuyuan Gang, Shanxi province. After Zhang Qingjie, et al, “山西忻州市九原岗北朝壁
 画墓[Shanxi Xinzhou Shi Jiuyuangang Beichao Bihuamu],” *Kaogu* 考古, no.07 (2015): 17.

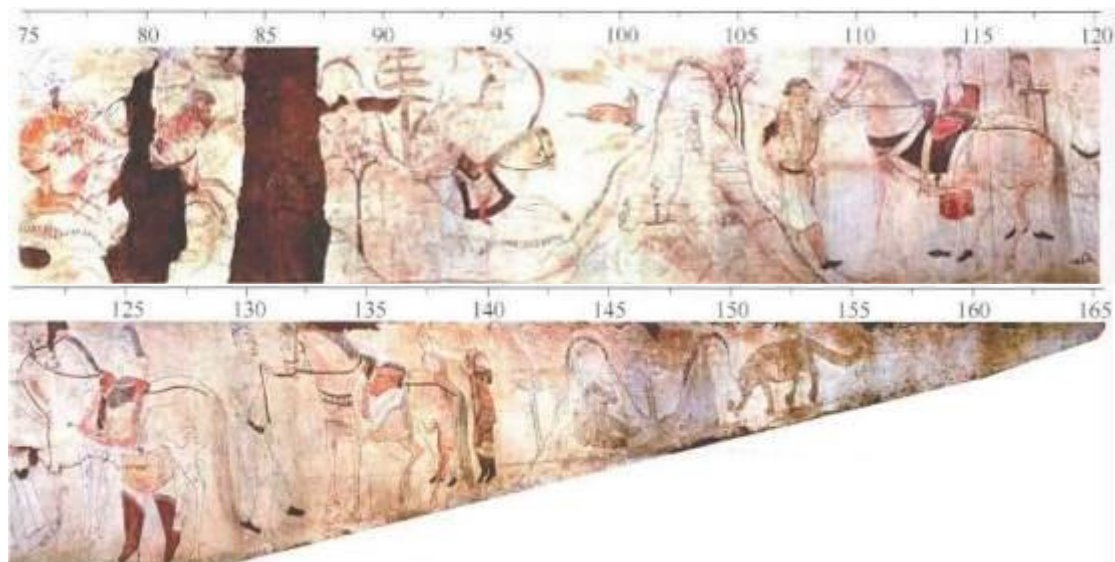


Fig. 4.1-36b. The image of processions returning towards the tomb door.
 Located on the east wall of the passage of the Northern Dynasty tombs, unearthed at Jiuyuan Gang, Shanxi province. After Shanxi bowuyuan 山西博物院, 山西九原岗北朝墓葬壁画搬迁保护[Shanxi jiuyuangang beichao muzang bihua banqian baohu] (Beijing: Kexue chubanshe, 2018), Plate E-2-3, E-2-4.



Fig. 4.1-36c. The image of processions departing from the direction of the tomb door
 Located on the east wall of the passage of the Northern Dynasty tombs, unearthed at Jiuyuan Gang, Shanxi province. After Shanxi bowuyuan 山西博物院, 山西九原岗北朝墓葬壁画搬迁保护[Shanxi jiuyuangang beichao muzang bihua banqian baohu] (Beijing: Kexue chubanshe, 2018), Plate E-3-1, E-3-2.



Fig. 4.1-36d. The image of processions returning towards the tomb door.
 Located on the east wall of the passage of the Northern Dynasty tombs found at Jiuyuan Gang, Shanxi province. After Shanxi bowuyuan 山西博物院, 山西九原岗北朝墓葬壁画搬迁保护[Shanxi jiuyuangang beichao muzang bihua banqian baohu] (Beijing: Kexue chubanshe, 2018), Plate E-4-1.



Fig. 4.1-37. The murals on the walls of the tomb of Lou Rui.
Dated the first year of the Wuping reign (570 A.D.) Collected in Shanxi Museum.

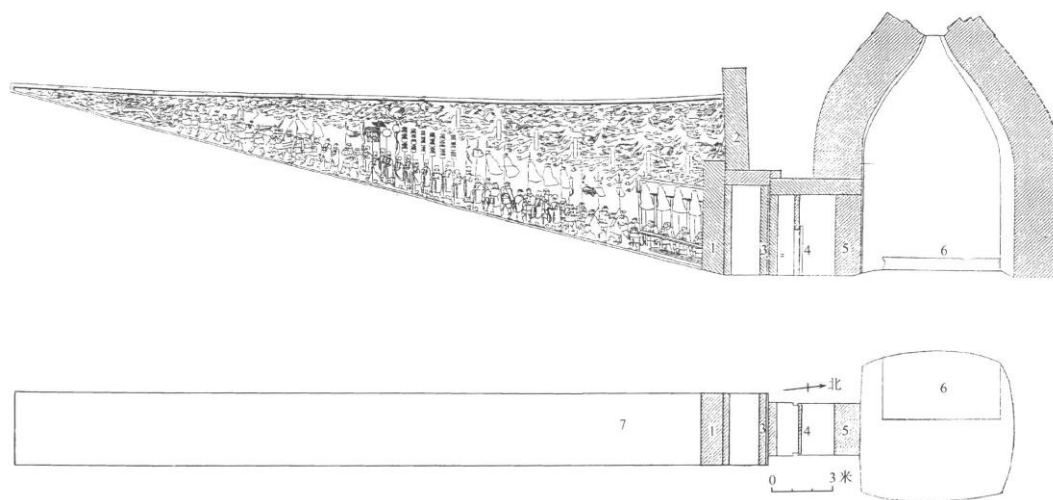


Fig. 4.1-38a. The image of processions in the North Dynasty mural tomb of Wanzhang.
Unearthed in Ci Xian County, Hebei Province. After Zhongguo shehuikexueyuan kaogu yanjiusuo 中国社会科学院考古研究所, *Cixian Zhangwan Beichao Bihuamu* 磁县湾漳北朝壁画墓 (Beijing: Kexue chubanshe, 2003), Plate 6.



Fig. 4.1-38b. The image of huge lotus on the floor in the North Dynasty mural tomb of Wanzhang Unearthed in Ci Xian County, Hebei Province. After Zhongguo shehuikexueyuan kaogu yanjiusuo 中国社会科学院考古研究所, *Cixian Zhangwan beichao bihuamu* 磁县湾漳北朝壁画墓, (Beijing: Kexue chubanshe, 2003), Plate 60.



Fig. 4.1-39. Northern Qi Dynasty Xu Xianxiu tomb, Dated Wuping, in the second year of the 5th millennium (571A.D.) , unearthed in Shanxi province. After Taiyuanshi wenwukaogu yanjiusuo 太原市文物考古研究所, *Beiqi Xuxianxiu mu* 北齐徐显秀墓, (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2005), 2.



Fig. 4.1-39a. The image of processions on the west wall of passage of Xu Xianxiu tomb. Dated Northern Qi Dynasty, Wuping, in the second year of the 5th millennium (571A.D.) After Taiyuanshi wenwukaogu yanjiusuo 太原市文物考古研究所, *Beiqi Xuxianxiu mu* 北齐徐显秀墓, (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2005), 9.



Fig. 4.1-39b. The image of processions on the east wall of passage of Xu Xianxiu tomb. Dated Northern Qi Dynasty, Wuping, the second year of the 5th millennium (571A.D.), Unearthed in Shanxi. After Taiyuanshi wenwukaogu yanjiusuo 太原市文物考古研究所, *Beiqi Xuxianxiu mu* 北齐徐显秀墓, (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2005), 2.



Fig. 4.1-39c. The image of Tomb Occupant Couple Seated Abreast in Xu Xianxiu Tomb. Unearthed in Shanxi, H: 410cm, W: 570cm. Northern Qi Dynasty, Wuping, in the second year of the 5th millennium (571A.D.). After Xu Guangji, *中国出土壁画全集 2* [*Zhongguo chutu bihua quanji 2*] (Beijing: Kexue chubanshe, 2012), Plate. 80.



Fig. 4.1-39d. The image of Readied formation and ox cart in Xu Xianxiu tomb. Unearthed in Shanxi, Northern Qi Dynasty, Wuping, in the second year of Northern Qi (571A.D.), H. 410cm, W. 575cm. After Xu Guangji, *中国出土壁画全集 2* [*Zhongguo Chutu Bihua Quanji 2*] (Beijing: Kexue Chubanshe, 2012), Plate 86.



Fig. 4.1-39e. The image of Readied formation in Xu Xianxiu tomb.
Unearthed in Shanxi, Northern Qi Dynasty, Wuping, in the second year of Northern Qi (571A.D.).
After Chang Yimin, Pei Jingrong and Wang Pujun, “太原北齐徐显秀墓发掘简报 Taiyuan Beiqi
Xuxianxiu Mu Fajue Jianbao,” *Wenwu* 文物[Cultural Relics], no.10 (2003): 19.



Fig. 4.1-39f. The image of Guards of honor in Xu Xianxiu tomb
Unearthed in Shanxi, Northern Qi Dynasty, Wuping, in the second year of Northern Qi (571A.D.), H.
410 cm, W. 570 cm. After Xu Guangji, *Zhongguo chutu bishua quanji 2* 中国出土壁画全集 2,(Beijing:
Kexue chubanshe, 2012.) Plate 88.



Fig. 4.2-1. Images of human figures in mural tombs from the Eastern Han Dynasty Dated Xin to Early Eastern Han (9-88 CE), H. 40 cm, W. 88 cm, Uncarthed from tomb M1 at the construction site of Goods and Materials Bureau in Dongpingxian, Shandong Province, in 2007. Preserved in the Shandong Museum. After Xu Guangji, *中国出土壁画全集 2* [*Zhongguo chutu bihua quanji 2*] (Beijing: Kexue chubanshe, 2012), Fig. 18.



Fig. 4.2-2. The image of a Guiding chariot in the Western Han Tomb. Dated Late Eastern Han-Early Three-Kingdom (around 220 CE). Unearthed from Tomb 2 at Zhucun in eastern suburbs of Luoyang, Jingyuan Primary School, Henan province, in 1991. Preserved in Museums of Ancient Tombs in Luoyang. After Xu Guangji, *中国出土壁画全集 5* [*Zhongguo chutu bihua quanji 5*] (Beijing: Kexue chubanshe, 2012), fig. 62.



Fig. 4.2-3 a. The image of chariot in Han tomb at Changcun.

Unearthed from Han tomb at Changcun of Wangcunxiang in Xingyang, Henan province, in 1995. H. 40.36 cm, W. ca.57.9 cm. Inscribed with the title "巴郡太守时车". After Xu Guangji, *中国出土壁画全集5* [Zhongguo Chutu Bihua QuANJI 5] (Beijing: Kexue chubanshe, 2012), fig. 94.



Fig. 4.2-3 b. The image of chariot in Eastern Han tomb at Changcun

Unearthed from Wangcunxiang in Xingyang, Henan province, in 1995. H. 35.5 cm; W. ca. 51 cm. inscribed with the title "北陵令时车". Preserved on the original site. After Xu Guangji, *中国出土壁画全集5* [Zhongguo chutu bihua quanji 5] (Beijing: Kexue chubanshe, 2012), fig. 95.



Fig. 4.2-3 c. The image of chariot in Eastern Han tomb at Changcun. Dated to Eastern Han (25-220 CE), H. 32 cm, W. ca. 48 cm. Unearthed from Wangcunxiang in Xingyang, Henan, in 1995. Preserved on the original site. After Xu Guangji, *中国出土壁画全集 5* [Zhongguo Chutu Bihua Quanji 5] (Beijing: Kexue chubanshe, 2012), fig. 96.



Fig. 4.2-3 d. The image of chariot in Eastern Han tomb. Dated to Eastern Han (25-220 CE), H. 32.2 cm; W. ca. 44 cm. Unearthed from Han tomb at Changcun of Wangcunxiang in Xingyang, Henan, in 1995. Preserved on the original site. After Xu Guangji, *中国出土壁画全集 5* [Zhongguo Chutu Bihua Quanji 5] (Beijing: Kexue chubanshe, 2012), fig. 97.



Fig. 4.2-4. The image of chariot in Han tomb at Haotan. Dated Xin to Eastern Han (9-220 CE), H. ca. 118 cm; W. 176 cm. Unearthed at Haotan, Dingbian, Shaanxi province, in 2003. Preserved in Shaanxi Provincial Institute of Archaeology. After Xu Guangji, *中国出土壁画全集 6* [Zhongguo Chutu Bihua Quanji 6] (Beijing: Kexue chubanshe, 2012), fig. 58.

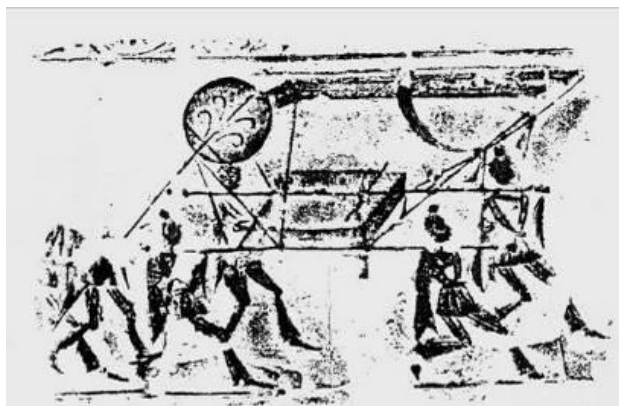


Fig. 4.2-5. The images of the palanquin in the Dengxian Tomb of Henan.
After Henansheng wenhuaju wenwugongzuodui 河南省文化局文物工作队, *邓县彩色画象砖墓* [Dengxian caise huaxiangzhuannmu] (Beijing: Wenwu Chubanshe, 1958), fig. 32.

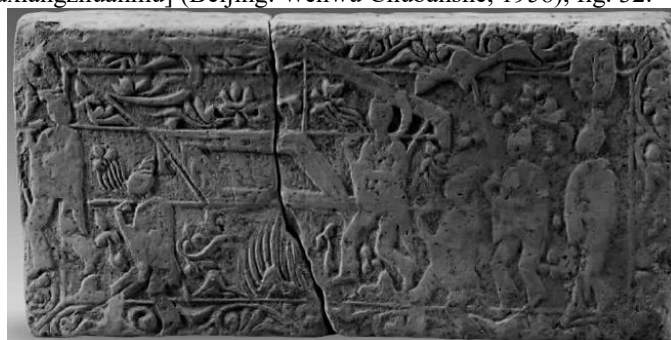


Fig. 4.2-6 The image of palanquin on the brick of Southern Dynasty tomb.
Unearthed from Qingshui Gou, Xiangyang, Hubei province. After Yang Yi and Liu Jiangsheng, “湖北襄阳麒麟清水沟南朝画像砖墓发掘简报 [Hubei Xiangyang qilin qingshuigou nanchao huanxiang zhuannmu fajuejianbao],” *Wenwu* 文物 [Cultural Relics], no.11 (2017): 21-39.



Fig. 4.2-7 The images of palanquin on the screen painting of the Simajinlong tomb.
Northern Wei Dynasty. After Yin Xian, and Dong Qigao, “北魏司马金龙墓屏风漆画题记 [Beiwei Sima Jinlongmu Pingfeng Qihua Tiji],” *Zhongguo Shufa* 中国书法 [Chinese Calligraphy], no. 07 (2014): 134.

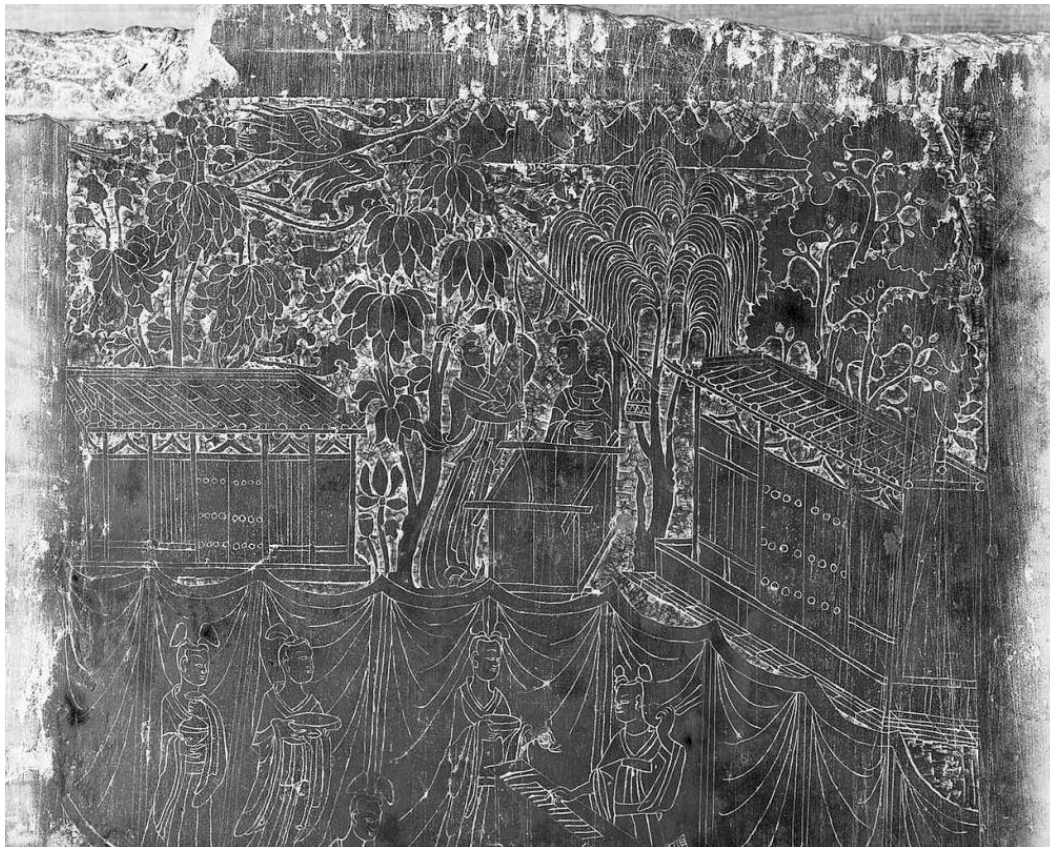


Fig. 4.2-8 The images of the figures on the Ninmao stone chamber of Northern Wei Dynasty. Preserved in the Boston's Art Museum (copyright Boston's Art Museum)



Fig. 4.2-9 The images of filial son Cai Shun on the stone sarcophagus. Preserved in the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art.(copyright Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art)

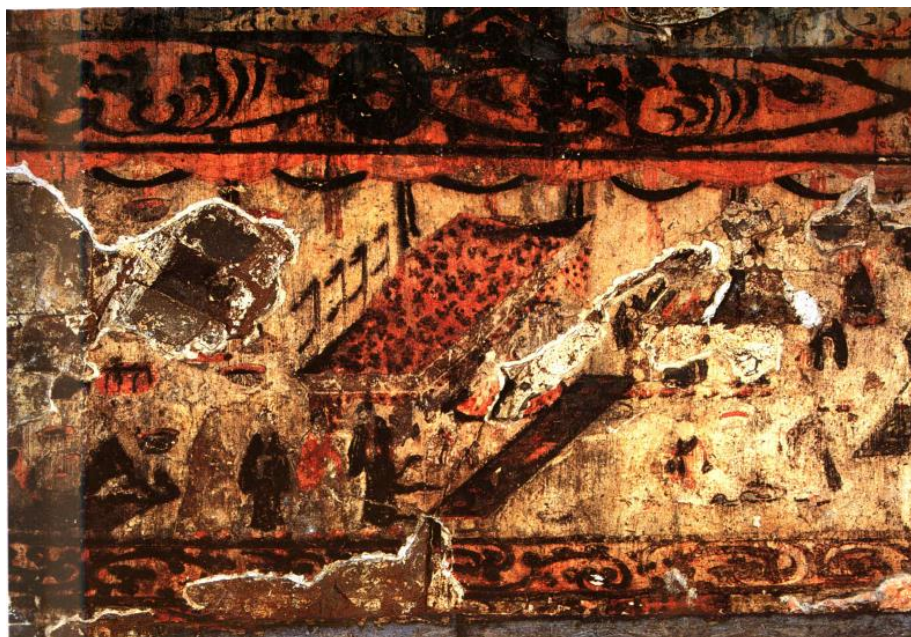


Fig. 4.2-10. The image of long table and curtains on the north wall of middle chamber of Han tomb. Unearthed from Tomb 2 at the west of Dahutingcun in Xinmi. Henan province, in 1960. Preserved on the original site. Eastern Han (25-220 CE); H. 70 cm, W. ca.360 cm. After Henansheng wenwu yanjiusuo 河南省文物研究所, 密县打虎亭汉墓[Mixian Dahuting Hanmu] (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1993), Plate 38.



Fig. 4.2-11. The image of group of figures on the South wall of Shaling Tomb7 of Northern Wei Dynasty Dated First Year of Taiyan Era, Northern Wei (A.D.435), H. ca.180 cm, W. ca.342 cm. Unearthed from Tomb M7 at Shalingcun in eastern suburbs of Datong, Shanxi Province, in 2005. Preserved on the original site. After Xu Guangji 徐光冀, 中国出土壁画全集 2 [Zhongguo Chutu Bihua Quanji 2] (Beijing: Kexue chubanshe, 2012), fig. 22.



Fig. 4.2-12. colorful images from the Shaling Tomb M7.

After Gao Feng, et al, “山西大同沙岭北魏壁画墓发掘简报[Shanxi Datong Shaling Beiwei Bihuamu Fajue Jianbao],” *Wenwu* 文物[Cultural Relics], no. 10 (2006): fig.20.



Fig. 4.2-13. Architecture made by pottery from the Tomb M10 of Yunbolu of Northern Wei in Datong.
After Zhang Zhizhong, et al, “山西大同云波路北魏墓(M10)发掘简报 Shanxi datong yunbolu beiweimu (M10) fajuejianbao,” *Wenwu* 文物[Cultural Relics], no. 11 (2017): fig.29, fig.30.



Fig. 4.2-14. Mural on the east wall of the Tomb of Yunbolu of Northern Wei in Datong.
After Liu Junxi, et al, " Shanxi datong yunbolilu beiwei bihuamu fajuejianbao 山西大同云波里路北魏壁画墓发掘简报," *Wenwu* 文物[Cultural Relics], no. 12 (2011): fig.9.

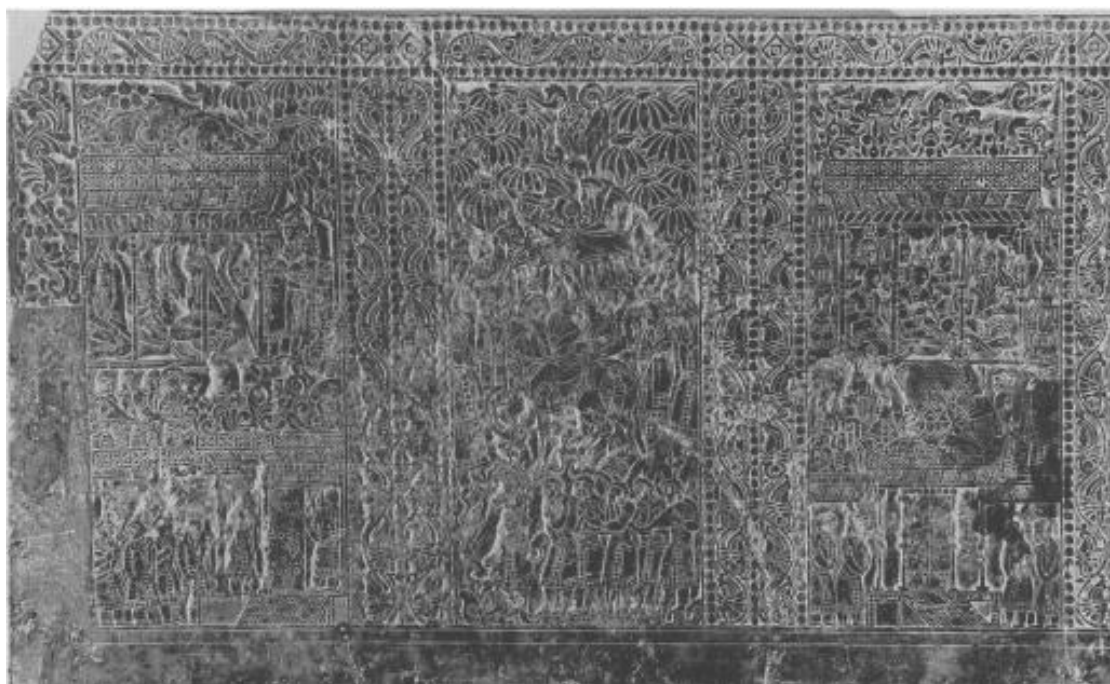


Fig. 4.2-15a. The image of architecture on the Ston screens of Anyang from Northern Qi Dynasty.
preserved in Musée Guimet, Paris. After Gustina Scaglia, "Central Asians on a Northern Ch'i gate shrine," *Artibus Asiae* 21.1 (1958): Fig.5.

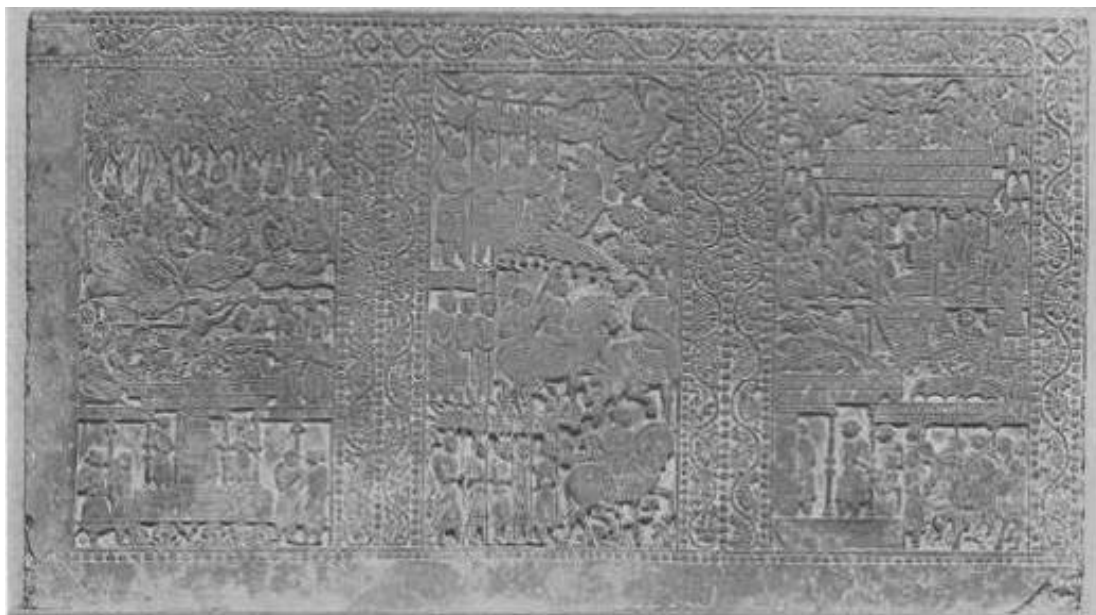


Fig. 4.2-15b. The image of architecture on the Ston screens of Anyang from Northern Qi Dynasty. After Gustina Scaglia, "Central Asians on a Northern Ch'i gate shrine." *Artibus Asiae* 21.1 (1958): Fig.4.

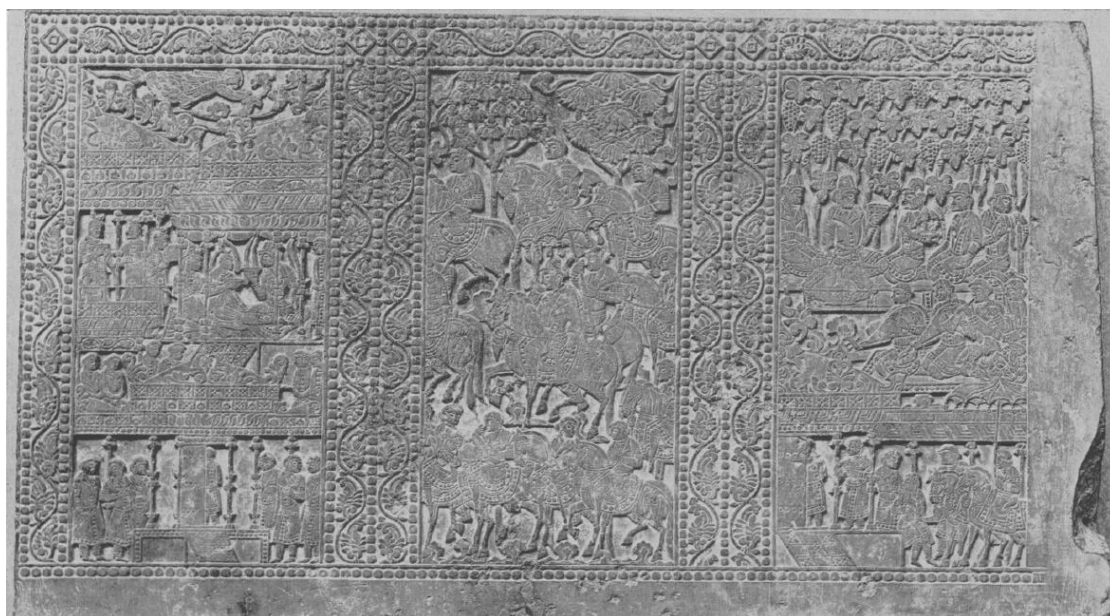


Fig. 4.2-15c. The image of architecture on the Ston screens of Anyang from Northern Qi Dynasty. After Gustina Scaglia, "Central Asians on a Northern Ch'i gate shrine." *Artibus Asiae* 21.1 (1958):Fig.3.



Fig. 4.2-16 The image of building on the Northern Dynasty Tomb of Juanyuan Gang Unearthed in Xinzhou, Shanxi Province. After Shanxi bowuyuan 山西博物院编, *山西九原岗北朝墓葬壁画搬迁保护* [Shanxi Jiuyuangang Beichao Muzang Bihua Banqian Baohu] (Beijing: Kexuechubanshe, 2018), fig. 1.22.



Fig. 4.2-17. The image of Courtyard in a Han Tomb in Haotan Unearthed from Haotan, Dingbian, Shaanxi province. Dated Xin to Eastern Han (9-220 CE), H. ca. 52 cm, W. 78 cm. Preserved in Shanxi Provincial Institute of Archacology. After Xu Guangji, *中国出土壁画全集 6* [Zhongguo Chutu Bihua Quanji 6] (Beijing: Kexue chubanshe, 2012), fig. 57.

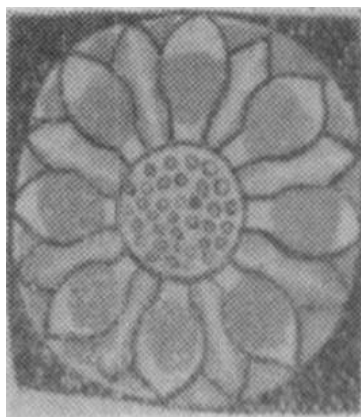


Fig. 4.2-18. The image of lotus on the tomb of Luanzanggang in Wuwei.
After Zhang Pengchuan, “河西出土的汉晋绘画简述[Hexi chutu de hanjin huihua jianshu],” *Wenwu* 文物[Cultural Relics], no. 06 (1978): 61.



Fig. 4.2-19 The image of horse in Weijin Tomb 3 of Jiayuguan in Gansu province.
After Hu Zhi, *甘肃嘉峪关魏晋三号墓彩绘砖[Gansu Jiayuguan Weijin Sanhaomu Caohuizhuan]* (Chongqing: Chongqing chubanshe, 2000), fig. 3.



Fig. 4.2-20 The image of horse in Weijin Tomb N0.6 of Jiayuguan in Gansu.
H.17.5 cm, W.36.5 cm. After Hu Zhi, *甘肃嘉峪关魏晋三号墓彩绘砖*[Gansu Jiayuguan Weijin Sanhaomu Caohuizhuan] (Chongqing: Chongqing chubanshe, 2000), fig. 25.

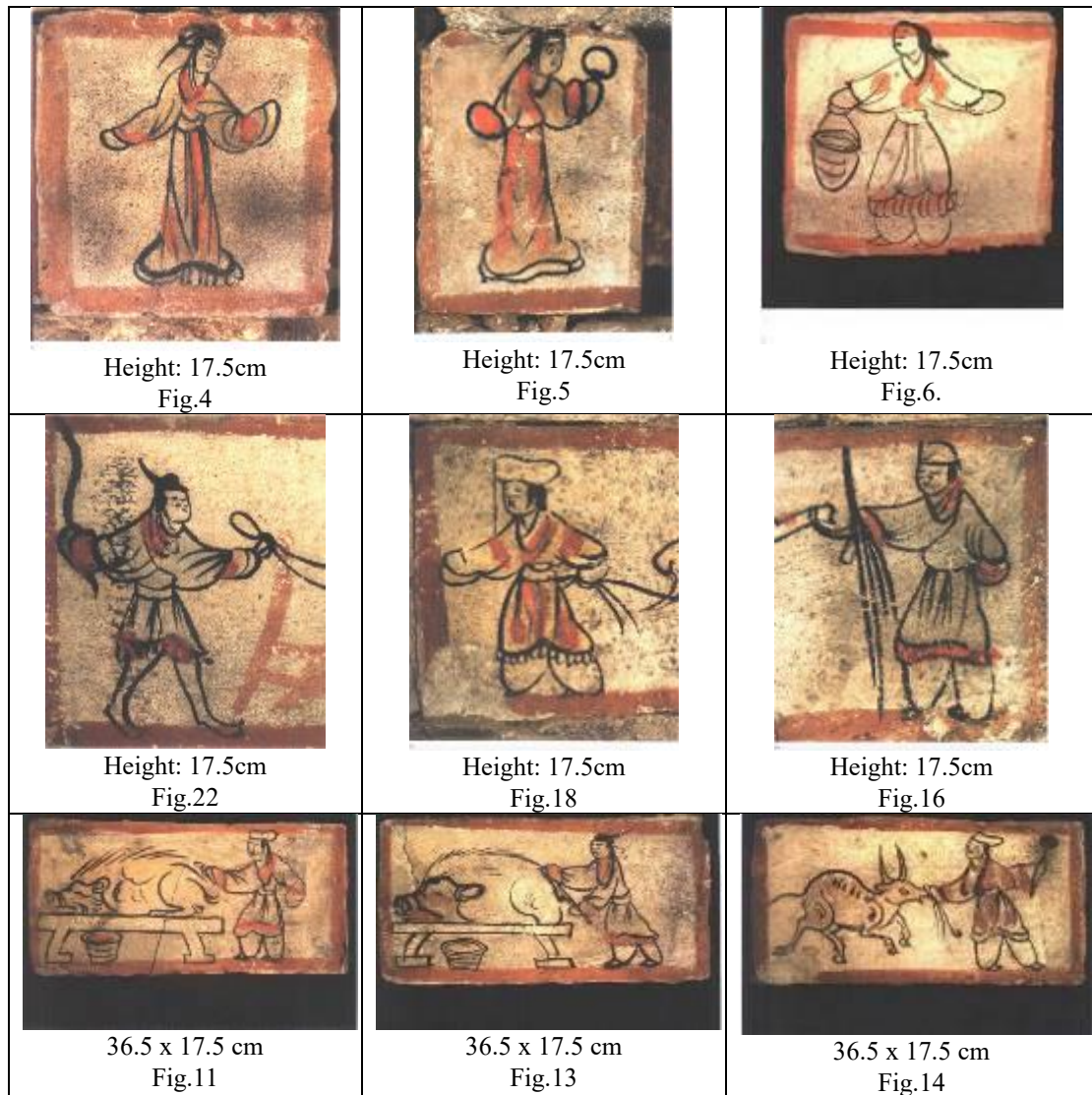


Fig. 4.2-21The image of figures in Weijin Tomb N0.6 Of Jiayuguan in Gansu.
After Hu Zhi, *甘肃嘉峪关魏晋三号墓彩绘砖*[Gansu Jiayuguan Weijin Sanhaomu Caohuizhuan] (Chongqing: Chongqing chubanshe, 2000), fig. 4, fig. 5, fig. 6, fig. 11, fig. 13, fig. 14, fig. 16, fig. 18, fig. 22.



Fig. 4.2-22a. The image of horse in Weijin Tomb N0.7 Of Jiayuguan in Gansu.
H.17.5; W.:36.5 cm. After Hu Zhi, *甘肃嘉峪关魏晋三号墓彩绘砖*[Gansu Jiayuguan Weijin Sanhaomu Caohuizhuan] (Chongqing: Chongqing chubanshe, 2000), fig. 19.



Fig. 4.2-22b. The image of horse in Weijin Tomb N0.7 of Jiayuguan in Gansu
H. 17.5 cm, W. 36.5 cm. After Hu Zhi, *甘肃嘉峪关魏晋三号墓彩绘砖*[Gansu Jiayuguan Weijin Sanhaomu Caohuizhuan] (Chongqing: Chongqing chubanshe, 2000), fig. 20.



Fig. 4.2-23 a The image of figure in Weijin Tomb N0.7 of Jiayuguan in Gansu
H. 17.5 cm, W. 36.5 cm. After Hu Zhi, *甘肃嘉峪关魏晋三号墓彩绘砖*[Gansu Jiayuguan Weijin Sanhaomu Caohuizhuan] (Chongqing: Chongqing chubanshe, 2000),fig. 41.



Fig. 4.2-23 b The image of figure in in Weijin Tomb N0.7 of Jiayuguan in Gansu.
H. 17.5 cm, W. 36.5 cm. After Hu Zhi, *甘肃嘉峪关魏晋三号墓彩绘砖*[Gansu Jiayuguan Weijin Sanhaomu Caohuizhuan] (Chongqing: Chongqing chubanshe, 2000), fig. 23.



Fig. 4.2-24 The image of horse in in Weijin Tomb N0.12 of Jiayuguan in Gansu.
H. 17.5 cm, W. 36.5 cm. After Hu Zhi, *甘肃嘉峪关魏晋三号墓彩绘砖*[Gansu Jiayuguan Weijin Sanhaomu Caohuizhuan] (Chongqing: Chongqing chubanshe, 2000), fig. 9.



Fig. 4.2-25a. Portrait of tomb occupant on the west wall of Dingjiazha Tomb M5 . Sixteen-States Period (304-439 CE), H. ca.80 cm, W. ca.110 cm. Unearthed from Tomb M5 at Dingjiazha of Guoyuanxiang in Jiuquan,Gansu province, in 1997. Preserved on the original site. After Xu Guangji, *中国出土壁画全集 9*[*Zhongguo Chutu Bihua Quanji 9*] (Beijing: Kexue chubanshe, 2012), fig. 124.

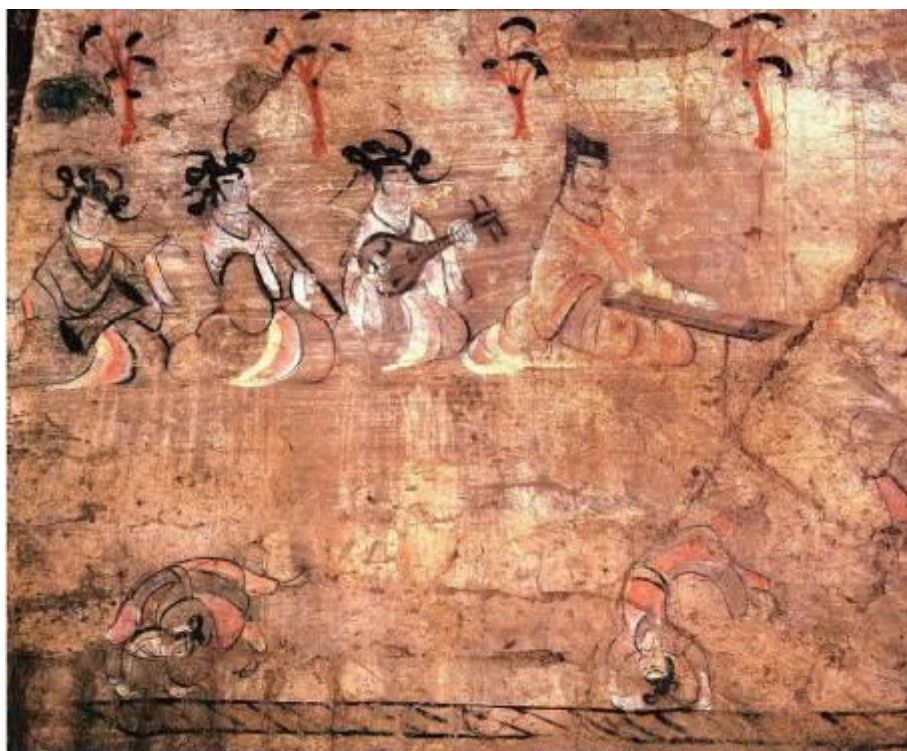


Fig. 4.2-25b. The image of figure on the west wall of Dingjiazha Tomb 5. Unearthed from Tomb M5 at Dingjiazha of Guoyuanxiang in Jiuquan,Gansu, in 1997.Preserved on the original site.Sixteen-States Period (304-439 CE), H. ca.100 cm; W. ca.100 cm. After Xu Guangji, *中国出土壁画全集 9*[*Zhongguo Chutu Bihua Quanji 9*] (Beijing: Kexue chubanshe, 2012), fig. 125.



Fig. 4.2-25c. The image of figure on the west wall of Dingjiazha Tomb 5. Sixteen-States Period (304-439 CE); H. ca. 85 cm, W. ca. 110 cm. Unearthed from Tomb M5 at Dingjiazha of Guoyuanxiang in Jiuquan, Gansu province, in 1997. Preserved on the original site. After Xu Guangji, *中国出土壁画全集 9* [*Zhongguo Chutu Bihua Quanji 9*] (Beijing: Kexue chubanshe, 2012), fig. 127.



Fig. 4.2-26a. The image of figure on the east ceiling of front chamber of Dingjiazha Tomb 5. Sixteen-States Period (304-439 CE), H. ca. 150 cm, W. ca. 300 cm. Unearthed from Tomb M5 at Dingjiazha of Guoyuanxiang in Jiuquan, Gansu province, in 1997. Preserved on the original site. After Xu Guangji, *中国出土壁画全集 9* [*Zhongguo Chutu Bihua Quanji 9*] (Beijing: Kexue chubanshe, 2012), fig. 130.



Fig. 4.2-26c. The image of figures on the west ceiling of front chamber of Dingjiazha Tomb M5. Sixteen-States Period (304-439 CE), H. ca. 150 cm. W. ca. 300 cm. Unearthed from Tomb M5 at Dingjiazha of Guoyuanxiang in Jiuquan, Gansu province, in 1997. Preserved on the original site. After Xu Guangji, *中国出土壁画全集 9* [Zhongguo Chutu Bihua Quanji 9] (Beijing: Kexue chubanshe, 2012), fig. 130.



Fig. 4.2-27 The image of horse on the south ceiling of Dingjiazha Tomb M5. Sixteen-States Period (304-439 CE), H. ca. 150 cm; W. ca. 300 cm. Unearthed from Tomb M5 at Dingjiazha of Guoyuanxiang in Jiuquan, Gansu province, in 1997. Preserved on the original site. After Xu Guangji, *中国出土壁画全集 9* [Zhongguo Chutu Bihua Quanji 9] (Beijing: Kexue chubanshe, 2012), fig. 131.



Fig. 4.2-28 The image of female figure in Weijin Tomb N0.4 of Jiayuguan in Gansu.
After Hu Zhi, 甘肃嘉峪关魏晋四号墓彩绘砖[Gansu Jiayuguan Weijin Sihaomu Caihuizhuan]
(Chongqing: Chongqing chubanshe, 2000), fig. 2.



Fig. 4.2-29 The image of male figures in Weijin Tomb N0.4 of Jiayuguan in Gansu.
After Hu Zhi, 甘肃嘉峪关魏晋四号墓彩绘砖[Gansu Jiayuguan Weijin Sihaomu Caihuizhuan]
(Chongqing: Chongqing chubanshe, 2000), fig. 5, fig. 15, fig. 12.

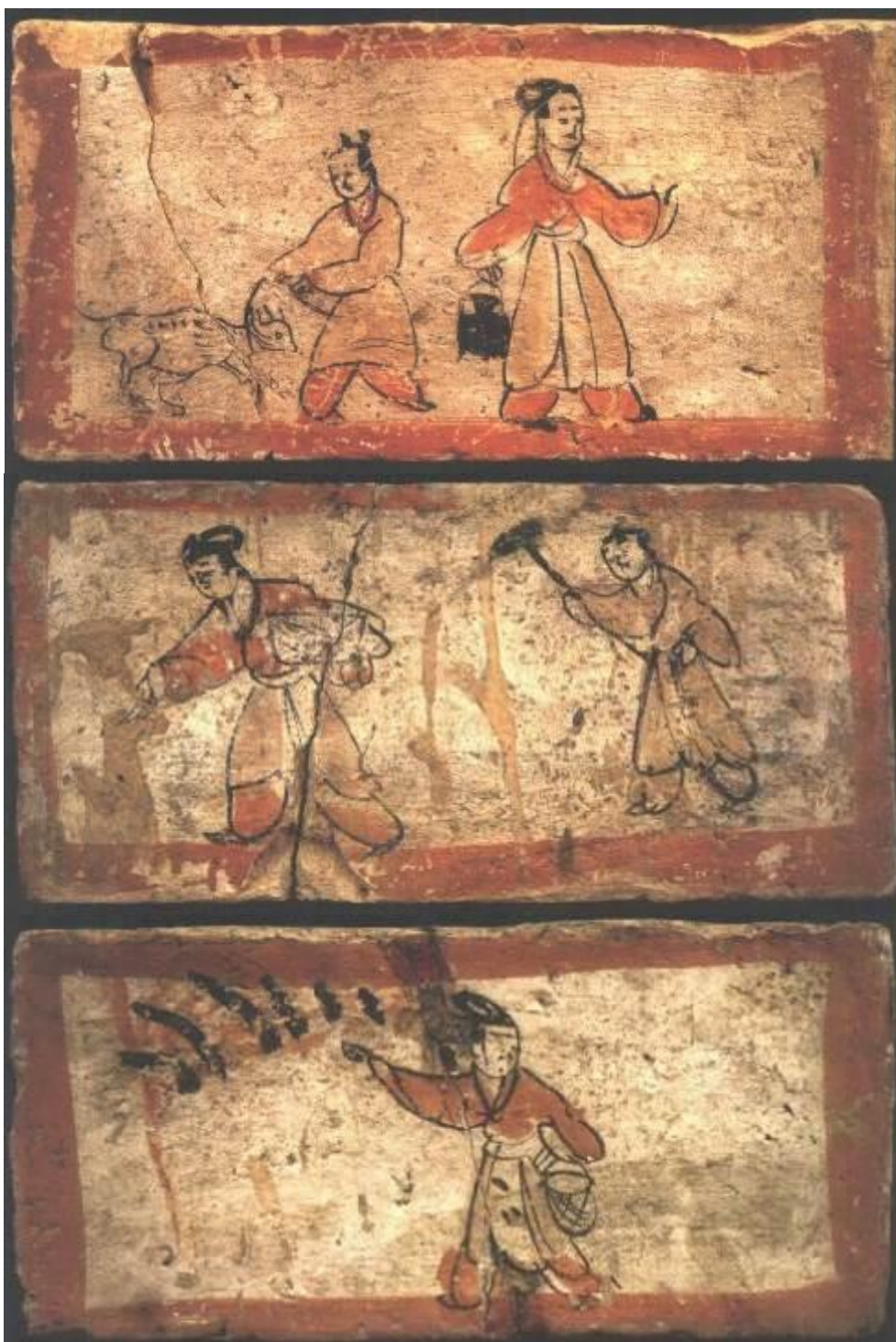


Fig. 4.2-30a. The image of figures in Weijin Tomb N0.3 of Jiayuguan in Gansu.
After Hu Zhi, *甘肃嘉峪关魏晋三号墓彩绘砖*[Gansu Jiayuguan Weijin Sanhaomu Caihuizhuan]
(Chongqing: Chongqing chubanshe, 2000), fig. 4, fig. 3, fig. 6.



Fig. 4.2-30b. The image of figure in Weijin Tomb N0.3 of Jiayuguan in Gansu.
After Hu Zhi, 甘肃嘉峪关魏晋三号墓彩绘砖[Gansu Jiayuguan Weijin Sanhaomu Caihuizhuan]
(Chongqing: Chongqing chubanshe, 2000), fig. 9, fig. 10.

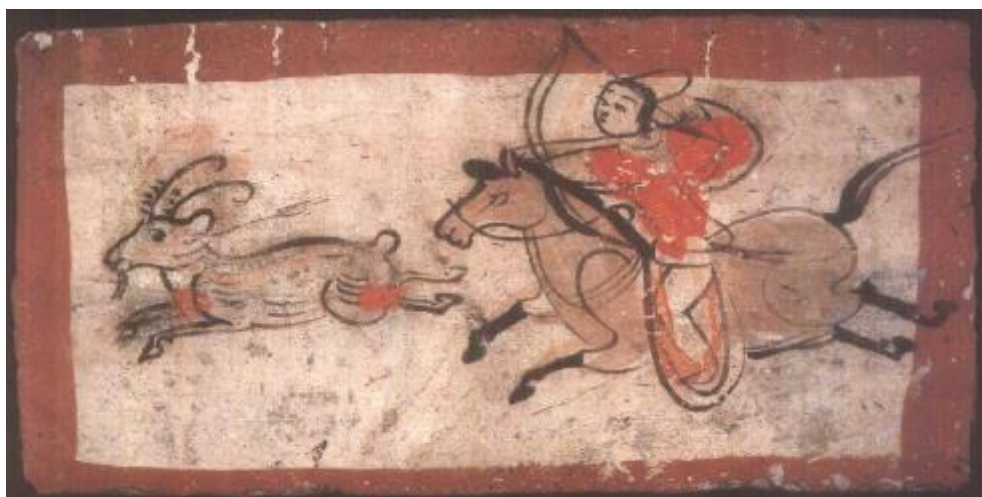


Fig. 4.2-31 The image of figure in Weijin Tomb N0.7 of Jiayuguan in Gansu
After Hu Zhi, 甘肃嘉峪关魏晋七号墓彩绘砖[Gansu Jiayuguan Weijin Qihaomu Caihuizhuan]
(Chongqing: Chongqing chubanshe, 2000), fig. 10.



Fig. 4.2-32 The image of sheep in Weijin Tomb N0.13 of Jiayuguan in Gansu. W. 36.5cm, H.17.5cm. After Hu Zhi 胡之, *甘肃嘉峪关魏晋十二、十三号墓彩绘砖* [Gansu Jiayuguan Weijin Shier Shisanhao Caihuizhuan] (Chongqing: Chongqing chubanshe, 2000), fig. 14.



Fig. 4.2-33. The image of horse on the east wall of Northern Wei Tongjiawan Tomb M9. Northern Wei (A.D. 461), unearthed from Tongjiawan Tomb M9 in Datong, Shanxi Province. After Zhang Qingjie, et al., “山西大同南郊全家湾北魏墓(M7、M9)发掘简报[Shanxi Datong Nanjiao Tongjiawan Beiwei Mu Fajue Jianbao],” *Wenwu* 文物[Cultural Relics], no.12(2015):fig.27.



Fig. 4.2-34a. The image of figure on the coffin from Northern Wei Zhijiabao Tomb in Datong. After Liu Junxi, Gao feng, “大同智家堡北魏墓棺板画[Datong Zhijaobao Beiwei Mu Guanban Hua],” *Wenwu* 文物[Cultural Relics], no.12(2004):fig.5.



Fig. 4.2-34b. The image of figure on on the coffin from Northern Wei Zhijiabao Tomb in Datong. After Liu Junxi, Gaofeng, “大同智家堡北魏墓棺板画 [Datong Zhijiaobao Beiwei Mu Guanban Hua],” *Wenwu* 文物 [Cultural Relics], no.12(2004):fig.9.



Fig. 4.2-34c. The image of figure on the coffin from Northern Wei Zhijiabao Tomb in Datong. After Liu Junxi, Gaofeng, “大同智家堡北魏墓棺板画 [Datong Zhijiaobao Beiwei Mu Guanban Hua],” *Wenwu* 文物 [Cultural Relics], no.12(2004):fig.11.



Fig. 4.2-34d. The image of figure on the coffin from Northern Wei Zhijiabao Tomb in Datong. After Liu Junxi, Gaofeng, “大同智家堡北魏墓棺板画 [Datong Zhijiaobao Beiwei Mu Guanban Hua],” *Wenwu* 文物 [Cultural Relics], no.12(2004):fig.10.



Fig. 4.2-34e. The image of figure on the coffin from Northern Wei Zhijiabao Tomb in Datong
After Liu Junxi, Gaofeng, “大同智家堡北魏墓棺板画 [Datong Zhijiaobao Beiwei Mu Guanban Hua],”
Wenwu 文物 [Cultural Relics], no. 12 (2004): fig. 8.



Fig. 4.2-35a. The image of figure on the coffin from Northern Wei Zhijiabao Tomb in Datong
After Liu Junxi, Gaofeng, “大同智家堡北魏墓棺板画 [Datong Zhijiaobao Beiwei Mu Guanban Hua],”
Wenwu 文物 [Cultural Relics], no. 12 (2004): fig. 5.

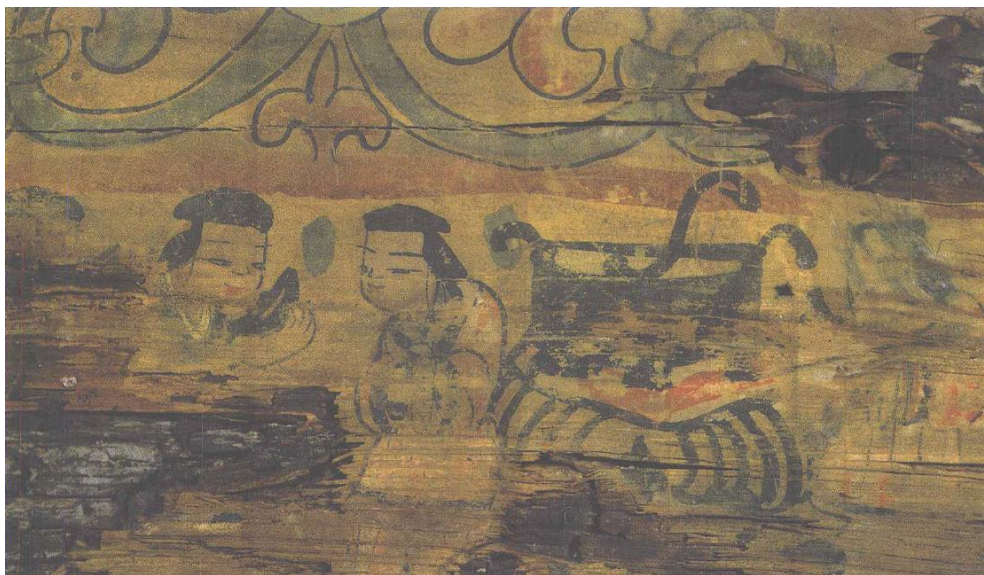


Fig. 4.2-35b. The image of figure on the coffin from Northern Wei Zhijiabao Tomb in Datong. After Liu Junxi, Gaofeng, “大同智家堡北魏墓棺板画 [Datong Zhijiabao Beiwei Mu Guanban Hua],” *Wenwu* 文物 [Cultural Relics], no.12(2004):fig.13.



Fig. 4.2-35c. The image of figure on on the coffin from Northern Wei Zhijiabao Tomb in Datong. Liu Junxi, Gaofeng, “大同智家堡北魏墓棺板画 [Datong Zhijiabao Beiwei Mu Guanban Hua],” *Wenwu* 文物 [Cultural Relics], no.12(2004):fig.12.



Fig. 4.2-36a. The image of figure on the left side of lacquer coffin in Northern Wei Tomb in Guyuan. After Ningxia Guyuan Bowuguan 宁夏固原博物馆, 固原北魏墓漆棺画 [Guyuan Beiwei Mu Qiguan Hua] (yingchuan: Ningxia Renming Chubanshe, 1988), 49.



Fig. 4.2-36b. The image of figure on the left side of lacquer coffin in Northern Wei Tomb in Guyuan. After Ningxia Guyuan Bowuguan 宁夏固原博物馆, 固原北魏墓漆棺画 [Guyuan Beiwei Mu Qiguan Hua] (yingchuan: Ningxia Renming Chubanshe, 1988), 50.



Fig. 4.2-36c. The image of figure on the left side of lacquer coffin in Northern Wei Tomb in Guyuan. After Ningxia Guyuan Bowuguan 宁夏固原博物馆, 固原北魏墓漆棺画 [Guyuan Beiwei Mu Qiguan Hua] (yingchuan: Ningxia Renming Chubanshe, 1988), 52.

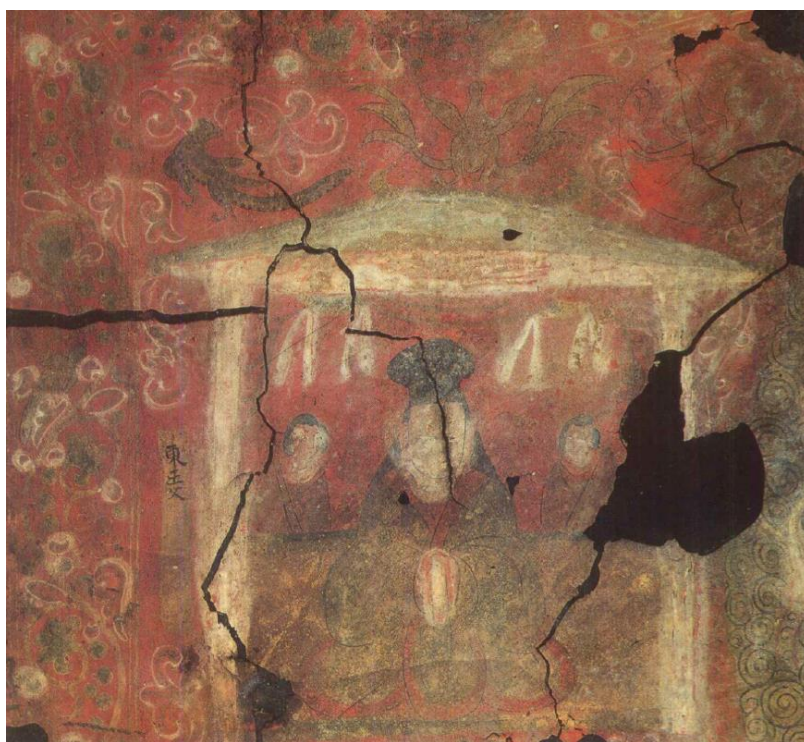


Fig. 4.2-37a. The image of figure on the up side of lacquer coffin in Northern Wei Tomb in Guyuan. After Ningxia Guyuan Bowuguan 宁夏固原博物馆, 固原北魏墓漆棺画 [Guyuan Beiwei Mu Qiguan Hua] (yingchuan: Ningxia Renming Chubanshe, 1988), 47.



Fig. 4.2-37b The image of figure on the up side of lacquer coffin in Northern Wei Tomb in Guyuan.
 After Ningxia Guyuan Bowuguan 宁夏固原博物馆, 固原北魏墓漆棺画 [Guyuan Beiwei Mu Qiguan
Hua] (yingchuan: Ningxia Renming Chubanshe, 1988), 40.



Fig. 4.2-38. The image of figure on the front side of lacquer coffin in Northern Wei Tomb in Guyuan. After Ningxia Guyuan Bowuguan 宁夏固原博物馆, 固原北魏墓漆棺画 [Guyuan Beiwei Mu Qiguan Hua] (yingchuan: Ningxia Renming Chubanshe,1988), 55.



Fig. 4.2-39. Figures on the Northern Zhou(A.D.565) Yu Wenmeng Tomb at Guyuan. After Zhiqiang Geng, 宁夏固原北周宇文猛墓发掘报告与研究[Ningxia Guyuan Beizhou Yuwenmeng Mu Fajue Baogao yu Yanjiu] (Yinchuan: Yangguang Chubanshe,2014), fig.45.



Fig. 4.2-40. Figures on the north wall of Northern Zhou (A.D.575) Tian Hong tomb.

Unearthed from Dabaocun, Guyuan, Ningxia Province.

After Ningxia Wenwu Kaogu Yanjiusuo 宁夏文物考古研究所, *北周田弘墓* [Beizhou Tianhou Mu] (Beijing: Wenwu Chubanshe, 2000), fig.13.



Fig. 4.2-41a. The image of Figures on the north wall of Northern Wei Tomb M29 in Qilicun

After Xiaogang Hou, “山西大同七里村北魏墓群 M29 发掘简报 [Shanxi Datong Qilicun Beiwei Muqun],” *Wenwu* 文物 [Cultural Relics], no.1 (2023): fig.26.



Fig. 4.2-41b. The image of Figures on the west wall of Norther Wie Tomb M29 in Qilicun.
After Xiaogang Hou, “山西大同七里村北魏墓群 M29 发掘简报[Shanxi Datong Qilicun Beiwei Muqun],” *Wenwu* 文物[Cutral Relics],no.1 (2023):fig.30.



Fig. 4.2-41c. The image of Figures on the west wall of Norther Wie Tomb M29 in Qilicun.
After Xiaogang Hou, “山西大同七里村北魏墓群 M29 发掘简报[Shanxi Datong Qilicun Beiwei Muqun],” *Wenwu* 文物[Cutral Relics],no.1 (2023): fig.31.



Fig. 4.2-41d. The image of lotus on the ceiling of Northern Wei Tomb M29 in Qilicun.
After Xiaogang Hou, “山西大同七里村北魏墓群 M29 发掘简报[Shanxi Datong Qilicun Beiwei Muqun],” *Wenwu* 文物[Cultural Relics], no.1 (2023):fig.25.



Fig. 4.2-42a. The figures on the mural of north wall of Northern Qi Tomb in Shuiquanliang.
After Chuanfu Qu, et al., “山西朔州水泉梁北齐壁画墓发掘简报[Shanxi Shuo Zhou Shuiquanliang Beiqi Bihua Mu Fajue Jianbao],” *Wenwu* 文物[Cultural Relics], no.12(2010):fig.13.



Fig. 4.2-42b The figures and details on the west wall of Northern Qi Tomb in Shuiquanliang. After Chuanfu Qu, et al. "山西朔州水泉梁北齐壁画墓发掘简报[Shanxi Shuo Zhou Shuiquanliang Beiqi Bihua Mu Fajue Jianbao]," *Wenwu* 文物[Cultural Relics], no.12(2010): fig.17,18.



Fig. 4.2-42c The figures on the south wall of Northern Qi Tomb in Shuiquanliang.
After Chuanfu Qu, et al." 山西朔州水泉梁北齐壁画墓发掘简报[Shanxi Shuo Zhou Shuiquanliang Beiqi Bihua Mu Fajue Jianbao]," *Wenwu* 文物[Cultural Relics], no.12(2010):fig.19.



Fig. 4.2-43a. Procession Scene on the west wall of Northern Qi (ca. 570 A.D.) Lou Rui tomb.
H. ca. 140 cm, W. ca. 400 cm, Unearthed from Lou Rui tomb at Wangguocun in southern suburbs of Taiyuan, Shanxi province; in 1979. Preserved in Shanxi Museum. After Guangji Xu, *中国出土壁画全集 2*[Zhongguo chutu bihua quanji 2] (Beijing: Kexue chubanshe, 2012), fig.40.

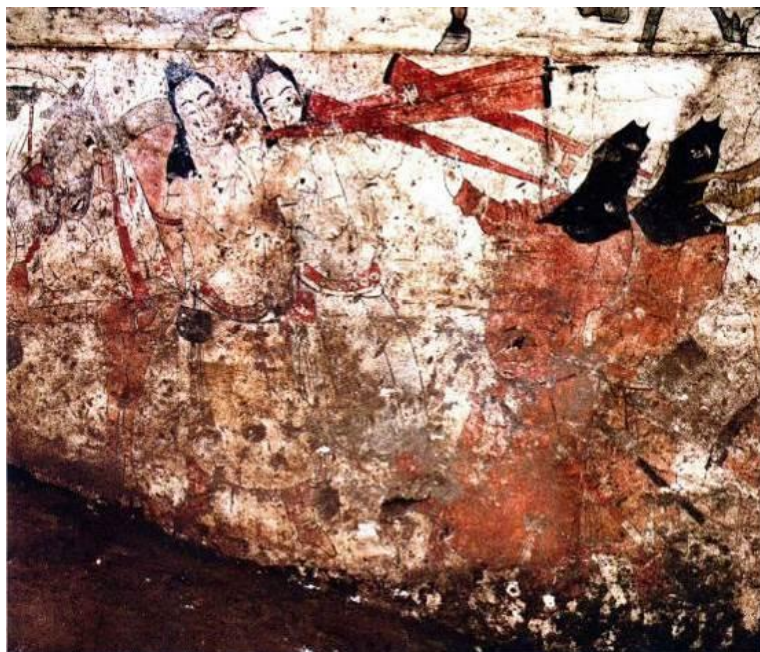


Fig. 4.2-43b. Procession Scene on the west wall of the tunnel of Lou Rui tomb.
H. ca. 140 cm; W. ca. 150 cm. Unearthed from Northern Qi Lou Rui tomb at Wangguocun in southern suburbs of Taiyuan, Shanxi province, in 1979. Preserved in Shanxi Museum. After Guangji Xu, *中国出土壁画全集 2* [Zhongguo chutu bihua quanji 2] (Beijing: Kexue chubanshe, 2012), fig.46.



Fig. 4.2-43c. Figures on the west wall of the tunnel of Lou Rui tomb
Unearthed from Northern Qi Lou Rui tomb at Wangguocun in southern suburbs of Taiyuan, Shanxi province, in 1979. Preserved in Shanxi Museum. After Shanxi Sheng Kaogu Yanjiusuo, *北齐东安王娄睿墓* [Beiqi Dongan Wang Lourui Mu] (Beijing: Wenwu Chubanshe, 2006), Plate.51, Plate 57.



Fig. 4.2-44a. Figures of Guards on the west wall of tunnel of Xu Xianxiu tomb. Northern Qi (571 A.D.), H. ca.175 cm, W. ca.325 cm. Unearthed from Wangjiafengcun in Taiyuan, Shanxi province, in 2000. Preserved on the original site. After Guangji Xu, *中国出土壁画全集 2* [Zhongguo chutu bihua quanji 2] (Beijing: Kexue chubanshe, 2012), fig.74.



Fig. 4.2-44b. Figures on the east wall of tunnel of Xu Xianxiu tomb. Northern Qi (571 A.D.), H. ca. 180 cm, W. ca. 205 cm. Unearthed from Wangjiafengcun in Taiyuan, Shanxi province, in 2000. Preserved on the original site. After Guangji Xu, *中国出土壁画全集 2* [Zhongguo chutu bihua quanji 2] (Beijing: Kexue chubanshe, 2012), fig.77.



Fig. 4.2-44c Figures on the North wall of XuXianxiu's tomb. Northern Qi (A.D.571), unearthed from XuXianxiu tomb at Wangjiafengcun in Taiyuan, Shanxi province. After Pei Jingrong, and Yu Xiangyi, “北齐风云画卷山西太原王家峰徐显秀壁画墓[Beiqi Fengyun Huajuan Shanxi Taiyuan Wangjiafeng Xuxianxiu Bihuamu],” *Wenming* 文明 [Civilization], .no.07(2004): 120.



Fig. 4.2-44d Figures on the south wall of XuXianxiu tomb. Northern Qi (A.D.571), unearthed from XuXianxiu tomb at Wangjiafengcun in Taiyuan, Shanxi province. After Taiyuanshi wenwukaogu yanjiusuo 太原市文物考古研究所, 北齐徐显秀墓 [Beiqi Xuxianxiu mu] (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2005), 54.

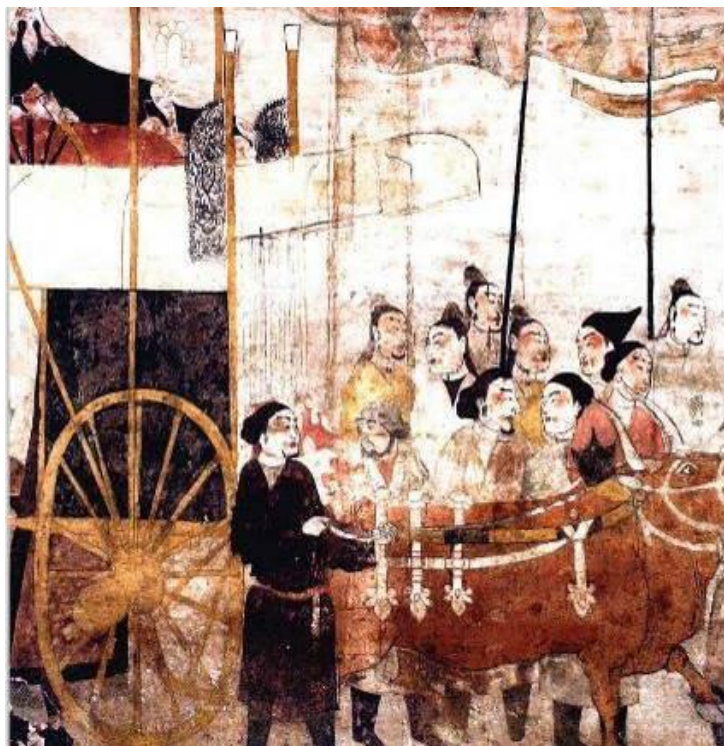


Fig. 4.2-44e. Figures on the east wall of Xu Xianxiu tomb. Northern Qi (A.D.571), unearthed from Xu Xianxiu tomb at Wangjiafengcun in Taiyuan, Shanxi province. After Guangji Xu, *中国出土壁画全集 2* [Zhongguo chutu bihua quanji 2] (Beijing: Kexue chubanshe, 2012), fig.87.



Fig. 4.2-44f. Figures on the west wall of Xu Xianxiu tomb. Northern Qi (A.D.571), unearthed from Xu Xianxiu tomb at Wangjiafengcun in Taiyuan, Shanxi province. After Taiyuanshi Wenwu Kaogu Yanjiusuo 太原市文物考古研究所, *北齐徐显秀墓* [Beiqi Xuxianxiu mu] (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2005), fig.8.



Fig. 4.2-44g. Figure on the door of the Xu Xianxiu tomb. Northern Qi (A.D.571), unearthed from XuXianxiu tomb at Wangjiafengcun in Taiyuan, Shanxi province. After Taiyuanshi Wenwu Kaogu Yanjiusuo 太原市文物考古研究所, 北齐徐显秀墓 [Beiqi Xuxianxiu mu] (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2005), fig.8.



Fig. 4-2-45a. Figures on the east wall of Northern Wei Tomb at Yunboli. After Junxi Liu, et al."山西大同云波里路北魏壁画墓发掘简报 [Shanxi Datong Yunboli lu Beiwei Bihuamu Fajue Jianbao]," *Wenwu* 文物 [Cultural Relics], no.12(2011): fig.12.



Fig. 4-2-45b. Figures on the east wall of Northern Wei Tomb at Yunboli.
After Junxi Liu, et al. "山西大同云波里路北魏壁画墓发掘简报[Shanxi Datong Yunboli lu Beiwei Bihuamu Fajue Jianbao]," *Wenwu* 文物[Cultural Relics], no.12(2011):fig.10.

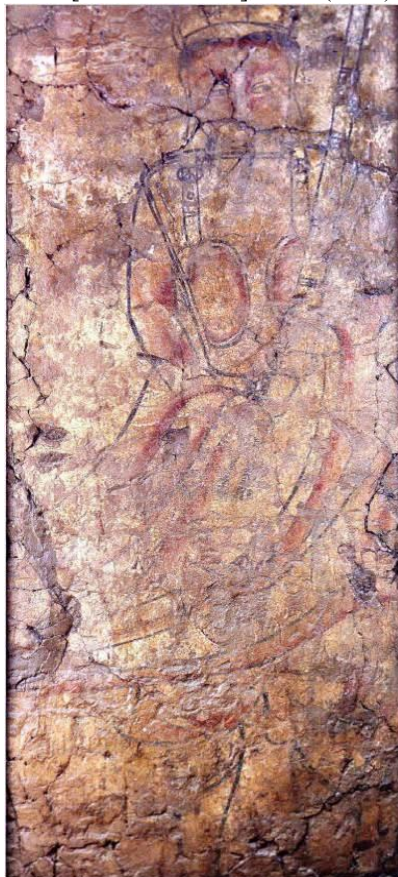


Fig. 4.2-46. Figure on the mural on the Lixian Tomb
Northern Zhou (A.D.569). Preserved in Ningxia museum.



Fig. 4.2-47. Females in the mural of Northern Wei(A.D.532) Wangwen Tomb.
After Xie Hujun, and Zhang Jian, *洛阳纪年墓研究* [Luoyang Jinian Mu Yanjiu] (Zhenzhou: Daxiang Chuban She, 2013), fig.2.



Fig. 4.2-48. Terracotta figurines in the Yuanzuan tomb
Northern dynasty (A.D.525), H. 17.5cm. Preserved in Royal Ontario Museum. After Xu Chanfei 徐婵菲, Chen Shen, “洛阳出土北魏元熙元篡墓陶俑(上)[Luoyang Chutu Beiwei Yuanxi Yuanzuan Mu Taoyong],” *Luoyang Kaogu* 洛阳考古 [Archaeology of Luoyang], no.2 (2019):fig.12.



Fig. 4.2-49. The story of Guoju on the brick of Dengxian tomb.
Preserved in Henan Museum. Photography by the author.



Fig. 4.2-50. Four Greybeards of south Mountain on the brick of Dengxian tomb.
H.19 cm, L.38 cm. After Henan Sheng Wenhua ju Wenwu Gongzuodui 河南省文化局文物工作队, *河南邓县彩色画像砖* [Henan Dengxian Caise Huaxiang Zhuan] (Shanghai: Shanghai Renmin Meishu Chubanshe, 1963), fig.31.



Fig. 4.2-51. Four female figures on the brick of Dengxian tomb.
H.19cm, L.38cm. After Henan Sheng Wenhua ju Wenwu Gongzuodui 河南省文化局文物工作队, *河南邓县彩色画像砖* [Henan Dengxian Caise Huaxiang Zhuan] (Shanghai: Shanghai Renmin Meishu Chubanshe, 1963), fig.24.

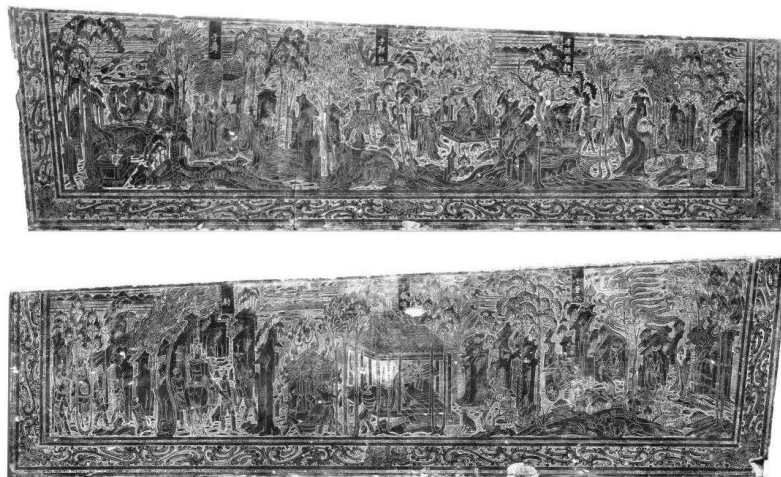


Fig. 4.2-52a. Figures on the stone sarcophagus.
Preserved in Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art.



Fig. 4.2-52b. The Image of same species of tree on stone sarcophagus.
Preserved in Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art Draw by Yuanyuan Duan.



Fig. 4.2-52c. The image of Filial son Wanglin on the stone sarcophagus
Preserved in Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art.

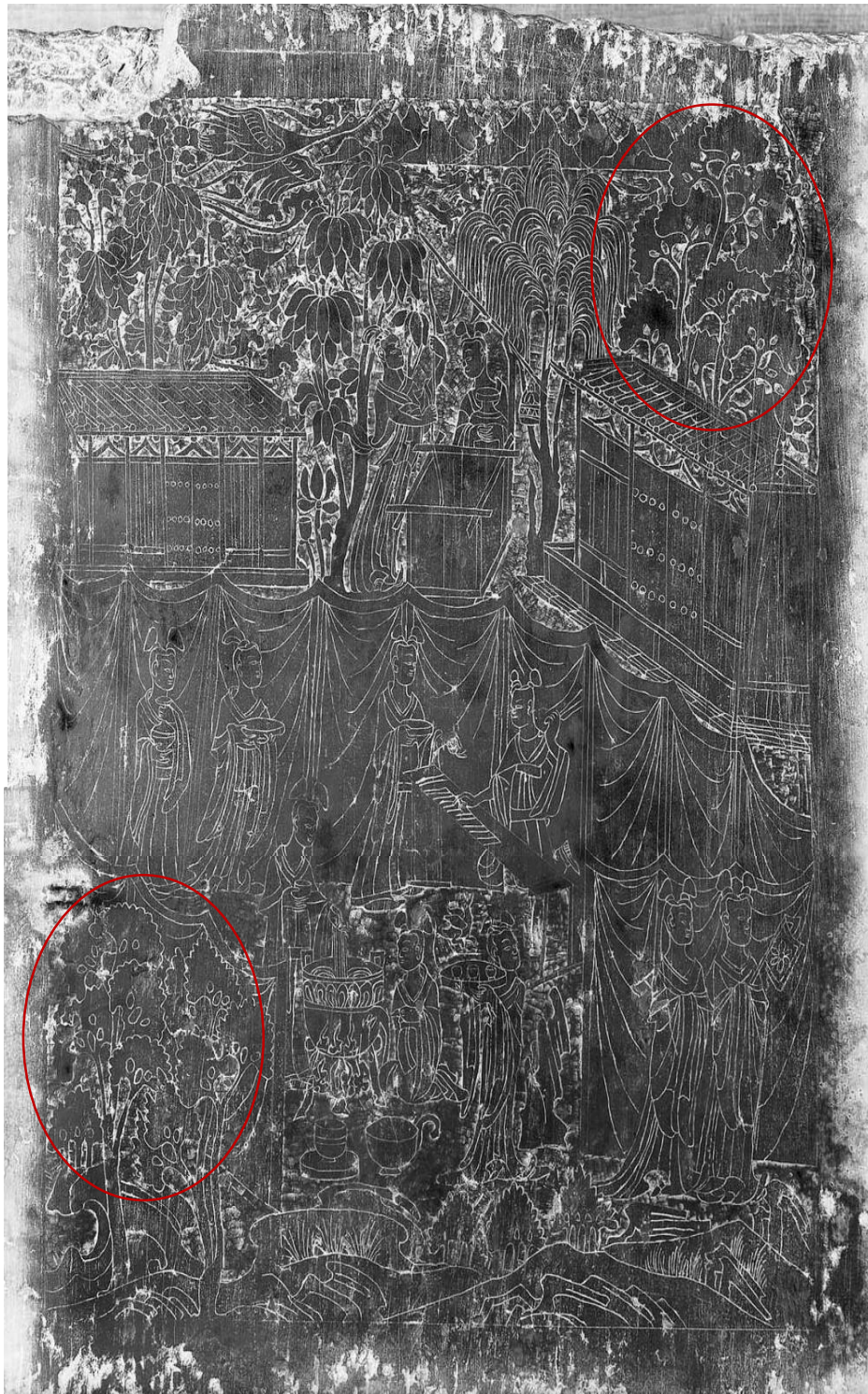


Fig. 4.2-53a the image of same species of tree on Ninmao Ston chamber
Unearthed in Luoyang, Henan Province. Preserved in Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. (copyright
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston)



Fig. 4.2-53b The image of same species of tree on the Ninmao stone chamber. Unearthed in Luoyang, Henan Province. Preserved in Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. (copyright Museum of Fine Arts, Boston)

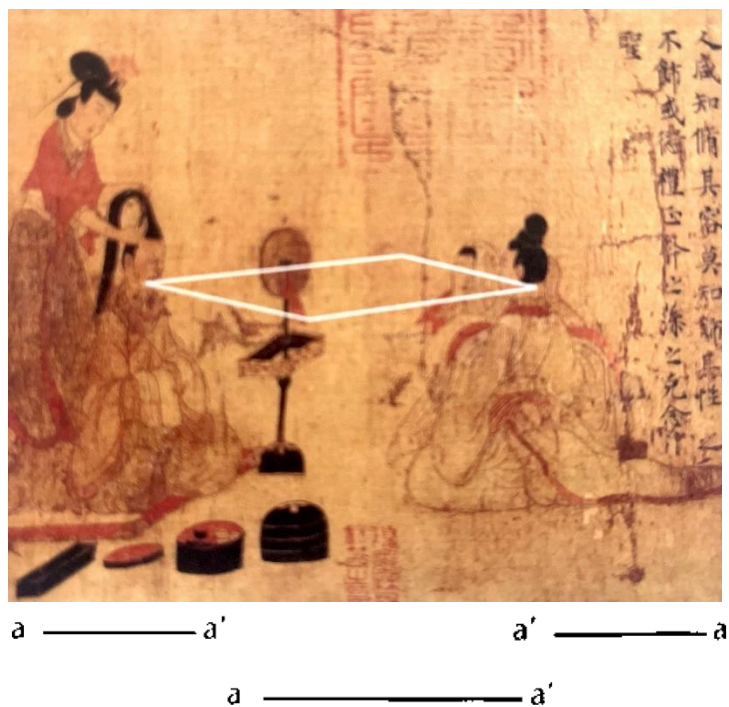


Fig. 4.2-54. Wu hung's analyses of The Admonitions Scroll.
After Hung Wu, *Space in Art History* (Shanghai Renmin Chubanshe, 1995), 38.

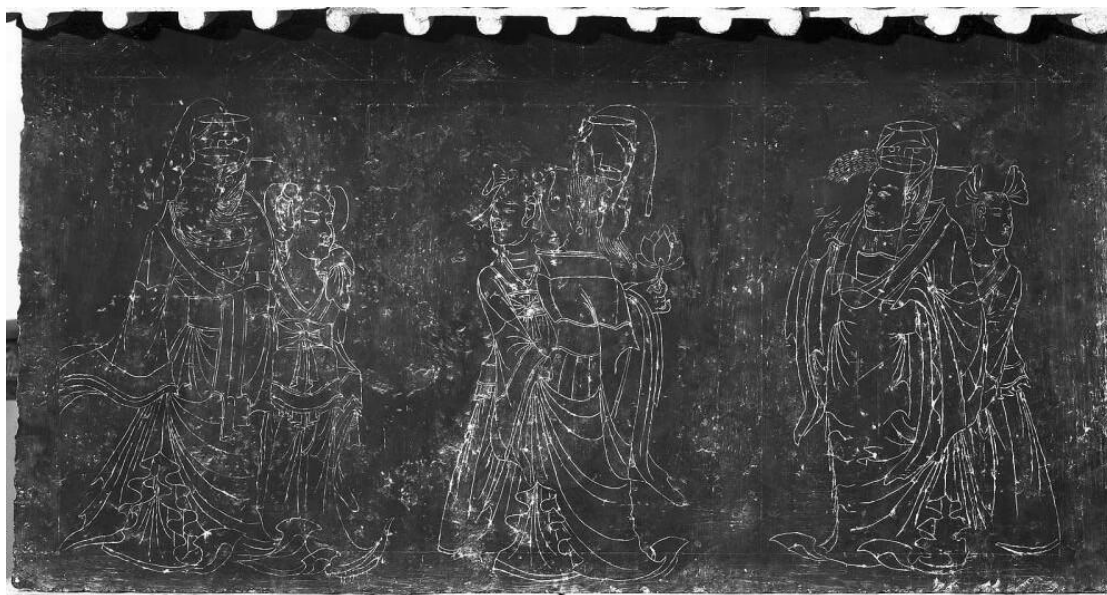


Fig. 4.2-55. Figures on the outer side of the back wall of Ningmao stone chamber
Northern Wei Dynasty. Unearthed in Luoyang, Henan Province. Preserved in Museum of Fine Arts,
Boston. (copyright Museum of Fine Arts, Boston)



Fig. 4.2-56a. Detail of the admonitions scroll
Preserved in the British Museum (copyright) British Museum.



Fig. 4.2-56b. Detail of The Admonitions Scroll.



Fig. 4.2-56c. Detail of The Admonitions Scroll.



Fig. 4.2-57. Seven Sages of the Bamboo Grove on the south wall of the tomb of Southern Dynasty. Unearthed from Xishanqiao, Nanjing, Jiangsu Province. Preserved in Nanjing Museum.

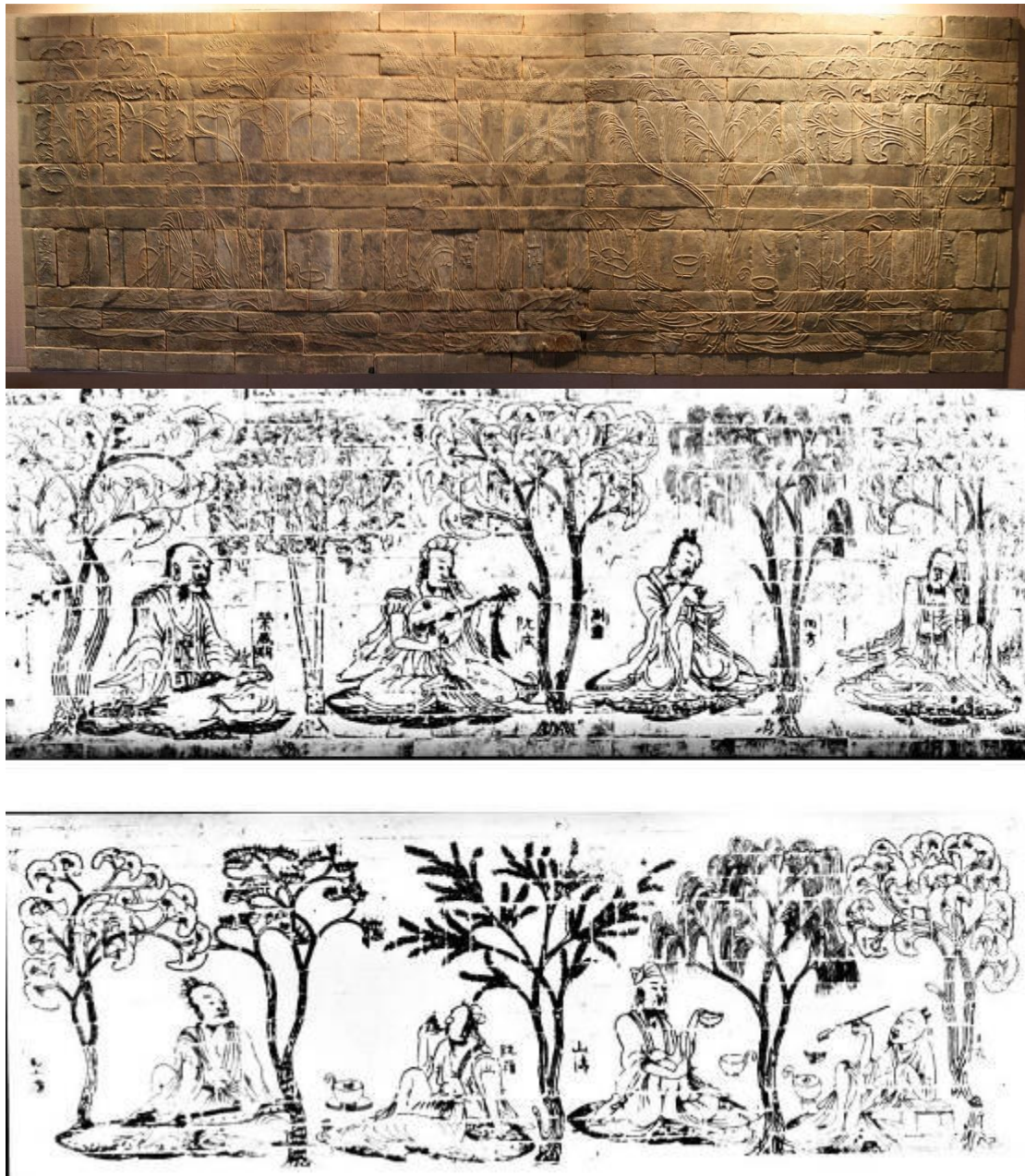


Fig. 4.2-58. Seven Sages of the Bamboo Grove on the tomb of Southern Dynasty
Unearthed from Xishanqiao, Nanjing, Jiangsu Province. Preserved in Nanjing Museum. Photography
by Yuanyuan Duan.

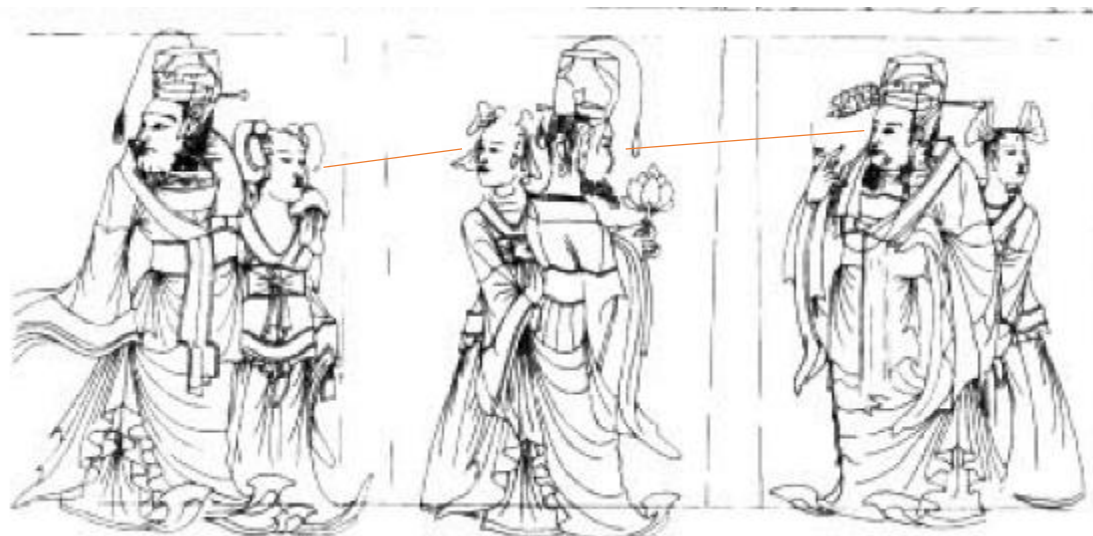


Fig. 4.2-59. The eye contact relationship on the back wall of Ningmaoin Tomb.
Draw by Yuanyuan Duan.



Fig. 4.2-60. A group of figures on the stone sarcophagus of Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art.



Fig. 4.2-61a. Sarcophagus of Prince Yuan Mi of Norther Wei Dynasty (ca. 524).
H. 61cm, L.223.5 com. Preserved in the Minneapolis Institute of Arts.(Copyright Minneapolis Institute of Arts.)



Fig. 4.2-61b. Detail of figures on the Sarcophagus of Prince Yuan Mi of Northern Wei Dynasty (ca. 524)



Fig. 4.2-61c. Detail of figures on the Sarcophagus of Prince Yuan Mi of Northern Wei Dynasty (ca. 524)



Fig. 4.2-61d. The Images on the upper edge of the Sarcophagus of Prince Yuan Mi.

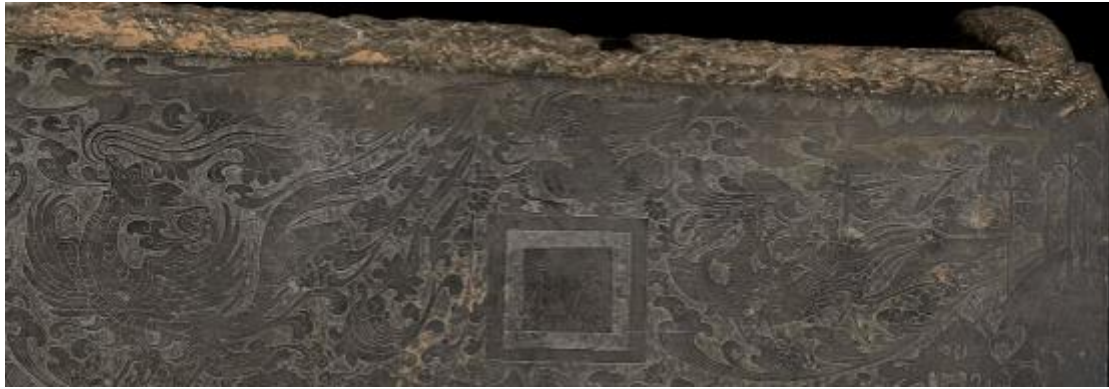


Fig. 4.2-61e. The Images on the upper edge of Sarcophagus of Prince Yuan Mi.



Fig. 4.2-61f. The Images on the upper edge of Sarcophagus of Prince Yuan Mi.



Fig. 4.2-62. Pottery house with windows in Xinji Tomb 1 of Northern Wei Dynasty. Unearthed from the tomb of Xinji, Guyuan, Ningxia province. Preserved in Guyuan Museum. After Feng Luo, "彭阳新集北魏墓[Pengyang Xinji Beiwei Mu]," *Wenwu* 文物[Cultural Relics], no.9(1988): fig.4.

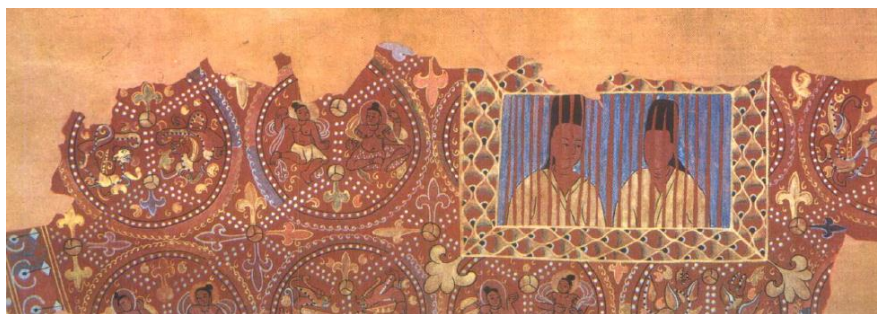


Fig. 4.2-63a. Detail of the Painted coffin of Northern Wei. Dated late fifth century,unearthed from Guyuan, Ningxia province. After Ningxia Guyuan Bowuguan 宁夏固原博物馆, 固原北魏墓漆棺画[Guyuan beiwei Mu Qiguan Hua] (Yingchuan: Ningxia Renming Chubanshe,1988), 49.

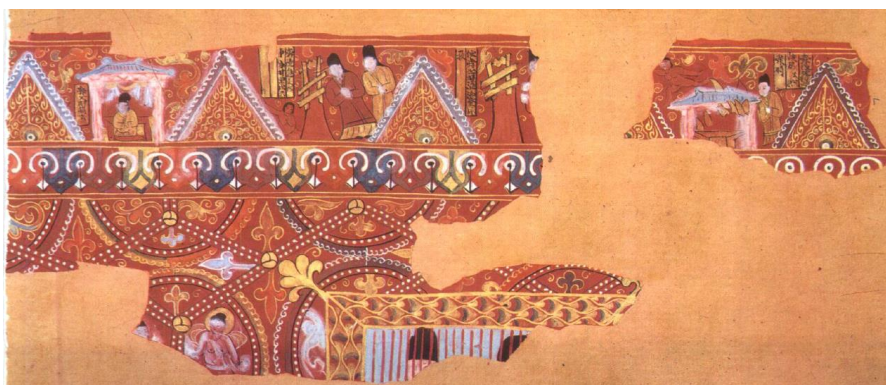


Fig. 4.2-63b. Detail of the painted coffin of Northern Wei. Dated late fifth century,unearthed from Guyuan, Ningxia province. After Ningxia Guyuan Bowuguan 宁夏固原博物馆, 固原北魏墓漆棺画[Guyuan beiwei Mu Qiguan Hua] (Yingchuan: Ningxia Renming Chubanshe,1988),43.

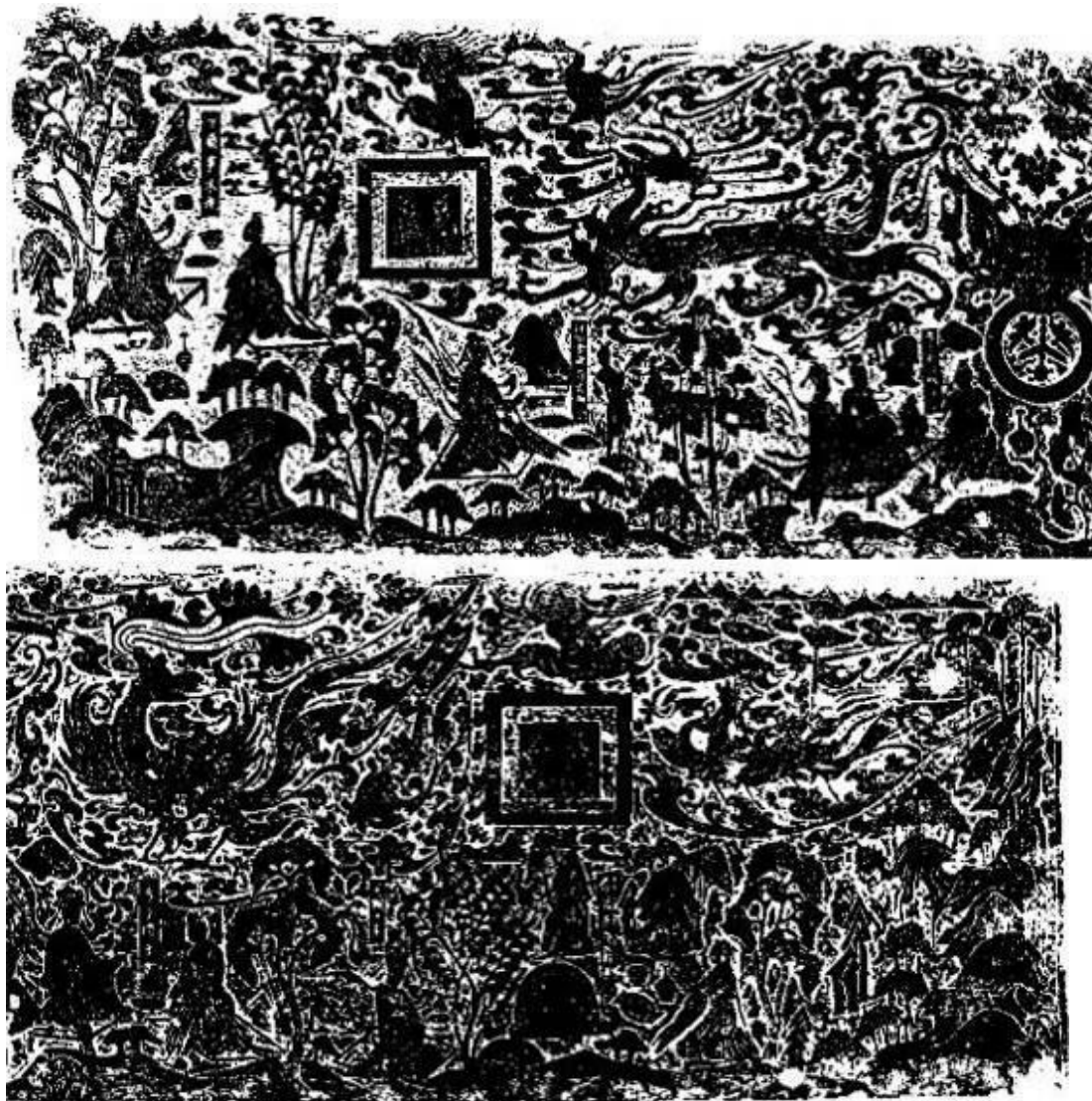


Fig. 4.2-64a. The image of group figures on left side panel of Yuanmi stone sarcophagus. Unearthed near Luoyang, Henan province. Preserved in Minneapolis Institute of Arts

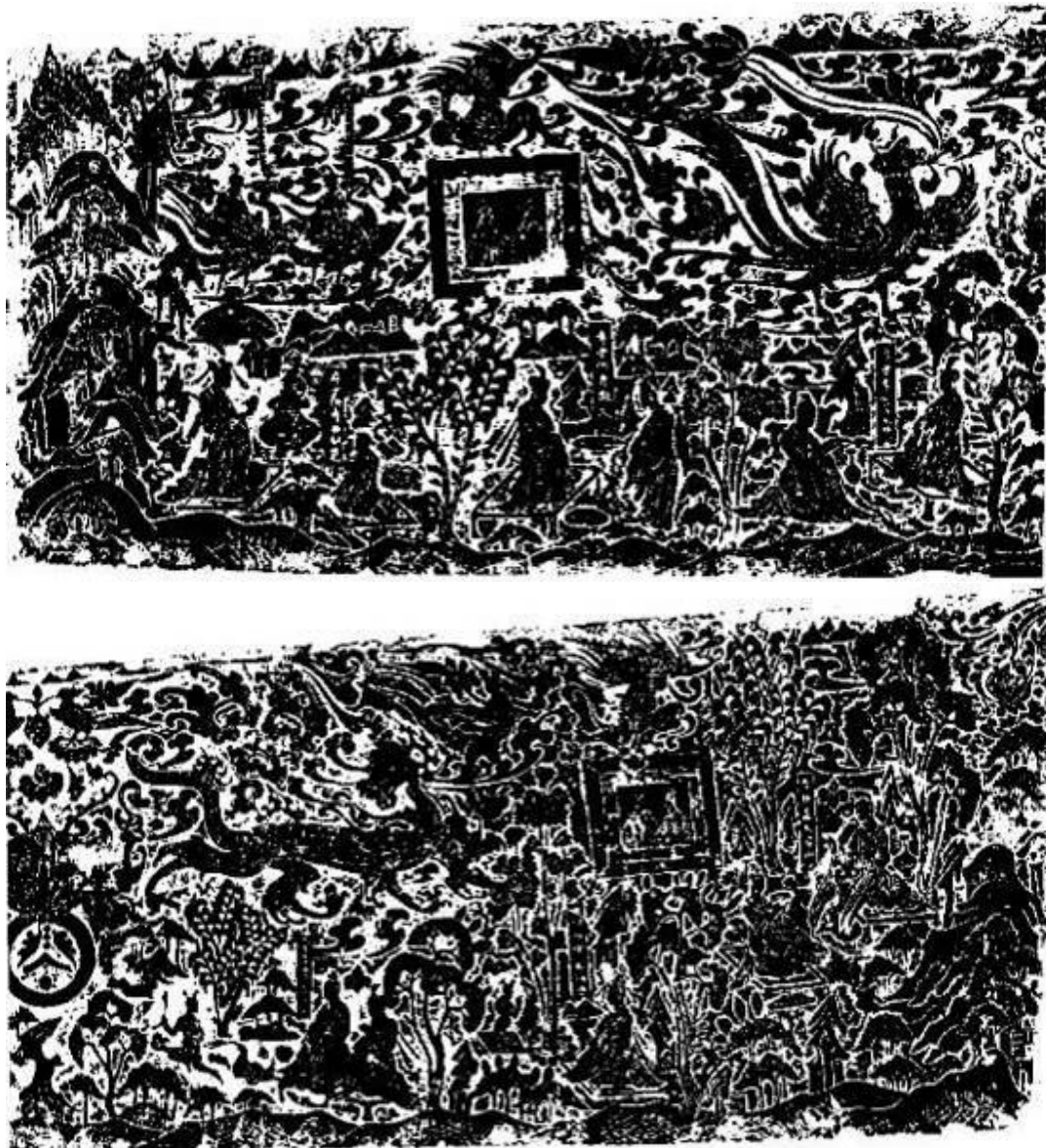


Fig. 4.2-64b. The image of group figures on right side panel of Yuanmi stone sarcophagus. Unearthed near Luoyang, Henan province. Preserved in Minneapolis Institute of Arts



Fig. 4.2-65. Coffins of the Northern Wei Tomb M29 at Qilicun. After Xiaogang Hou, “山西大同七里村北魏墓群 M29 发掘简报 [Shanxi Datong Qilicun Beiwei Muqun M29 Fajue Jianbao],” *Wenwu* 文物 [Cultural Relics], no.1 (2023):fig.8.



Fig. 4.2-66. The image of building on the mural of a tomb of Helingol. 2nd century, unearthed from a tomb of Helingol, Inner Mongolia. After Guangji Xu, *中国出土壁画全集 3 内蒙古*[Zhongguo chutu bihua quanji 3 neimenggu] (Beijing: Kexue chubanshe, 2012), fig.52.



Fig. 4.2-67a. The image of group figures on the mural of West Han tomb M1. Unearthed from the tomb M1 at Xi'an Technology University. After Kou Xiaoshi, Hu Anlin, "西安理工大学西汉壁画墓发掘简报[Xian Ligong Daxue Xihan Bihua Mu Fajue Jianbao]," *Wenwu* 文物 [Cultural Relics], no.5(2006): fig.43.



Fig. 4.2-67b. The image of group figures on the mural of West Han tomb M1. Unearthed from the tomb M1 at Xi'an Technology University. After Kou Xiaoshi, Hu Anlin, "西安理工大学西汉壁画墓发掘简报[Xian Ligong Daxue Xihan Bihua Mu Fajue Jianbao]," *Wenwu* 文物 [Cultural Relics], no.5(2006): fig.45.



Fig. 4.2-68a. The images on the west wall of Zhuwei stone chamber. After Wilma Fairbank, "A Structural Key to Han Mural Art," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 7, no. 1(1942): fig.11.

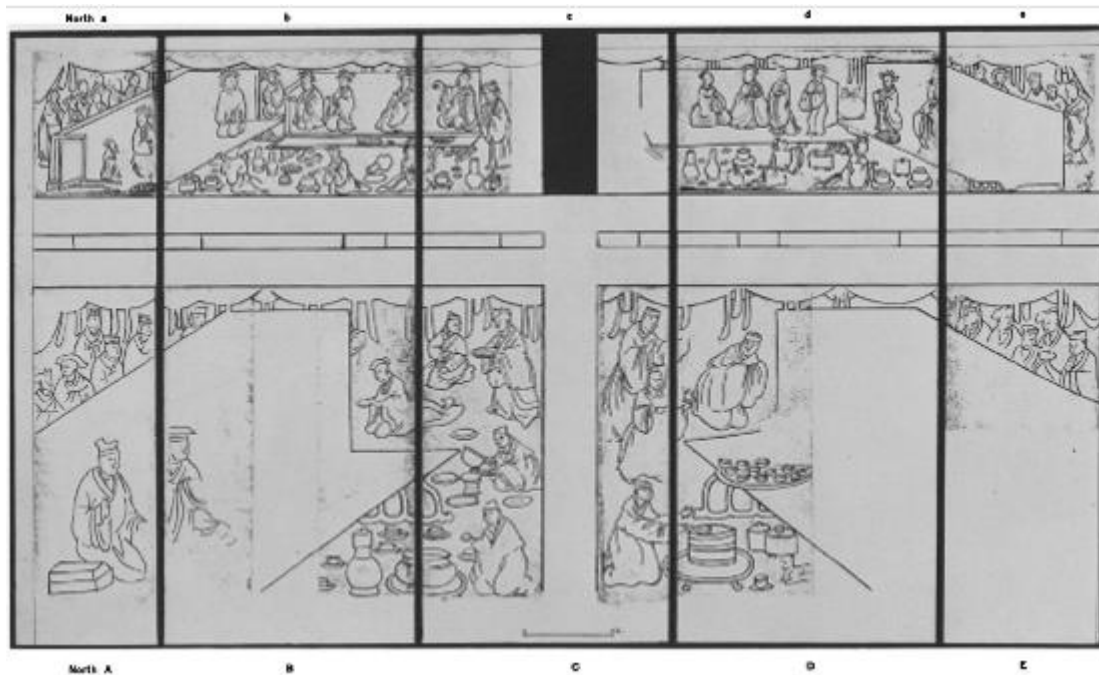


Fig. 11. Interior of rear (north) wall, Cao Wei's stele.

Fig. 4.2-68b. The images on the north wall of Zhuwei Stone chamber.
 After Wilma Fairbank, "A Structural Key to Han Mural Art," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 7, no. 1(1942): fig.11.

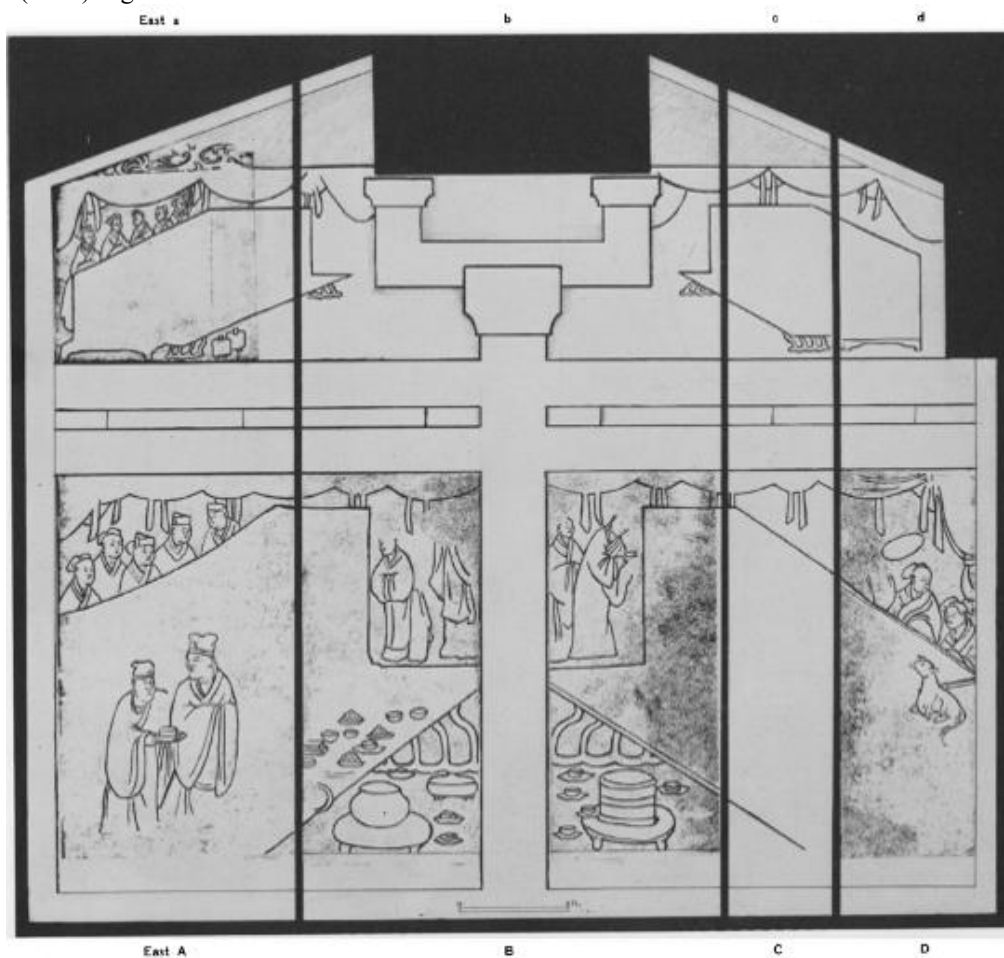


Fig. 4.2-68c. The Images on the east wall of Zhuwei Stone chamber.
 After Wilma Fairbank, "A Structural Key to Han Mural Art," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 7, no. 1(1942):fig.11.



Fig. 4.2-69. The Image of building in the Tomb of Goguyeo(Mid-fourth century)
After Guangji Xu, *Zhongguo chutu bihua quanji* 8 Liaoning Jilin Heilongjiang 中国出土壁画全集 8
辽宁吉林黑龙江 (Beijing: Kexue chubanshe, 2012),fig.111.

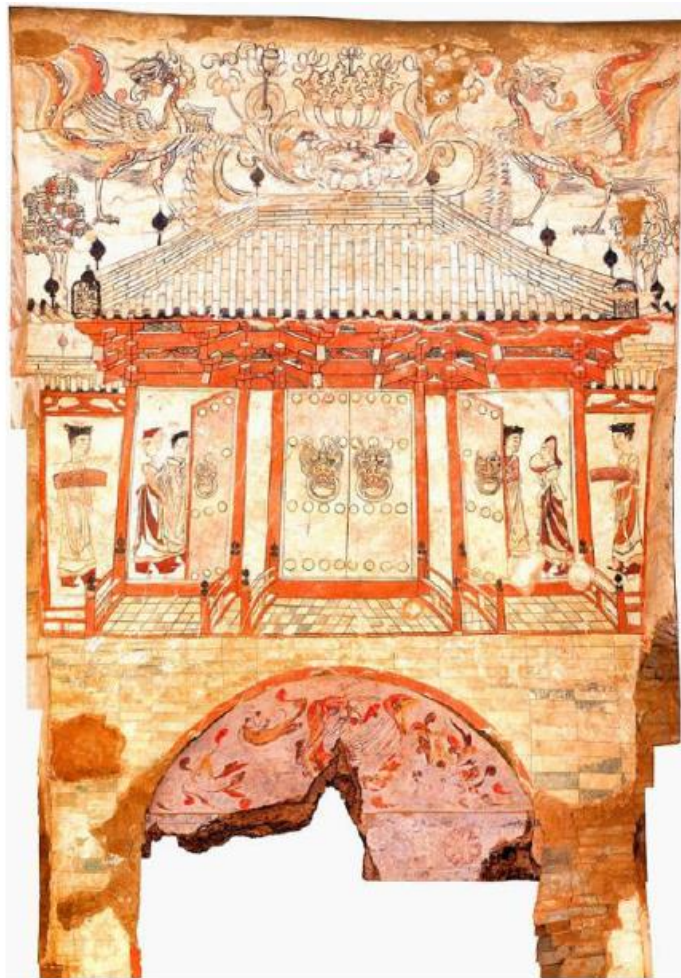


Fig. 4.2-70. The Image of the building in Jiuyuangang Tomb of Northern Dynasty.
After Shanxi bowuyuan 山西博物院, *山西九原岗北朝墓葬壁画搬迁保护* [Shanxi jiuyuangang
beichao muzang bihua banqian baohu] (Beijing: Kexue chubanshe, 2018), fig.101.

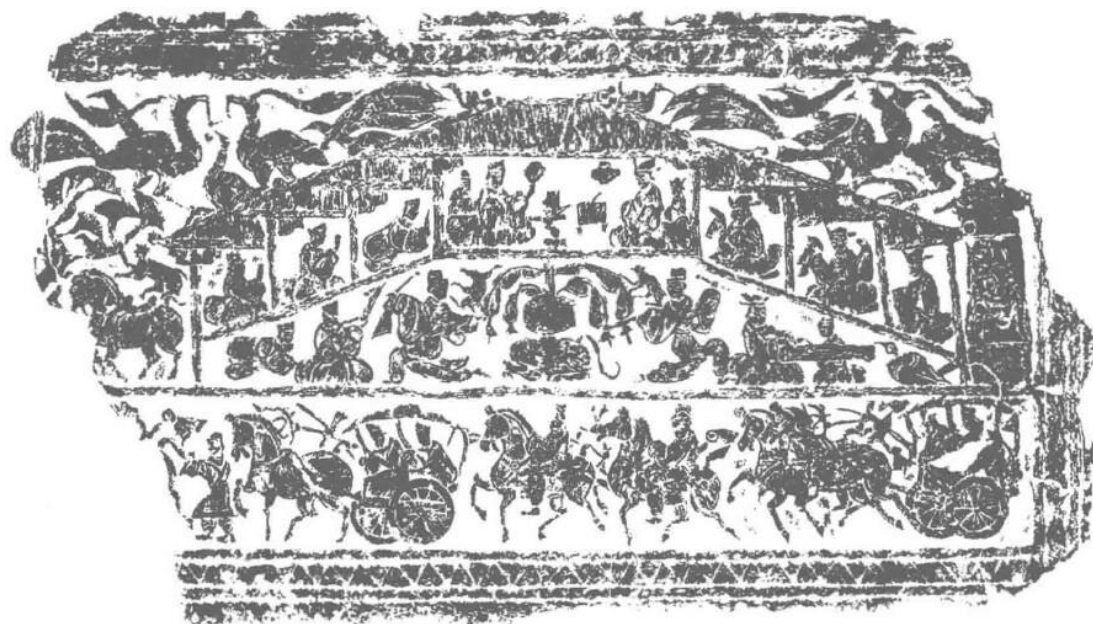


Fig. 4.2-71. The image of buildings on the mural of Han Stone relief (A.D.134).
After Aiguo Yang, *幽冥两界: 纪年汉代画像石研究* [Youming Liangjie Jinian Handai Huaxiang Shi Yanjiu] (Xian: Shanxi Renming Meishu Chubanshe, 2006), Fig.1-3-22.



Fig. 4.2-72. The image on the east wall of the East Han tomb of Helingeer.
After Guangji Xu, *中国出土壁画全集 3 内蒙古* [Zhongguo Chutu Bihua Quanji 3 Neimenggu] (Beijing: Kexue Chubanshe, 2012), Plate 49.

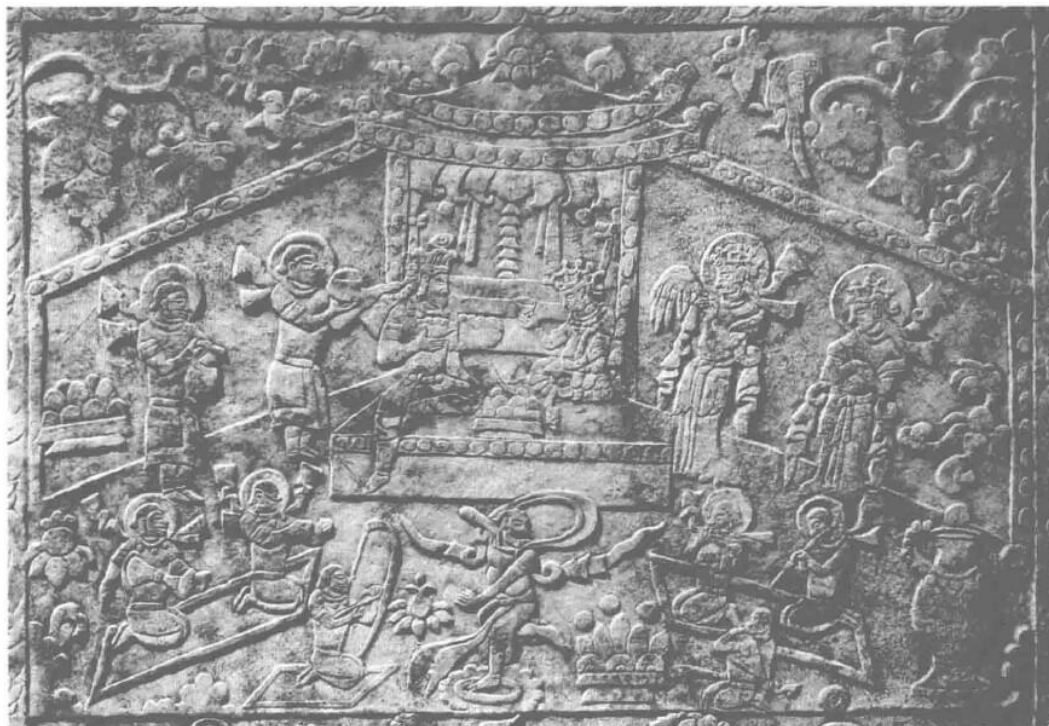


Fig. 4.2-73. The image on the back wall of stone coffins of Yuhong tomb (ca.592 A.D.) Unearthed in Taiyuan, Shanxi province. Preserved in Shanxi Museum. After Wen Gao, *中国画像石棺全集* [Zhongguo Huaxiang Shiguan Quanj] (Taiyuan:Sanjin Chubanshe,2011) , fig.4-2-5.

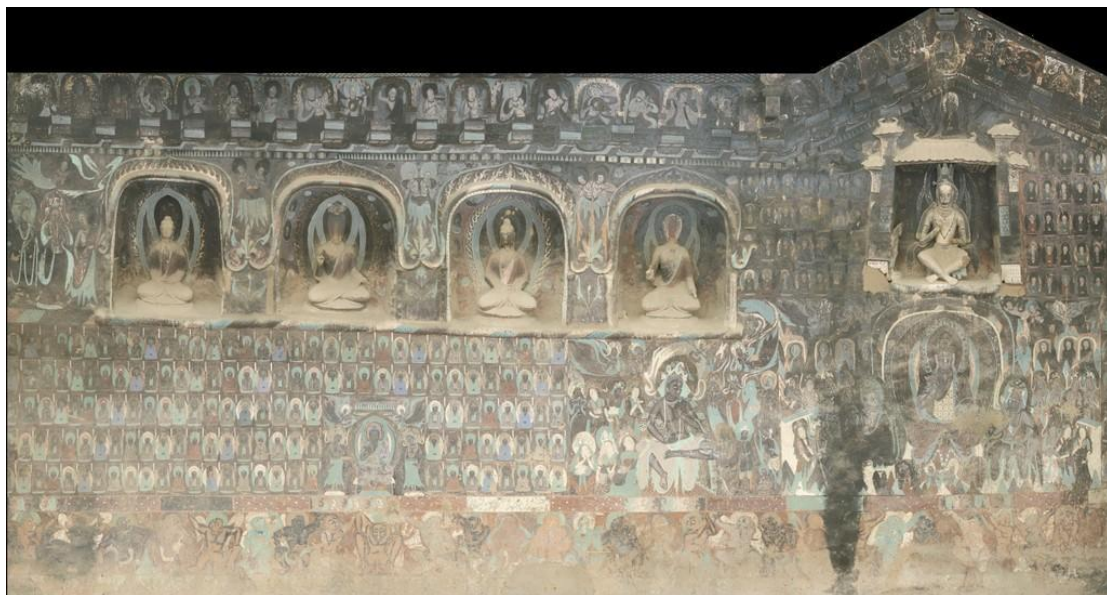


Fig. 5.1-1a. South wall of main chamber in Dunhuang Mogao Cave 254. W. 9.5m, H. 3.96m. Available from: ARTstor, <https://shibbolethsp.jstor.org/start?entityID=https%3A%2F%2Fidp.uni-heidelberg.de&dest=https://www.jstor.org/stable/community.15434685&site=jst>



Fig. 5.1-1b. North wall of main chamber in Dunhuang Mogao Cave 254.
W. 9.36 m, H. 3.95 m. Available from ARTstor,
<https://shibbolethsp.jstor.org/start?entityID=https%3A%2F%2Fidp.uni-heidelberg.de&dest=https://www.jstor.org/stable/community.15441765&site=jstor>

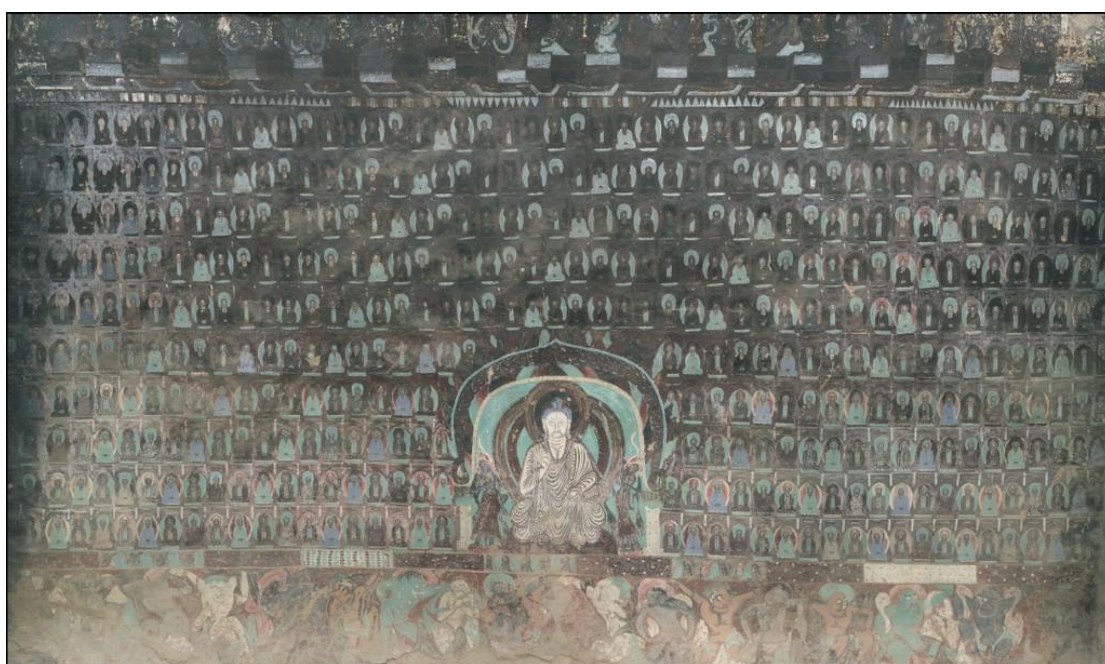


Fig. 5.1-1c. West wall of main chamber in Dunhuang Mogao Cave 254.
Available from: ARTstor,
<https://shibbolethsp.jstor.org/start?entityID=https%3A%2F%2Fidp.uni-heidelberg.de&dest=https://www.jstor.org/stable/community.15433778&site=jstor>

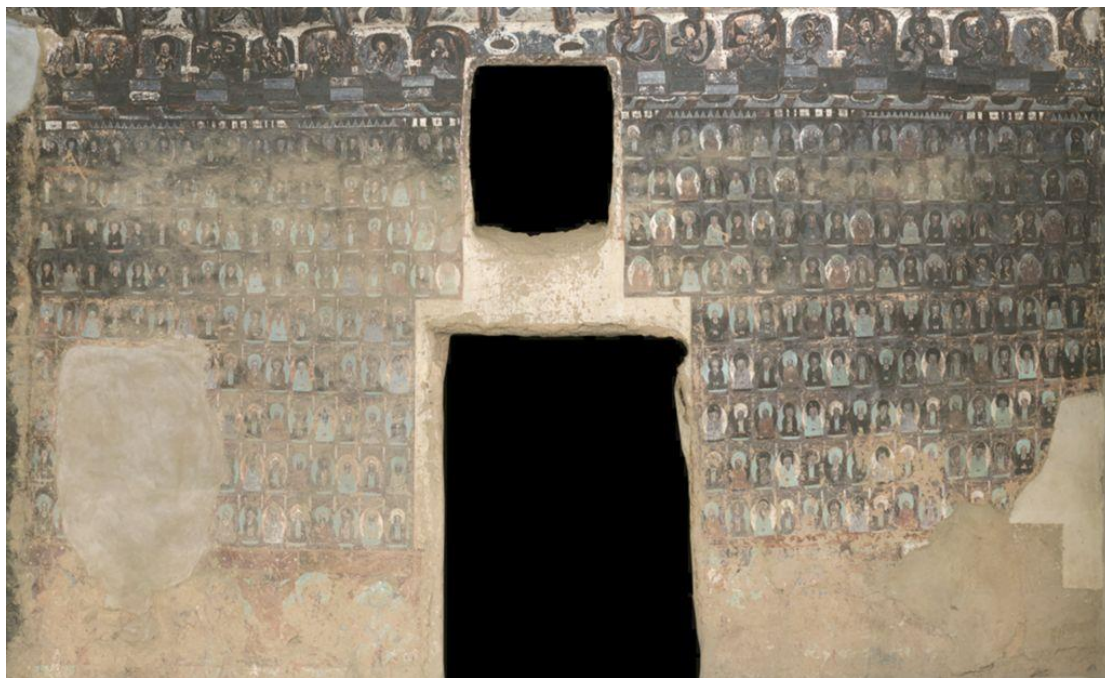


Fig.5.1-1d. East wall of main chamber in Dunhuang Mogao Cave 254.

Available from: ARTstor, <https://shibbolethsp.jstor.org/start?entityID=https%3A%2F%2Fidp.uni-heidelberg.de&dest=https://www.jstor.org/stable/community.15438935&site=jstor>



Fig. 5.1-1e. The central pillar of Mogao Cave 254,

Date of photograph: 1943-1944. Available From Artstor Digital Library,

<https://shibbolethsp.jstor.org/start?entityID=https%3A%2F%2Fidp.uni-heidelberg.de&dest=https://www.jstor.org/stable/community.15435509&site=jstor>

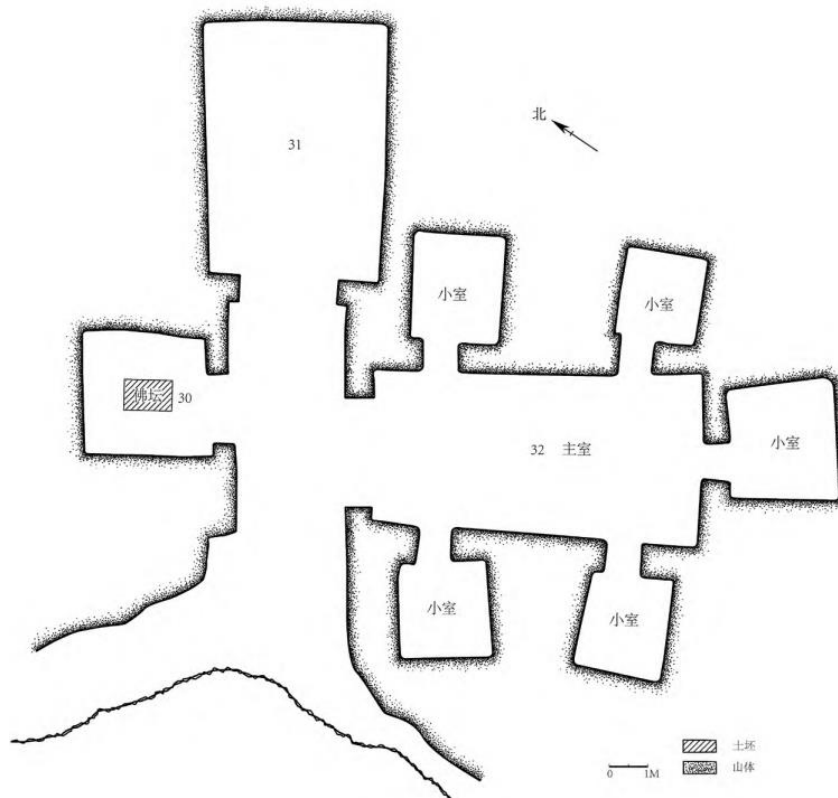


Fig. 5.1-2a. The plan of Toyok Cave 42(K32)

After Lidong Xia, “石窟空间与仪式秩序: 重建吐峪沟东区第 30-32 窟禅观程序[Cave Space and Ritual Program: The Meditation Courses Reviewed through Caves 30-32 in the East Tuyuq Grottoes],” *Gugong Bowuyuan Yuankan* 故宫博物院院刊 [Palace Museum Journal], no.4(2022): fig.3.

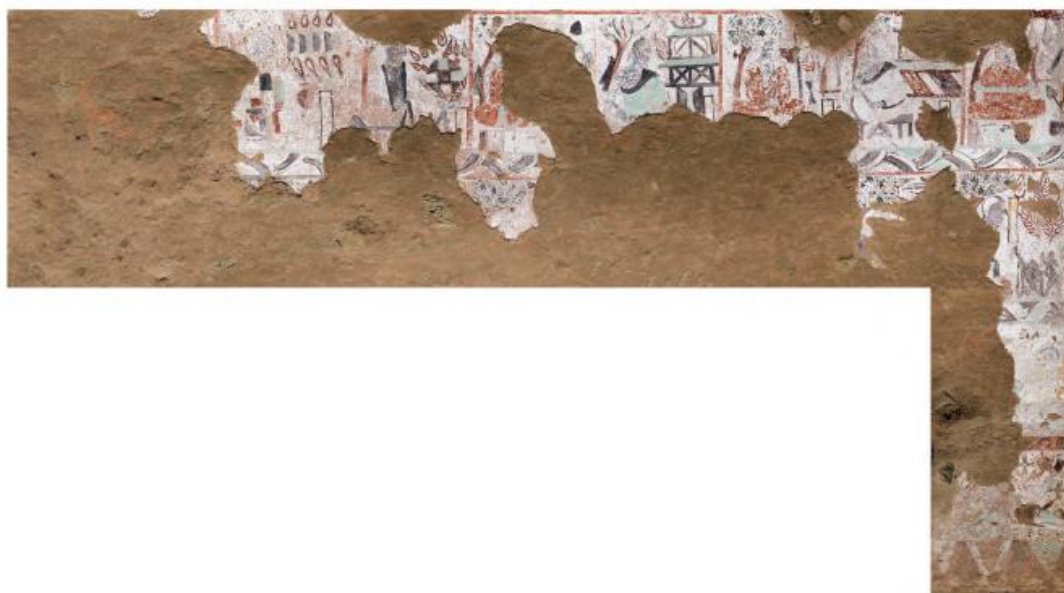


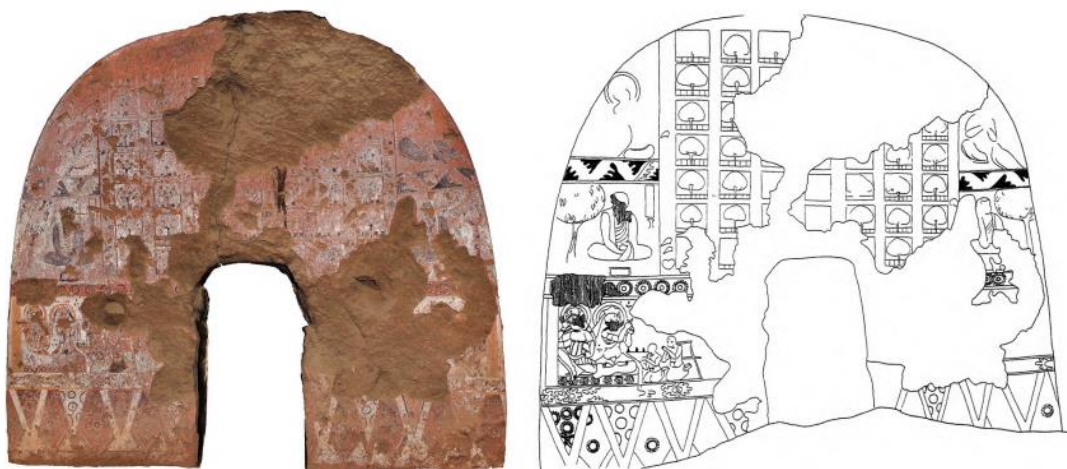
Fig. 5.1-2b. The right wall of main chamber of Toyok Cave 42(K32).

After Lidong Xia, “Shiku Kongjian yu Yishi Chengxu 石窟空间与仪式秩序: 重建吐峪沟东区第 30-32 窟禅观程序[Cave Space and Ritual Program: The Meditation Courses Reviewed through Caves 30-32 in the East Tuyuq Grottoes],” *Gugong Bowuyuan Yuankan* 故宫博物院院刊 [Palace Museum Journal], no.4(2022):22, fig.5.



1

Fig. 5.1-2c. The left wall of main chamber of Toyok Cave 42(K32).
 After Lidong Xia, "Shiku Kongjian yu Yishi Chengxu 石窟空间与仪式秩序: 重建吐峪沟东区第 30-32 窟禅观程序[Cave Space and Ritual Program: The Meditation Courses Reviewed through Caves 30-32 in the East Tuyuq Grottoes]," *Gugong Bowuyuan Yuankan* 故宫博物院院刊 [Palace Museum Journal], no.4(2022):fig.7.



1

2

Fig. 5.1-2d The back wall of main chamber of Toyok Cave 42(K32).
 After Lidong Xia, "Shiku Kongjian yu Yishi Chengxu 石窟空间与仪式秩序: 重建吐峪沟东区第 30-32 窟禅观程序[Cave Space and Ritual Program: The Meditation Courses Reviewed through Caves 30-32 in the East Tuyuq Grottoes]," *Gugong Bowuyuan Yuankan* 故宫博物院院刊 [Palace Museum Journal], no.4(2022): fig.6.



Fig. 5.1-3a. The back wall of main chamber of Toyok Cave 41(K31).
After Lidong Xia, "Shiku Kongjian yu Yishi Chengxu 石窟空间与仪式秩序: 重建吐峪沟东区第 30-32 窟禅观程序[Cave Space and Ritual Program: The Meditation Courses Reviewed through Caves 30-32 in the East Tuyuq Grottoes]." *Gugong Bowuyuan Yuankan* 故宫博物院院刊 [Palace Museum Journal], no.4(2022): fig.9-1.



Fig. 5.1-3b. The left wall of main chamber of Toyok Cave 41(K31)
After Lidong Xia, "Shiku Kongjian yu Yishi Chengxu 石窟空间与仪式秩序: 重建吐峪沟东区第 30-32 窟禅观程序[Cave Space and Ritual Program: The Meditation Courses Reviewed through Caves 30-32 in the East Tuyuq Grottoes]." *Gugong Bowuyuan Yuankan* 故宫博物院院刊 [Palace Museum Journal], no.4(2022):fig.9-2.

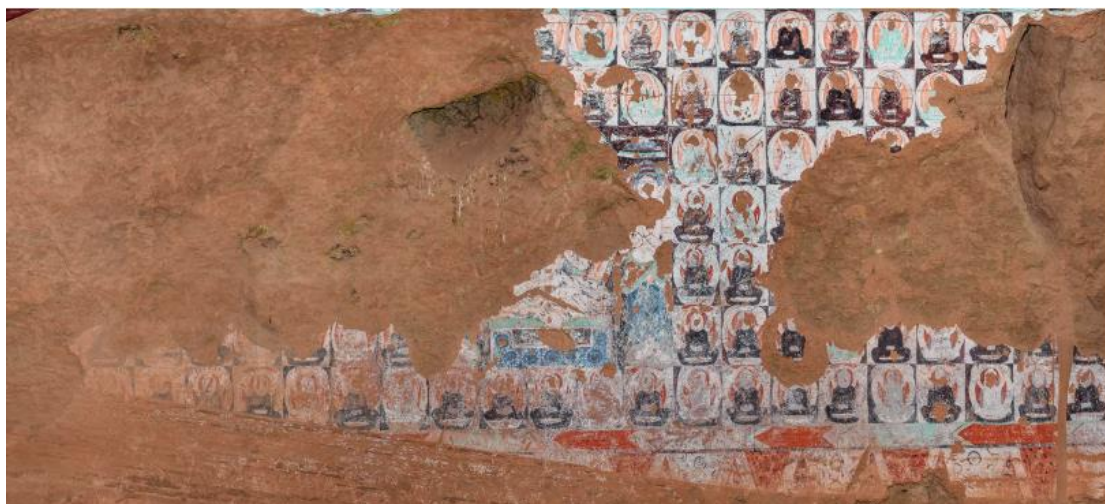


Fig. 5.1-3c. The right wall of main chamber of Toyok Cave 41(K31)

After Lidong Xia, “Shiku Kongjian yu Yishi Chengxu 石窟空间与仪式秩序: 重建吐峪沟东区第 30-32 窟禅观程序[Cave Space and Ritual Program: The Meditation Courses Reviewed through Caves 30-32 in the East Tuyuq Grottoes].” *Gugong Bowuyuan Yuankan* 故宫博物院院刊 [Palace Museum Journal], no.4(2022):fig.9-3.

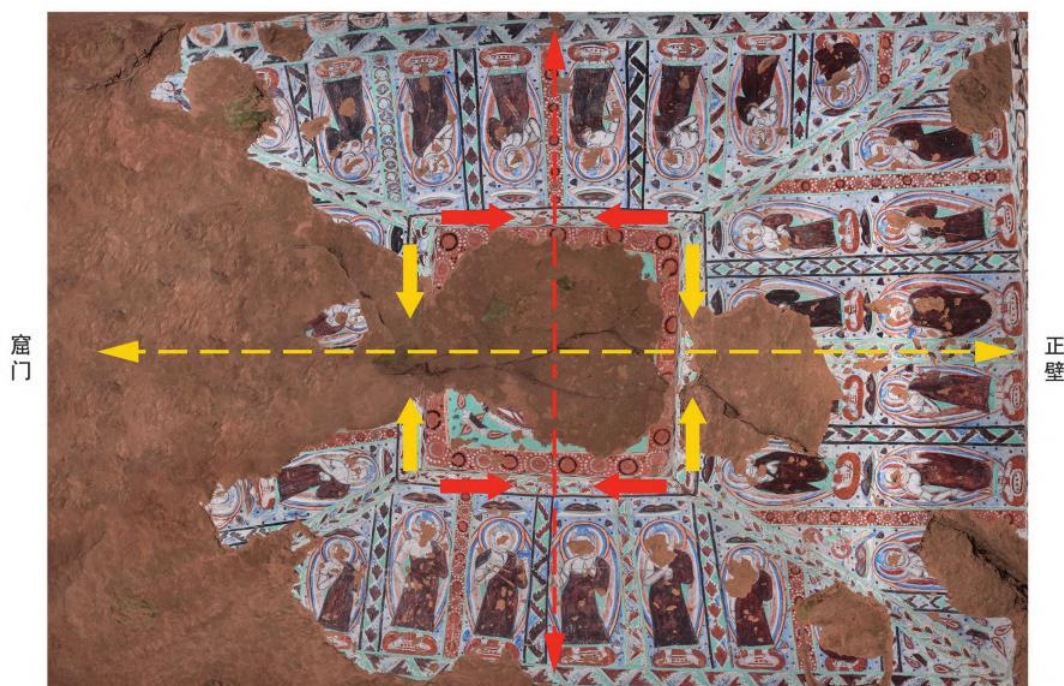


Fig. 5.1-3d. The ceiling of main chamber of Toyok Cave 41(K31).

After Lidong Xia, “Shiku Kongjian yu Yishi Chengxu 石窟空间与仪式秩序: 重建吐峪沟东区第 30-32 窟禅观程序[Cave Space and Ritual Program: The Meditation Courses Reviewed through Caves 30-32 in the East Tuyuq Grottoes].” *Gugong Bowuyuan Yuankan* 故宫博物院院刊 [Palace Museum Journal], no.4(2022):fig.10.

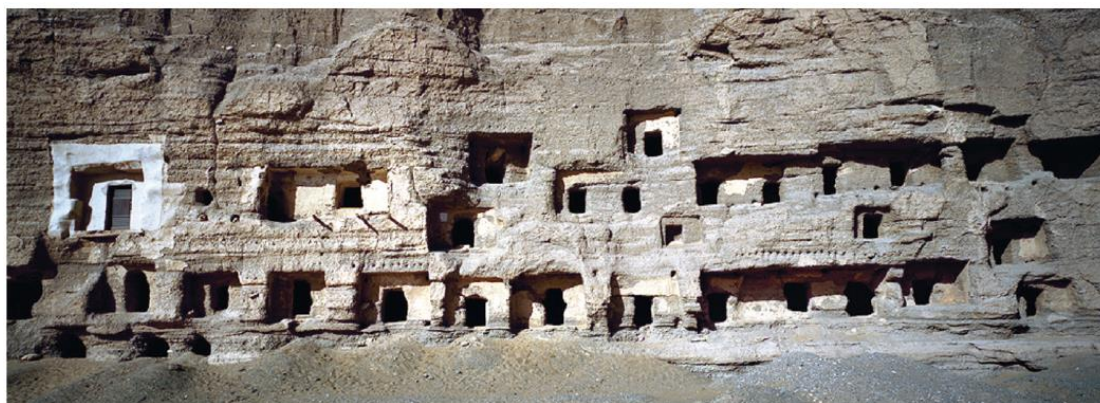


Fig. 5.1-4. Caves in the northern area of the Dunhuang Mogao Caves.
After Peng Jinzhang, and Costantino Moretti, “Les fouilles archéologiques du secteur nord de Mogao.”
Arts Asiatiques 67.1 (2012):fig.1.



Fig. 5.1-5. Pagoda relics in Mogao Cave 285.
After Mission Pelliot, *Les grottes de Touen-Houang* (Paris. Librairie Paul Geuthner, 1920),
Plate.CCLX.

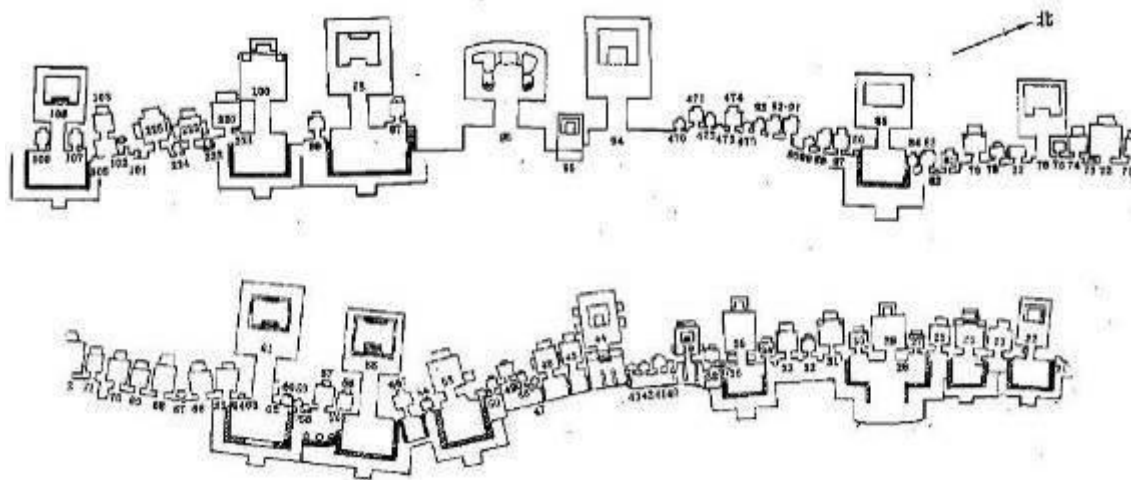


Fig. 5.1-6. Ruins of the hall in front of the Mogao Caves.
 After Yushan Pan, and Shichang Ma, 莫高窟窟前殿堂遗址 [Mogaoku Kuqian Diantang Yizhi]
 (Beijing: Wenwu Chubanshe, 1985), fig. 7.



Fig. 5.1-7a. The remains of building in front of the Mogao Caves
 After Mission Pelliot, *Les grottes de Touen-Houang* (Paris. Librairie Paul Geuthner, 1920), Plate. V.



Fig. 5.1-7b. The remains of building in front of Mogao cave 96
After Mission Pelliot, *Les grottes de Touen-Houang* (Paris: Librairie Paul Geuthner, 1920), Plate VI.

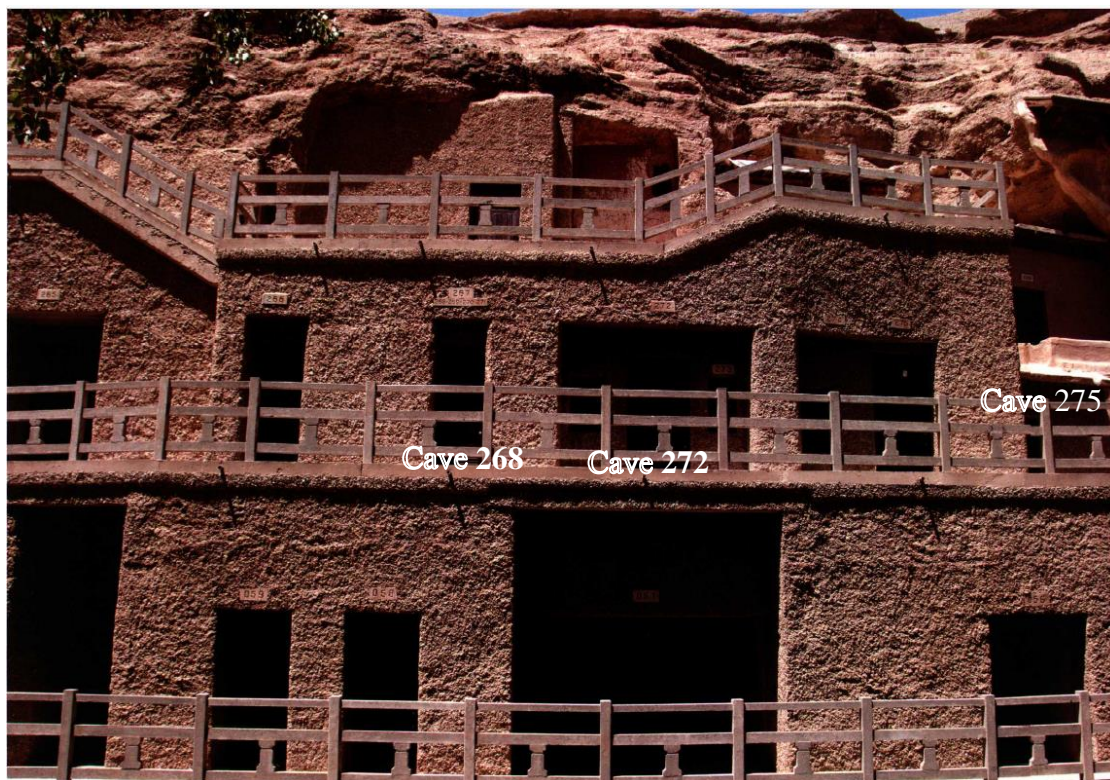


Fig. 5.1-8. Group A: Mogao Cave 268, Mogao Cave 272 and Mogao Cave 275
After Dunhuang Yanjiuyuan 敦煌研究院 [Dunhuang Academy], *敦煌石窟全集 第1卷 莫高窟第266、268、272、275窟考古报告第二分册* [Caves 266-275 of Mogao Grottoes The Dunhuang caves] (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2006), Plate 2.

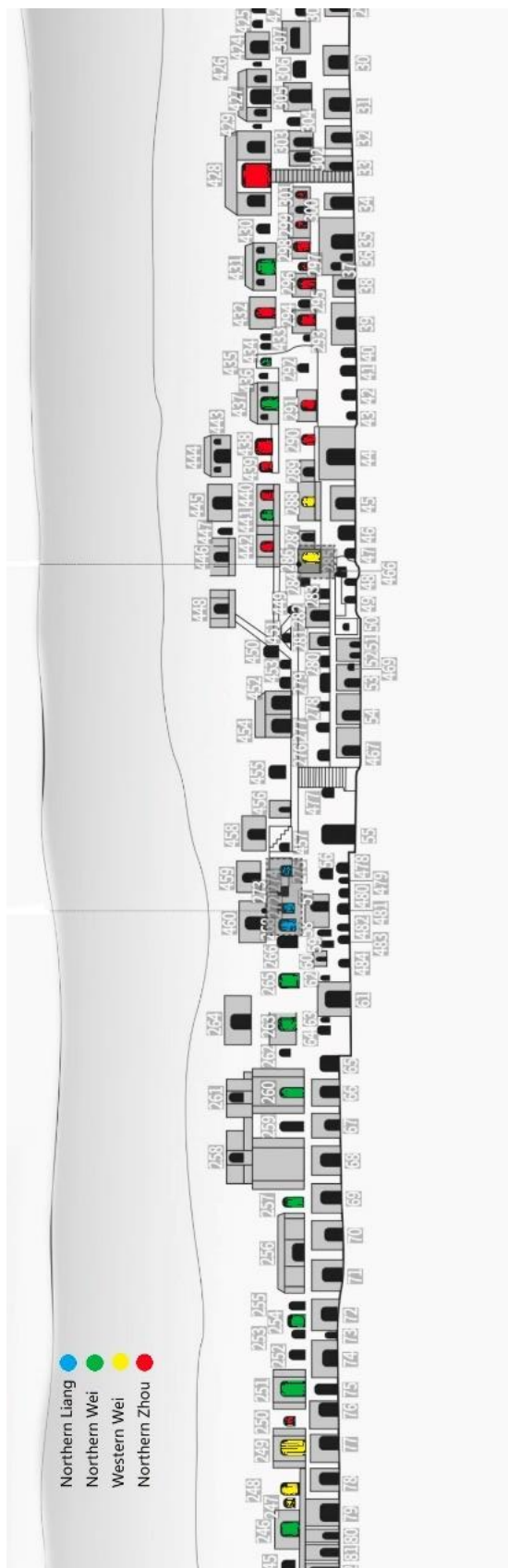


Fig. 5.1-9. Distribution of Dunhuang Mogao Caves excavated during the 4th-6th century.
Draw by the author

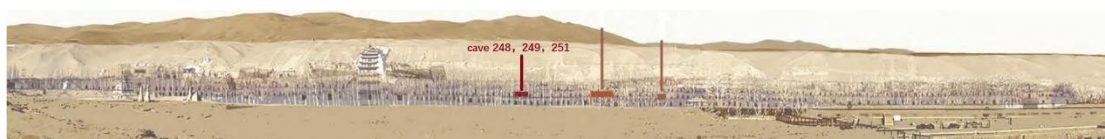


Fig. 5.1-10. Group B: Mogao Cave 248, Mogao Cave 249 and Mogao Cave 251



Fig. 5.1-11. Group C: Mogao Cave 285, Mogao Cave 288
Photograph by Yuanyuan Duan, 28, Feb. 2019.



Fig. 5.1-12. Group D: Mogao Cave 442, Mogao Cave 438, Mogao Cave 437, Mogao Cave 290.
Photograph by Yuanyuan Duan, 28, Feb. 2019

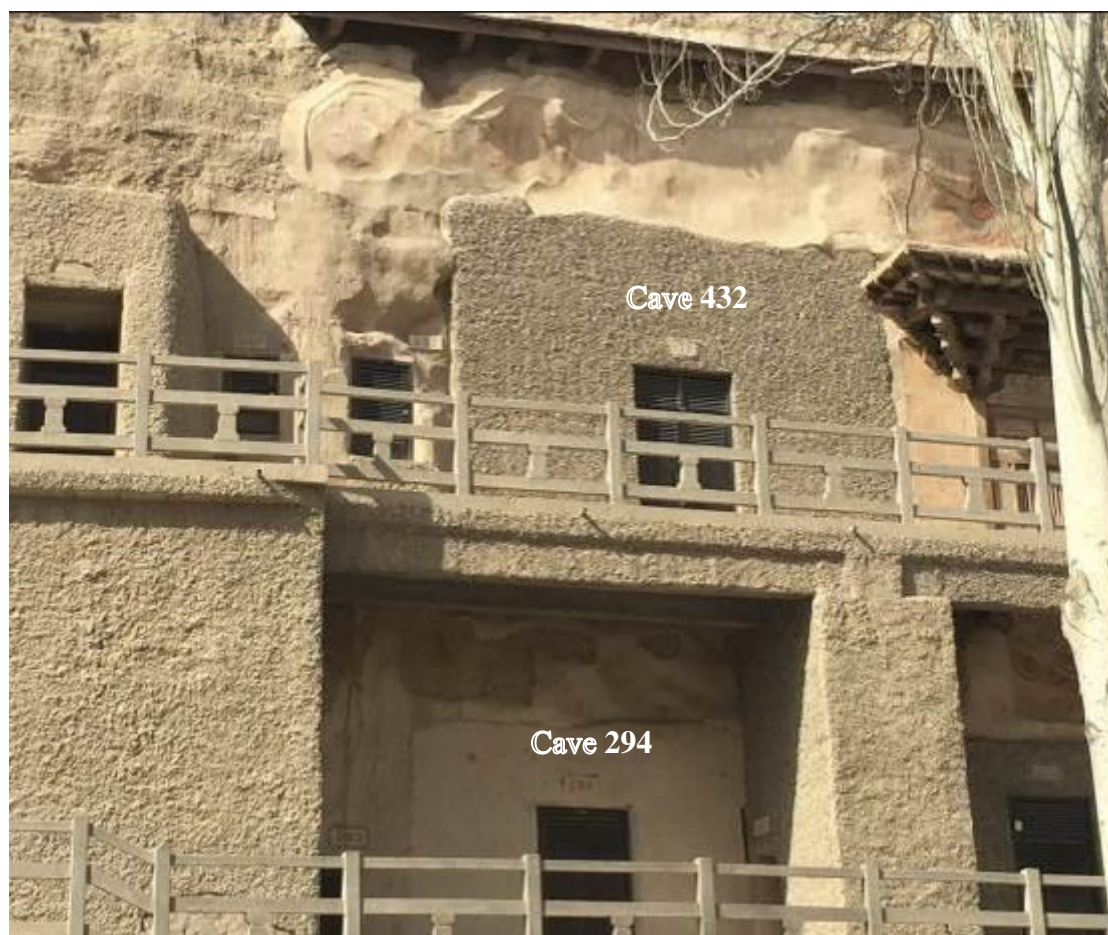


Fig. 5.1-13. Group E: Mogao Cave 294, Mogao Cave 432.
Photograph by Yuanyuan Duan, 28, Feb. 2019



Fig. 5.1-14. Group F: Mogao Cave 296, Mogao Cave 297, Mogao Cave 299, Mogao Cave 431.
Photograph by Yuanyuan Duan, 28, Feb., 2019.



Fig. 5.1-15. Group G: Mogao Cave 301 and Mogao Cave 428.

Photograph by Yuanyuan Duan, 28, Feb., 2019.

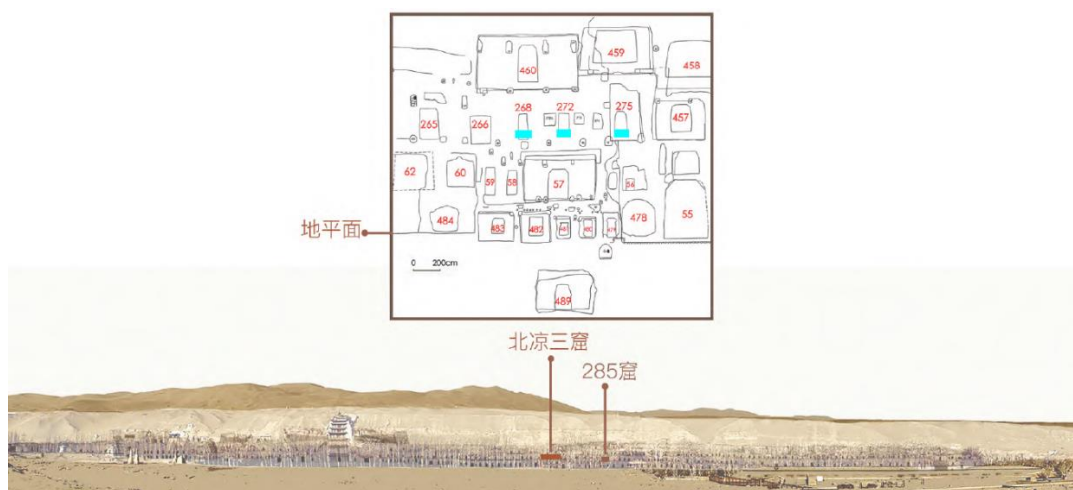


Fig. 5.1-16a. Location of the Three Northern Liang Caves at Mogao Caves.

After Zhao Rong Zhao, "Dunhuang Mogaoku Beiliang Sanku Kaizao Cidi Shulun 敦煌莫高窟北凉三窟开凿次第述论[On the Excavation Sequence of the Three Northern Liang Caves at Mogao in Dunhuang]," *Dunhuang Yanjiu* 敦煌研究[Dunhuang Research], no.02(2022):fig.1.

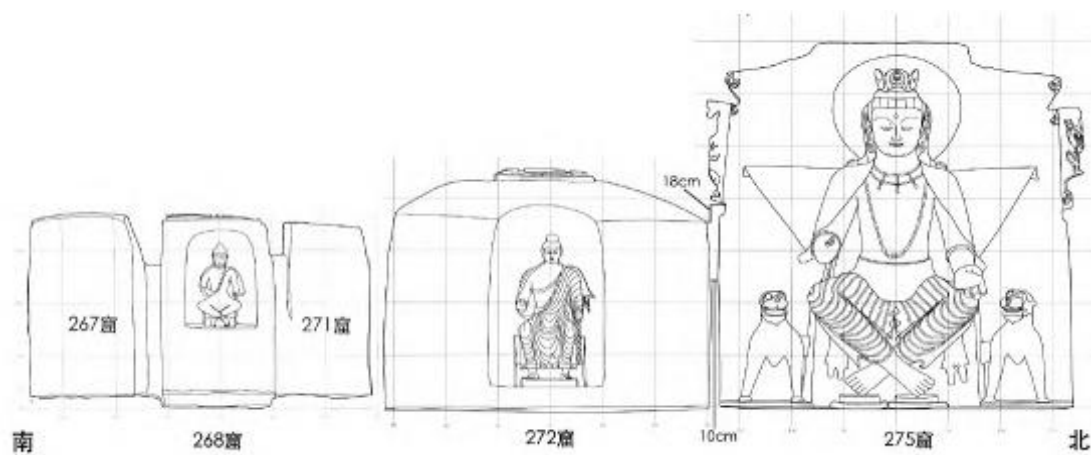
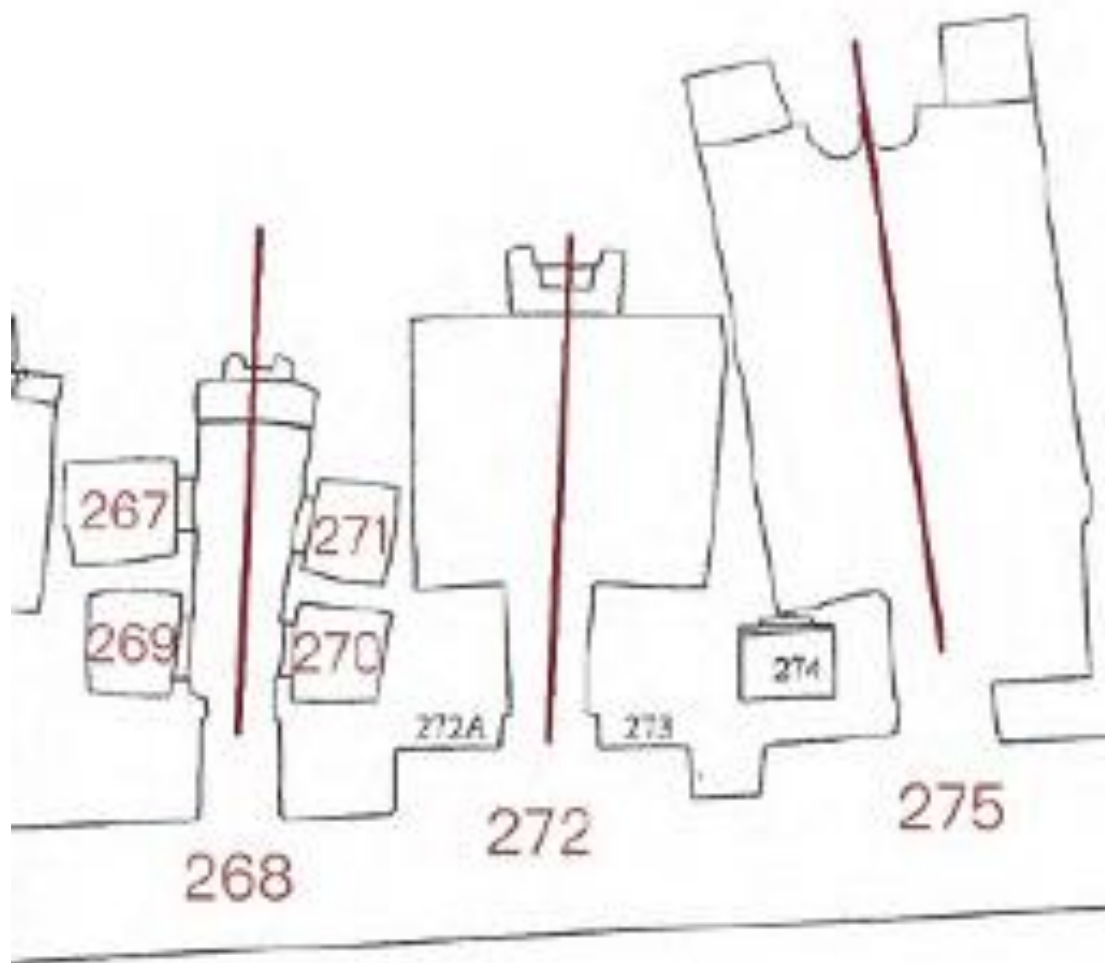


Fig. 5.1-16b. Interior plan and elevation of the three Northern Liang Caves. Including Mogao Cave 268, Mogao Cave 272, Mogao Cave 275.

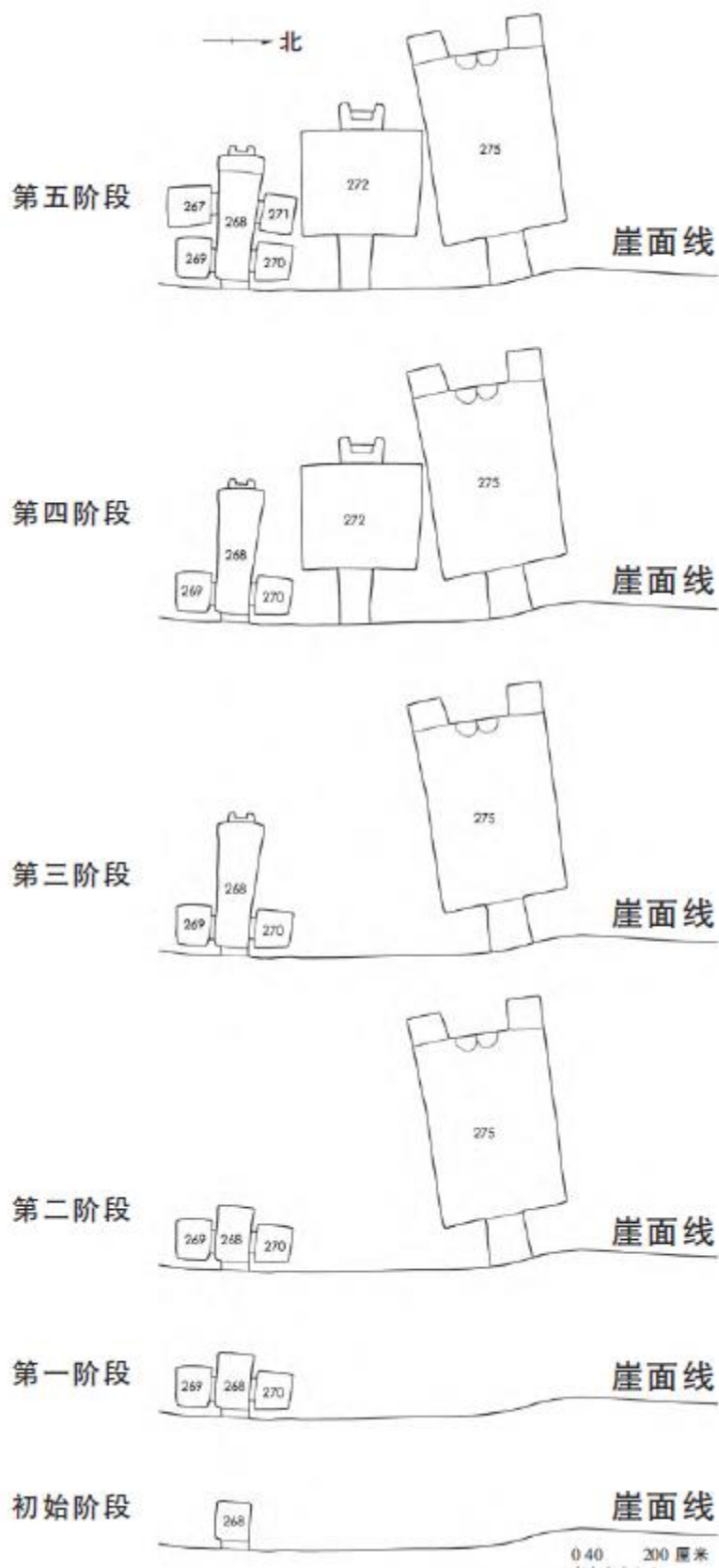


Fig. 5.1-16c. Diagram of the order of excavation of the three Northern Liang Caves.
 After Rong Zhao, "Dunhuang Mogaoku Beiliang Sanku Kaizao Cidi Shulun 敦煌莫高窟北凉三窟开凿次第述论 [On the Excavation Sequence of the Three Northern Liang Caves at Mogao in Dunhuang]," *Dunhuang Yanjiu* 敦煌研究 [Dunhuang Research], no.02(2022): fig.13.

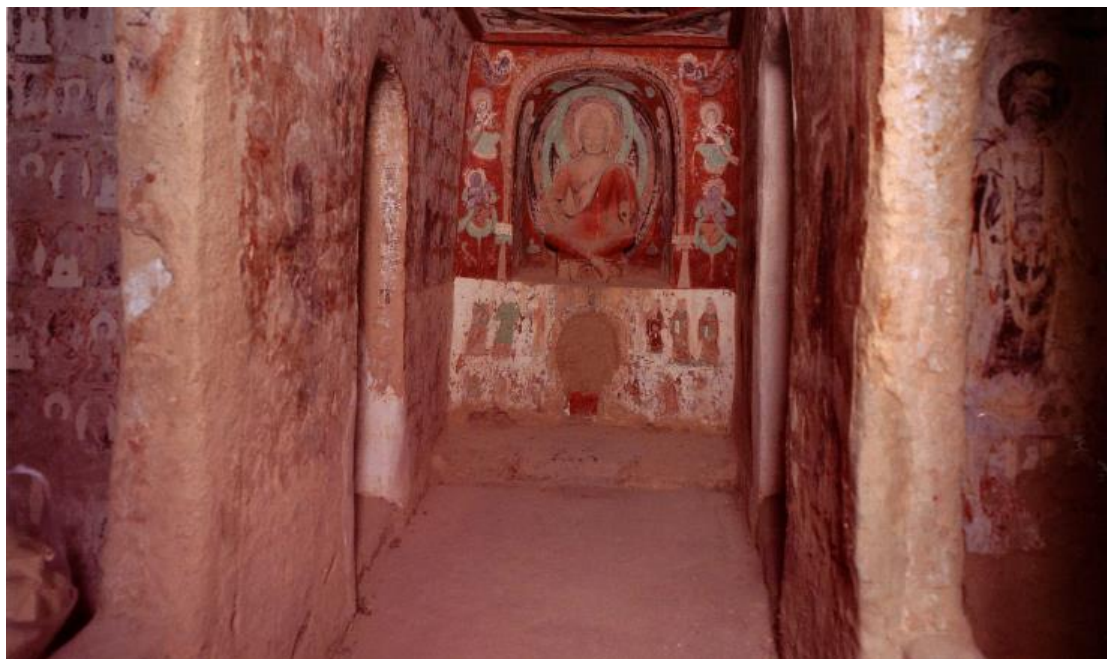
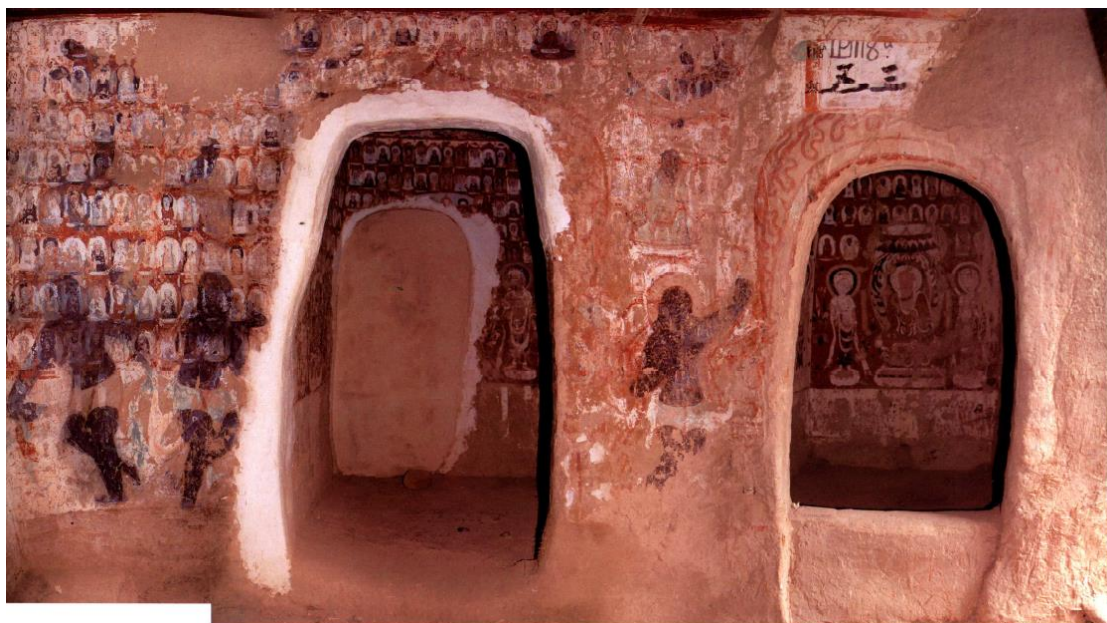


Fig. 5.1-17a. West wall of Mogao cave 268.

After Dunhuang Yanjiuyuan 敦煌研究院, *Dunhuang Shiku Quanji Diyijuan Mogaoku Di Erliliu Erliuba Erqier Erqiwu Ku Kaogu Baogao Dier Fence* 敦煌石窟全集 第1卷 莫高窟第266、268、272、275窟考古报告第二分册 [Caves 266-275 of Mogao Grottoes The Dunhuang caves] (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2006), Plate 27.

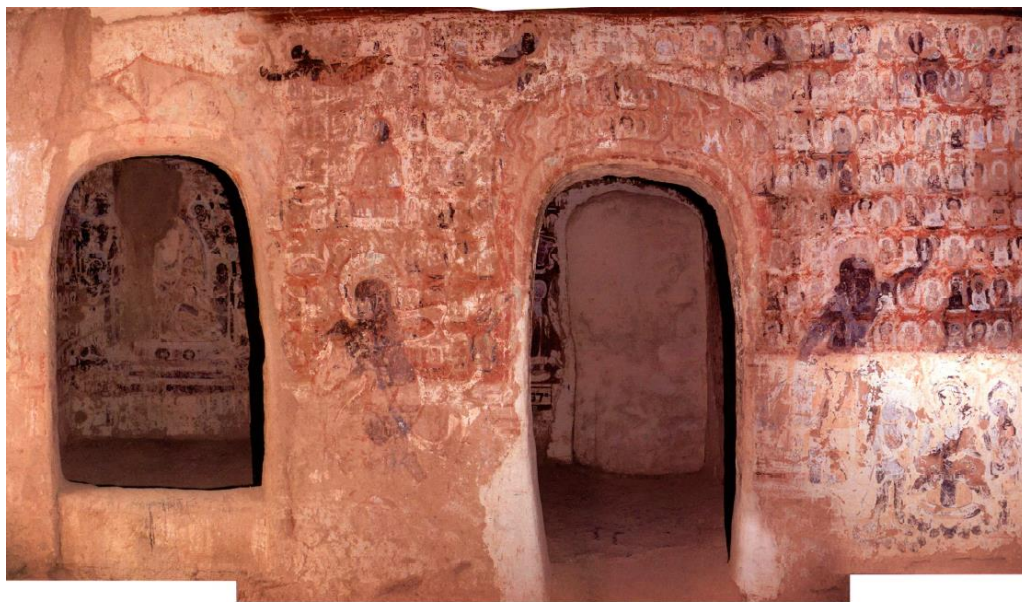


1 第268窟北壁

2007

Fig.5.1-17b. North wall of Mogao Cave 268.

After Dunhuang Yanjiuyuan 敦煌研究院, *Dunhuang Shiku Quanji Diyijuan Mogaoku Di Erliliu Erliuba Erqier Erqiwu Ku Kaogu Baogao Dier Fence* 敦煌石窟全集 第1卷 莫高窟第266、268、272、275窟考古报告第二分册 [Caves 266-275 of Mogao Grottoes The Dunhuang caves] (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2006), Plate 40.



2 第268窟南壁

2007

Fig. 5.1-17c. South wall of Mogao Cave 268

After Dunhuang Yanjiuyuan 敦煌研究院, *Dunhuang Shiku Quanji Diyijuan Mogaoku Di Erliliu Erliuba Erqier Erqiwu Ku Kaogu Baogao Dier Fence* 敦煌石窟全集 第1卷 莫高窟第266、268、272、275窟考古报告第二分册 [Caves 266-275 of Mogao Grottoes The Dunhuang caves] (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2006), Plate 40.

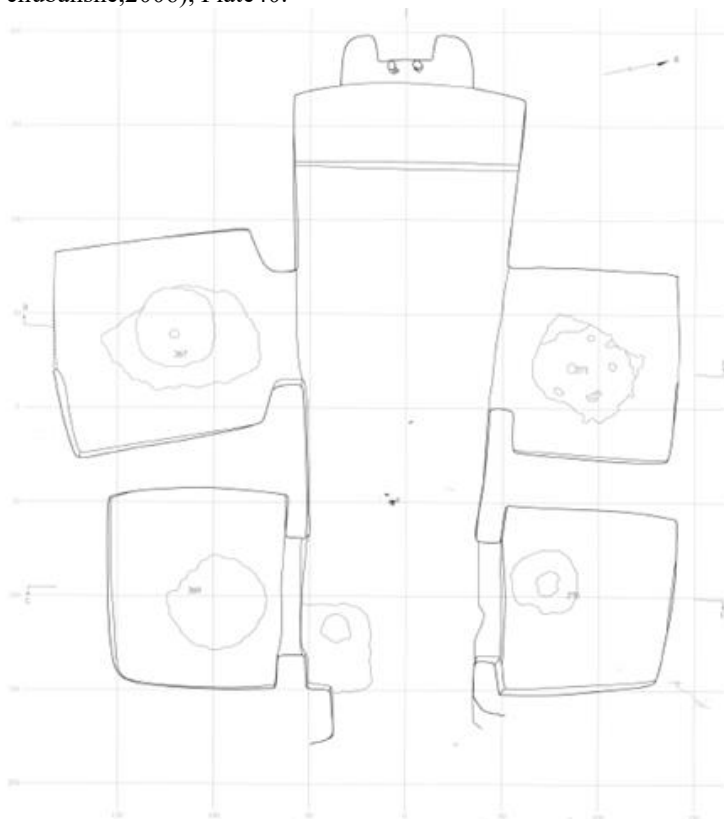


Fig. 5.1-18a. Residue in Mogao Cave 268, Mogao Cave 267, Mogao Cave 269, Mogao Cave 270, Mogao Cave 271.

After Dunhuang Yanjiuyuan 敦煌研究院, *Dunhuang Shiku Quanji Diyijuan Mogaoku Di Erliliu Erliuba Erqier Erqiwu Ku Kaogu Baogao Dier Fence* 敦煌石窟全集 第1卷 莫高窟第266、268、272、275窟考古报告第二分册 [Caves 266-275 of Mogao Grottoes The Dunhuang caves] (Beijing: Wenwu Chubanshe, 2006), Plate 15.

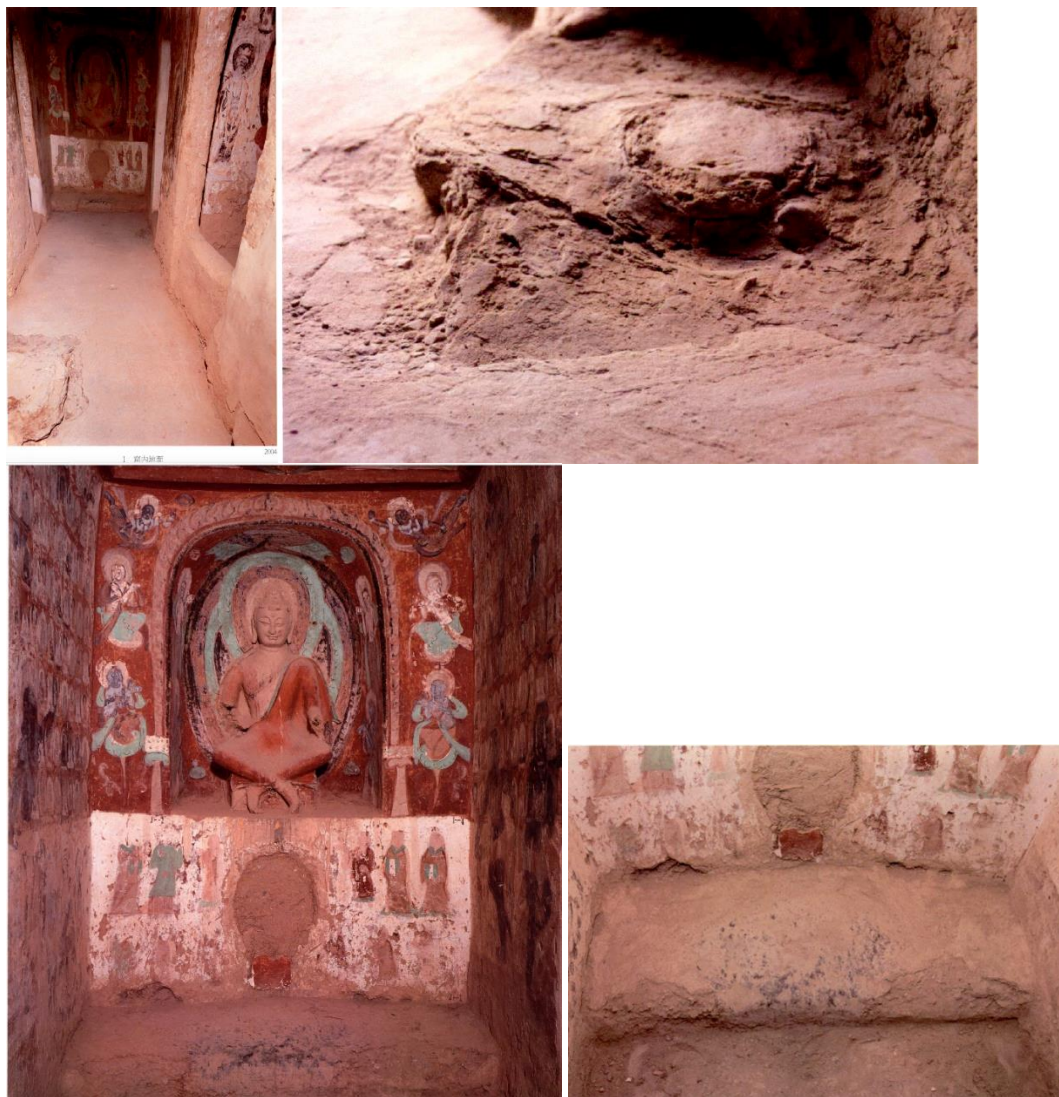


Fig. 5.1-18b. Traces remaining at Mogao Cave 268.

From: Dunhuang Yanjiuyuan 敦煌研究院, *Dunhuang Shiku Quanji Diyijuan Mogaoku Di Erliliu Erliuba Erqier Erqiwu Ku Kaogu Baogao Dier Fence* 敦煌石窟全集 第1卷 莫高窟第266、268、272、275窟考古报告第二分册 [Caves 266-275 of Mogao Grottoes The Dunhuang caves] (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2006), Plate 29.



Fig. 5.1-18c. Traces remaining at Mogao Cave 267.
 After Dunhuang Yanjiuyuan 敦煌研究院, *Dunhuang Shiku Quanji Diyijuan Mogaoku Di Erliliu Erliuba Erqier Erqiwu Ku Kaogu Baogao Dier Fence* 敦煌石窟全集 第1卷 莫高窟第266、268、272、275窟考古报告第二分册 [Caves 266-275 of Mogao Grottoes The Dunhuang caves] (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2006), Plate 71.



Fig. 5.1-18d. Traces remaining at Mogao Cave 269
 After Dunhuang Yanjiuyuan 敦煌研究院, *Dunhuang Shiku Quanji Diyijuan Mogaoku Di Erliliu Erliuba Erqier Erqiwu Ku Kaogu Baogao Dier Fence* 敦煌石窟全集 第1卷 莫高窟第266、268、272、275窟考古报告第二分册 [Caves 266-275 of Mogao Grottoes The Dunhuang caves] (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2006), Plate 71.



Fig. 5.1-18e. Traces remaining at Mogao Cave 270.

After Dunhuang Yanjiuyuan 敦煌研究院, *Dunhuang Shiku Quanji Diyijuan Mogaoku Di Erliliu Erliuba Erqier Erqiwu Ku Kaogu Baogao Dier Fence* 敦煌石窟全集 第1卷 莫高窟第266、268、272、275窟考古报告第二分册 [Caves 266-275 of Mogao Grottoes The Dunhuang caves] (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2006), Plate 71.



Fig. 5.1-18f. Traces remaining at Mogao Cave 271

After Dunhuang Yanjiuyuan 敦煌研究院, *Dunhuang Shiku Quanji Diyijuan Mogaoku Di Erliliu Erliuba Erqier Erqiwu Ku Kaogu Baogao Dier Fence* 敦煌石窟全集 第1卷 莫高窟第266、268、272、275窟考古报告第二分册 [Caves 266-275 of Mogao Grottoes The Dunhuang caves] (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2006), Plate 71.

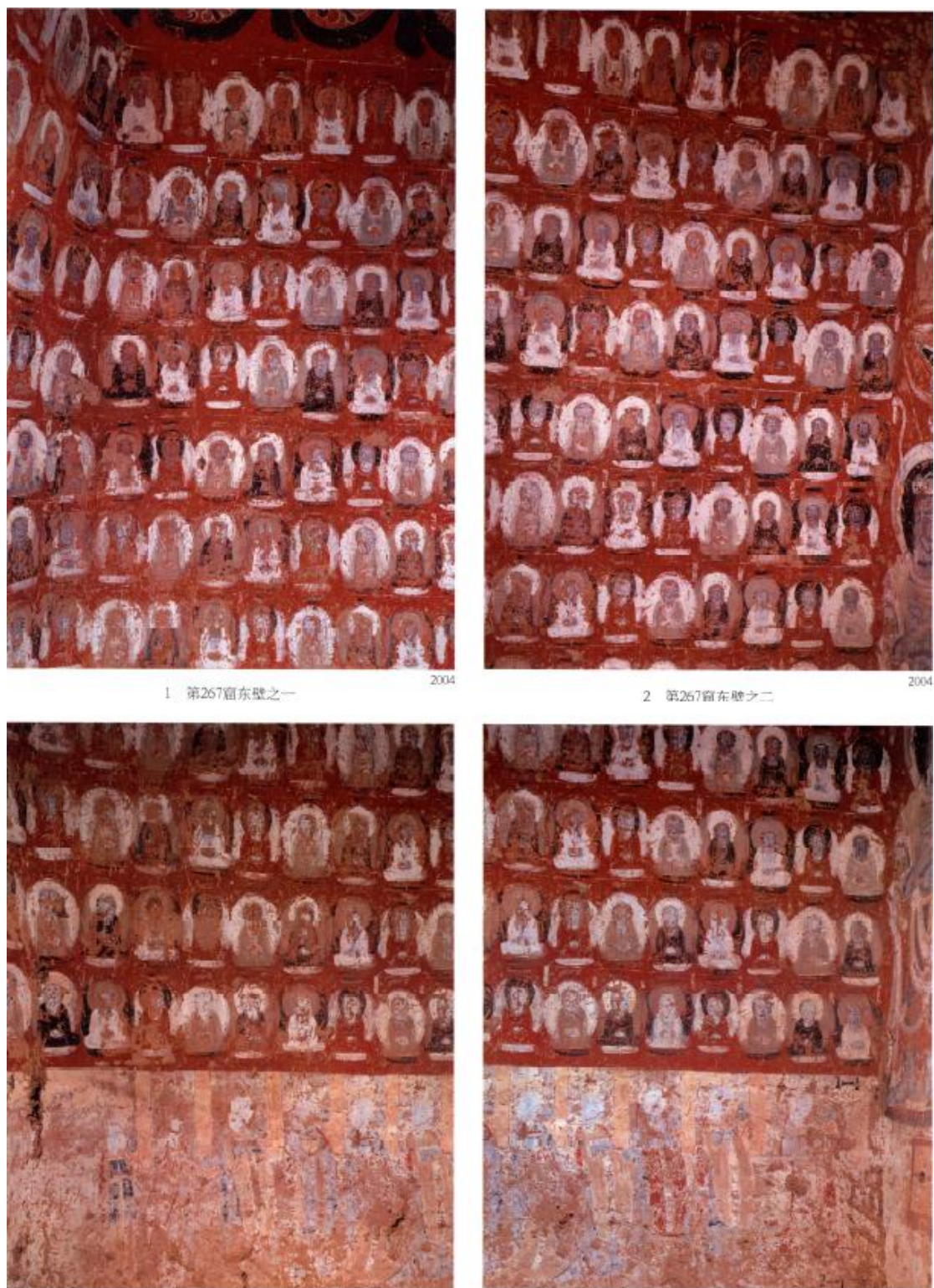


Fig. 5.1-19a. East wall of Mogao Cave 267.
 After Dunhuang Yanjiuyuan 敦煌研究院, *Dunhuang Shiku Quanjì Diyìjuàn Mogaoku Di Erliliu Erliuba Erqier Erqiwu Ku Kaogu Baogao Dier Fence* 敦煌石窟全集 第1卷 莫高窟第266、268、272、275窟考古报告第二分册 [Caves 266-275 of Mogao Grottoes The Dunhuang caves] (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2006), Plate 93.

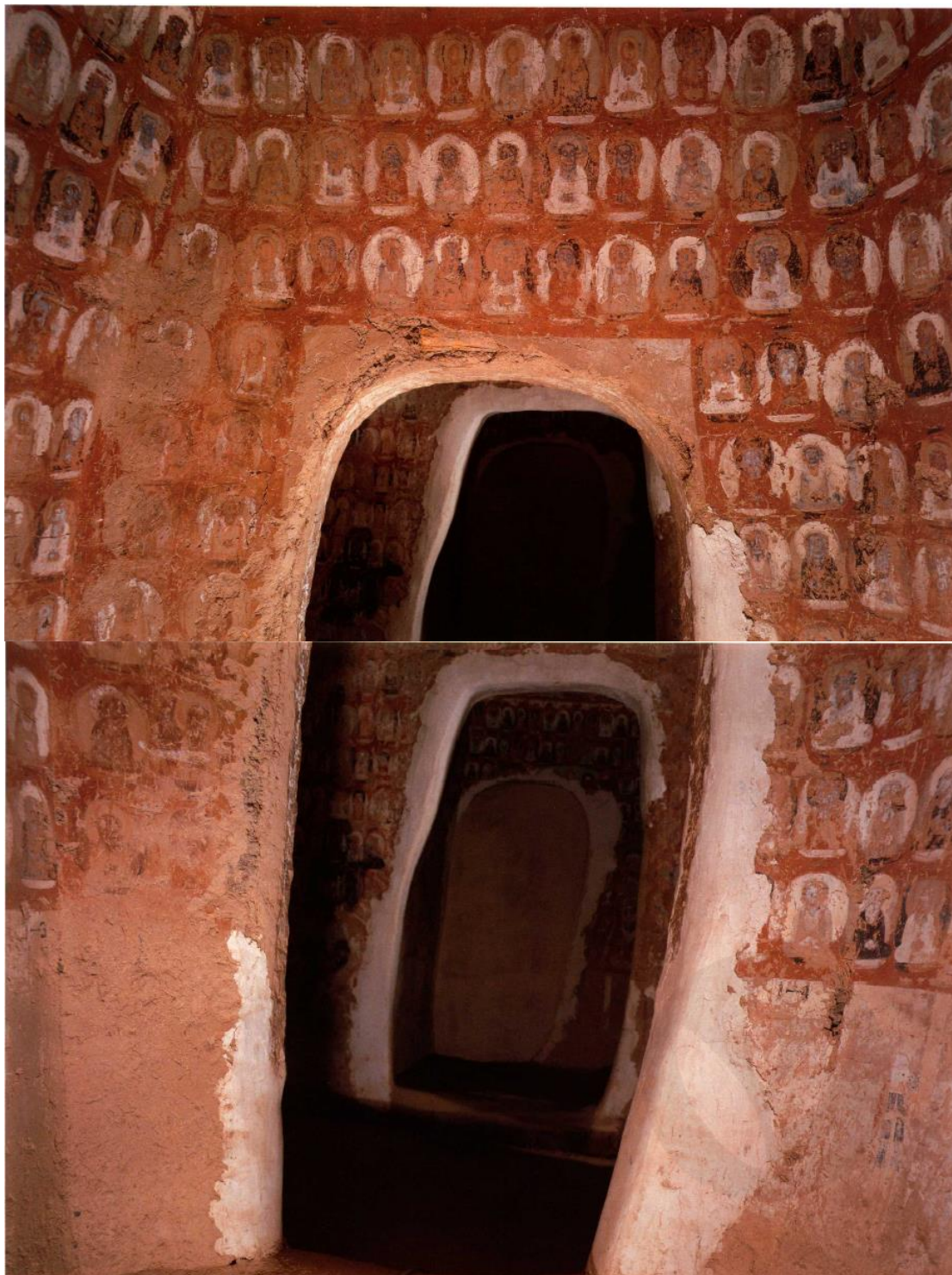


Fig. 5.1-19b. North wall of Mogao Cave 267

After Dunhuang Yanjiuyuan 敦煌研究院, *Dunhuang Shiku Quanjì Diyìjuàn Mogaoku Di Erliuliu Erliuba Erqier Erqiwu Ku Kaogu Baogao Dier Fence* 敦煌石窟全集 第1卷 莫高窟第266、268、272、275窟考古报告第二分册 [Caves 266-275 of Mogao Grottoes The Dunhuang caves] (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2006), Plate 94.

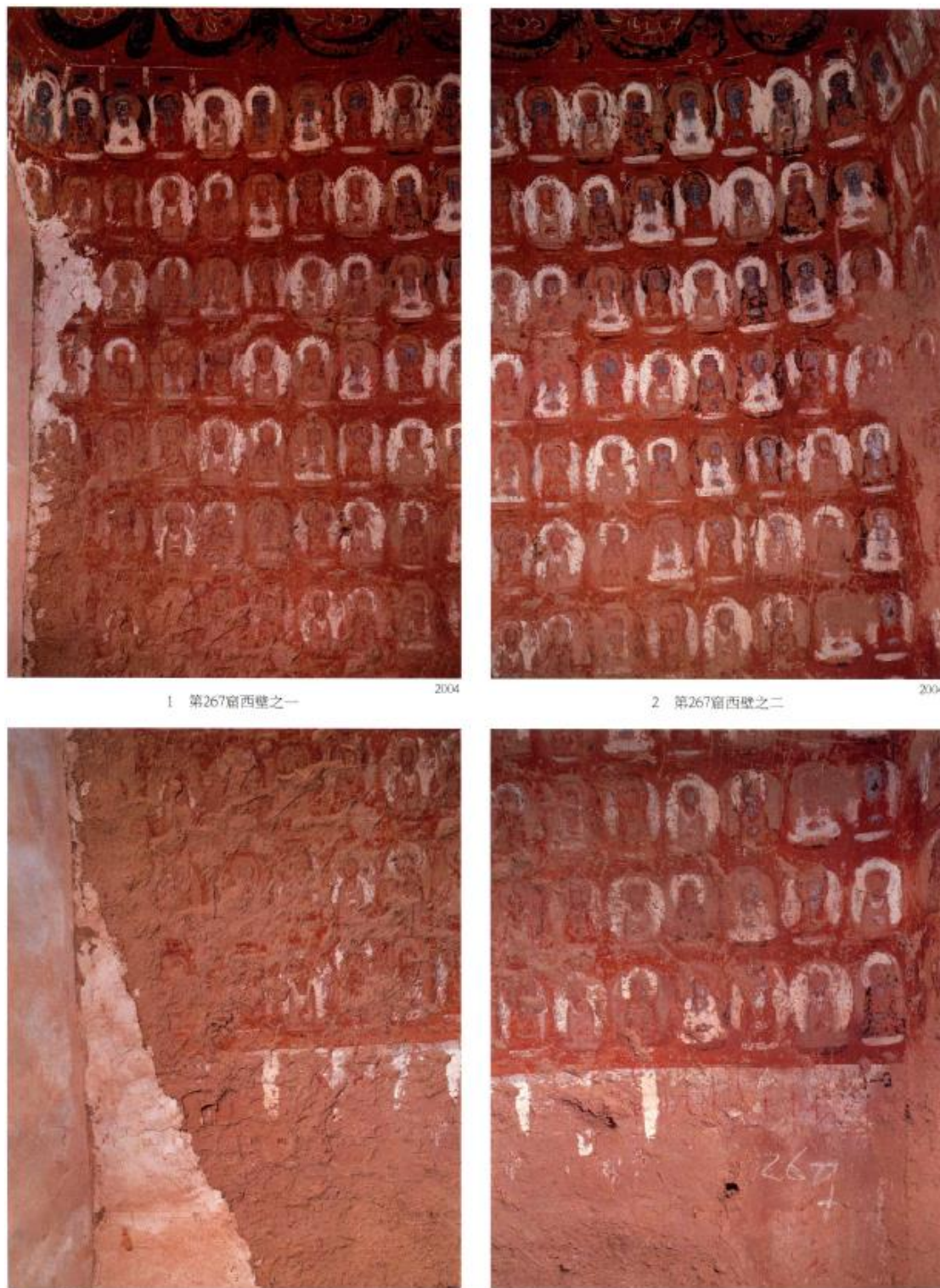


Fig. 5.1-19c. West wall of Mogao Cave 267.
 After Dunhuang Yanjiuyuan 敦煌研究院, *Dunhuang Shiku Quanji Diyijuan Mogaoku Di Erliliu Erliuba Erqier Erqiwu Ku Kaogu Baogao Dier Fence* 敦煌石窟全集 第1卷 莫高窟第266、268、272、275窟考古报告第二分册 [Caves 266-275 of Mogao Grottoes The Dunhuang caves] (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2006), Plate 92.



Fig. 5.1-19d. South wall of Mogao Cave 267.

After Dunhuang Yanjiuyuan 敦煌研究院, *Dunhuang Shiku Quanji Diyijuan Mogaoku Di Erliliu Erliuba Erqier Erqiwu Ku Kaogu Baogao Dier Fence* 敦煌石窟全集 第1卷 莫高窟第266、268、272、275窟考古报告第二分册 [Caves 266-275 of Mogao Grottoes The Dunhuang caves] (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2006), Plate 90.

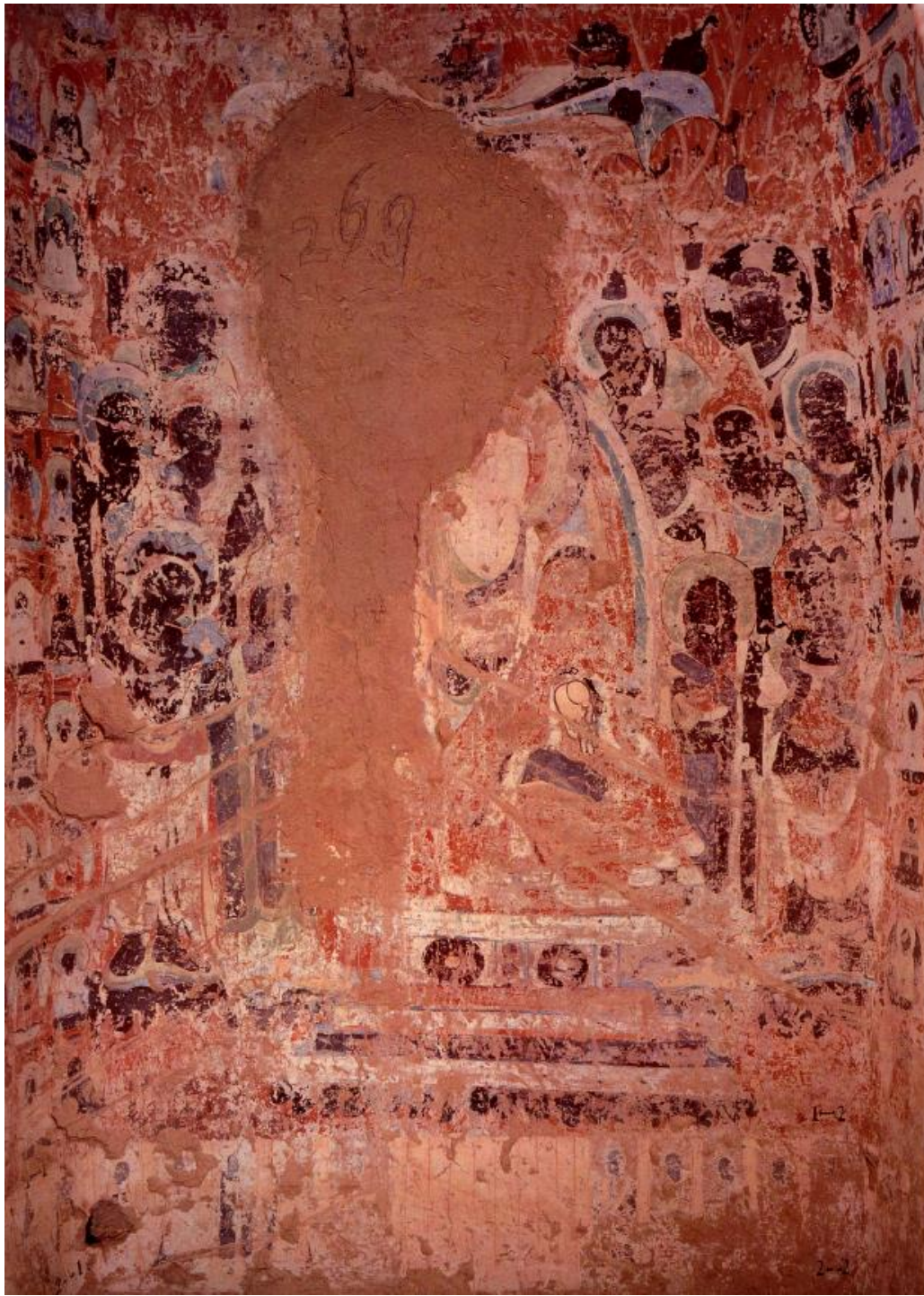
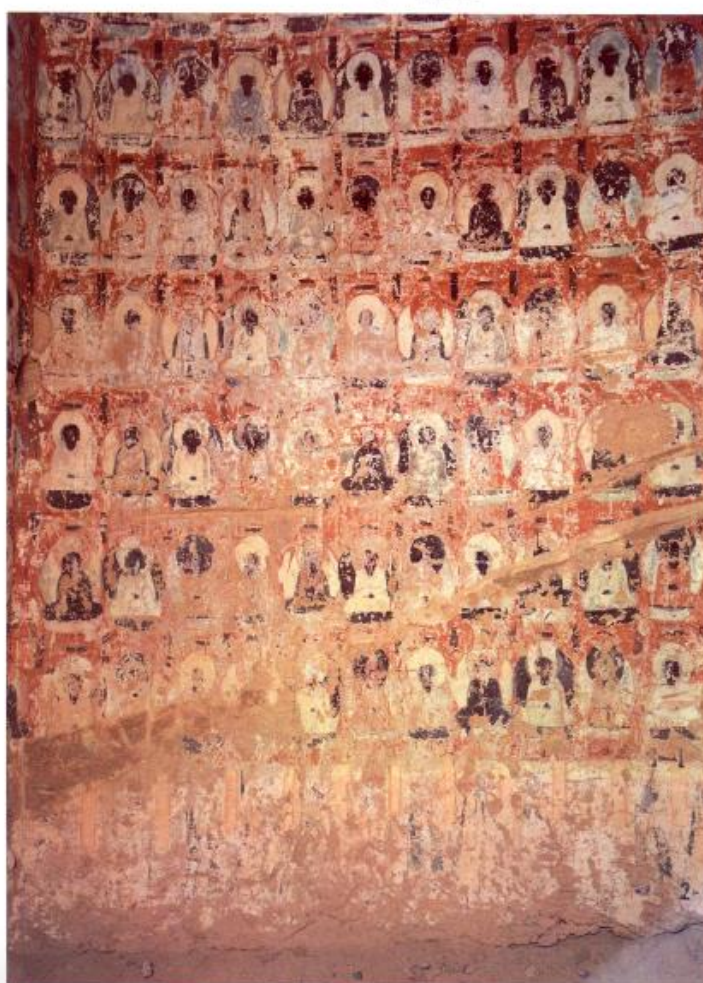


Fig. 5.1-20a. South wall of Mogao Cave 269.
After Dunhuang Yanjiuyuan 敦煌研究院, *Dunhuang Shiku QuANJI Diyijuan Mogaoku Di Erliliu Erliuba Erqier Erqiwu Ku Kaogu Baogao Dier Fence* 敦煌石窟全集 第1卷 莫高窟第266、268、272、275窟考古报告第二分册 [Caves 266-275 of Mogao Grottoes The Dunhuang Caves] (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2006), Plate 97.



1 第269窟东壁之一

2004



2004

2 第269窟东壁之二

第269窟东壁

Fig. 5.1-20b. East wall of Mogao Cave 269.
After Dunhuang Yanjiuyuan 敦煌研究院, *Dunhuang Shiku Quanji Diyijuan Mogaoku Di Erliliu Erliuba Erqier Erqiwu Ku Kaogu Baogao Dier Fence* 敦煌石窟全集 第1卷 莫高窟第266、268、272、275窟考古报告第二分册 [Caves 266-275 of Mogao Grottoes The Dunhuang caves] (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2006), Plate 100.

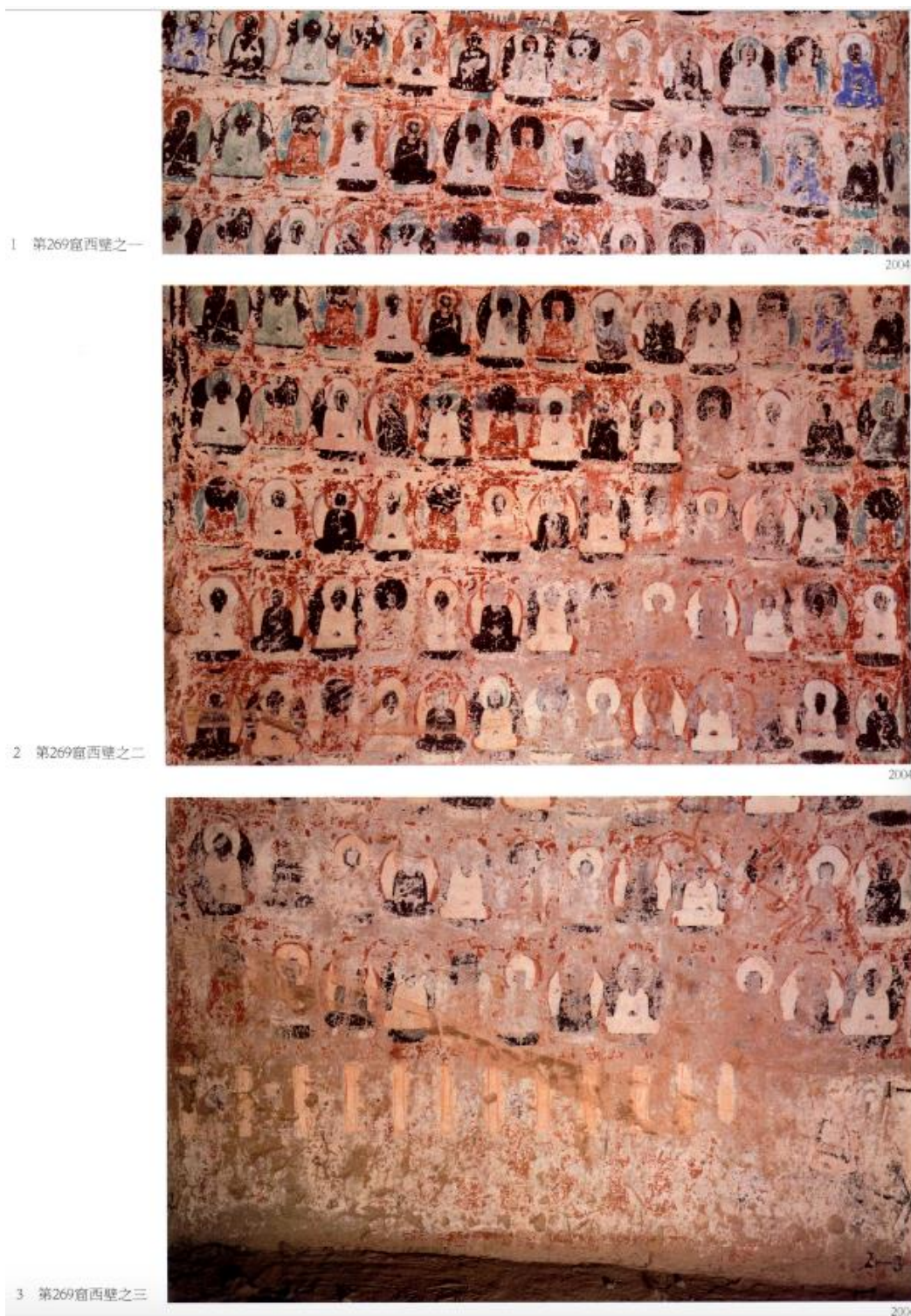


Fig. 5.1-20c. West wall of Mogao Cave 269.

After Dunhuang Yanjiuyuan 敦煌研究院, *Dunhuang Shiku Quanji Diyijuan Mogaoku Di Erliliu Erliuba Erqier Erqiwu Ku Kaogu Baogao Dier Fence* 敦煌石窟全集 第1卷 莫高窟第266、268、272、275窟考古报告第二分册 [Caves 266-275 of Mogao Grottoes The Dunhuang caves] (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2006), Plate 98

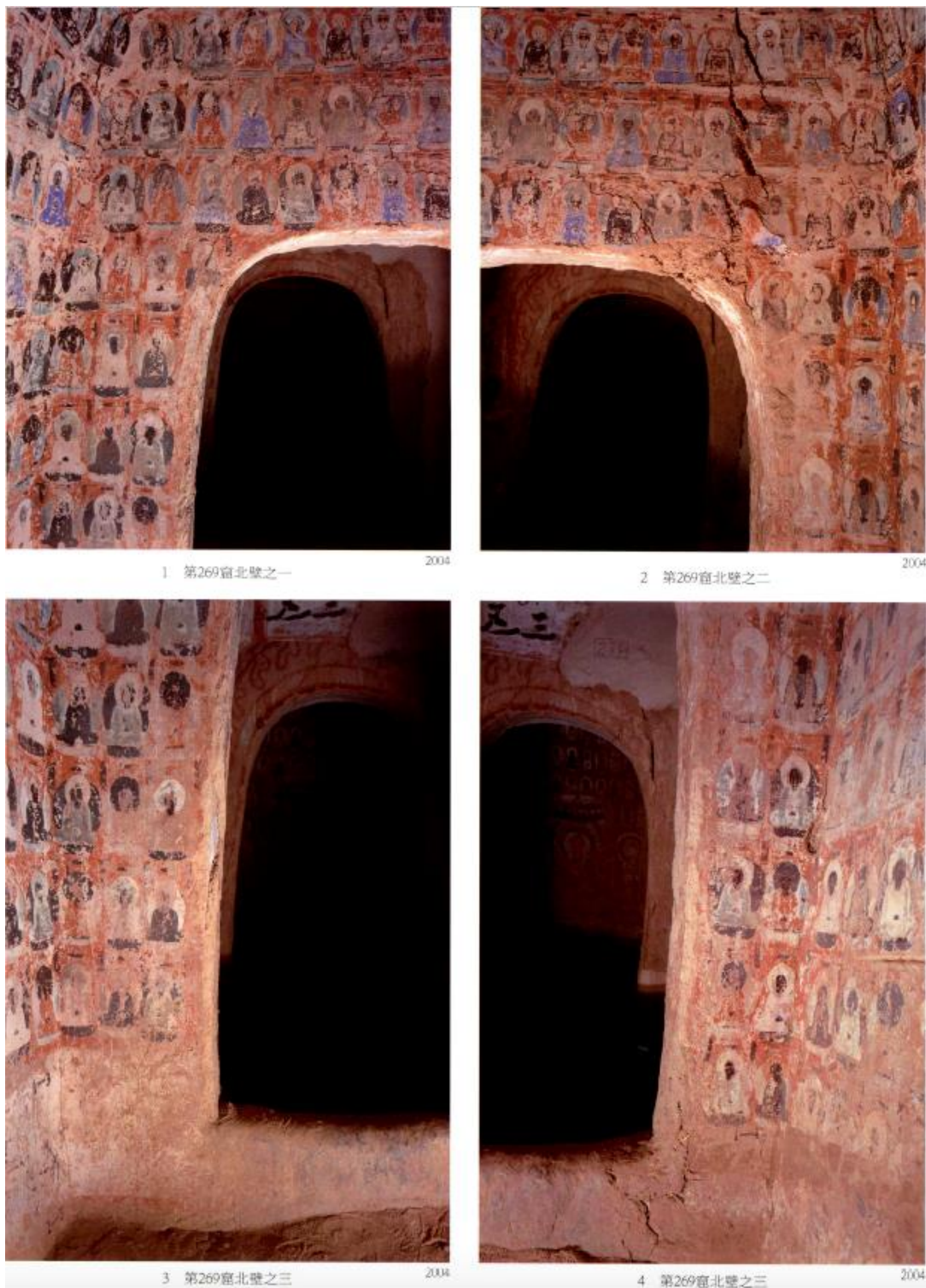


Fig. 5.1-20d. North wall of Mogao Cave 269.

After Dunhuang Yanjiuyuan 敦煌研究院, *Dunhuang Shiku Quanji Diyijuan Mogaoku Di Erliliu Erliuba Erqier Erqiwu Ku Kaogu Baogao Dier Fence* 敦煌石窟全集 第1卷 莫高窟第266、268、272、275窟考古报告第二分册 [Caves 266-275 of Mogao Grottoes The Dunhuang caves] (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2006), Plate 101.

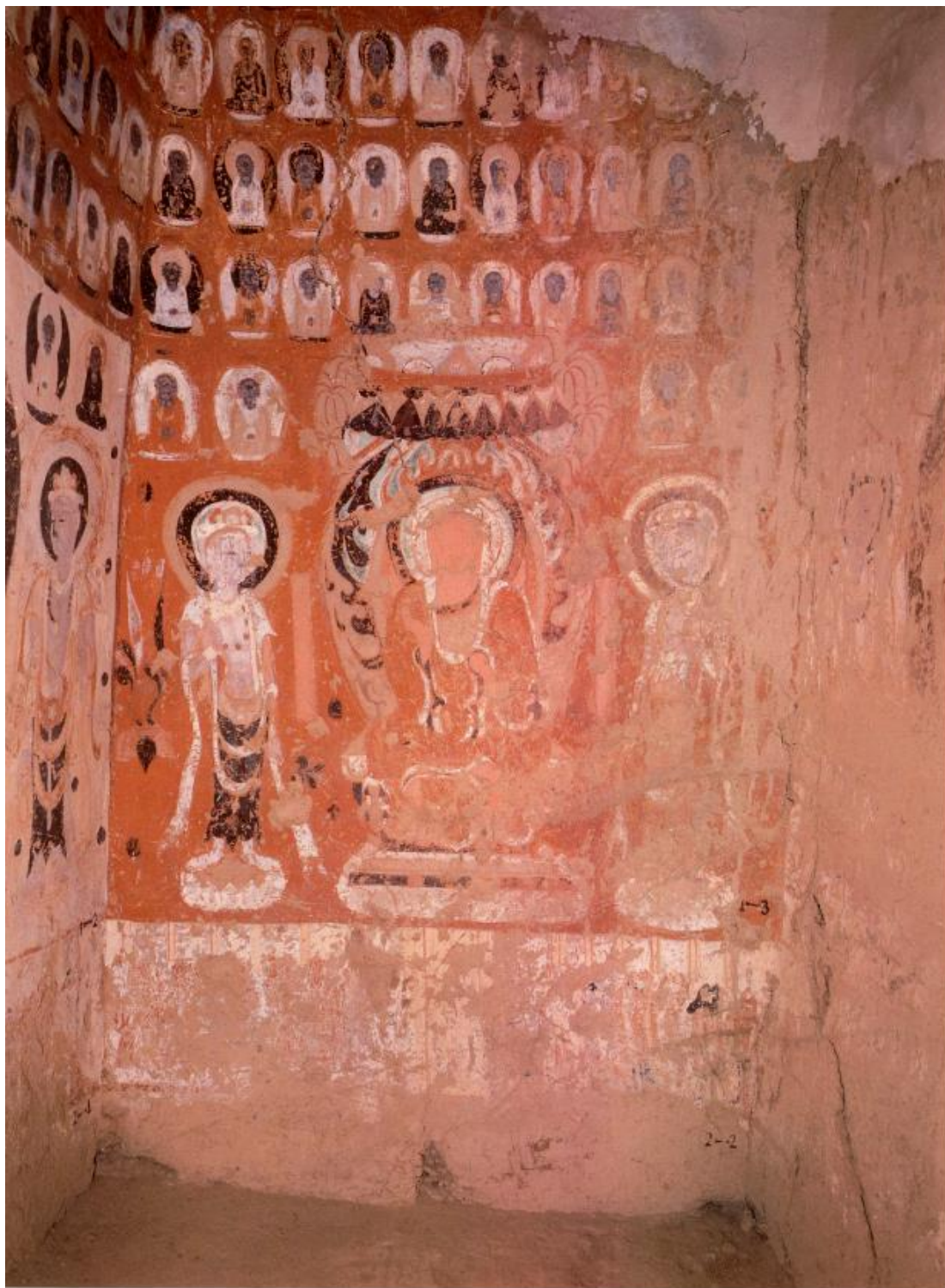


Fig. 5.1-21a .North wall of Mogao Cave 270.

After Dunhuang Yanjiuyuan 敦煌研究院, *Dunhuang Shiku Quanji Diyijuan Mogaoku Di Erliliu Erliuba Erqier Erqiwu Ku Kaogu Baogao Dier Fence* 敦煌石窟全集 第1卷 莫高窟第266、268、272、275窟考古报告第二分册 [Caves 266-275 of Mogao Grottoes The Dunhuang caves] (Beijing:Wenwu chubanshe,2006), Plate 82.

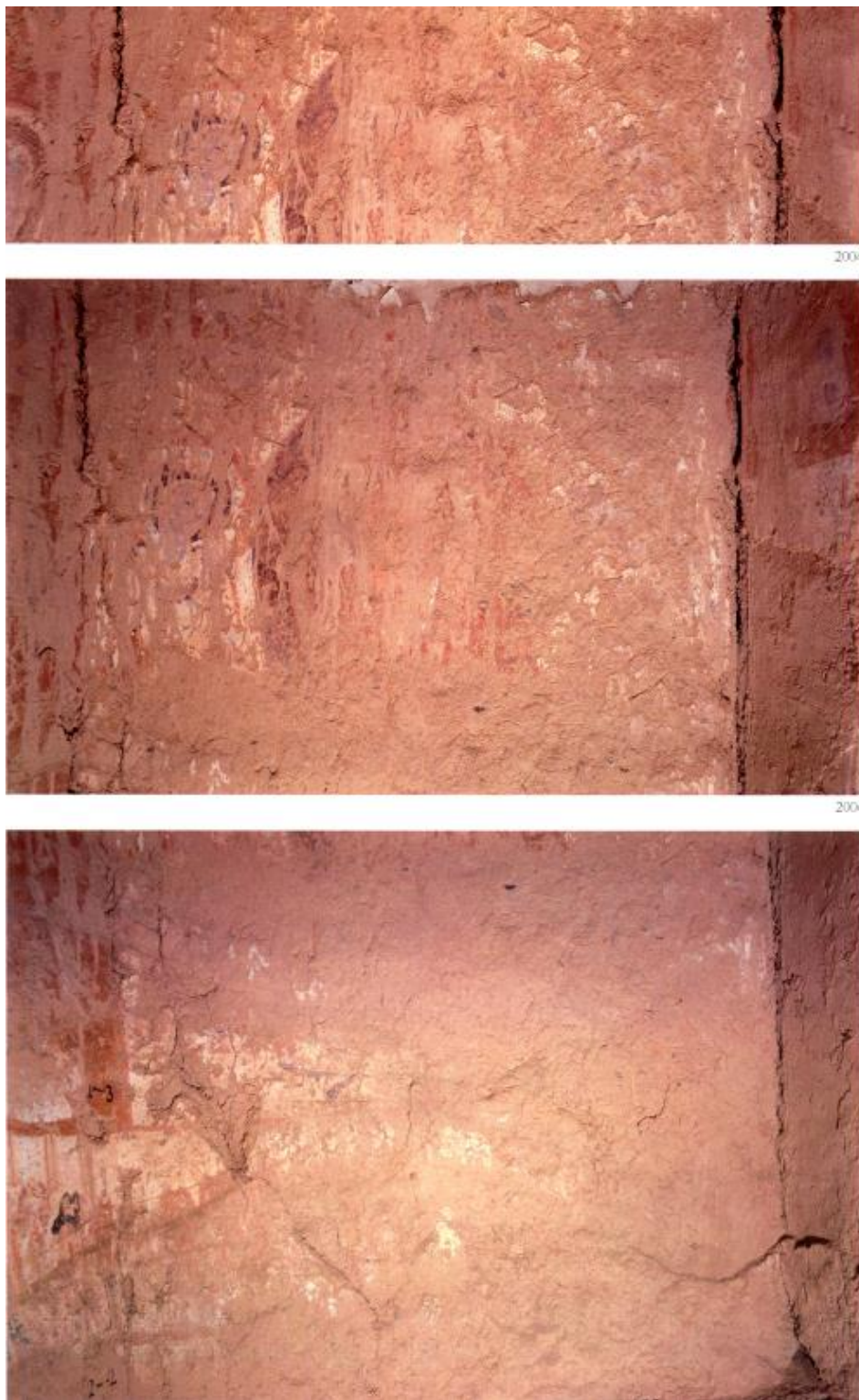
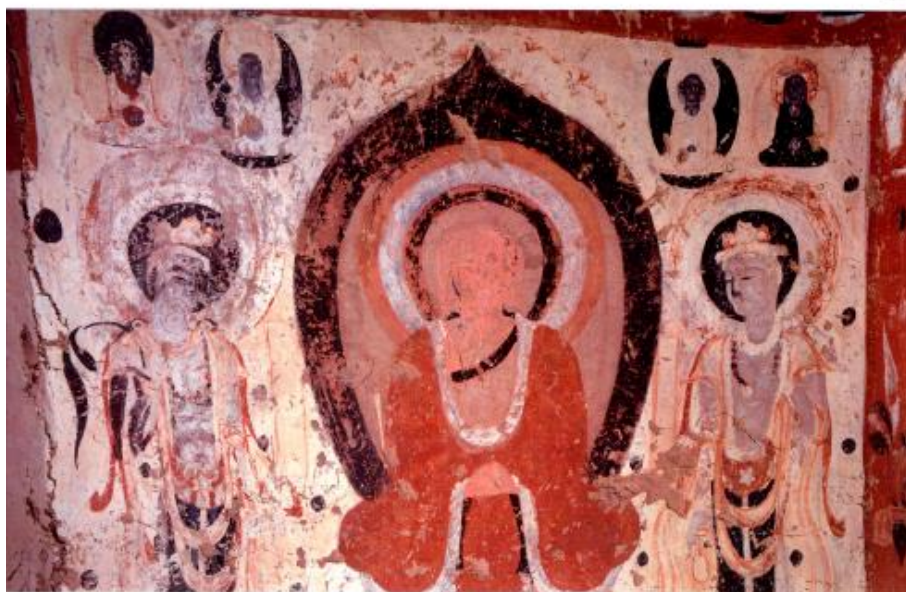


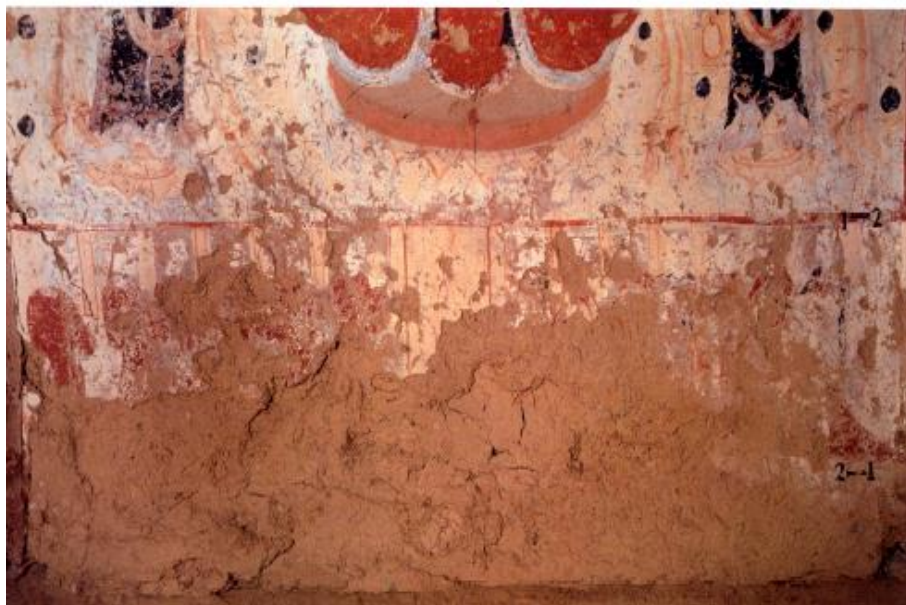
Fig. 5.1-21b. East wall of Mogao Cave 270.
After Dunhuang Yanjiuyuan 敦煌研究院, *Dunhuang Shiku Quanji Diyijuan Mogaoku Di Erliliu Erliuba Erqier Erqiwu Ku Kaogu Baogao Dier Fence* 敦煌石窟全集 第1卷 莫高窟第266、268、272、275窟考古报告第二分册 [Caves 266-275 of Mogao Grottoes The Dunhuang caves] (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2006), Plate 84.



200



200



2-1

Fig. 5.1-21c. West wall of Mogao Cave 270.

After Dunhuang Yanjiuyuan 敦煌研究院, *Dunhuang Shiku Quanji Diyijuan Mogaoku Di Erliliu Erliuba Erqier Erqiwu Ku Kaogu Baogao Dier Fence* 敦煌石窟全集 第1卷 莫高窟第266、268、272、275窟考古报告第二分册 [Caves 266-275 of Mogao Grottoes The Dunhuang caves] (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2006), Plate 85.



1 第270窟南壁之一

2004



2 第270窟南壁之二

2004



Fig. 5.1-21d. South wall of Mogao Cave 270.

After Dunhuang Yanjiuyuan 敦煌研究院, *Dunhuang Shiku Quanji Diyijuan Mogaoku Di Erlilium Erliuba Erqier Erqiwu Ku Kaogu Baogao Dier Fence* 敦煌石窟全集 第1卷 莫高窟第266、268、272、275窟考古报告第二分册 [Caves 266-275 of Mogao Grottoes The Dunhuang caves] (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2006), Plate 87.



Fig. 5.1-22a. North wall of Mogao Cave 271.

After Dunhuang Yanjiuyuan 敦煌研究院, *Dunhuang Shiku Quanji Diyijuan Mogaoku Di Erliliu Erliuba Erqier Erqiwu Ku Kaogu Baogao Dier Fence* 敦煌石窟全集 第1卷 莫高窟第266、268、272、275窟考古报告第二分册 [Caves 266-275 of Mogao Grottoes The Dunhuang caves] (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2006), Plate 73.

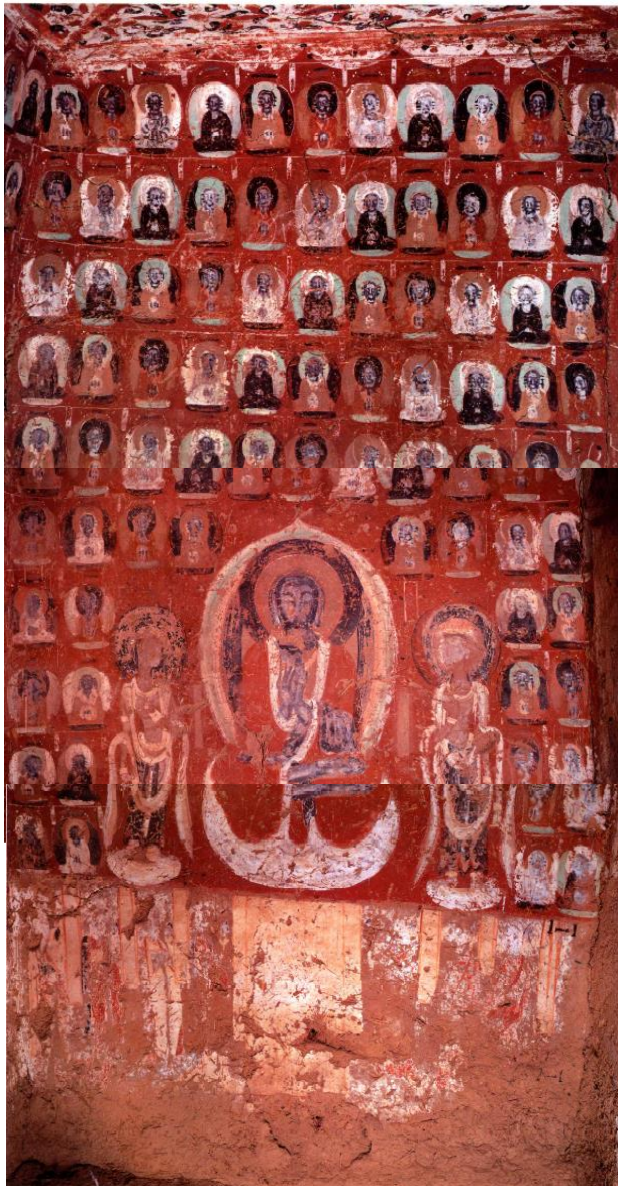


Fig. 5.1-22b. East wall of Mogao Cave271
After Dunhuang Yanjiuyuan 敦煌研究院, *Dunhuang Shiku Quanji Diyijuan Mogaoku Di Erliliu Erliuba Erqier Erqiwu Ku Kaogu Baogao Dier Fence* 敦煌石窟全集 第1卷 莫高窟第266、268、272、275 窟考古报告第二分册 [Caves 266-275 of Mogao Grottoes The Dunhuang caves] (Beijing:Wenwu chubanshe,2006), Plate 75.

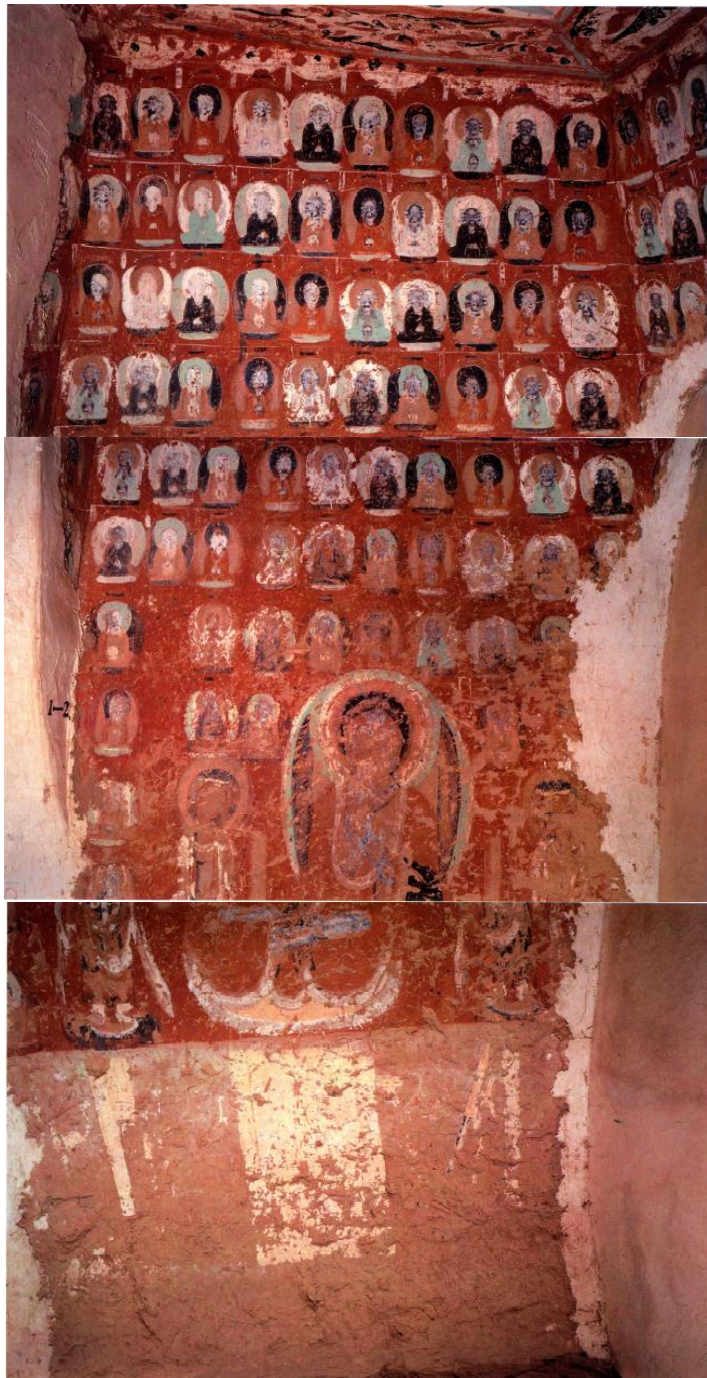


Fig. 5.1-22c. West Wall of Mogao Cave 271.
 After Dunhuang Yanjiuyuan 敦煌研究院, *Dunhuang Shiku Quanji Diyijuan Mogaoku Di Erliliu Erliuba Erqier Erqiwu Ku Kaogu Baogao Dier Fence* 敦煌石窟全集 第1卷 莫高窟第266、268、272、275窟考古报告第二分册 [Caves 266-275 of Mogao Grottoes The Dunhuang caves] (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2006), Plate 77.



1 第271窟南壁之一

2006



Fig. 5.1-22d. South wall of Mogao Cave 271.

After Dunhuang Yanjiuyuan 敦煌研究院, *Dunhuang Shiku Quanji Diyijuan Mogaoku Di Erliuliu Erliuba Erqier Erqiwu Ku Kaogu Baogao Dier Fence* 敦煌石窟全集 第1卷 莫高窟第266、268、272、275窟考古报告第二分册 [Caves 266-275 of Mogao Grottoes The Dunhuang caves] (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2006), Plate 79.



Fig. 5.1-23a. The image of buddha on Huangyuande stele at the west wall of Longmen cave (511 A.D). After Jinglong Liu. *Guyangdong Longmen Shiku Di 1443 Ku* 古阳洞 龙门石窟第 1443 窟 (Beijing: Kexue Chubanshe, 2001), Plate 26.



Fig. 5.1-23b. “liu fazang” Stela dated 521A.D. H.70cm, W. 34.2 cm, preserved in Freer Gallery of Art.(copyright Freer Gallery of Art)

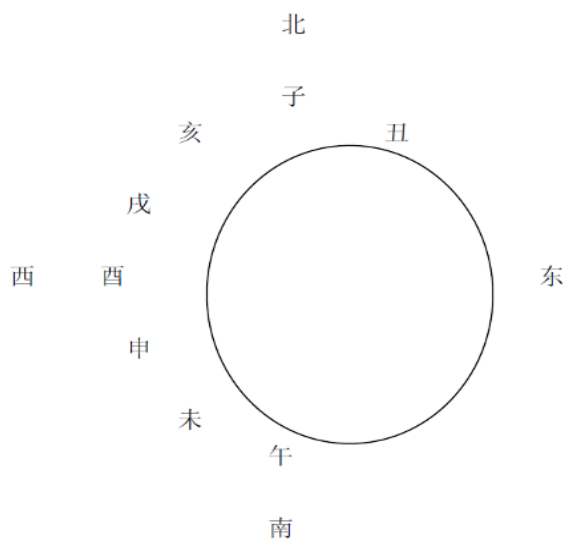


Fig. 5.1-24. Direction of worship recorded in “*Liushi li wen* 劉師禮文”.

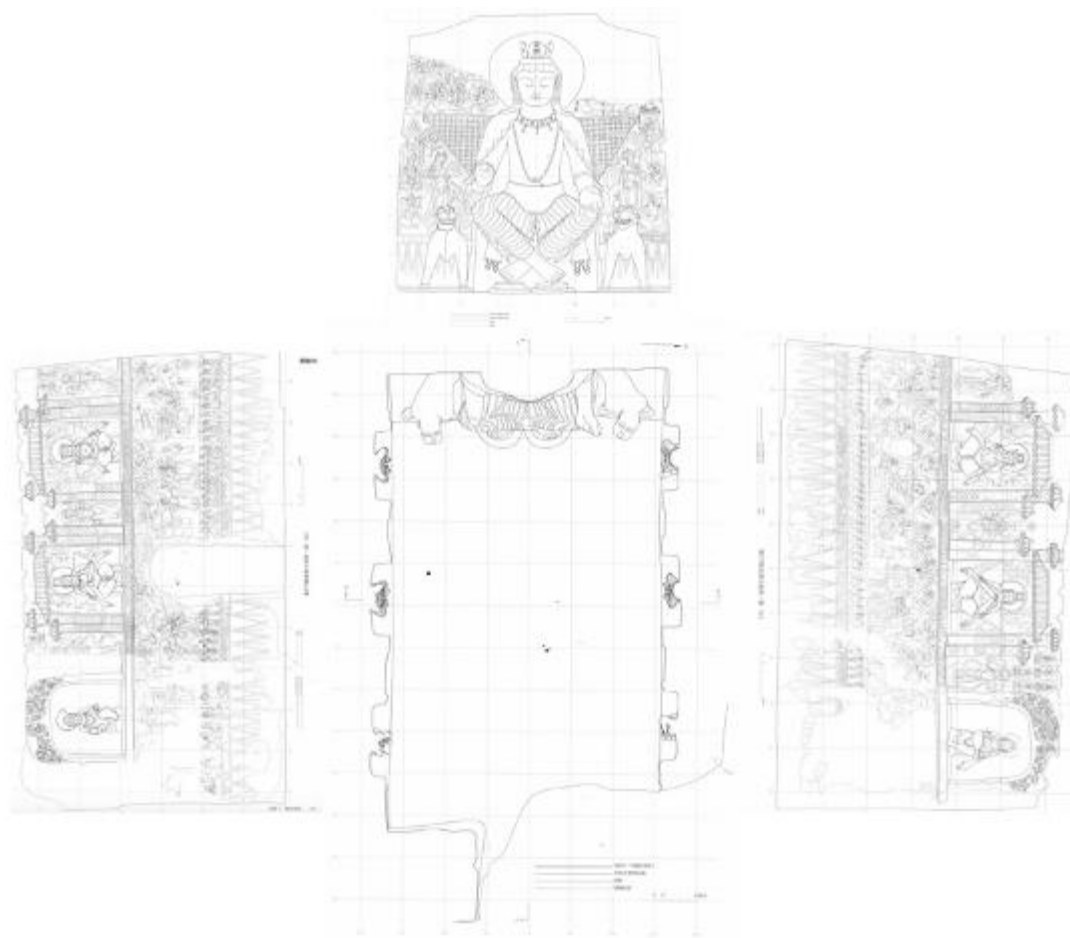


Fig. 5.1-25a. Mogao Cave 275.

After Dunhuang Yanjiuyuan 敦煌研究院, *Dunhuang Shiku Quanji Diyijuan Mogaoku Di Erliliu Erliuba Erqier Erqiwu Ku Kaogu Baogao Dier Fence* 敦煌石窟全集 第1卷 莫高窟第266、268、272、275窟考古报告第二分册 [Caves 266-275 of Mogao Grottoes The Dunhuang caves] (Beijing:Wenwu chubanshe,2006), Plate 87, Plate 88, Plate 89.

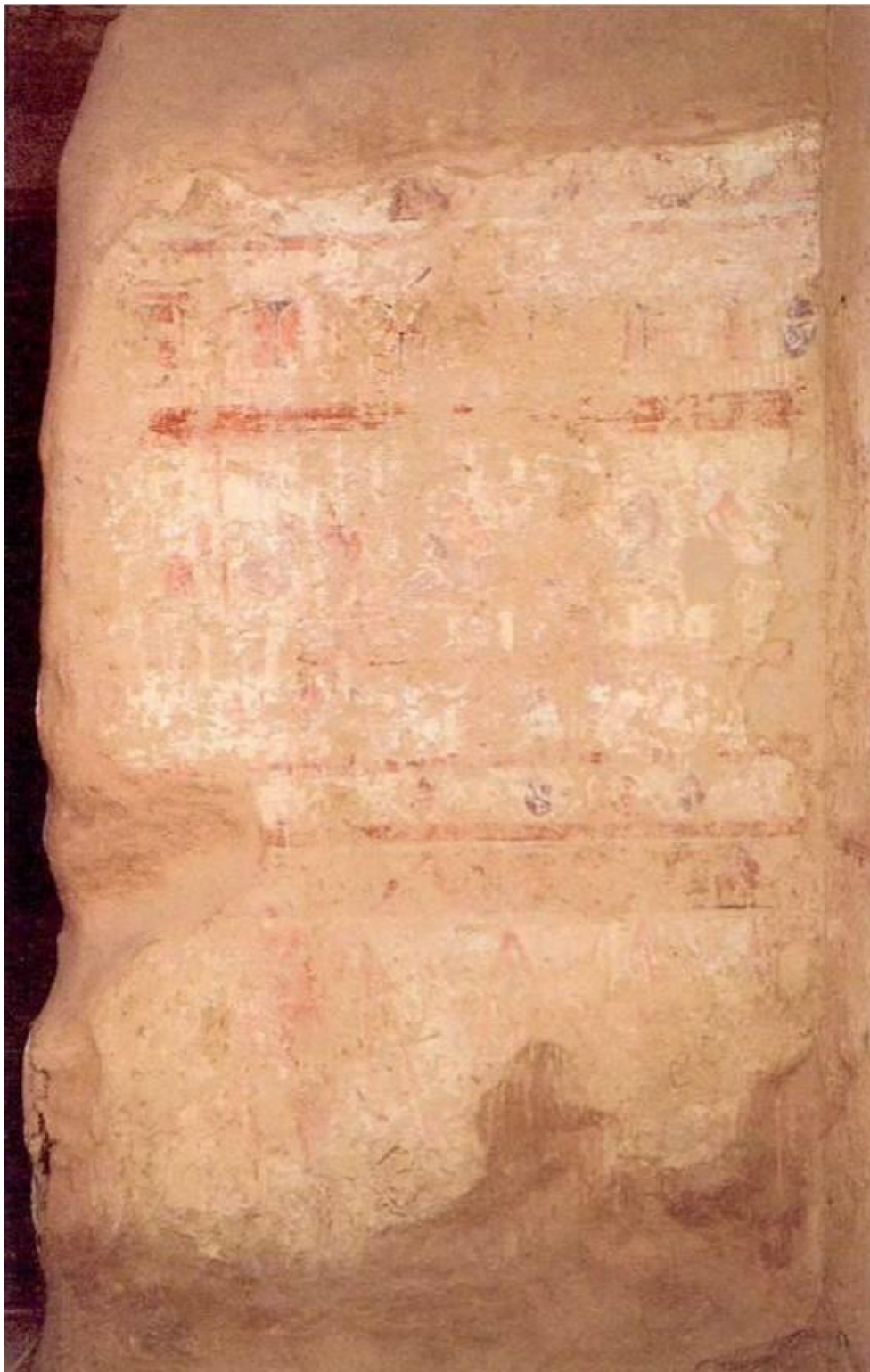


Fig. 5.1-25b. East wall of Mogao Cave 275.

After Dunhuang Yanjiuyuan 敦煌研究院, *Dunhuang Shiku Quanji Diyijuan Mogaoku Di Erliliu Erliuba Erqier Erqiwu Ku Kaogu Baogao Dier Fence* 敦煌石窟全集 第1卷 莫高窟第266、268、272、275窟考古报告第二分册 [Caves 266-275 of Mogao Grottoes The Dunhuang caves] (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2006), Plate 230.



Fig. 5.1-26a. West wall of Mogao Cave 275.

After Dunhuang Yanjiuyuan 敦煌研究院, *Dunhuang Shiku Quanji Diyijuan Mogaoku Di Erliliu Erliuba Erqier Erqiwu Ku Kaogu Baogao Dier Fence* 敦煌石窟全集 第1卷 莫高窟第266、268、272、275窟考古报告第二分册 [Caves 266-275 of Mogao Grottoes The Dunhuang caves] (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2006), Plate 173.

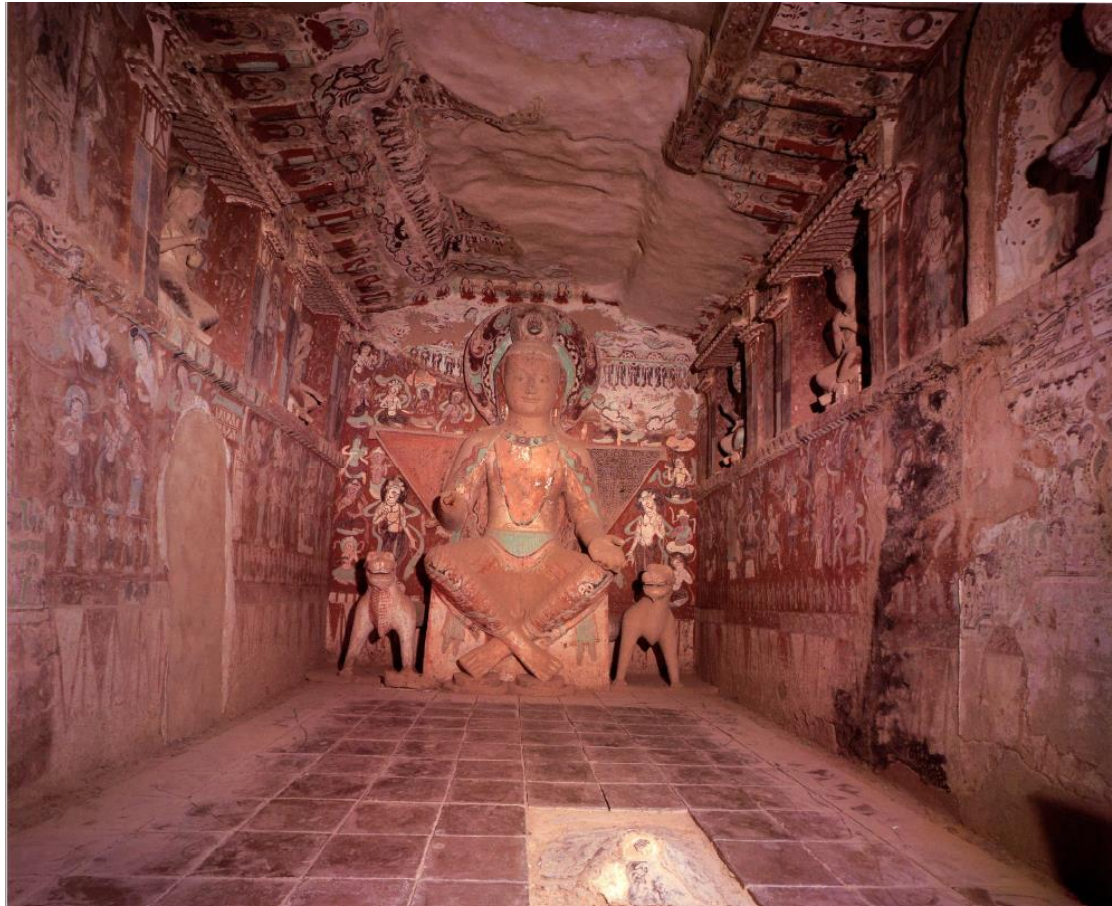


Fig. 5.1-26b. Ceiling of Mogao Cave 275

After Dunhuang Yanjiuyuan 敦煌研究院, *Dunhuang Shiku Quanji Diyijuan Mogaoku Di Erliliu Erliuba Erqier Erqiwu Ku Kaogu Baogao Dier Fence* 敦煌石窟全集 第1卷 莫高窟第266、268、272、275窟考古报告第二分册 [Caves 266-275 of Mogao Grottoes The Dunhuang caves] (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2006), Plate 171.

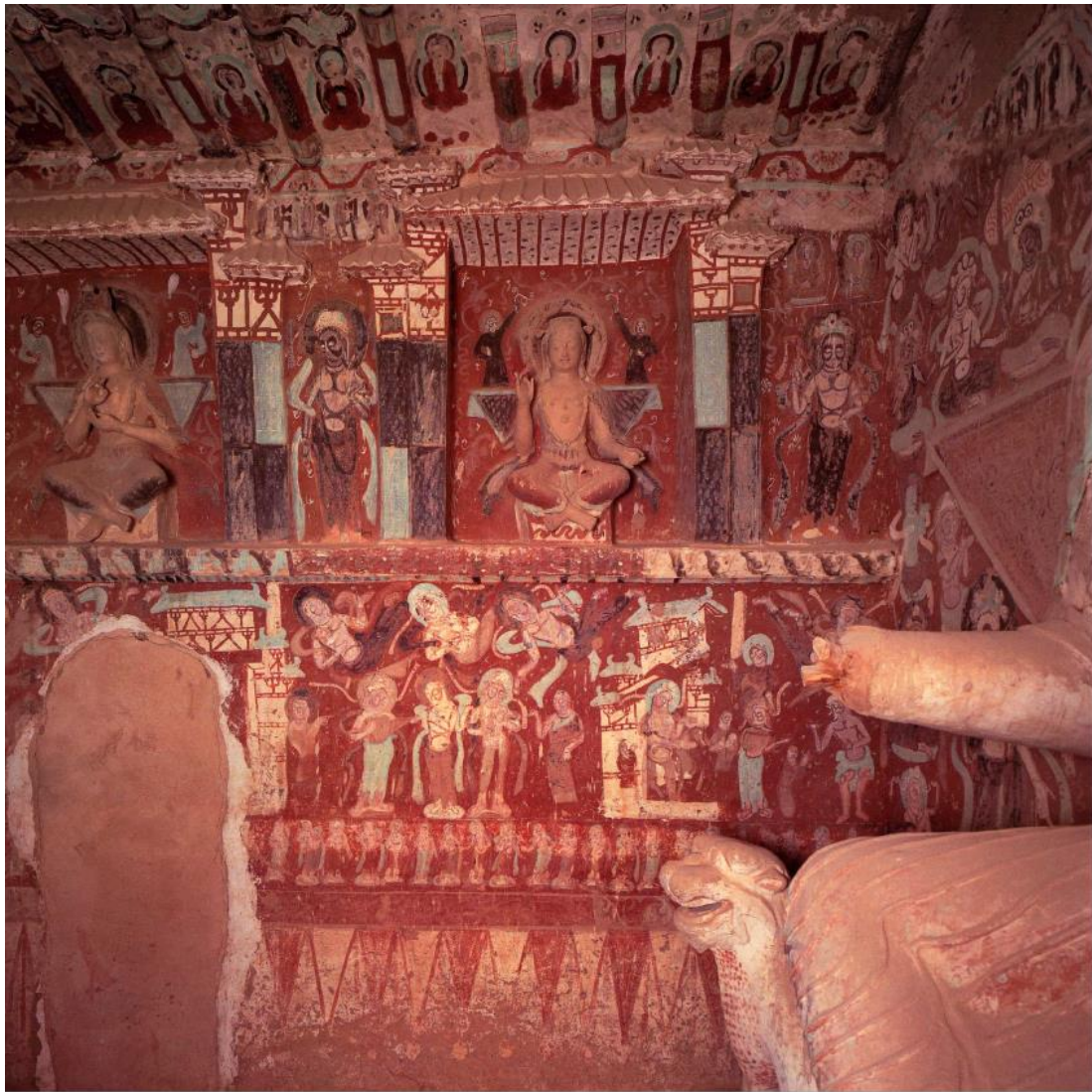


Fig. 5.1-26c. South wall of Mogao Cave 275.

After Dunhuang Yanjiuyuan 敦煌研究院, *Dunhuang Shiku Quanji Diyijuan Mogaoku Di Erliliu Erliuba Erqier Erqiwu Ku Kaogu Baogao Dier Fence* 敦煌石窟全集 第1卷 莫高窟第266、268、272、275窟考古报告第二分册 [Caves 266-275 of Mogao Grottoes The Dunhuang caves] (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2006), Plate 209.



Fig. 5.1-26d. South wall of Mogao Cave 275.
After Dunhuang Yanjiuyuan 敦煌研究院, *Dunhuang Shiku Quanji Diyijuan Mogaoku Di Erliliu Erliuba Erqier Erqiwu Ku Kaogu Baogao Dier Fence* 敦煌石窟全集 第1卷 莫高窟第266、268、272、275窟考古报告第二分册 [Caves 266-275 of Mogao Grottoes The Dunhuang caves] (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2006), Plate 210.

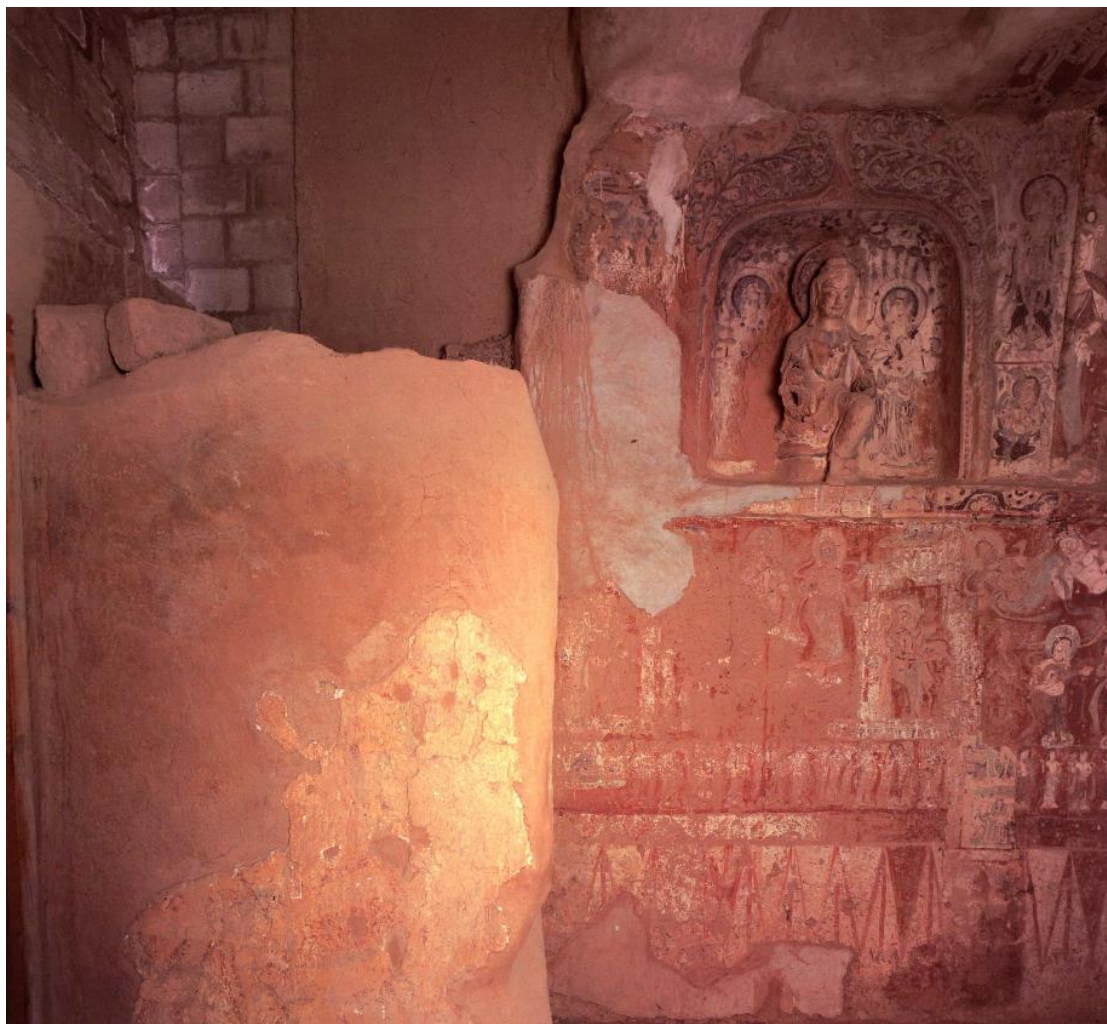


Fig. 5.1-26e. South wall of Mogao Cave 275.
After Dunhuang Yanjiuyuan 敦煌研究院, *Dunhuang Shiku Quanji Diyijuan Mogaoku Di Erliliu Erliuba Erqier Erqiwu Ku Kaogu Baogao Dier Fence* 敦煌石窟全集 第1卷 莫高窟第266、268、272、275窟考古报告第二分册 [Caves 266-275 of Mogao Grottoes The Dunhuang caves] (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2006), Plate 211.



Fig. 5.1-26f. The first scene of the mural on the south wall of Mogao Cave 275.
After Dunhuang Yanjiuyuan 敦煌研究院, *Dunhuang Shiku Quanji Diyijuan Mogaoku Di Erlilium Erliuba Erqier Erqiwu Ku Kaogu Baogao Dier Fence* 敦煌石窟全集 第1卷 莫高窟第266、268、272、275窟考古报告第二分册 [Caves 266-275 of Mogao Grottoes The Dunhuang caves] (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2006), Plate 221.



Fig. 5.1-26g. The second scene of the mural on the south wall of Mogao Cave 275.

After Dunhuang Yanjiuyuan 敦煌研究院, *Dunhuang Shiku Quanji Diyijuan Mogaoku Di Erliliu Erliuba Erqier Erqiwu Ku Kaogu Baogao Dier Fence* 敦煌石窟全集 第1卷 莫高窟第266、268、272、275窟考古报告第二分册 [Caves 266-275 of Mogao Grottoes The Dunhuang caves] (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2006), Plate 222.



Fig. 5.1-26h. The third scene of the mural on the south wall of Mogao Cave 275.
 After Dunhuang Yanjiuyuan 敦煌研究院, *Dunhuang Shiku Quanji Diyijuan Mogaoku Di Erliliu Erliuba Erqier Erqiwu Ku Kaogu Baogao Dier Fence* 敦煌石窟全集 第1卷 莫高窟第266、268、272、275窟考古报告第二分册 [Caves 266-275 of Mogao Grottoes The Dunhuang caves] (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2006), Plate 223

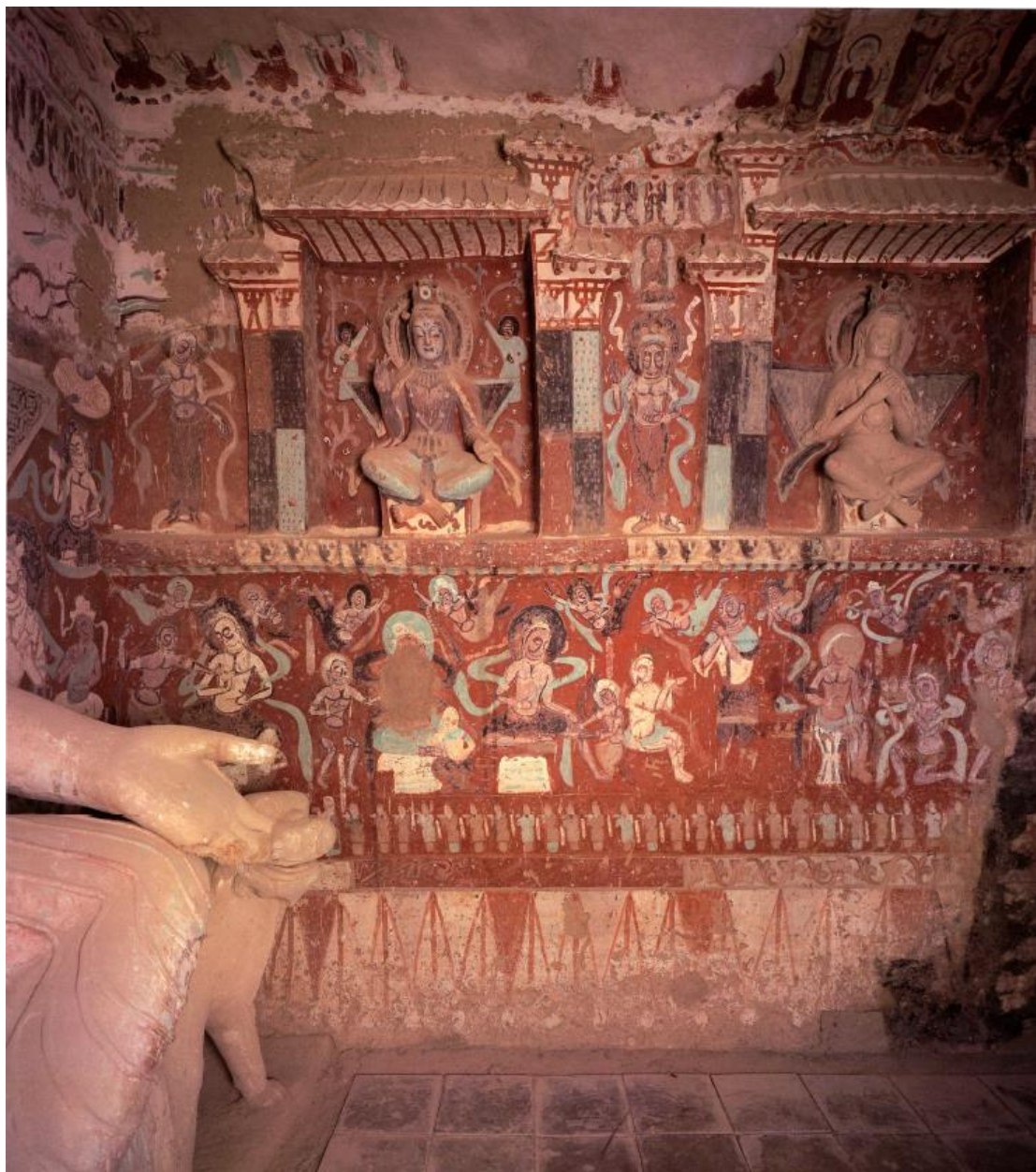


Fig. 5.1-27a. North wall of Mogao Cave 275

After Dunhuang Yanjiuyuan 敦煌研究院, *Dunhuang Shiku Quanji Diyijuan Mogaoku Di Erliliu Erliuba Erqier Erqiwu Ku Kaogu Baogao Dier Fence* 敦煌石窟全集 第1卷 莫高窟第266、268、272、275窟考古报告第二分册 [Caves 266-275 of Mogao Grottoes The Dunhuang caves] (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2006), Plate 189.



Fig. 5.1-27b. North wall of Mogao Cave 275.

After Dunhuang Yanjiuyuan 敦煌研究院, *Dunhuang Shiku Quanji Diyijuan Mogaoku Di Erliliu Erliuba Erqier Erqiwu Ku Kaogu Baogao Dier Fence* 敦煌石窟全集 第1卷 莫高窟第266、268、272、275窟考古报告第二分册 [Caves 266-275 of Mogao Grottoes The Dunhuang caves] (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2006), Plate 190.

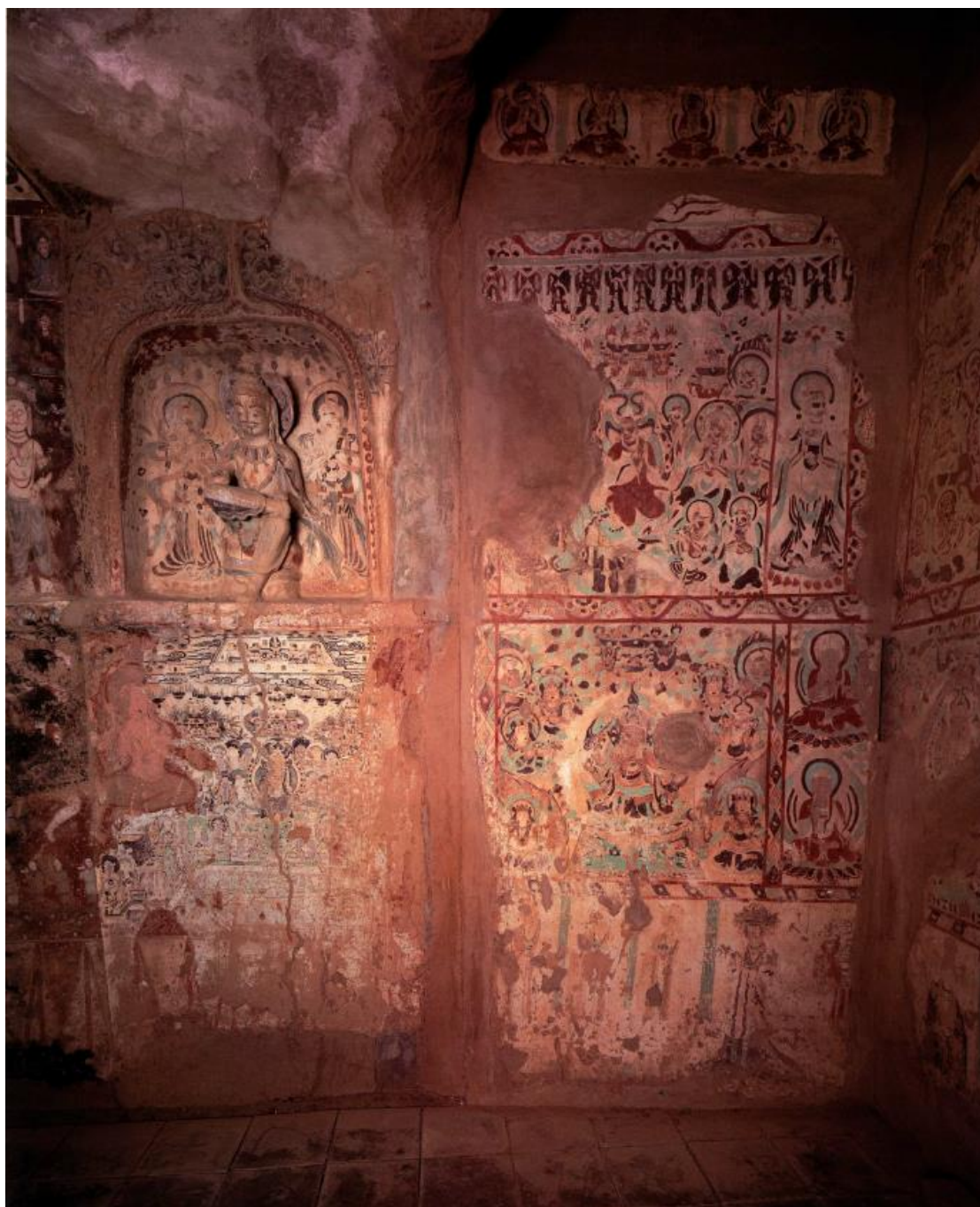


Fig. 5.1-27c. North wall of Mogao Cave 275.

After Dunhuang Yanjiuyuan 敦煌研究院, *Dunhuang Shiku Quanjì Diyìjuàn Mogaoku Di Erliuliu Erliuba Erqier Erqiwu Ku Kaogu Baogao Dier Fence* 敦煌石窟全集 第1卷 莫高窟第266、268、272、275窟考古报告第二分册 [Caves 266-275 of Mogao Grottoes The Dunhuang caves] (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2006), Plate 191.



Fig. 5.1-27d. The first scene of the mural on the north wall of Mogao Cave 275
 After Dunhuang Yanjiuyuan 敦煌研究院, *Dunhuang Shiku Quanji Diyijuan Mogaoku Di Erliliu Erliuba Erqier Erqiwu Ku Kaogu Baogao Dier Fence* 敦煌石窟全集 第1卷 莫高窟第266、268、272、275窟考古报告第二分册 [Caves 266-275 of Mogao Grottoes The Dunhuang caves] (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2006), Plate 199.



Fig. 5.1-27e. The second scene of the mural on the north wall of Mogao Cave 275.

After Dunhuang Yanjiuyuan 敦煌研究院, *Dunhuang Shiku Quanjì Diyìjuàn Mogaoku Di Erliuliu Erliuba Erqier Erqiwu Ku Kaogu Baogao Dier Fence* 敦煌石窟全集 第1卷 莫高窟第266、268、272、275窟考古报告第二分册 [Caves 266-275 of Mogao Grottoes The Dunhuang caves] (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2006), Plate 200.



Fig. 5.1-27f. The third scene of the mural on the north wall of Mogao Cave 275.
 After Dunhuang Yanjiuyuan 敦煌研究院, *Dunhuang Shiku Quanji Diyijuan Mogaoku Di Erliliu Erliuba Erqier Erqiwu Ku Kaogu Baogao Dier Fence* 敦煌石窟全集 第1卷 莫高窟第266、268、272、275窟考古报告第二分册 [Caves 266-275 of Mogao Grottoes The Dunhuang caves] (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2006), Plate 201.

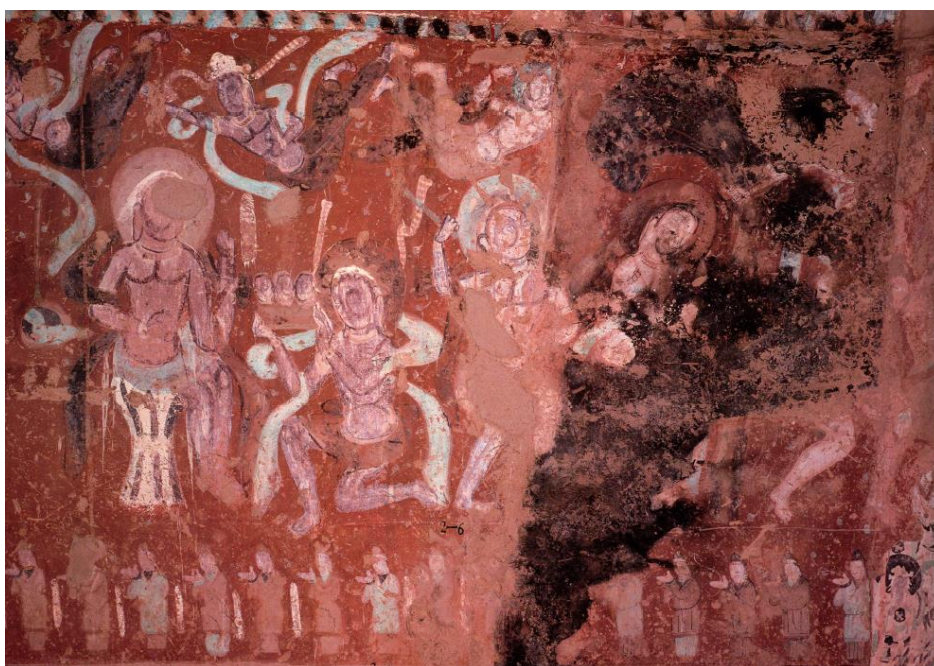


Fig. 5.1-27g. The Fourth scene of the mural on the north wall of Mogao Cave 275.
 After Dunhuang Yanjiuyuan 敦煌研究院, *Dunhuang Shiku Quanji Diyijuan Mogaoku Di Erliliu Erliuba Erqier Erqiwu Ku Kaogu Baogao Dier Fence* 敦煌石窟全集 第1卷 莫高窟第266、268、272、275窟考古报告第二分册 [Caves 266-275 of Mogao Grottoes The Dunhuang caves] (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2006), Plate 202.



Fig. 5.1-27h. The image of donors on the north wall of Mogao Cave 275.

After Dunhuang Yanjiuyuan 敦煌研究院, *Dunhuang Shiku Quanji Diyijuan Mogaoku Di Erliliu Erliuba Erqier Erqiwu Ku Kaogu Baogao Dier Fence* 敦煌石窟全集 第1卷 莫高窟第266、268、272、275窟考古报告第二分册 [Caves 266-275 of Mogao Grottoes The Dunhuang caves] (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2006), Plate 204.

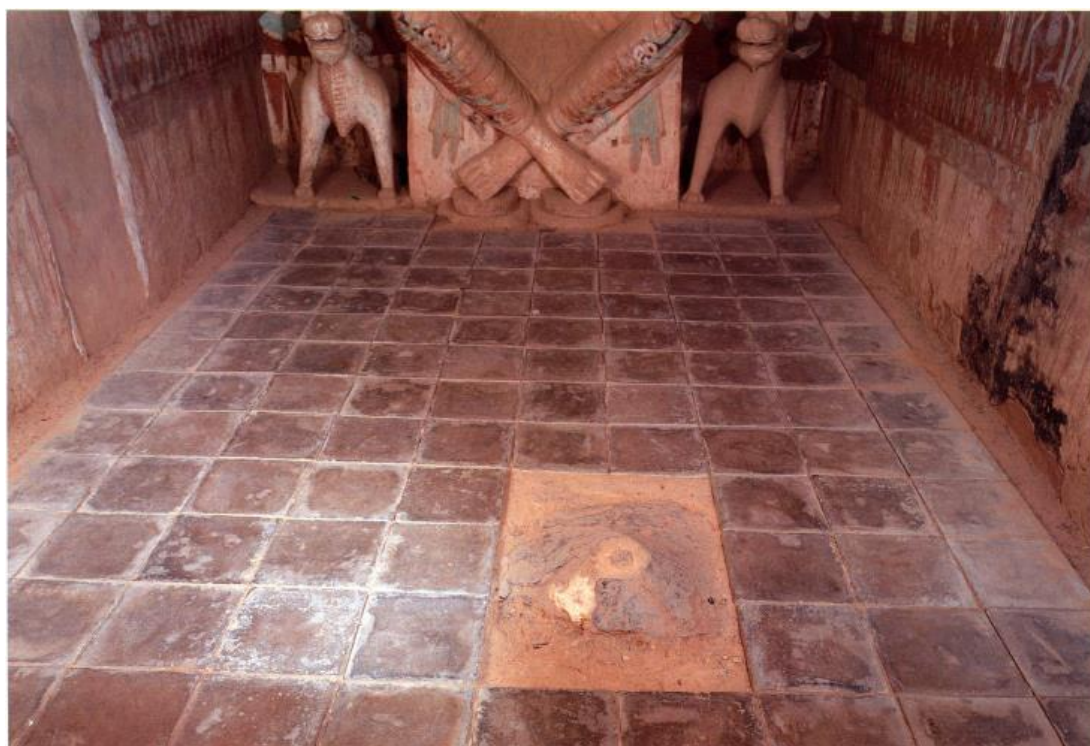


Fig. 5.1-28. traces on the ground of Mogao Cave 275.

After Dunhuang Yanjiuyuan 敦煌研究院, *Dunhuang Shiku Quanji Diyijuan Mogaoku Di Erliliu Erliuba Erqier Erqiwu Ku Kaogu Baogao Dier Fence* 敦煌石窟全集 第1卷 莫高窟第266、268、272、275窟考古报告第二分册 [Caves 266-275 of Mogao Grottoes The Dunhuang caves] (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2006), Plate 174.



Fig. 5.1-29. The side shrine of Mogao Cave 272.

After Rong Zhao, "Dunhuang Mogaoku Beiliang Sanku Kaizao Cidi Shulun 敦煌莫高窟北凉三窟开凿次第述论[On the Excavation Sequence of the Three Northern Liang Caves at Mogao in Dunhuang]," *Dunhuang Yanjiu* 敦煌研究[Dunhuang Research], no.2(2022):fig.3.



Fig. 5.1-30. West wall of Mogao Cave 272.

After Dunhuang Yanjiuyuan 敦煌研究院, *Dunhuang Shiku Quanji Diyijuan Mogaoku Di Erliliu Erliuba Erqier Erqiwu Ku Kaogu Baogao Dier Fence* 敦煌石窟全集 第1卷 莫高窟第266、268、272、275窟考古报告第二分册 [Caves 266-275 of Mogao Grottoes The Dunhuang caves] (Beijing:Wenwu chubanshe,2006), Plate 106.



Fig. 5.1-31a. Buddhas in the north wall of Mogao Cave 272.

After Dunhuang Yanjiuyuan 敦煌研究院, *Dunhuang Shiku Quanji Diyijuan Mogaoku Di Erliliu Erliuba Erqier Erqiwu Ku Kaogu Baogao Dier Fence* 敦煌石窟全集 第1卷 莫高窟第266、268、272、275窟考古报告第二分册 [Caves 266-275 of Mogao Grottoes The Dunhuang caves] (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2006), Plate 130.

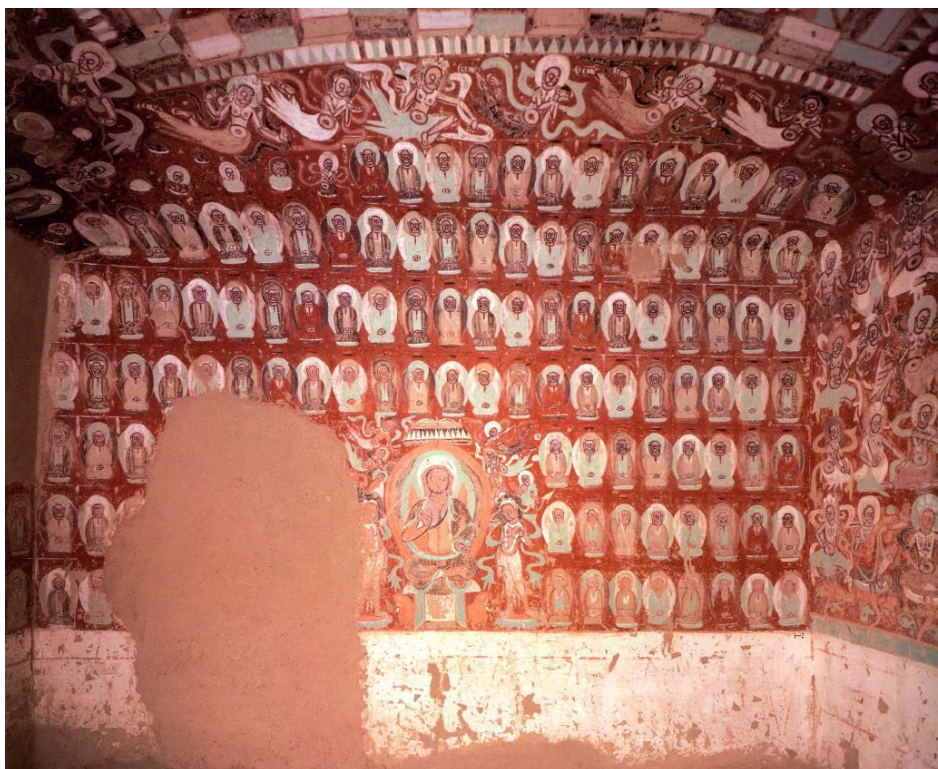


Fig. 5.1-31b. Buddhas on the south wall of Mogao Cave 272

After Dunhuang Yanjiuyuan 敦煌研究院, *Dunhuang Shiku Quanji Diyijuan Mogaoku Di Erliliu Erliuba Erqier Erqiwu Ku Kaogu Baogao Dier Fence* 敦煌石窟全集 第1卷 莫高窟第266、268、272、275窟考古报告第二分册 [Caves 266-275 of Mogao Grottoes The Dunhuang caves] (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2006), Plate 135.



Fig. 5.1-31c. Buddhas in the east wall of Mogao Cave 272

After Dunhuang Yanjiuyuan 敦煌研究院, *Dunhuang Shiku Quanji Diyijuan Mogaoku Di Erliliu Erliuba Erqier Erqiwu Ku Kaogu Baogao Dier Fence* 敦煌石窟全集 第1卷 莫高窟第266、268、272、275窟考古报告第二分册 [Caves 266-275 of Mogao Grottoes The Dunhuang caves] (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2006), Plate 140.

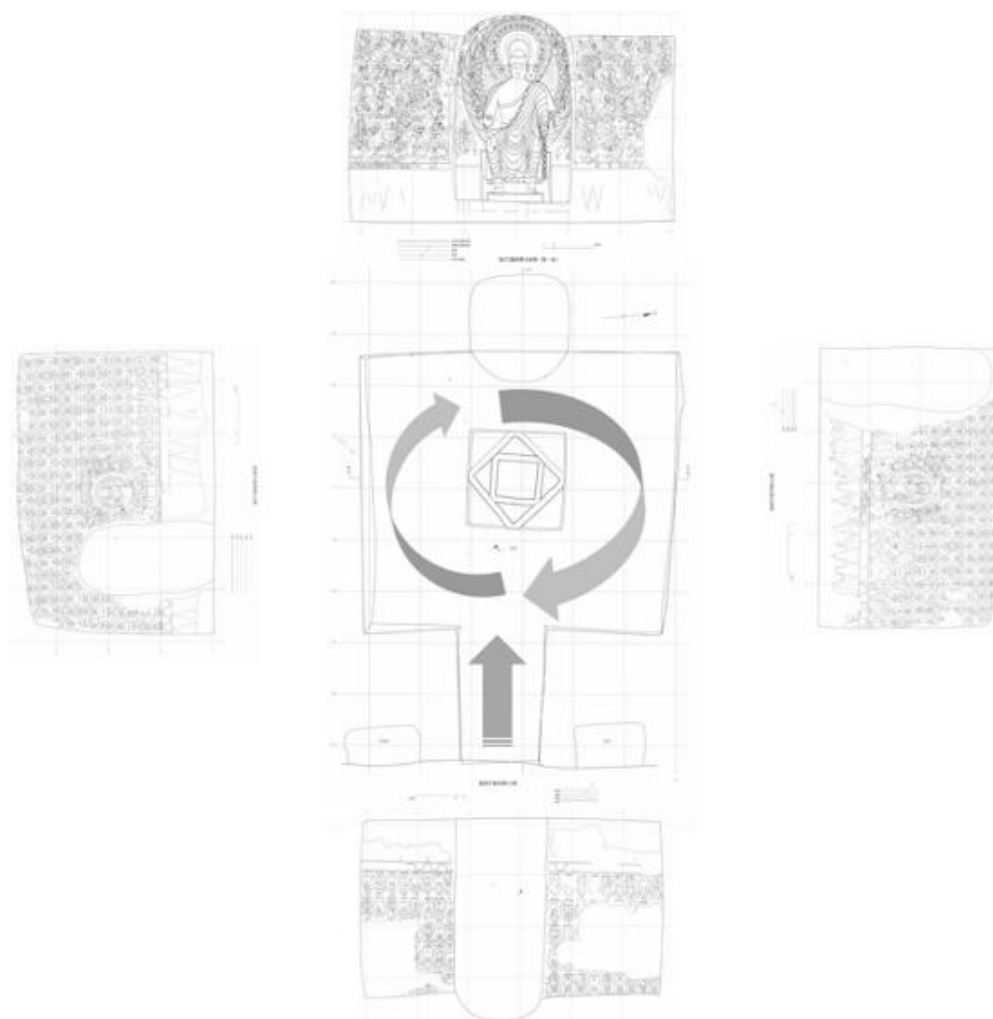


Fig. 5.1-32. Route Map for walkers in Mogao Cave 272
Draw by author.



Fig. 5.1-33a. Traces in the west niche of Mogao Cave 272

After Dunhuang Yanjiuyuan 敦煌研究院, *Dunhuang Shiku Quanji Diyijuan Mogaoku Di Erlilium Erliuba Erqier Erqiwu Ku Kaogu Baogao Dier Fence* 敦煌石窟全集 第1卷 莫高窟第266、268、272、275窟考古报告第二分册 [Caves 266-275 of Mogao Grottoes The Dunhuang caves] (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2006), Plate 110.



Fig. 5.1-33b. The image of female donors in the west wall of Mogao Cave 272

After Dunhuang Yanjiuyuan 敦煌研究院, *Dunhuang Shiku Quanji Diyijuan Mogaoku Di Erlilium Erliuba Erqier Erqiwu Ku Kaogu Baogao Dier Fence* 敦煌石窟全集 第1卷 莫高窟第266、268、272、275窟考古报告第二分册 [Caves 266-275 of Mogao Grottoes The Dunhuang caves] (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2006), Plate 152.



Fig. 5.1-33c. The image of male donors in west niche of Mogao Cave 272.
 After Dunhuang Yanjiuyuan 敦煌研究院, *Dunhuang Shiku Quanji Diyijuan Mogaoku Di Erliliu Erliuba Erqier Erqiwu Ku Kaogu Baogao Dier Fence* 敦煌石窟全集 第1卷 莫高窟第266、268、272、275窟考古报告第二分册 [Caves 266-275 of Mogao Grottoes The Dunhuang caves] (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2006), Plate 152.

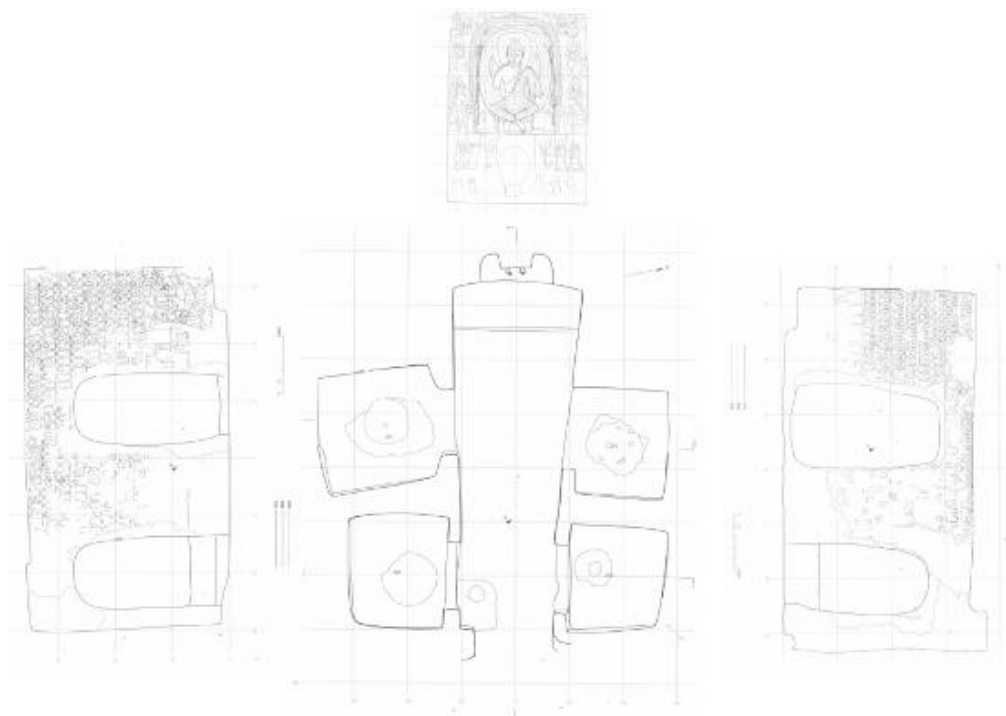


Fig. 5.1-34. Mogao Cave 268.
 After Dunhuang Yanjiuyuan 敦煌研究院, *Dunhuang Shiku Quanji Diyijuan Mogaoku Di Erliliu Erliuba Erqier Erqiwu Ku Kaogu Baogao Dier Fence* 敦煌石窟全集 第1卷 莫高窟第266、268、272、275窟考古报告第二分册 [Caves 266-275 of Mogao Grottoes The Dunhuang caves] (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2006), Plate 15, Plate 23, Plate 28, Plate 29.

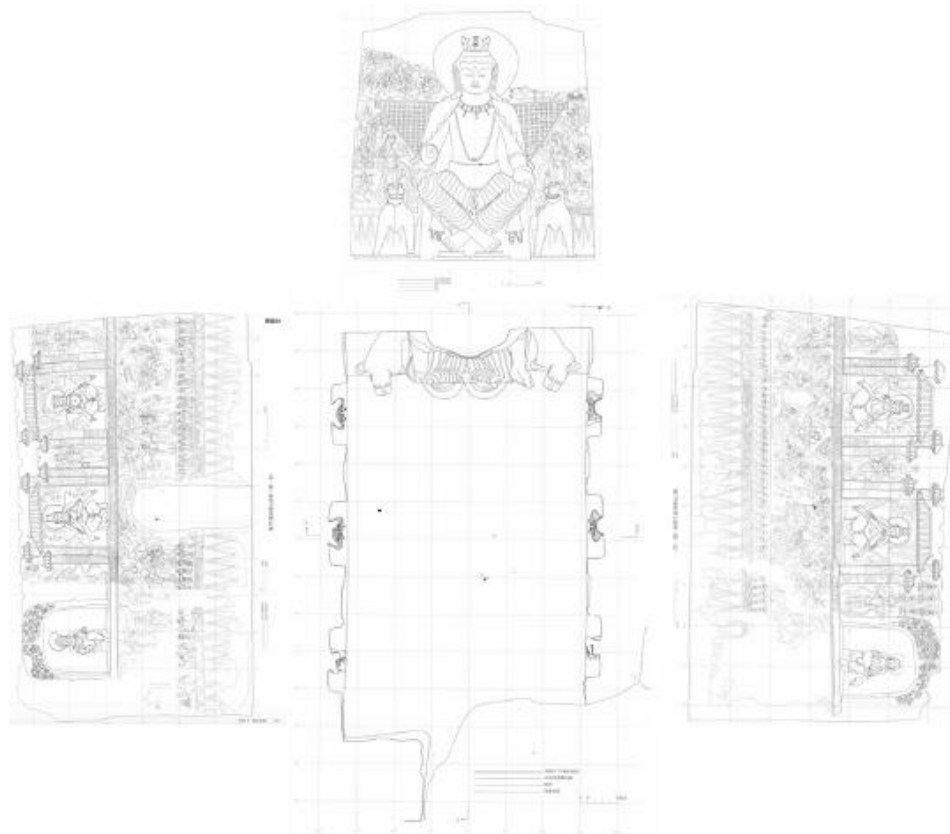
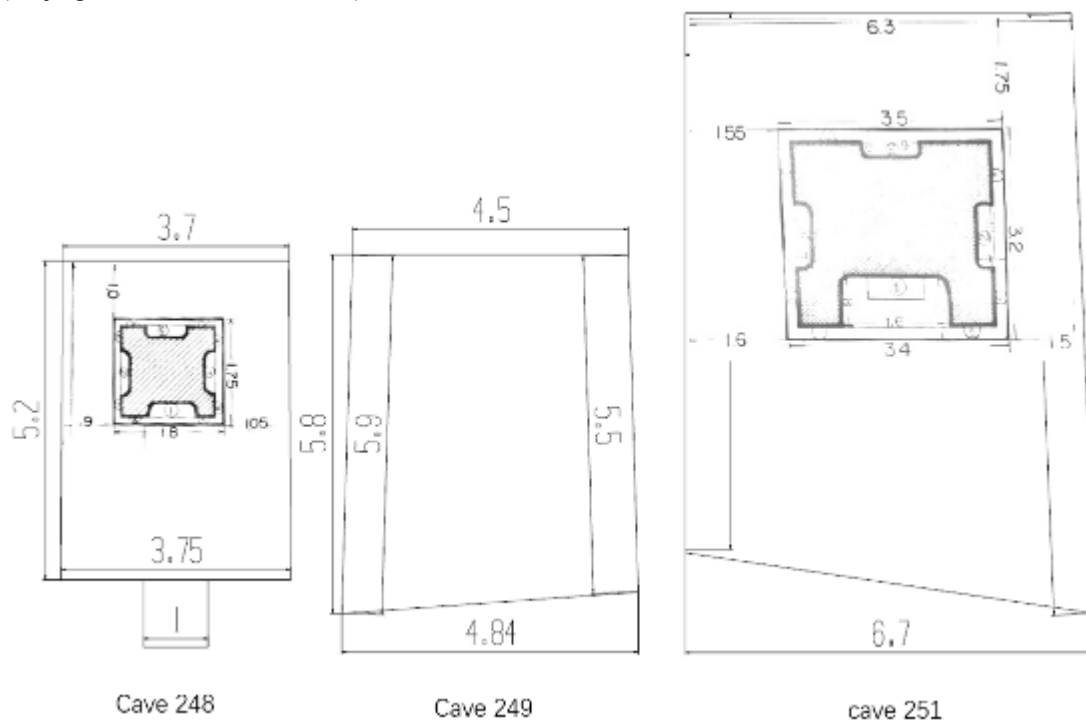


Fig. 5.1-35. Mogao Cave 275.

After Dunhuang Yanjiuyuan 敦煌研究院, *Dunhuang Shiku Quanji Diyijuan Mogaoku Di Erliliu Erliuba Erqier Erqiwu Ku Kaogu Baogao Dier Fence* 敦煌石窟全集 第1卷 莫高窟第266、268、272、275窟考古报告第二分册 [Caves 266-275 of Mogao Grottoes The Dunhuang caves] (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2006), Plate 83, 87, 88, 89.



Cave 248

Cave 249

cave 251

Fig. 5.1-36. The floor plane of Mogao Cave 248, Mogao Cave 249, Mogao Cave 251.
Draw by Yuanyuan Duan.

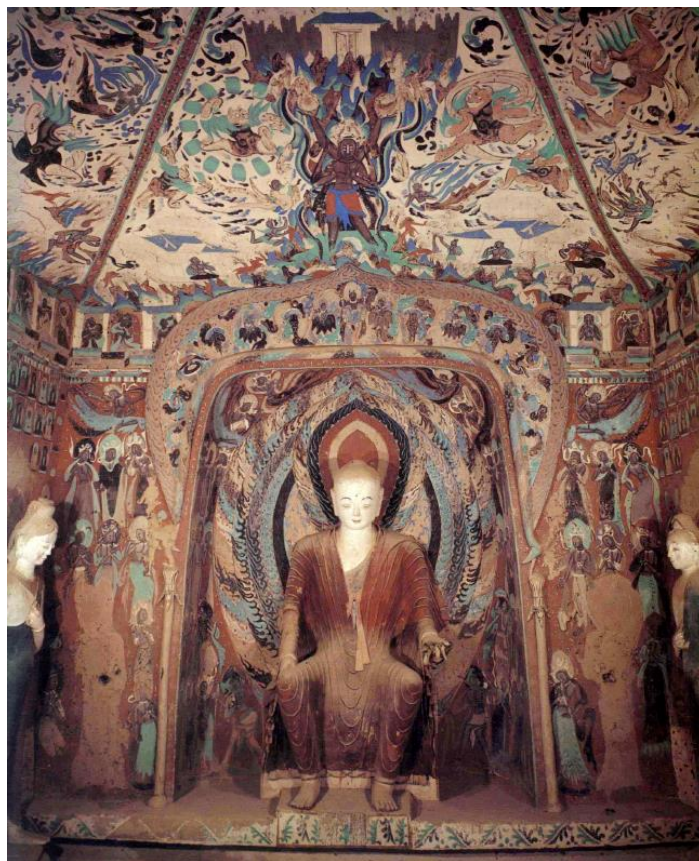


Fig. 5.1-37. The west niche of Mogao Cave 249.

From: Dunhuang Wenwu Yanjiusuo 敦煌文物研究所, Zhongguo Shiku Dunhuang Mogaoku 1. 中国石窟 敦煌莫高窟 1 [Chinese Grottoes Dunhuang Mogao Caves] (Beijing: Wenwu Chubanshe, 1982), fig.89.



Fig. 5.1-38a. West wall of Mogao Cave 249.

Available from: <https://www.e-dunhuang.com/cave/10.0001/0001.0001.0249>



Fig. 5.1-38b. North wall of Mogao Cave 249.

Available from: <https://shibbolethsp.jstor.org/start?entityID=https%3A%2F%2Fidp.uni-heidelberg.de&dest=https://www.jstor.org/stable/community.15463149&site=jstor>



Fig. 5.1 -38c South wall of Mogao Cave 249.

W. 4.10 m, H. 3.87 m. Available from <https://shibbolethsp.jstor.org/start?entityID=https%3A%2F%2Fidp.uni-heidelberg.de&dest=https://www.jstor.org/stable/community.15459894&site=jstor>



Fig. 5.1-39 South slope of Mogao Cave 249 ceiling..

W. (top): 1.19 m, W. (bottom) 5.40 m, H. 2.06 m. Available from

<https://shibbolethsp.jstor.org/start?entityID=https%3A%2F%2Fidp.uni-heidelberg.de&dest=https://www.jstor.org/stable/community.15441845&site=jstor>



Fig. 5.1-40a. North slope of ceiling of Mogao Cave 249.

W. (top) 1.19 m, W. (bottom) 5.94 m, H. 1.80 m. Available from

<https://shibbolethsp.jstor.org/start?entityID=https%3A%2F%2Fidp.uni-heidelberg.de&dest=https://www.jstor.org/stable/community.15428168&site=jstor>



Fig. 5.1-40b. Detail of mural on the north slope of Mogao Cave 249 ceiling.

After Dunhuang Wenwu Yanjiusuo 敦煌文物研究所, *Zhongguo Shiku Dunhuang Mogaoku 1*. 中国石窟 敦煌莫高窟 1 [Chinese Grottoes Dunhuang Mogao Caves] (Beijing: Wenwu Chubanshe, 1982), fig.107.



Fig. 5.1-41. East slope of Mogao Cave 249 ceiling.
 W (top): 1.17 m W (bottom): 4.64 m, H. 2.43 m. Available from:
<https://shibbolethsp.jstor.org/start?entityID=https%3A%2F%2Fidp.uni-heidelberg.de&dest=https://www.jstor.org/stable/community.15463115&site=jstor>



Fig. 5.1-42a. West slope of Mogao Cave 249 ceiling.
 W (top): 1.25 m, W (bottom): 4.20 m, H: 1.80 m. Available from
<https://shibbolethsp.jstor.org/start?entityID=https%3A%2F%2Fidp.uni-heidelberg.de&dest=https://www.jstor.org/stable/community.15444180&site=jstor>



Fig. 5.1-42b. The image of Garuda on the west slope of Mogao Cave 249 ceiling.
Available from <https://shibbolethsp.jstor.org/start?entityID=https%3A%2F%2Fidp.uni-heidelberg.de&dest=https://www.jstor.org/stable/community.15444180&site=jstor>



Fig. 5.1-42c The image of sarasvatī on the west slope of Mogao Cave 249 ceiling.
Available from: <https://shibbolethsp.jstor.org/start?entityID=https%3A%2F%2Fidp.uni-heidelberg.de&dest=https://www.jstor.org/stable/community.15444180&site=jstor>

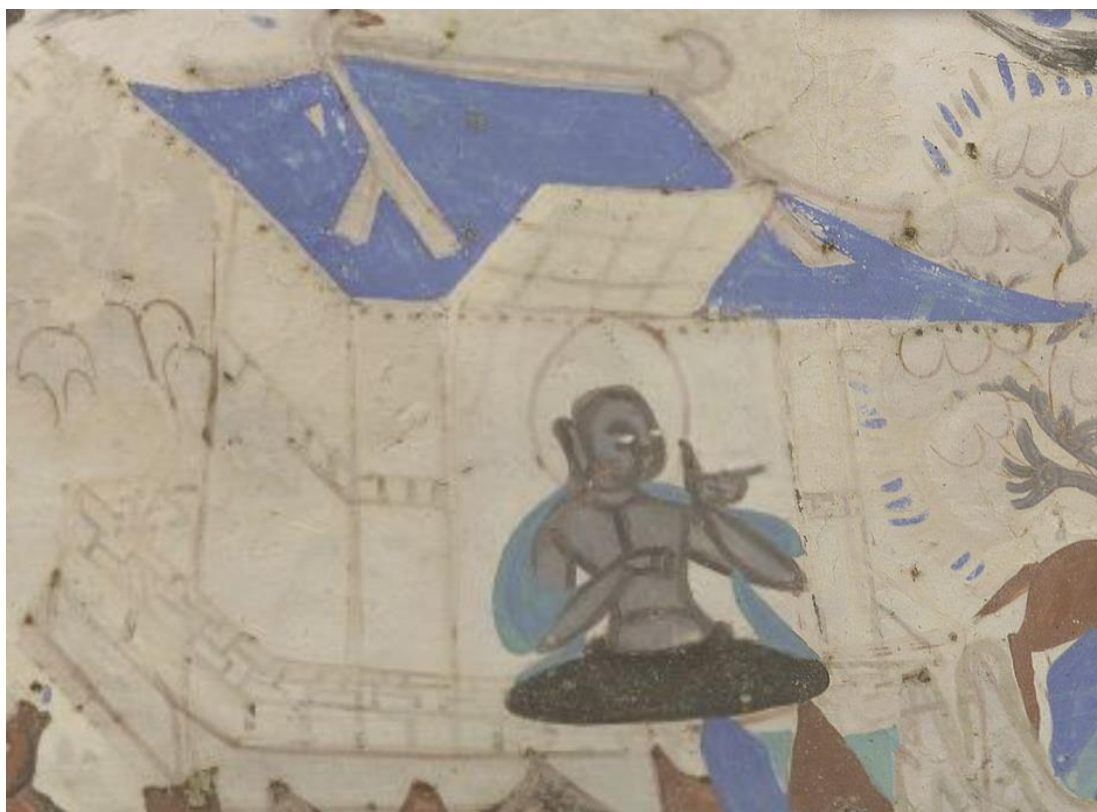


Fig. 5.1-42d. The image of king of the ghosts on the west slope of Mogao Cave 249 ceiling.
Available from: <https://shibbolethsp.jstor.org/start?entityID=https%3A%2F%2Fidp.uni-heidelberg.de&dest=https://www.jstor.org/stable/community.15444180&site=jstor>



Fig. 5.1-42e The image of king of the ghosts on the west slope of Mogao Cave 249 ceiling.
Available from: <https://shibbolethsp.jstor.org/start?entityID=https%3A%2F%2Fidp.uni-heidelberg.de&dest=https://www.jstor.org/stable/community.15444180&site=jstor>



Fig. 5.1-42f. The image of king of fire and earth on the west slope of Mogao Cave 249 ceiling.
Available from: <https://shibbolethsp.jstor.org/start?entityID=https%3A%2F%2Fidp.uni-heidelberg.de&dest=https://www.jstor.org/stable/community.15444180&site=jstor>



Fig. 5.1-42g. The image of king of water on the west slope of Mogao Cave 249 ceiling.
Available from: <https://shibbolethsp.jstor.org/start?entityID=https%3A%2F%2Fidp.uni-heidelberg.de&dest=https://www.jstor.org/stable/community.15444180&site=jstor>



Fig. 5.1-42h. The image of king of wind on the west slope of Mogao Cave 249 ceiling.
Available from: <https://shibbolethsp.jstor.org/start?entityID=https%3A%2F%2Fidp.uni-heidelberg.de&dest=https://www.jstor.org/stable/community.15444180&site=jstor>



Fig. 5.1-43a. The image of king of wind in stele of East Wei (543 A.D.)
After shen Jin, 海外及港台藏历代佛像 珍品纪年图鉴 [Haiwai Ji Gangtai Cang Lidai Foxiang Zhenpin Jinian Tujian] (Taiyuan: Shanxi Renming Chubanshe, 2007), 91.



Fig. 5.1-42i. The image of Pāñcika on the west slope of Mogao Cave 249 ceiling.
Available from: <https://shibbolethsp.jstor.org/start?entityID=https%3A%2F%2Fidp.uni-heidelberg.de&dest=https://www.jstor.org/stable/community.15444180&site=jstor>



Fig. 5.1-42j. The image of king of mountain on the west slope of Mogao Cave 249 ceiling
Available from <https://shibbolethsp.jstor.org/start?entityID=https%3A%2F%2Fidp.uni-heidelberg.de&dest=https://www.jstor.org/stable/community.15444180&site=jstor>



Fig. 5.1-42k. The image of king of tree on the west slope of Mogao Cave 249 ceiling.
 Available from: <https://shibbolethsp.jstor.org/start?entityID=https%3A%2F%2Fidp.uni-heidelberg.de&dest=https://www.jstor.org/stable/community.15444180&site=jstor>



Fig. 5.1-43b. The image of king of mountain and tree with inscription in the stele of East Wei Dynasty
 After Shen Jin, *海外及港台藏历代佛像珍品纪年图鉴*[*Haiwai Ji Gangtai Cang Lidai Foxiang Zhenpin Jinian Tujian*] (Taiyuan: Shanxi Renming Chubanshe,2007), 91.



Fig. 5.1-44 The image of passing on doctrines from master to disciple on the Dashengzhu cave-temple. Photography by Yuanyuan Duan, 2019.

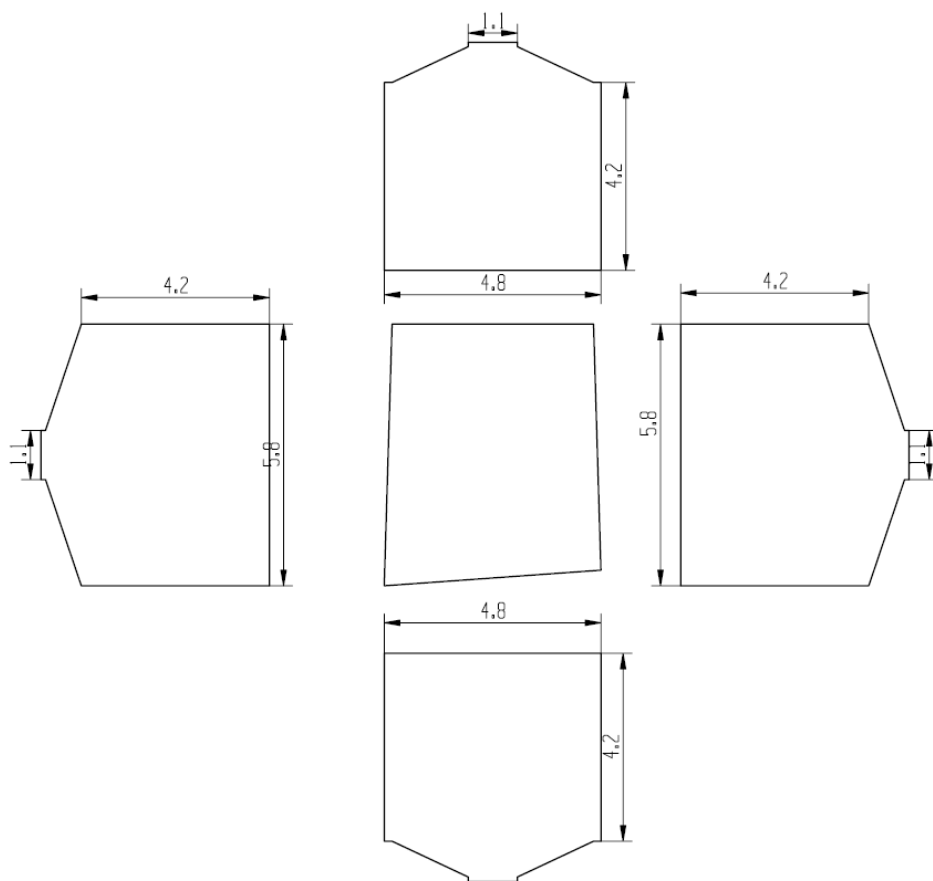


Fig. 5.1-45 a. Mogao Cave 249.
Draw by Yuanyuan Duan..



Fig. 5.1-45b. Mogao Cave 249 ceiling.
Available from: <https://www.e-dunhuang.com/cave/10.0001/0001.0001.0249>



Fig. 5.1-46a. Niche of central pillar facing east in Mogao Cave 248.
Available from: <https://shibbolethsp.jstor.org/start?entityID=https%3A%2F%2Fidp.uni-heidelberg.de&dest=https://www.jstor.org/stable/community.15455431&site=jstor>

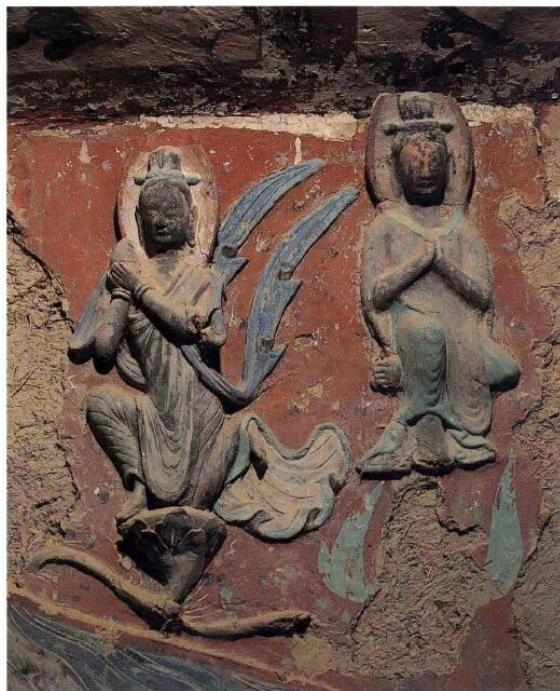


Fig. 5.1-46b. The image of lotus incarnations on the niche of central pillar facing east in Mogao Cave 248

After Dunhuang Wenwu Yanjiusuo 敦煌文物研究所, *Zhongguo Shiku Dunhuang Mogaoku 1*. 中国石窟 敦煌莫高窟 1 [Chinese Grottoes Dunhuang Mogao Caves] (Beijing: Wenwu Chubanshe, 1982), fig.83.

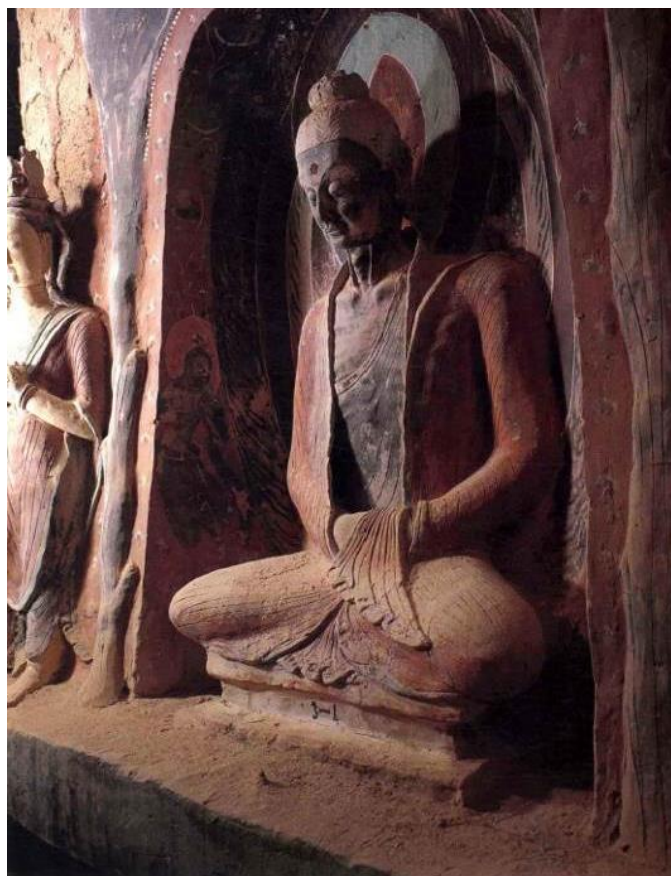


Fig. 5.1-46c. Niche of central pillar facing west in Mogao Cave 248

After Dunhuang Wenwu Yanjiusuo 敦煌文物研究所, *Zhongguo Shiku Dunhuang Mogaoku 1*. 中国石窟 敦煌莫高窟 1 [Chinese Grottoes Dunhuang Mogao Caves] (Beijing: Wenwu Chubanshe, 1982), Fig.80.

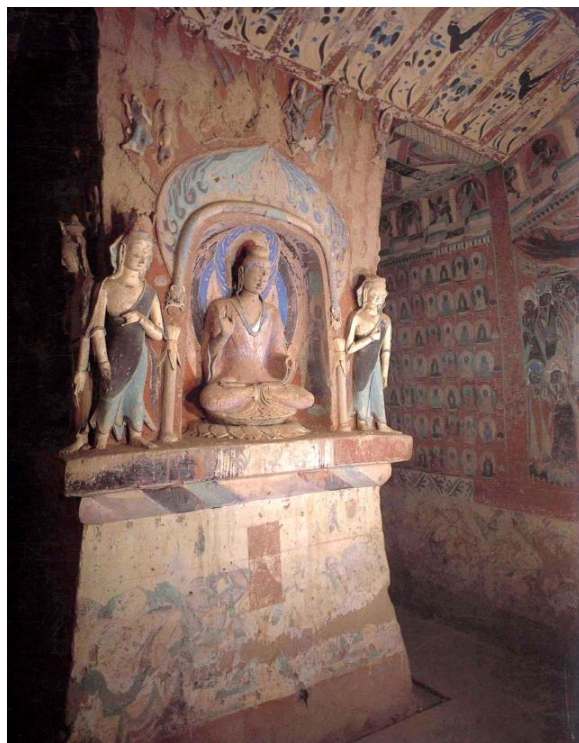


Fig. 5.1-46d The image of donors in Mogao Cave 248 central pillar.
 After Dunhuang Wenwu Yanjiusuo 敦煌文物研究所, *Zhongguo Shiku Dunhuang Mogaoku 1*. 中国石窟 敦煌莫高窟 1 [Chinese Grottoes Dunhuang Mogao Caves 1] (Beijing: Wenwu Chubanshe, 1982), fig.79.



Fig. 5.1-47. North wall of Mogao Cave 248
 After Dunhuang Wenwu Yanjiusuo 敦煌文物研究所, *Zhongguo Shiku Dunhuang Mogaoku 1*. 中国石窟 敦煌莫高窟 1 [Chinese Grottoes Dunhuang Mogao Caves 1] (Beijing: Wenwu Chubanshe, 1982), fig.84.

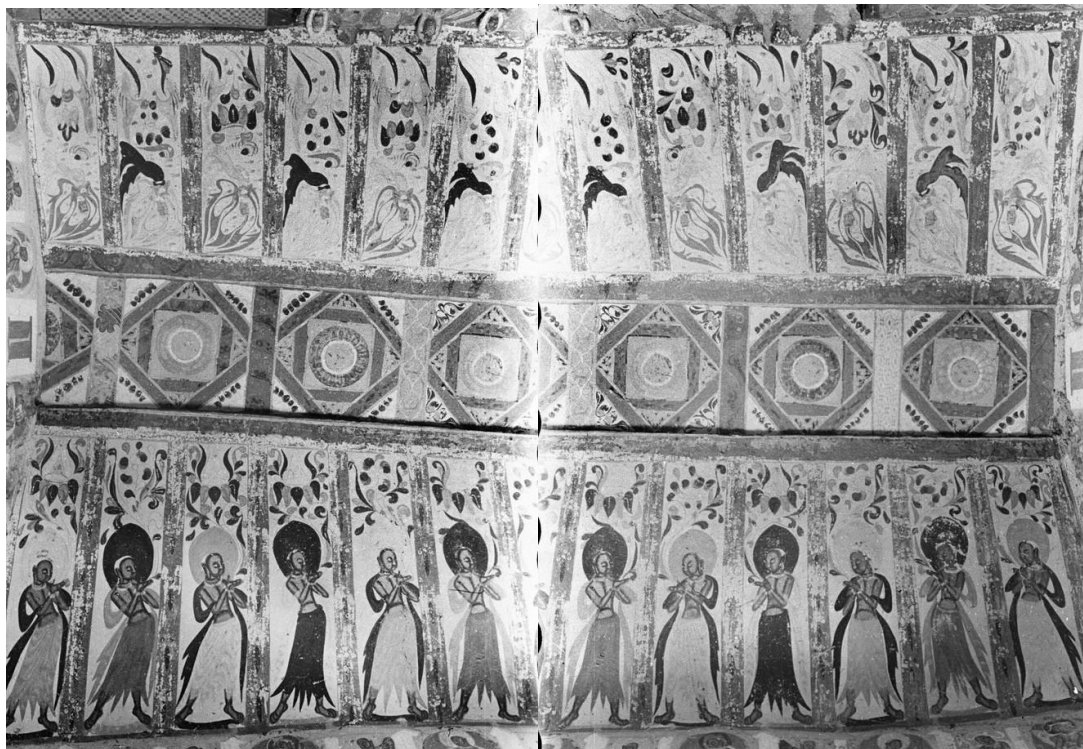


Fig. 5.1-48a. The ceiling of Mogao Cave 248.

Available from: <https://shibbolethsp.jstor.org/start?entityID=https%3A%2F%2Fidp.uni-heidelberg.de&dest=https://www.jstor.org/stable/community.15443706&site=jstor>



Fig. 5.1-48b. East side of the ceiling of Mogao Cave 248.

After Dunhuang Wenwu Yanjiusuo 敦煌文物研究所, *Zhongguo Shiku Dunhuang Mogaoku 1*. 中国石窟 敦煌莫高窟 1 [Chinese Grottoes Dunhuang Mogao Caves 1] (Beijing: Wenwu Chubanshe, 1982), fig.87.



Fig. 5.1-48c. West side of the ceiling of Mogao Cave 248.

After Dunhuang Wenwu Yanjiusuo 敦煌文物研究所, *Zhongguo Shiku Dunhuang Mogaoku 1*. 中国石窟 敦煌莫高窟 1 [Chinese Grottoes Dunhuang Mogao Caves 1] (Beijing: Wenwu Chubanshe, 1982), fig.85.



Fig. 5.1-49a. Mogao Cave 251.

Available from: <https://shibbolethsp.jstor.org/start?entityID=https%3A%2F%2Fidp.uni-heidelberg.de&dest=https://www.jstor.org/stable/community.15429207&site=jstor>



Fig. 5.1-49b. Niche facing east in Mogao Cave 251 central pillar.
 After Dunhuang Wenwu Yanjiusuo 敦煌文物研究所, *Zhongguo Shiku Dunhuang Mogaoku 1*. 中国石窟 敦煌莫高窟 1 [Chinese Grottoes Dunhuang Mogao Caves 1] (Beijing: Wenwu Chubanshe, 1982), fig.46.



Fig. 5.1-49c. Niche facing north in Mogao Cave 251 central pillar
 After Dunhuang Wenwu Yanjiusuo 敦煌文物研究所, *Zhongguo Shiku Dunhuang Mogaoku 1*. 中国石窟 敦煌莫高窟 1 [Chinese Grottoes Dunhuang Mogao Caves 1] (Beijing: Wenwu Chubanshe, 1982), fig.47.



Fig. 5.1- 50a. The East wall of Mogao Cave 251.

Available from: <https://shibbolethsp.jstor.org/start?entityID=https%3A%2F%2Fidp.uni-heidelberg.de&dest=https://www.jstor.org/stable/community.15444647&site=jstor>

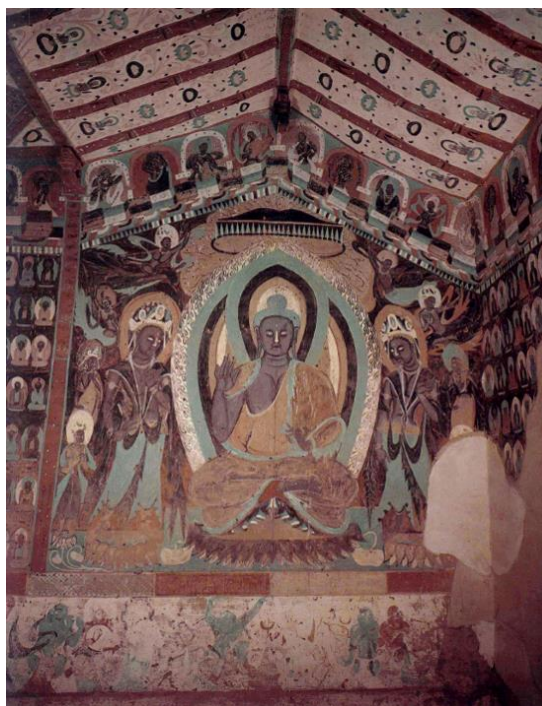


Fig. 5.1-50b. The east part of the north wall of Mogao Cave 251.

After Dunhuang Wenwu Yanjiusuo 敦煌文物研究所, *Zhongguo Shiku Dunhuang Mogaoku 1* 中国石窟 敦煌莫高窟 [Chinese Grottoes Dunhuang Mogao Caves 1] (Beijing: Wenwu Chubanshe, 1982), fig.48.

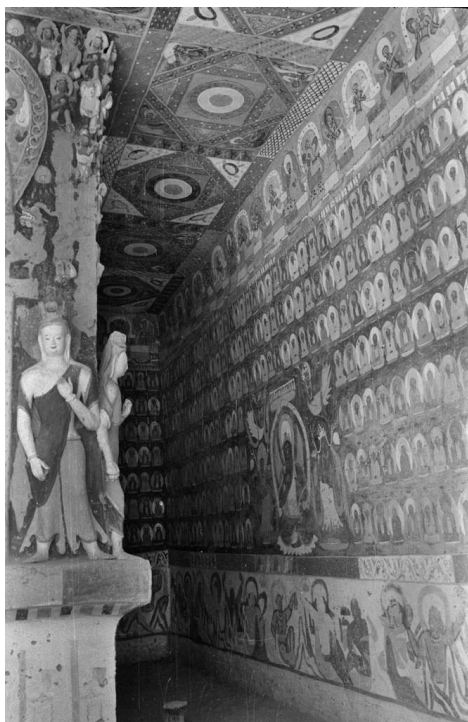


Fig. 5.1-50c. West part of Mogao Cave 251 north wall

Available from <https://shibbolethsp.jstor.org/start?entityID=https%3A%2F%2Fidp.uni-heidelberg.de&dest=https://www.jstor.org/stable/community.1544424&site=jstor>

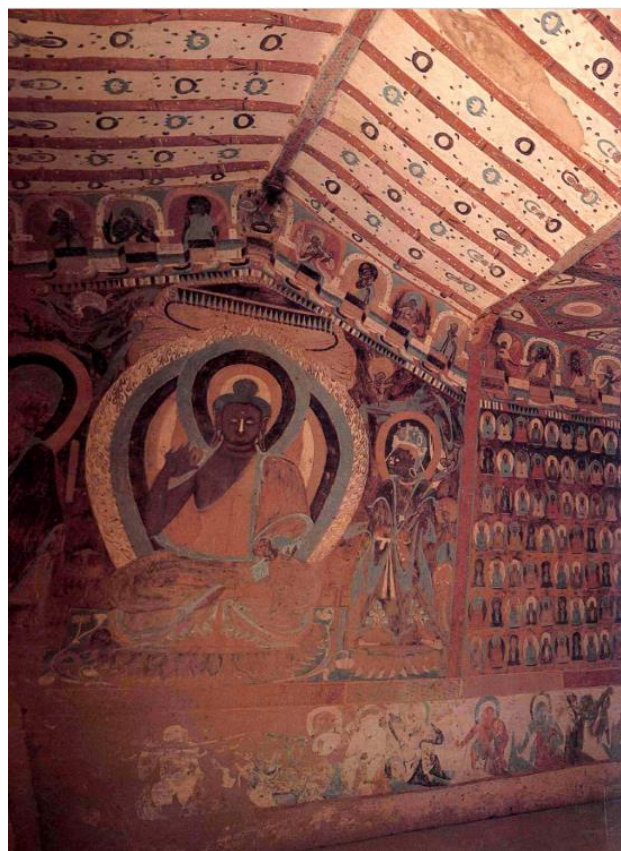


Fig. 5.1-50d. East part of Mogao Cave 251 south wall.

After Dunhuang Wenwu Yanjiusuo 敦煌文物研究所, *Zhongguo Shiku Dunhuang Mogaoku 1*. 中国石窟 敦煌莫高窟 1 [Chinese Grottoes Dunhuang Mogao Caves 1] (Beijing: Wenwu Chubanshe, 1982), fig.46.



Fig. 5.1-51. location of group C including Mogao Cave 285 and Mogao Cave 288.
 Photograph by Yuanyuan Duan, Feb. 28, 2019.



Fig. 5.1-52a. Remaining buildings in the north wall of Mogao Cave 285.
 Photograph by Charles Nouette. After Mission Pelliot, *Les grottes de Touen-Houang* (Paris. Librairie Paul Geuthner, 1920), Plate CCLX.

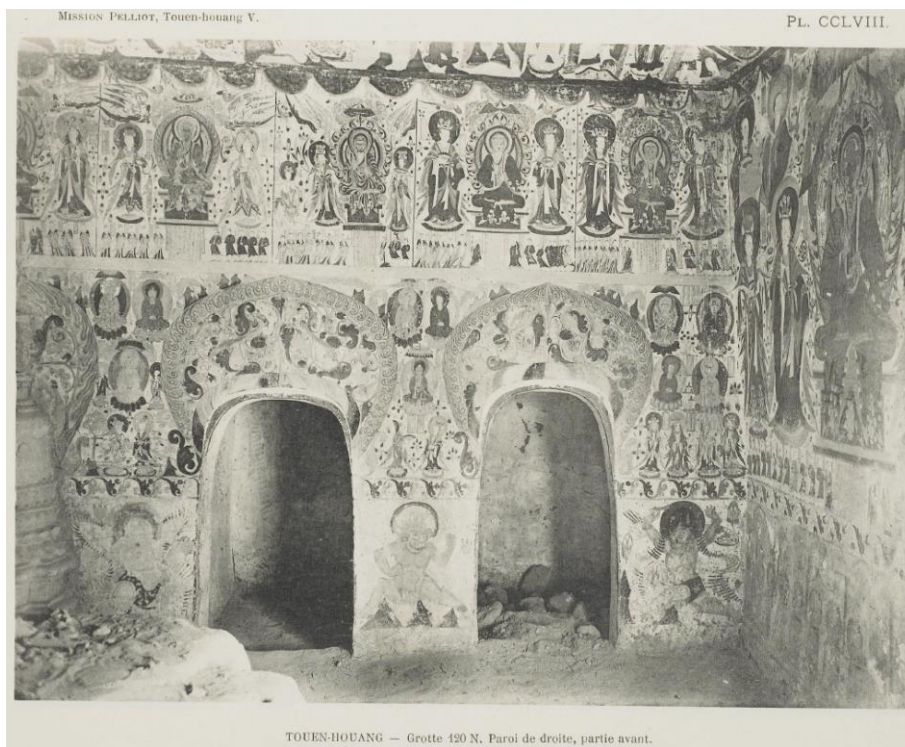


Fig. 5.1-52b. Remaining buildings in the north wall of Mogao Cave 285.
 Photograph by Charles Nouette. After Mission Pelliot, *Les grottes de Touen-Houang* (Paris. Librairie Paul Geuthner, 1920), Plate CCLVIII.

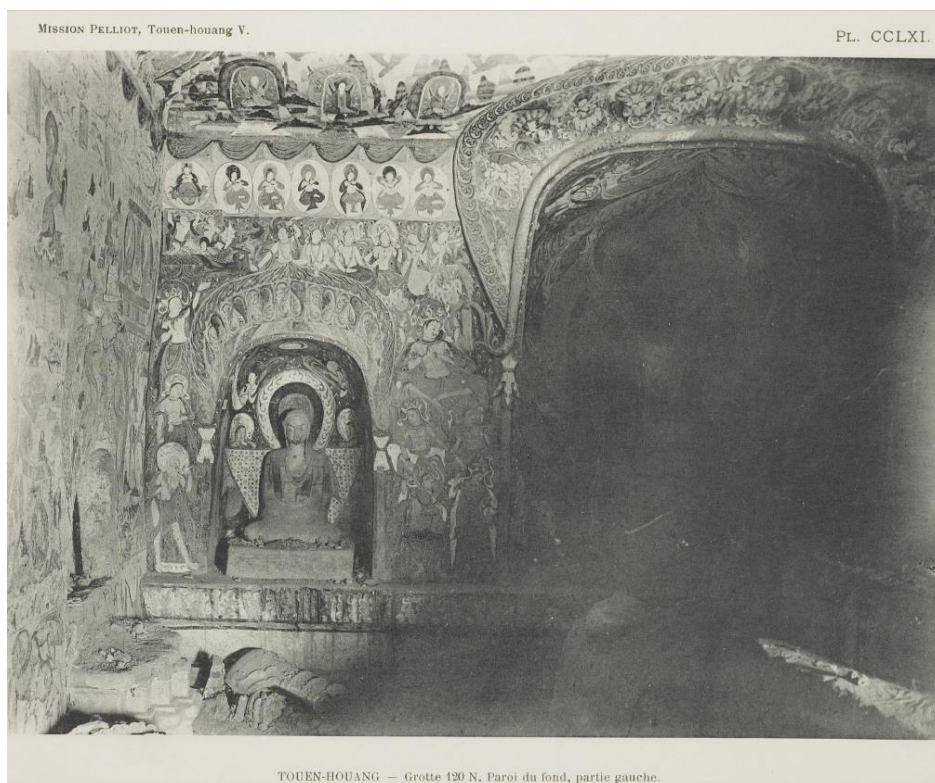


Fig. 5.1-53. Remaining buildings in the south wall of Mogao Cave 285.
 Photograph by Charles Nouette. After Mission Pelliot, *Les grottes de Touen-Houang* (Paris. Librairie Paul Geuthner, 1920), Plate CCLXI.

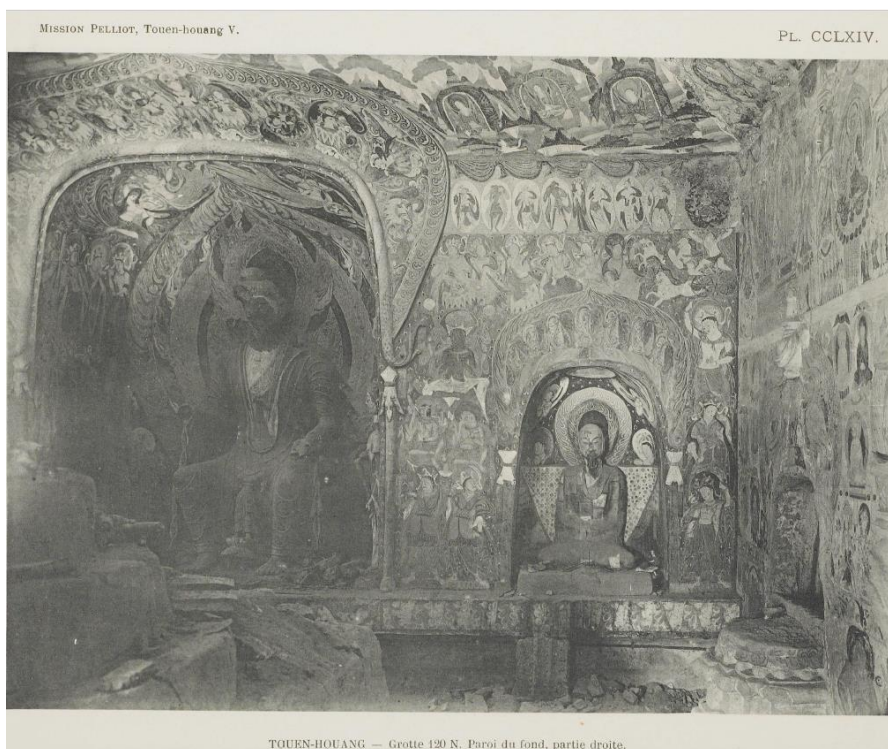


Fig. 5.1-54a. Remaining buildings in center of Mogao Cave 285.
 Photograph by Charles Nouette. After Mission Pelliot, *Les grottes de Touen-Houang* (Paris. Librairie Paul Geuthner, 1920), Plate CCLXIV.



Fig. 5.1-54b. Remaining buildings in the center of Mogao Cave 285.
 Photograph by Charles Nouette. After Mission Pelliot, *Les grottes de Touen-Houang* (Paris. Librairie Paul Geuthner, 1920), Plate CCLXVII.



Fig. 5.1-54c. Remaining buildings in the center of Mogao Cave 285.
 Photograph by Charles Nouette. After Mission Pelliot, *Les grottes de Touen-Houang* (Paris. Librairie Paul Geuthner, 1920), Plate CCLXVIII.

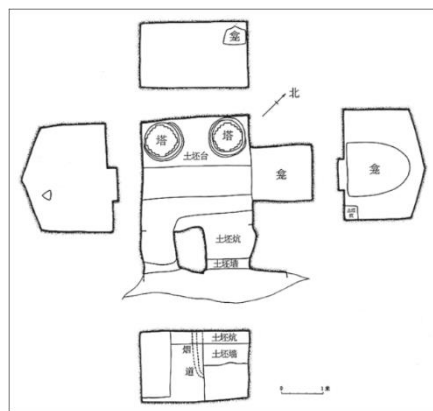


Fig. 5.1-55. Mogao Cave B142 in the north area of Dunhuang Mogao Caves.
 After Peng Jinzhang, and Costantino Moretti, “Les fouilles archéologiques du secteur nord de Mogao,” *Arts Asiatiques* 67.1 (2012):115, Fig 20.



Fig. 5.1-56a. North wall of Mogao Cave 285.

W. 6.36 m, H. 3.14 m. Available from:

<https://shibbolethsp.jstor.org/start?entityID=https%3A%2F%2Fidp.uni-heidelberg.de&dest=https://www.jstor.org/stable/community.18124507&site=jstor>

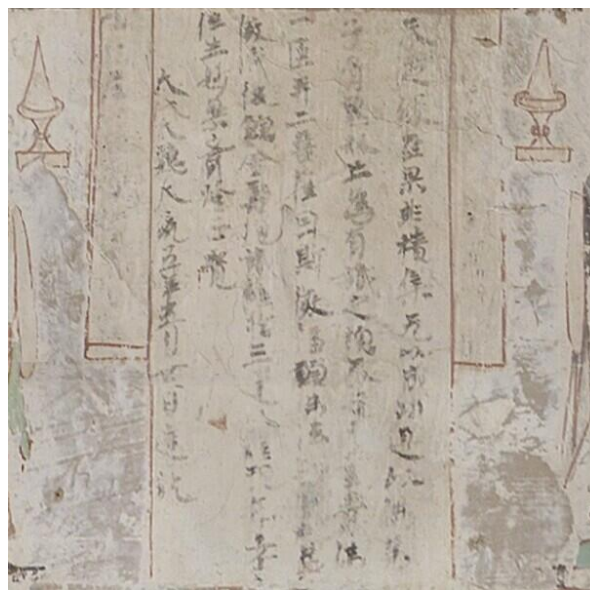
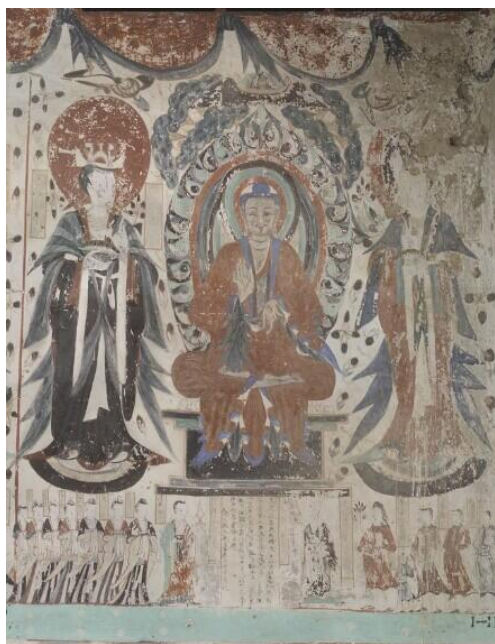


Fig. 5.1-56b. The first Buddha and the inscription on the mural of north wall of Mogao Cave 285

Available from: <https://shibbolethsp.jstor.org/start?entityID=https%3A%2F%2Fidp.uni-heidelberg.de&dest=https://www.jstor.org/stable/community.18124507&site=jstor>

The inscription: “夫從緣至果，非積集無以成功，是以佛弟子滑黑奴上為有識之類，敬造無量壽佛一區並二菩薩。因斯微福，願法興隆，魔事微滅，後願含靈抱識離舍三途八難、現在老苦，往生妙樂，齊登正覺。大代大魏大統五年五月廿一日造訖。”



Fig. 5.1-56c. The fourth Buddha and the inscription on the mural of north wall Mogao Cave 285.

Available from: <https://shibbolethsp.jstor.org/start?entityID=https%3A%2F%2Fidp.uni-heidelberg.de&dest=https://www.jstor.org/stable/community.18124507&site=jstor>

The Inscription: “夫從緣至果，非積集無以成功。是以佛弟子滑 ○ 安上為有識之 ○ 敬造 ○ ○ ○ ○ (無量壽佛) 一區並二菩薩，因斯微福，願法興隆，魔事微滅，後願含靈抱識離舍於三途於八難。大代大魏大統五年五月廿八日造”

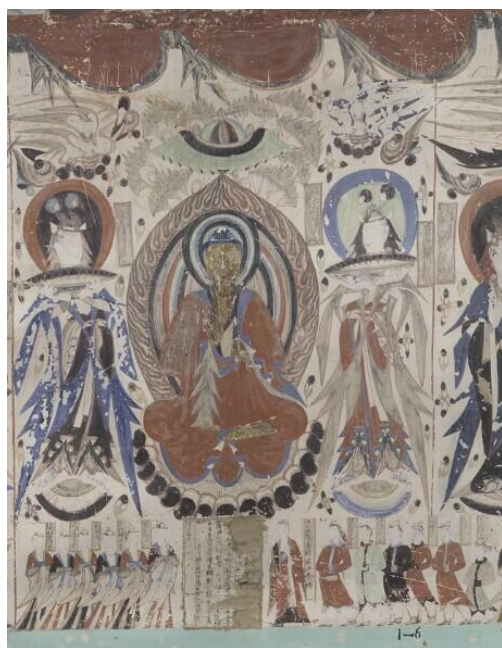


Fig. 5.1-56d. The sixth Buddha and the inscription on the mural of north wall of Mogao Cave 285

Available from: <https://shibbolethsp.jstor.org/start?entityID=https%3A%2F%2Fidp.uni-heidelberg.de&dest=https://www.jstor.org/stable/community.18124507&site=jstor>

The Inscription: “夫至極闕曠，正為塵羅所約，聖遁歸趣，非積壘何能濟拔是以弟子比丘 ○ 化仰為七世父母所生母父敬造迦葉佛一區並二菩薩因斯微福願亡者神遊淨土，永離三途；現在居春位太安吉普及蠕動之類，速登常樂。大代大魏大統四年歲次戊午八月中旬造”



Fig. 5.1-57. East wall of Mogao Cave 285.

W. 6.39 m, H. 3.15 m. Available from:

<https://shibbolethsp.jstor.org/start?entityID=https%3A%2F%2Fidp.uni-heidelberg.de&dest=https://www.jstor.org/stable/community.18126761&site=jstor>



Fig. 5.1-58 West wall of Mogao Cave 285

W. 6.17 m, H. 3.20 m. Available from

<https://shibbolethsp.jstor.org/start?entityID=https%3A%2F%2Fidp.uni-heidelberg.de&dest=https://www.jstor.org/stable/community.18144320&site=jstor>



Fig. 5.1-59 South wall of Mogao Cave 285.

W. 6.22 m, H. 3.16 m. Available from:

<https://shibbolethsp.jstor.org/start?entityID=https%3A%2F%2Fidp.uni-heidelberg.de&dest=https://www.jstor.org/stable/community.18116060&site=jstor>



Fig. 5.1-60a. West slope of Mogao Cave 285 ceiling.

W.(top) 1.36 m, W.(bottom) 6.03 m, H. 2.85 m. Available from:

<https://shibbolethsp.jstor.org/start?entityID=https%3A%2F%2Fidp.uni-heidelberg.de&dest=https://www.jstor.org/stable/community.18115461&site=jstor>



Fig. 5.1-60b. South slope of Mogao Cave 285 ceiling.

W (top): 1.23 m, W (bottom): 6.17 m, H. 2.80 m. Available from:

<https://shibbolethsp.jstor.org/start?entityID=https%3A%2F%2Fidp.uni-heidelberg.de&dest=https://www.jstor.org/stable/community.18114639&site=jstor>



Fig. 5.1-60c. North slope of Mogao Cave 285 ceiling.
W. (top) 1.3 m, W. (bottom) 5.99 m, H. 2.97 m. Available from:
<https://shibbolethsp.jstor.org/start?entityID=https%3A%2F%2Fidp.uni-heidelberg.de&dest=https://www.jstor.org/stable/community.18123005&site=jstor>



Fig. 5.1-60d East slope of Mogao Cave 285 ceiling
W.(top): 1.29 m, W. (bottom) 6.56 m, H. 2.81 m. Available from:
<https://shibbolethsp.jstor.org/start?entityID=https%3A%2F%2Fidp.uni-heidelberg.de&dest=https://www.jstor.org/stable/community.18125743&site=jstor>

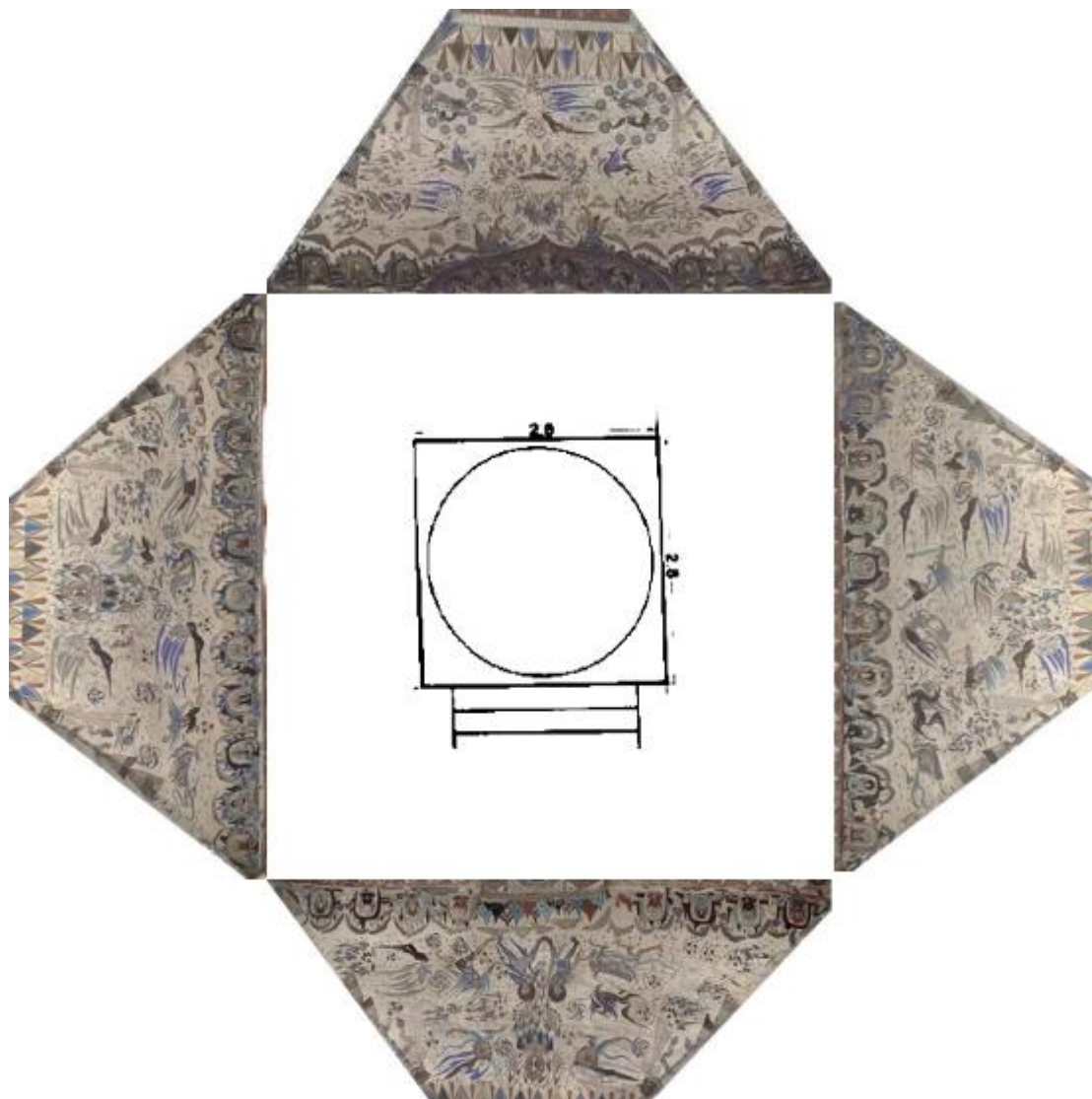


Fig. 5.1-60e. Field of vision above the center of Mogao Cave 285.
Draw by author.

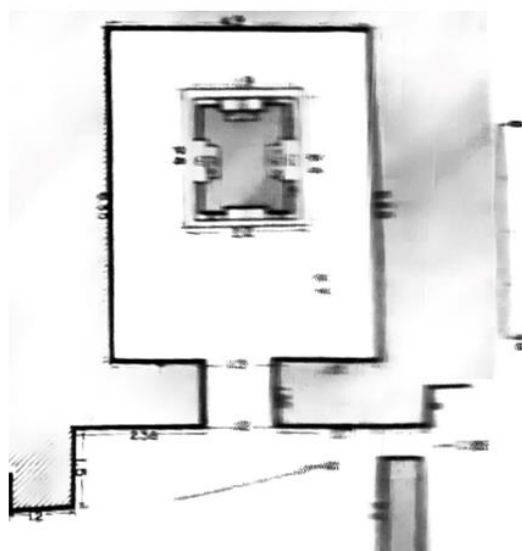


Fig. 5.1-61. Floor plan of Mogao Cave 288.
After Zhangru Shi, *Mogaoku Xing* 莫高窟形[Section and Plan Measurements of the Mogao Grottoes] (Taipei: Republic of China, 1996), 153.

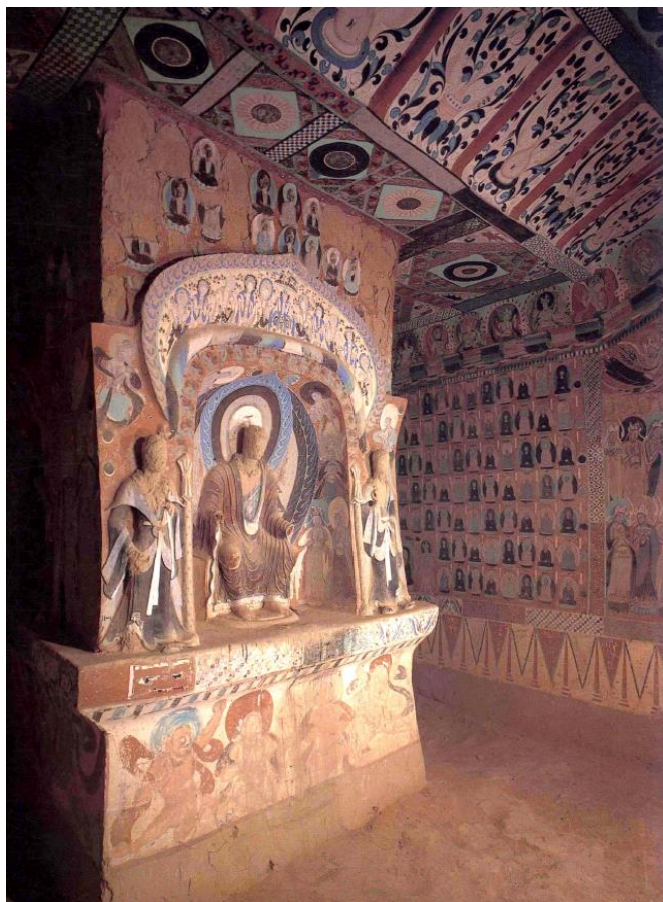


Fig. 5.1-62a. Central pillar of Mogao Cave 288.

After Dunhuang Wenwu Yanjiusuo 敦煌文物研究所, *Zhongguo Shiku Dunhuang Mogaoku 1*. 中国石窟 敦煌莫高窟 1 [Chinese Grottoes Dunhuang Mogao Caves 1] (Beijing: Wenwu Chubanshe, 1982), fig.108.

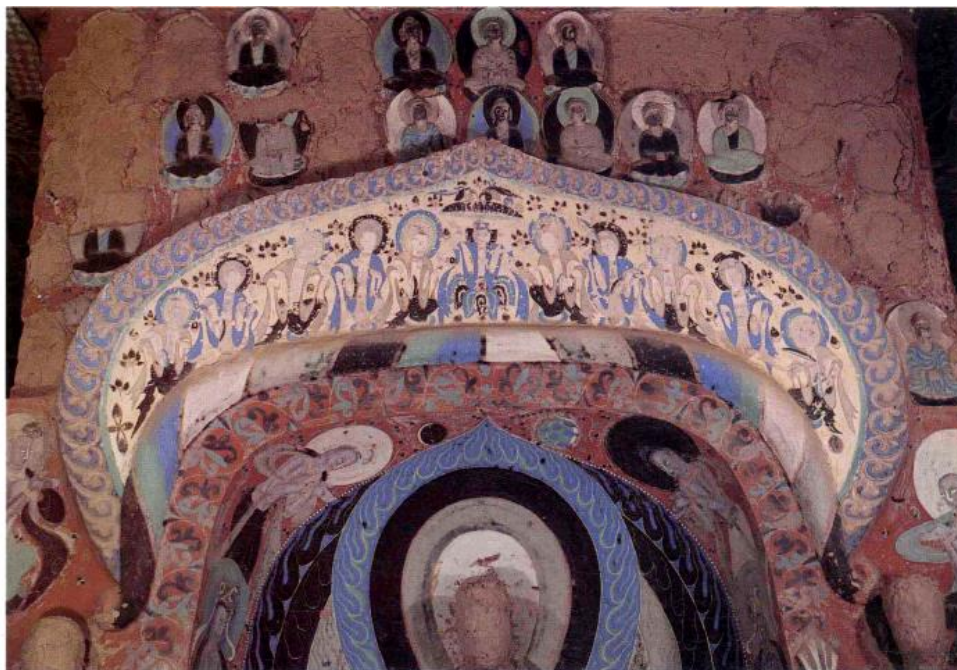


Fig. 5.1-62b. West niche in the central pillar of Mogao Cave 288.

After Dunhuang Wenwu Yanjiusuo 敦煌文物研究所, *Zhongguo Shiku Dunhuang Mogaoku 1*. 中国石窟 敦煌莫高窟 1 [Chinese Grottoes Dunhuang Mogao Caves 1] (Beijing: Wenwu Chubanshe, 1982), fig.110.

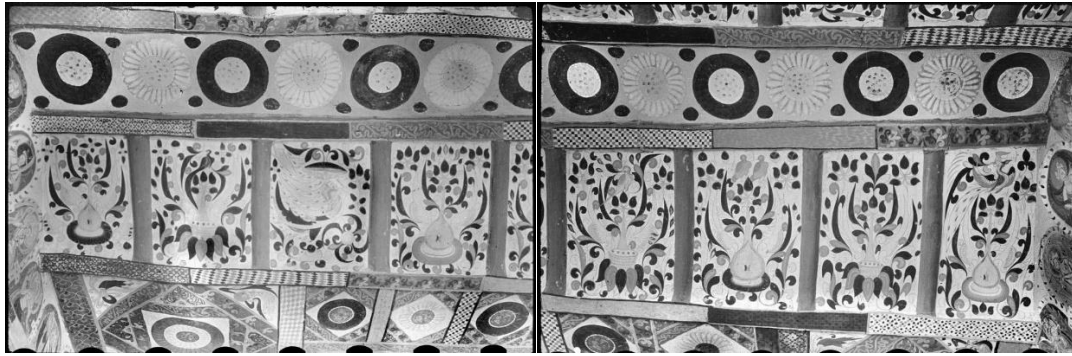


Fig. 5.1-63. West side of ceiling of Mogao Cave 288.

Available from: <https://shibbolethsp.jstor.org/start?entityID=https%3A%2F%2Fidp.uni-heidelberg.de&dest=https://www.jstor.org/stable/community.15437302&site=jstor>



Fig. 5.1-64. East side of ceiling of Mogao Cave 288.

Available from: <https://shibbolethsp.jstor.org/start?entityID=https%3A%2F%2Fidp.uni-heidelberg.de&dest=https://www.jstor.org/stable/community.15455095&site=jstor>

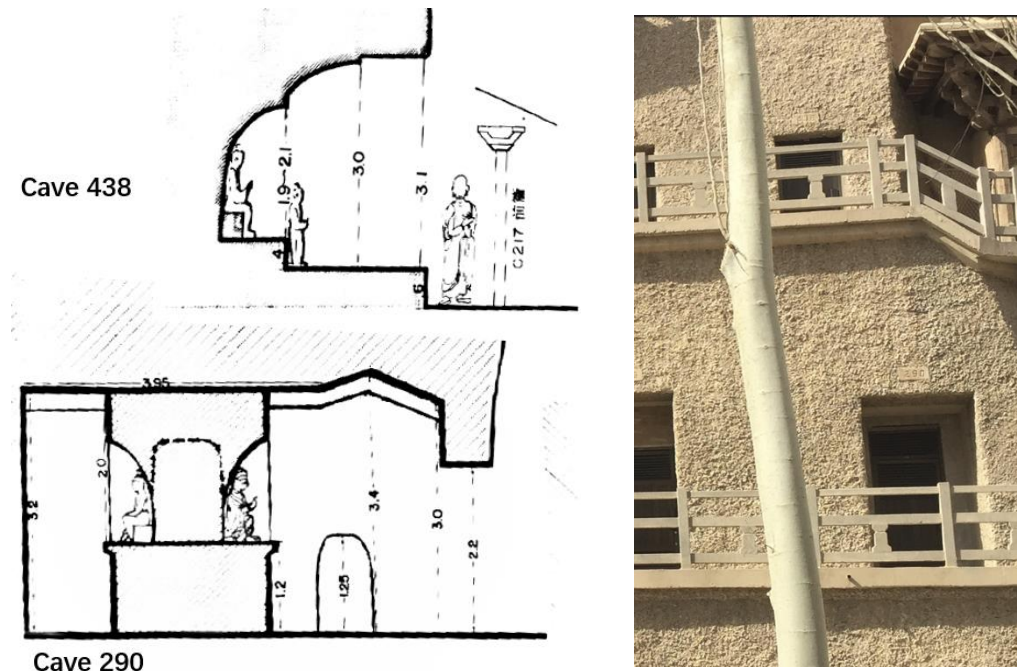


Fig. 5.1-65. Location of group D including Mogao Cave 438 and Mogao Cave 290
Draw by author.

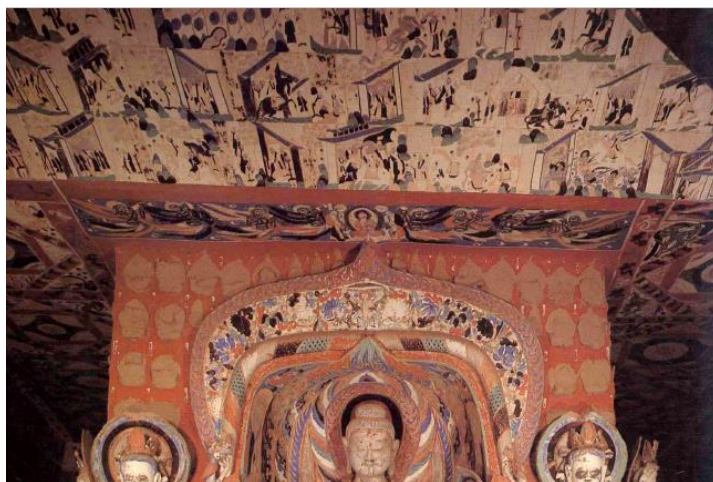


Fig. 5.1-66a. Ceiling of Mogao Cave 290.

After Dunhuang Wenwu Yanjiusuo 敦煌文物研究所, *Zhongguo Shiku Dunhuang Mogaoku 1*. 中国石窟 敦煌莫高窟 1 [Chinese Grottoes Dunhuang Mogao Caves 1] (Beijing: Wenwu Chubanshe, 1982), fig. 174.



Fig. 5.1-66b. East slope of ceiling of Mogao Cave 290.

From: Dunhuang Wenwu Yanjiusuo 敦煌文物研究所, *Zhongguo Shiku Dunhuang Mogaoku 1*. 中国石窟 敦煌莫高窟 1 [Chinese Grottoes Dunhuang Mogao Caves 1] (Beijing: Wenwu Chubanshe, 1982), fig. 176.

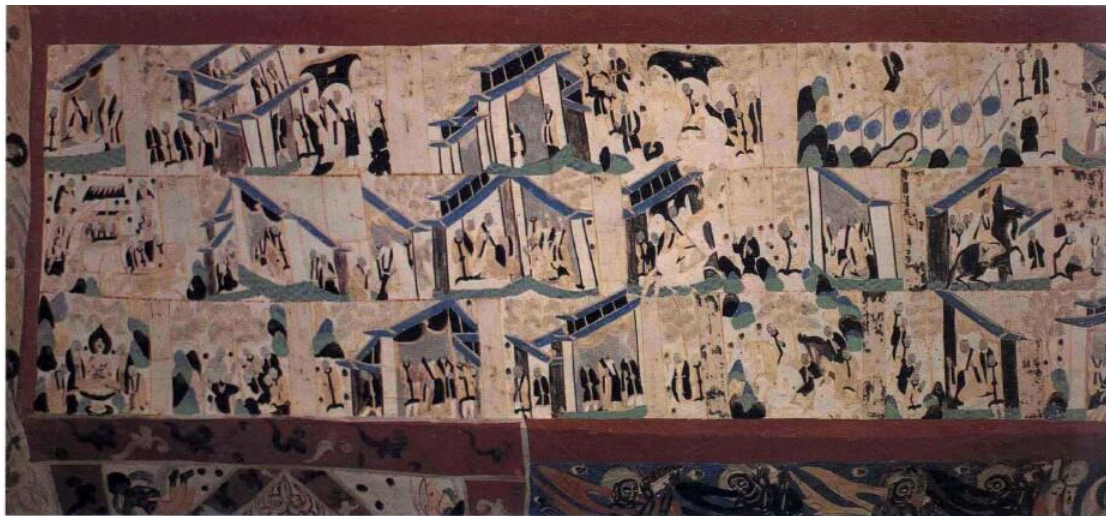


Fig. 5.1-66c. West slope of ceiling of Mogao Cave 290.

After Dunhuang Wenwu Yanjiusuo 敦煌文物研究所, *Zhongguo Shiku Dunhuang Mogaoku 1*. 中国石窟 敦煌莫高窟 1 [Chinese Grottoes Dunhuang Mogao Caves 1] (Beijing: Wenwu Chubanshe, 1982), fig.177.



Fig. 5.1-67a. East side of central pillar of Mogao Cave 290.
Photograph by Yuanyuan Duan.



Fig. 5.1-67b. South side of central pillar of Mogao Cave 290.
After Dunhuang Yanjiuyuan 敦煌研究院, *Dunhuang Shiku Yishu Mogaoku Di 290 Ku Beizhou* 敦煌石窟艺术 莫高窟第二九〇窟 北周 [Dunhuang Grottoes Art Mogao Cave 290 Northern Zhou Dynasty] (Najing: Jiangsu Meishu Chubanshe, 1994), fig.137.



Fig. 5.1-67c. West side of central pillar of Mogao Cave 290.

Available from: <https://shibbolethsp.jstor.org/start?entityID=https%3A%2F%2Fidp.uni-heidelberg.de&dest=https://www.jstor.org/stable/community.14403196&site=jstor>



Fig. 5.1-67d. North side of central pillar of Mogao Cave 290.

Available from: <https://shibbolethsp.jstor.org/start?entityID=https%3A%2F%2Fidp.uni-heidelberg.de&dest=https://www.jstor.org/stable/community.14404484&site=jstor>

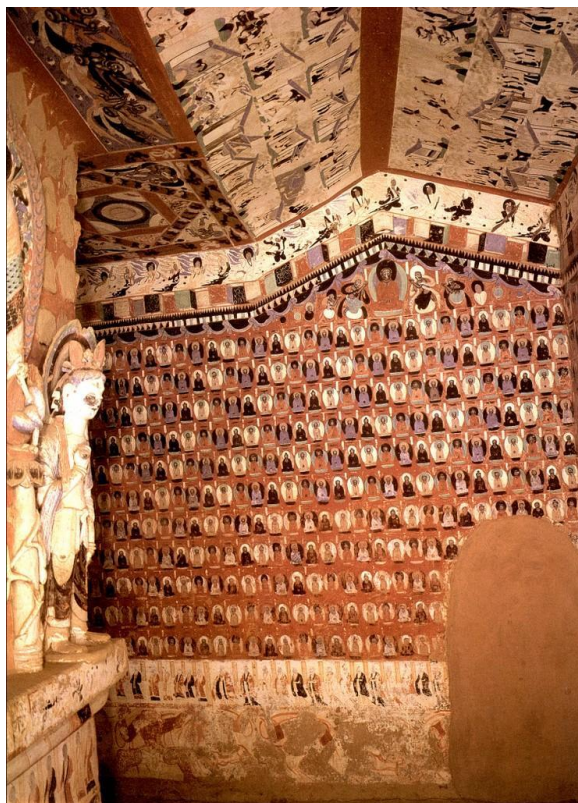


Fig. 5.1-68a. North wall of Mogao Cave 290.

Available from: <https://shibbolethsp.jstor.org/start?entityID=https%3A%2F%2Fidp.uni-heidelberg.de&dest=https://www.jstor.org/stable/community.14398057&site=jstor>

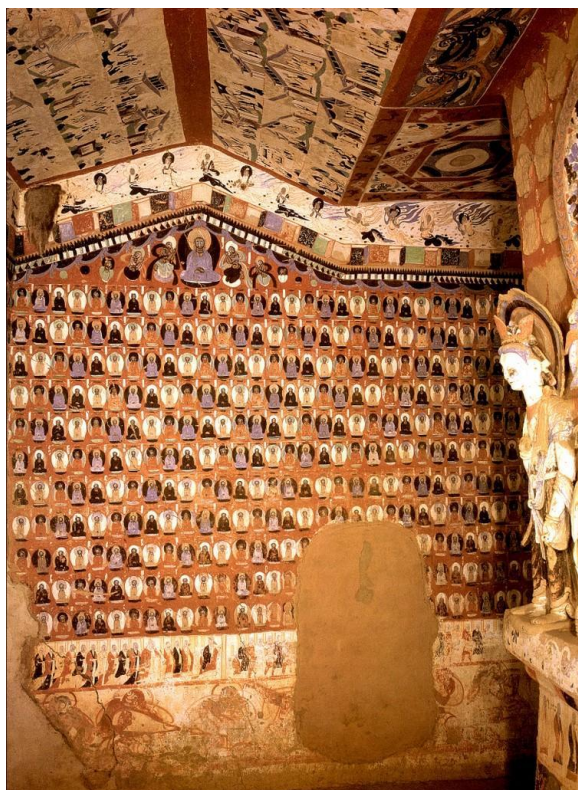


Fig. 5.1-68b. South wall of Mogao Cave 290

Available from: <https://shibbolethsp.jstor.org/start?entityID=https%3A%2F%2Fidp.uni-heidelberg.de&dest=https://www.jstor.org/stable/community.14401986&site=jstor>

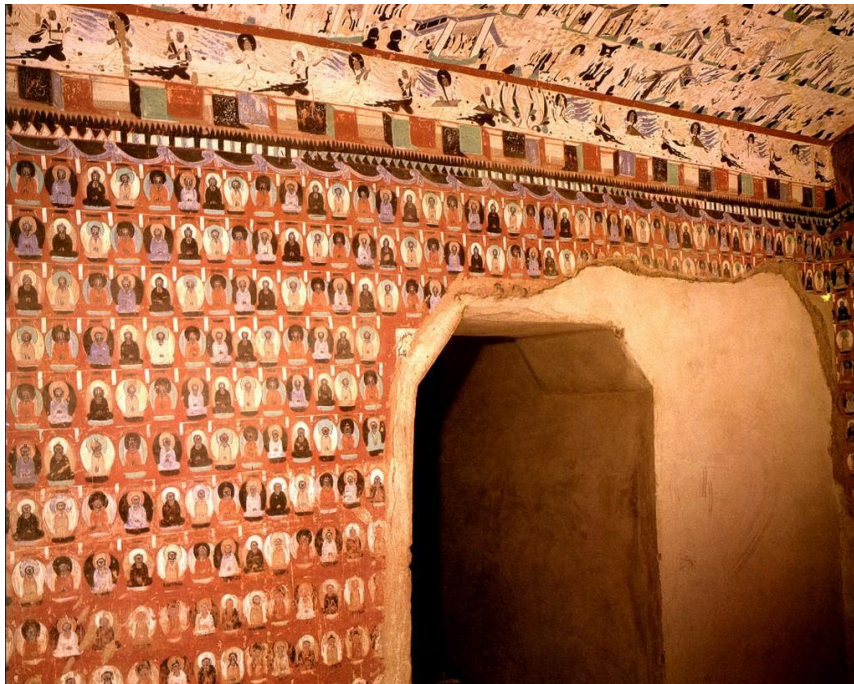


Fig. 5.1-68c. East wall of Mogao Cave 290.

Available from: <https://shibbolethsp.jstor.org/start?entityID=https%3A%2F%2Fidp.uni-heidelberg.de&dest=https://www.jstor.org/stable/community.14379407&site=jstor>



Fig. 5.1 -69a. West wall of Mogao Cave 438.
Photograph by Yuanyuan Duan, 2019.



Fig. 5.1-69b. The image of Vasistha and Mrgasirsa in West niche of Mogao Cave 438
Photograph by Yuanyuan Duan, 2019.



Fig. 5.1-69c. North wall of Mogao Cave 438.
Photograph by Yuanyuan Duan, 2019.

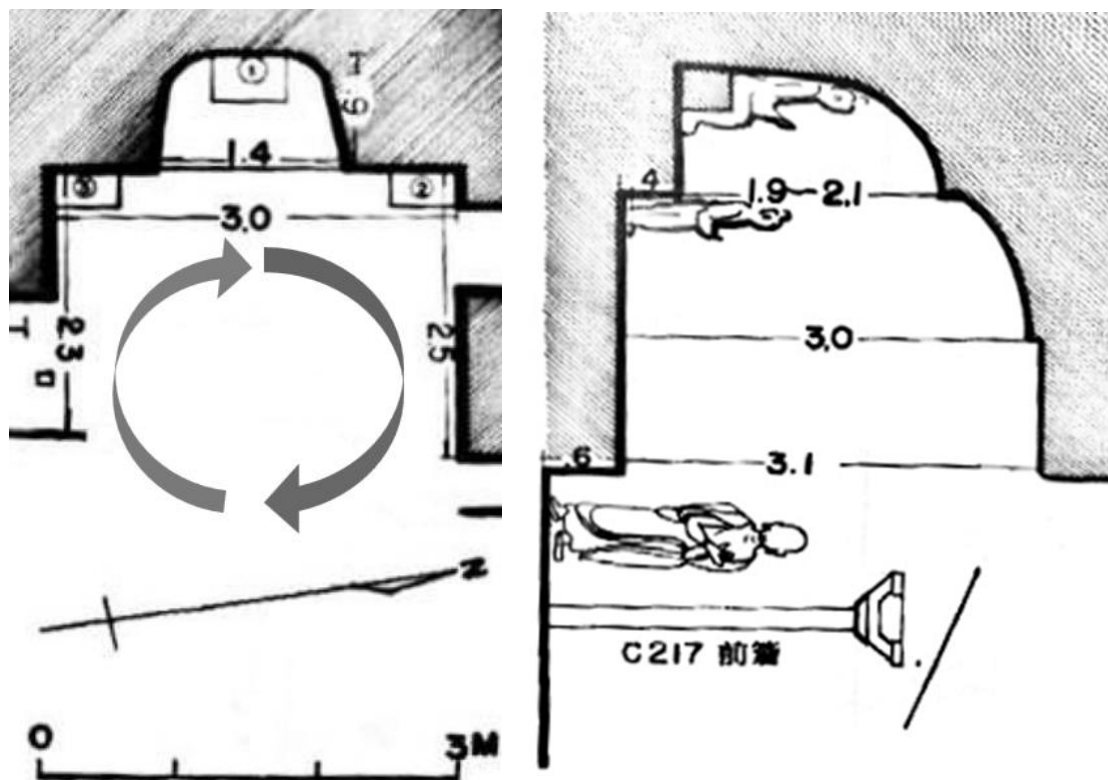


Fig. 5.1 -70. The restoration of the ritual route in Mogao Cave 438.
Draw by the author.

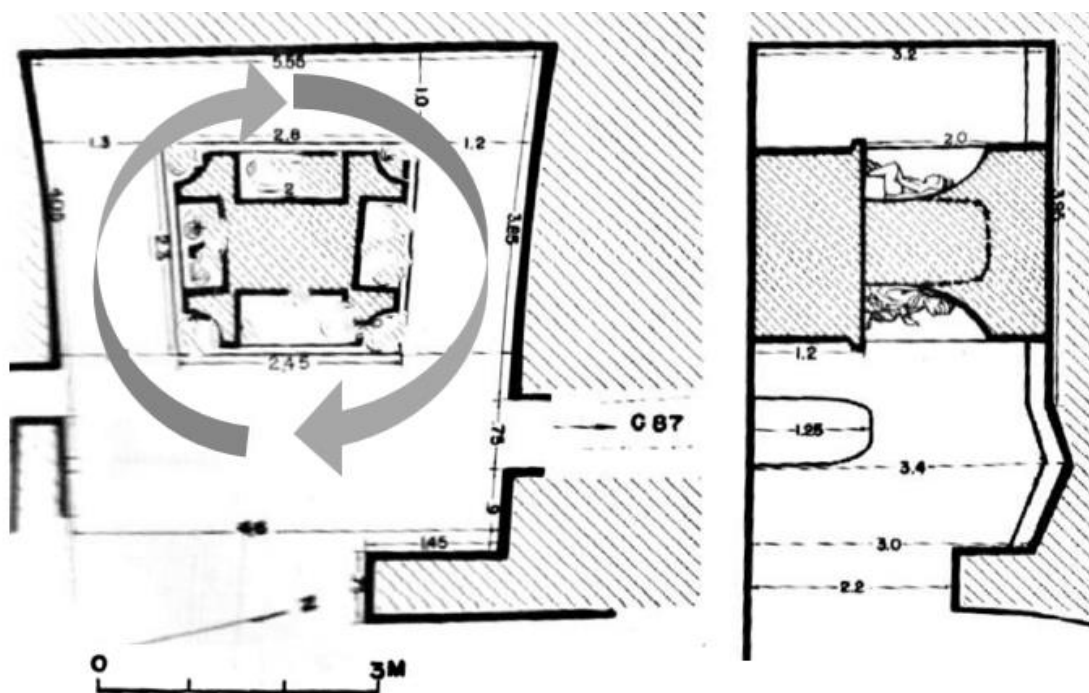


Fig. 5.1 -71. The restoration of this ritual route in Mogao Cave 290.
Draw by the author.

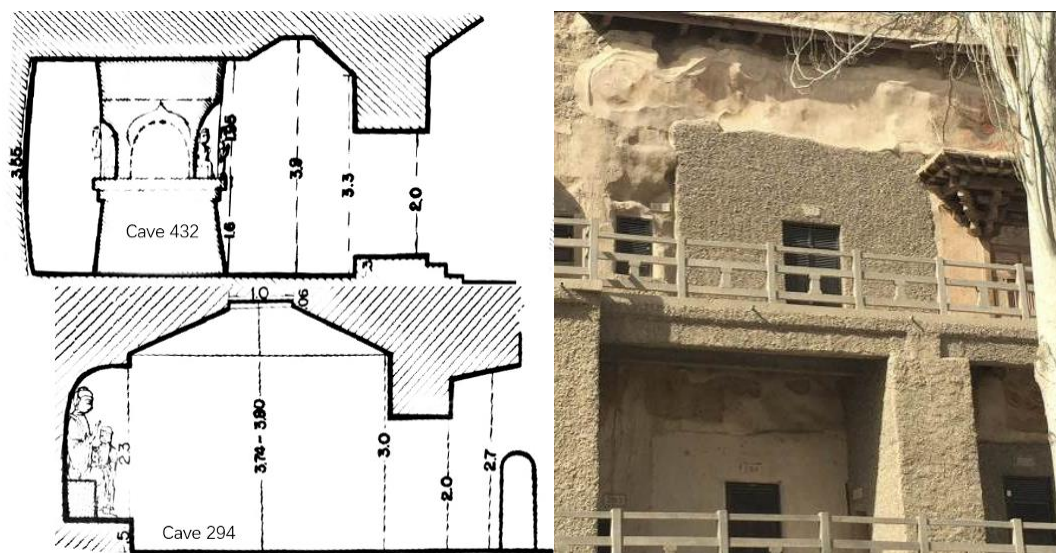


Fig. 5.1 -72. Location of Group E including Mogao Cave 432 and Mogao Cave 294.
Photograph by Yuanyuan Duan, 2019.

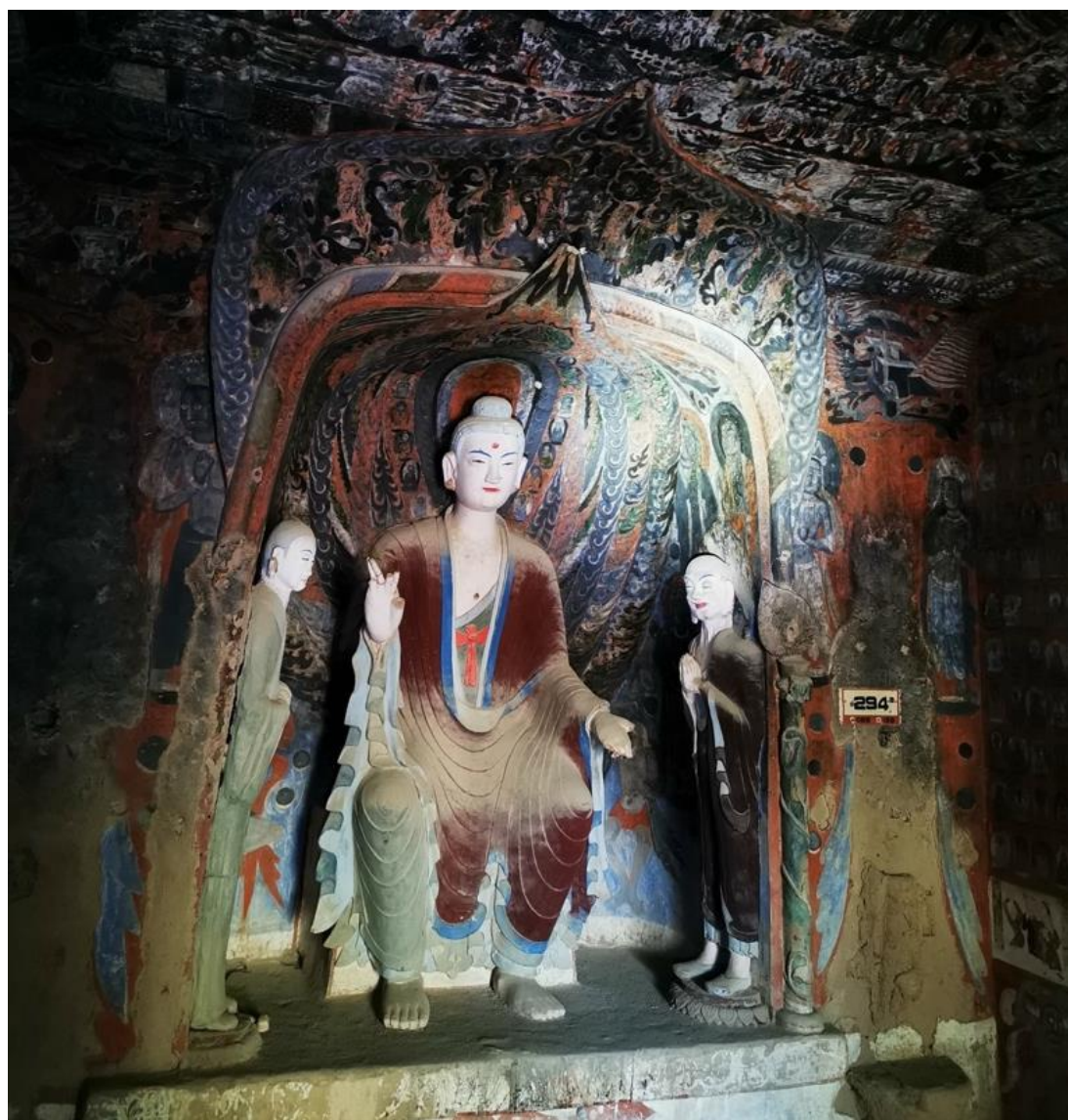


Fig. 5.1-73a. The statue of Buddha in the west niche of Mogao Cave 294.
Photograph by Yuanyuan Duan, 2019.



Fig. 5.1-73b. Vasistha and Mrgasira in West wall of Mogao Cave 294.
Photograph by Yuanyuan Duan, 2019.

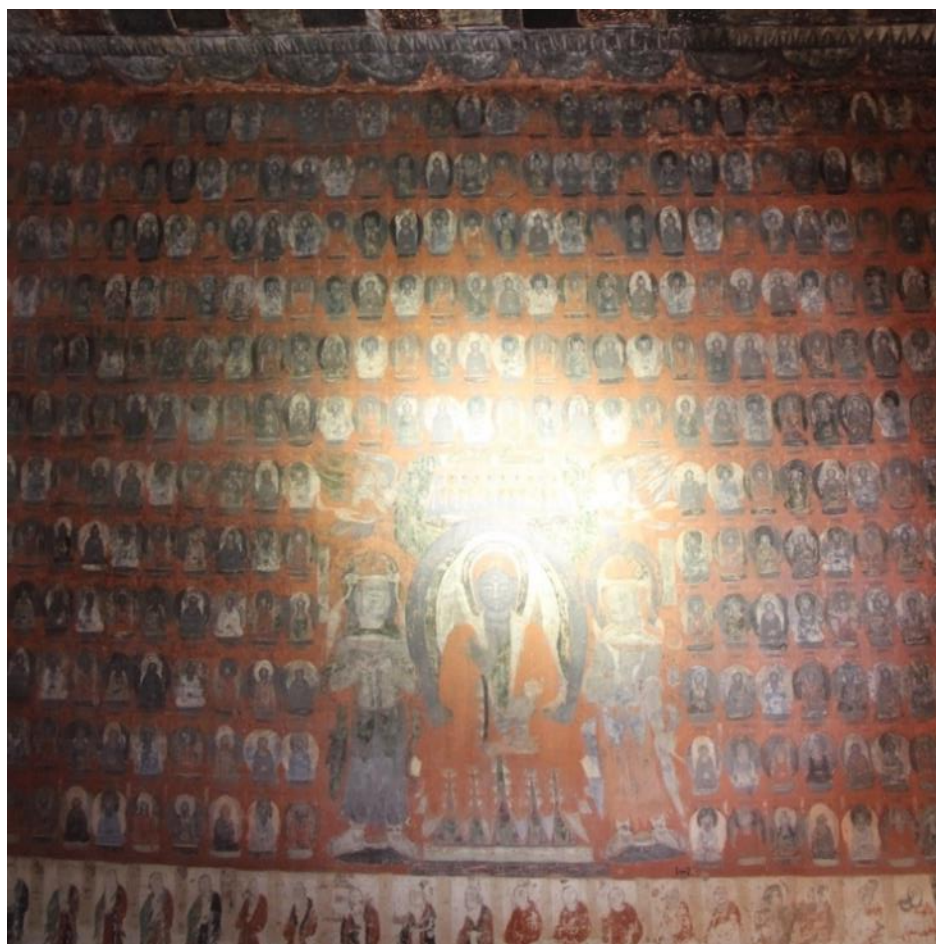


Fig. 5.1-73c. The images of buddha on the north wall of Mogao Cave 294.
Photograph by Yuanyuan Duan, 2019.



Fig. 5.1-73d. The images of buddha on the south wall of Mogao Cave 294.
Photograph by Yuanyuan Duan, 2019.



Fig. 5.1-74a Da zhusheng Cave.
Photograph by Yuanyuan Duan, Oct.3, 2019.



Fig. 5.1-74b North wall of Da Zhusheng Cave
Photograph by Yuanyuan Duan, Oct.3, 2019.



Fig. 5.1-74c. East wall of Da Zhusheng Cave.
Photograph by Yuanyuan Duan, Oct.3, 2019

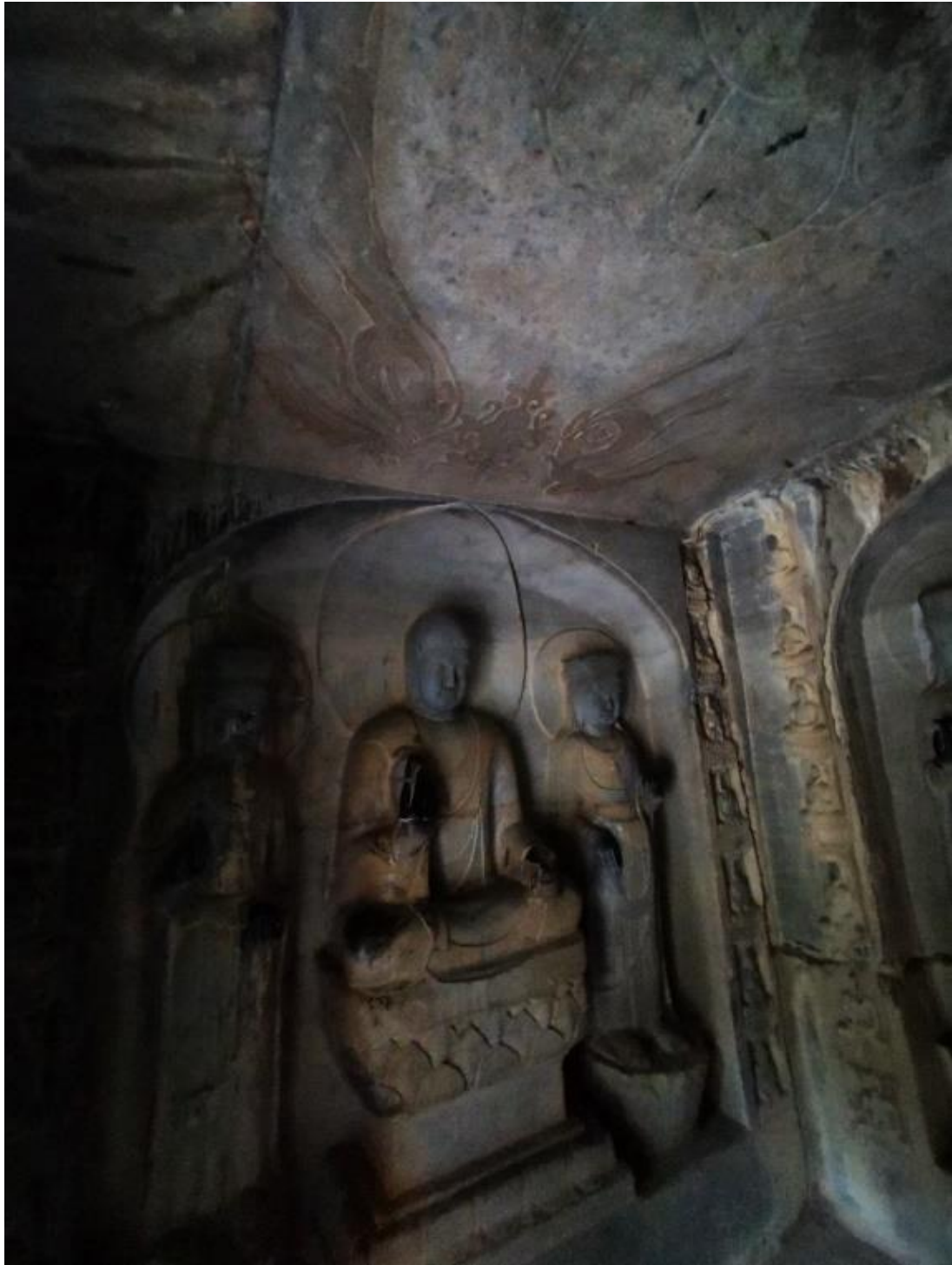


Fig. 5.1-74d. West wall of Da Zhusheng Cave.
Photograph by Yuanyuan Duan, Oct.3, 2019



Fig. 5.1-75a Mogao Cave 294 ceiling
Photograph by Yuanyuan Duan.



Fig. 5.1-76a Images of donors on the north wall of Mogao Cave 294
Photograph by Yuanyuan Duan.



Fig. 5.1-76b. Images of donors on the south wall of Mogao Cave 294
Photograph by Yuanyuan Duan.

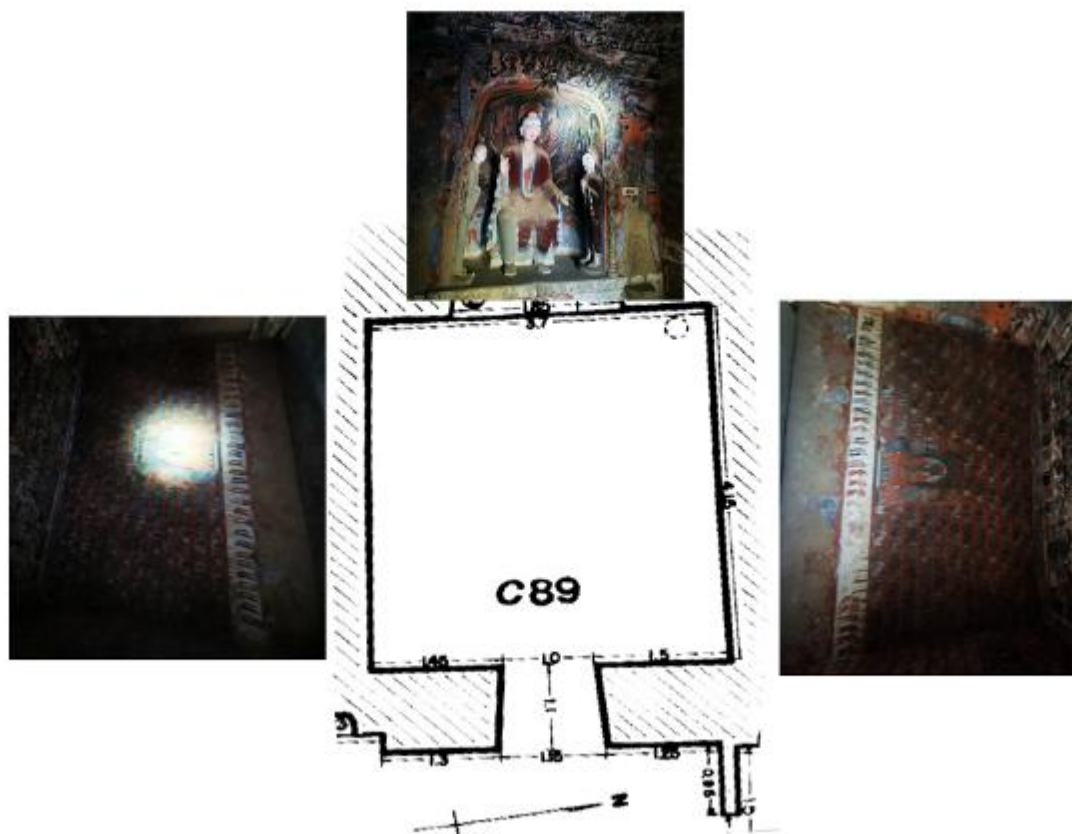


Fig. 5.1-77. Mogao Cave 294.
Draw by author.

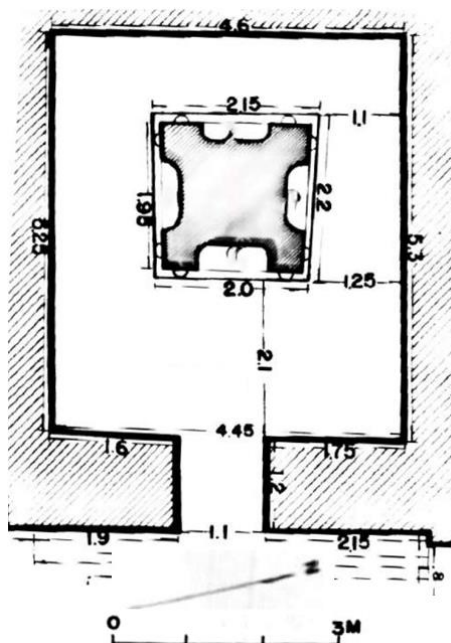


Fig. 5.1-78. The floor plan of Mogao Cave 432
Draw by author.



Fig. 5.1-79. Mogao Cave 432.
Available from: ARTstor, [http:// www.artstor. Org](http://www.artstor.org)

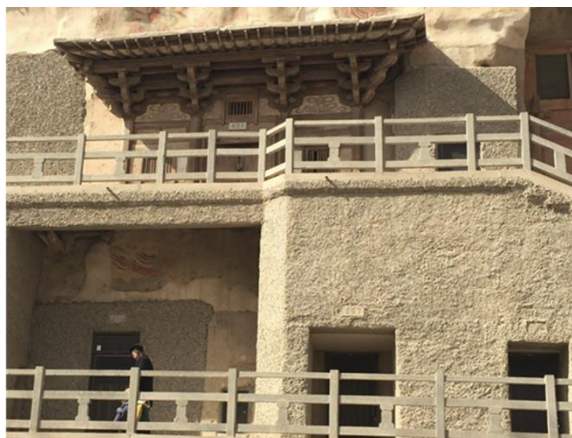
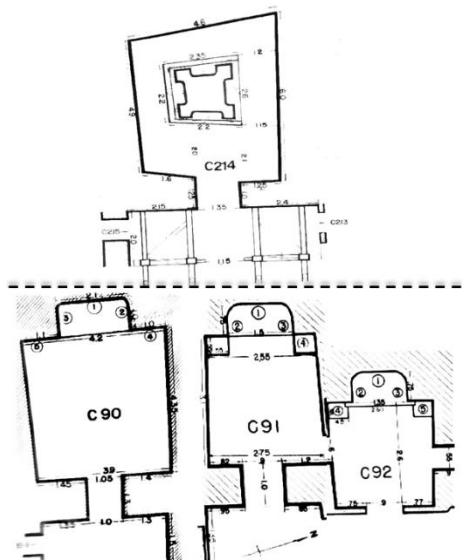


Fig. 5.1-80. Location of Group F including Mogao Cave 431, Mogao Cave 296, Mogao Cave 297, Mogao Cave 299.
Draw by author.



Fig. 5.1-81a. East side of central pillar of Mogao Cave 431.

Available from: <https://shibbolethsp.jstor.org/start?entityID=https%3A%2F%2Fidp.uni-heidelberg.de&dest=https://www.jstor.org/stable/community.14369341&site=jstor>

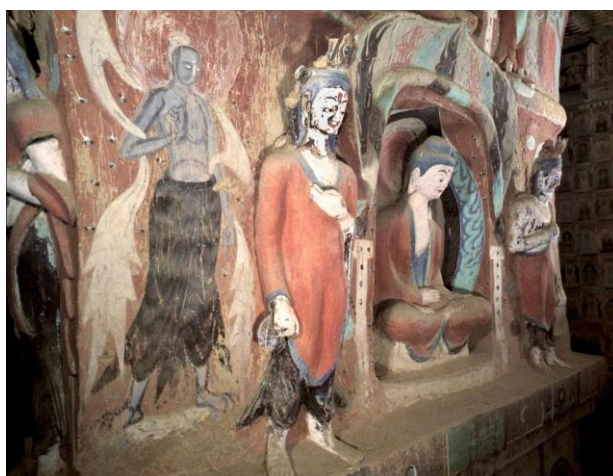
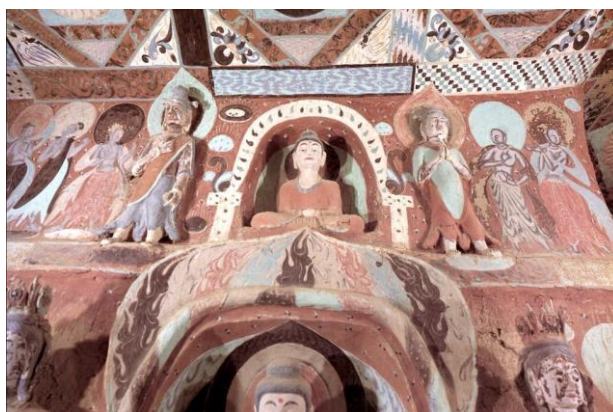


Fig. 5.1-81b North side of central pillar of Mogao Cave 431.

Available from: <https://shibbolethsp.jstor.org/start?entityID=https%3A%2F%2Fidp.uni-heidelberg.de&dest=https://www.jstor.org/stable/community.14397718&site=jstor>

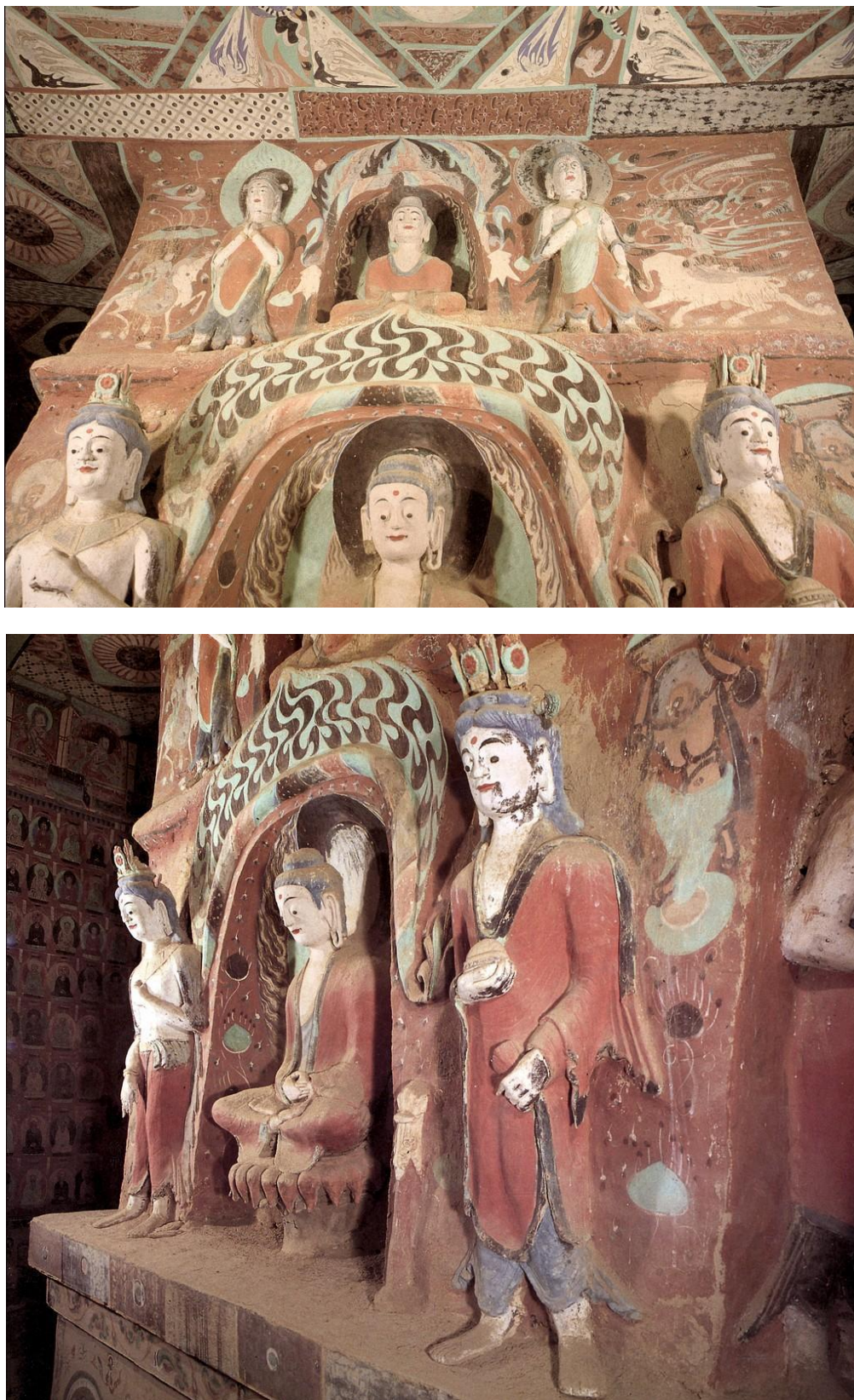


Fig. 5.1-81c. South side of central pillar of Mogao Cave 431.

Available from: <https://shibbolethsp.jstor.org/start?entityID=https%3A%2F%2Fidp.uni-heidelberg.de&dest=https://www.jstor.org/stable/community.14400958&site=jstor>

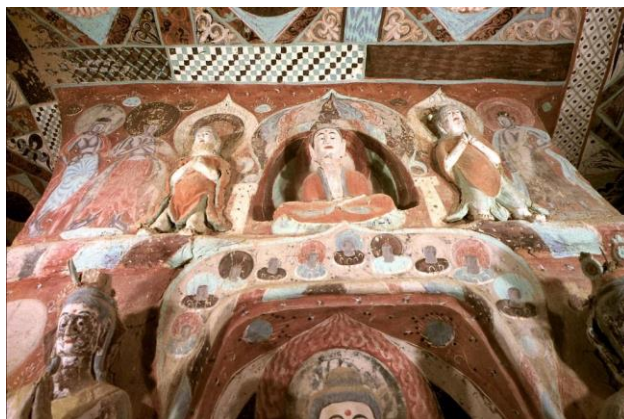


Fig. 5.1-81d. West side of central pillar of Mogao Cave 431.

Available from: <https://shibbolethsp.jstor.org/start?entityID=https%3A%2F%2Fidp.uni-heidelberg.de&dest=https://www.jstor.org/stable/community.14371785&site=jstor>

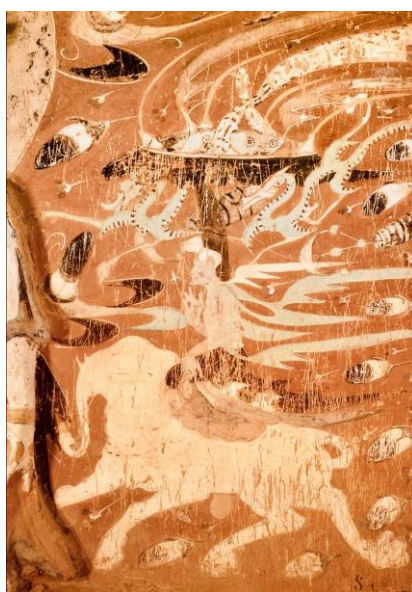


Fig. 5.1-82. Mural on the south side of the central pillar of Mogao Cave 431.

Available from: <https://shibbolethsp.jstor.org/start?entityID=https%3A%2F%2Fidp.uni-heidelberg.de&dest=https://www.jstor.org/stable/community.14389237&site=jstor>



Fig. 5.1-83. The image with inscription of “Qianjiluo” and “Maochiluo” on the stele of North Qi Dynasty (A.D.560).

After Jianyu Liu, “Dafangdeng Tuoluoni Jing de Shier Mengwang Shike Tuxiang 《大方等陀罗尼经》的“十二梦王”石刻图像,” *Wenwu* 文物[Cultural Relics], no.10(2007):fig.4.



Fig. 5.1-84a The images on the west wall of Mogao Cave 431
Available from: <https://shibbolethsp.jstor.org/start?entityID=https%3A%2F%2Fidp.uni-heidelberg.de&dest=https://www.jstor.org/stable/community.14392316&site=jstor>



Fig. 5.1-84b The images on the south wall of Mogao Cave 431.
Available from: <https://shibbolethsp.jstor.org/start?entityID=https%3A%2F%2Fidp.uni-heidelberg.de&dest=https://www.jstor.org/stable/community.14370436&site=jstor>



Fig. 5.1-84c. The images on the north wall of Mogao Cave 431.

Available from: <https://shibbolethsp.jstor.org/start?entityID=https%3A%2F%2Fidp.uni-heidelberg.de&dest=https://www.jstor.org/stable/community.14381938&site=jstor>



Fig. 5.1-84d. The image of figures holding lotus on the ceiling of Mogao Cave 431.
Photograph by Yuanyuan Duan.



Fig. 5.1-85 West niche of Mogao Cave 299
Photograph by Yuanyuan Duan.

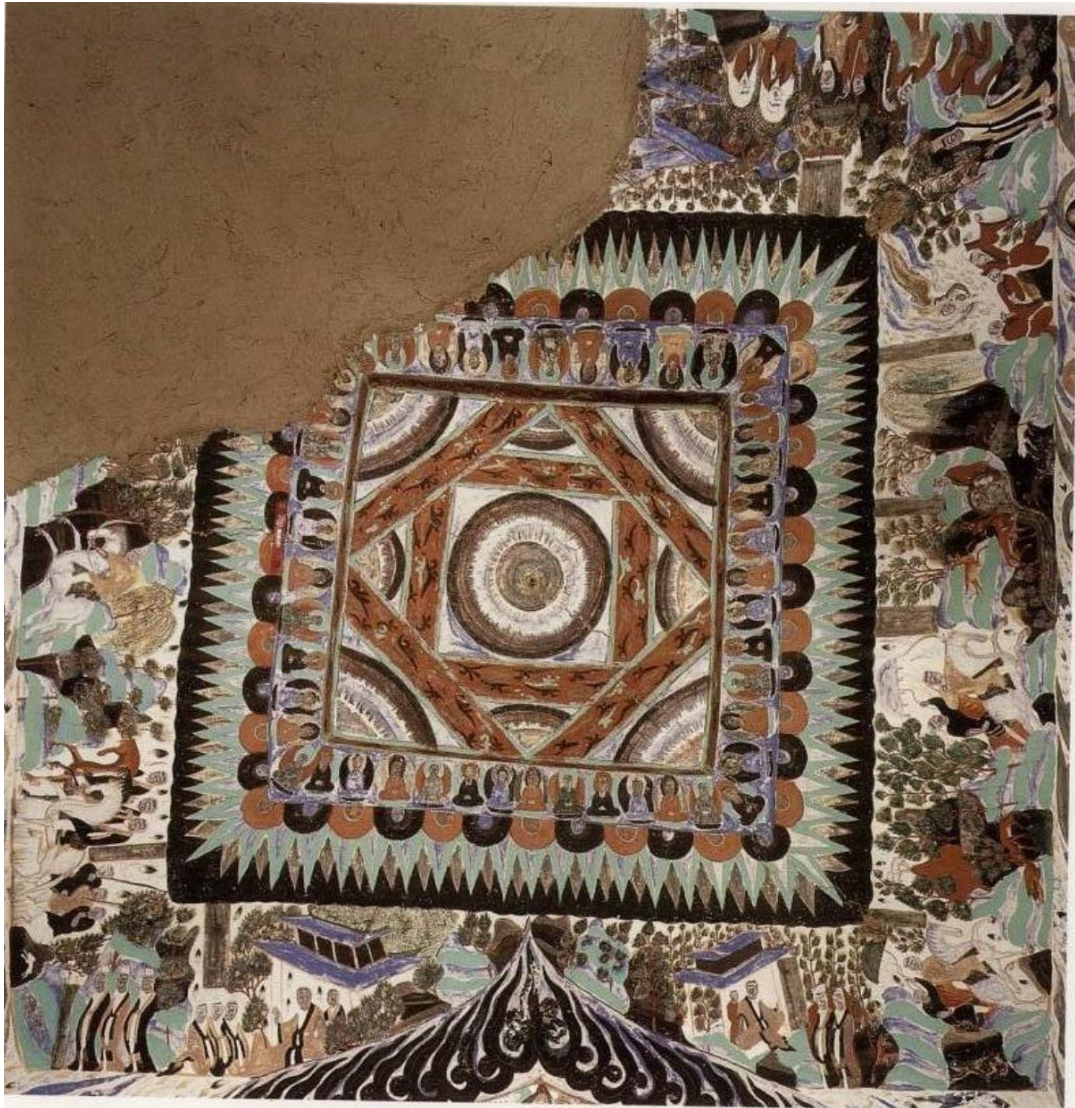


Fig. 5.1-86a. Mogao Cave 299 ceiling.

After Dunhuang Wenwu Yanjiusuo 敦煌文物研究所, *Zhongguo Shiku Dunhuang Mogaoku 1*. 中国石窟 敦煌莫高窟 1 [Chinese Grottoes Dunhuang Mogao Caves 1] (Beijing: Wenwu Chubanshe, 1982), fig.192.



Fig. 5.1-86b. North slope of Mogao Cave 299 ceiling.

After Dunhuang Wenwu Yanjiusuo 敦煌文物研究所, *Zhongguo Shiku Dunhuang Mogaoku 1*. 中国石窟 敦煌莫高窟 1 [Chinese Grottoes Dunhuang Mogao Caves 1] (Beijing: Wenwu Chubanshe, 1982), fig.196.

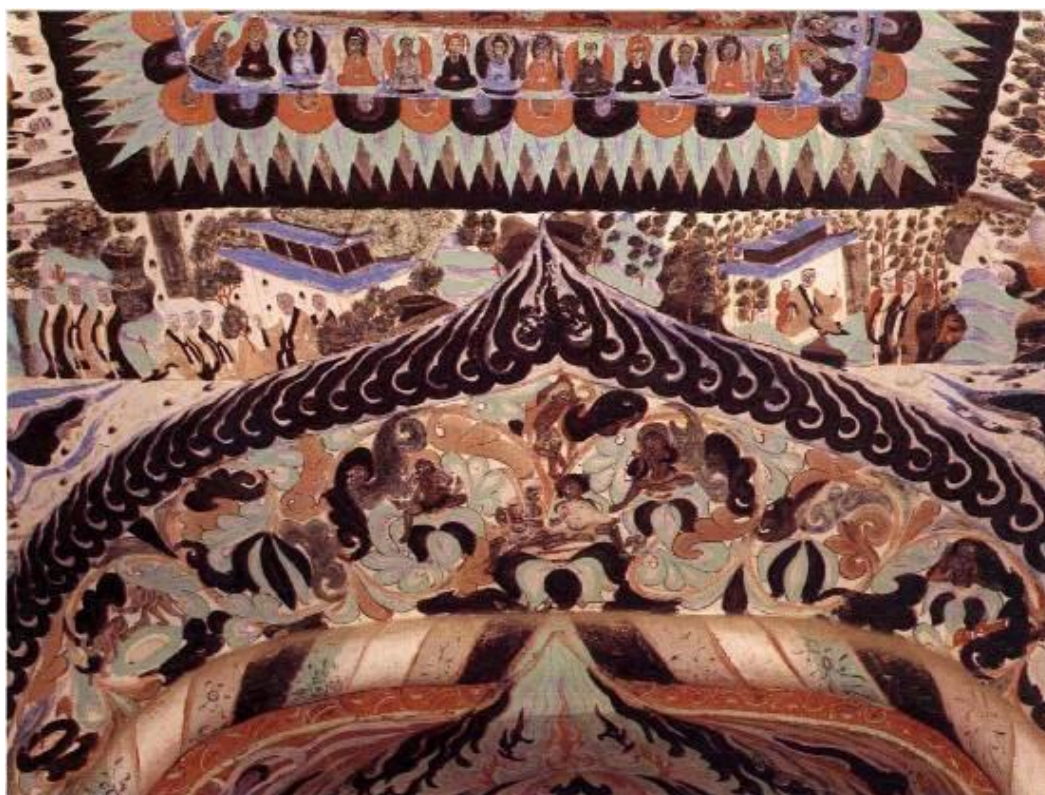


Fig. 5.1-86c West slope of Mogao Cave 299 ceiling

After Dunhuang Wenwu Yanjiusuo 敦煌文物研究所, *Zhongguo Shiku Dunhuang Mogaoku 1*. 中国石窟 敦煌莫高窟 1 [Chinese Grottoes Dunhuang Mogao Caves 1] (Beijing: Wenwu Chubanshe, 1982),197.

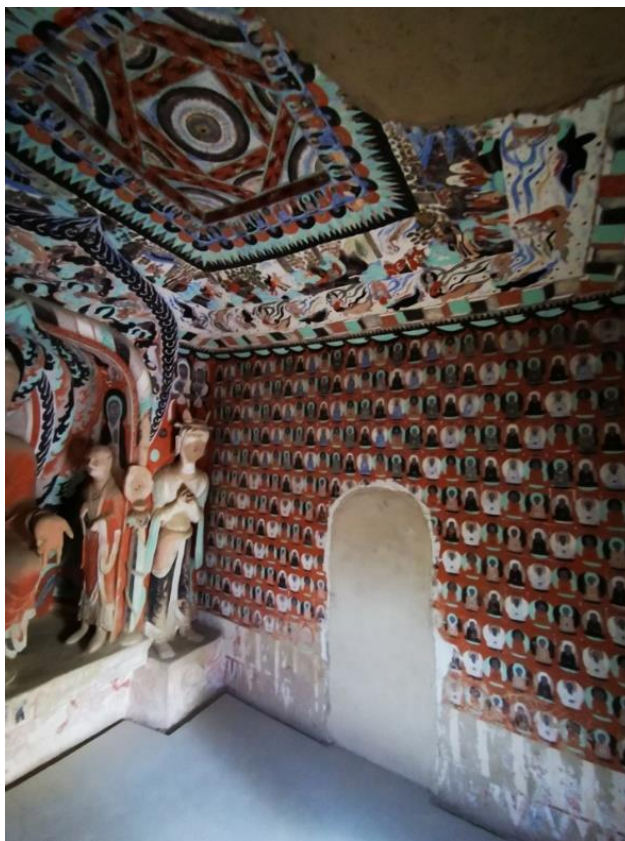


Fig. 5.1-86d. The mural of north Wall of Mogao Cave 299.
Photograph by Yuanyuan Duan.



Fig. 5.1-86e. The statue of Buddha in west wall of Mogao Cave 299.
Photograph by Yuanyuan Duan.



Fig. 5.1-87a West niche of Mogao Cave 296.

After Dunhuang Wenwu Yanjiusuo 敦煌文物研究所, *Zhongguo Shiku Dunhuang Mogaoku 1*. 中国石窟 敦煌莫高窟 1 [Chinese Grottoes Dunhuang Mogao Caves 1] (Beijing: Wenwu Chubanshe, 1982), fig.185.



Fig. 5.1-87b Images on the West niche of Mogao Cave 296.

Available from <https://shibbolethsp.jstor.org/start?entityID=https%3A%2F%2Fidp.uni-heidelberg.de&dest=https://www.jstor.org/stable/community.14372240&site=jstor>



Fig. 5.1-87c. North wall of Mogao Cave 296.

Available from: <https://shibbolethsp.jstor.org/start?entityID=https%3A%2F%2Fidp.uni-heidelberg.de&dest=https://www.jstor.org/stable/community.14370401&site=jstor>



Fig. 5.1-87d. The Jataka of Sujata on the north wall of Mogao Cave 296.

After Dunhuang Wenwu Yanjiusuo 敦煌文物研究所, *Zhongguo Shiku Dunhuang Mogaoku 1. 中国石窟敦煌莫高窟* [Chinese Grottoes Dunhuang Mogao Caves] (Beijing: Wenwu Chubanshe, 1982), fig.194.



Fig. 5.1-88. Mural on ceiling of Mogao Cave 296.

After Dunhuang Wenwu Yanjiusuo 敦煌文物研究所, *Zhongguo Shiku Dunhuang Mogaoku 1*. 中国石窟敦煌莫高窟 1 [Chinese Grottoes Dunhuang Mogao Caves 1] (Beijing: Wenwu Chubanshe, 1982), fig.126.



Fig. 5.1-89a West wall of Mogao Cave 297.

After Dunhuang Wenwu Yanjiusuo 敦煌文物研究所, *Zhongguo Shiku Dunhuang Mogaoku 1*. 中国石窟敦煌莫高窟 1 [Chinese Grottoes Dunhuang Mogao Caves 1] (Beijing: Wenwu Chubanshe, 1982), fig.155.



Fig. 5.1-89b. South wall of Mogao Cave 297.
Photograph by Yuanyuan Duan.



Fig. 5.1-89c Ceiling of Mogao Cave 297.
After Dunhuang Wenwu Yanjiusuo 敦煌文物研究所, *Zhongguo Shiku Dunhuang Mogaoku 1* 中国石窟敦煌莫高窟 1 [Chinese Grottoes Dunhuang Mogao Caves 1] (Beijing: Wenwu Chubanshe, 1982), fig.156.



Fig. 5.1-89d. Floor of Mogao Cave 297.
Photograph by Yuanyuan Duan.

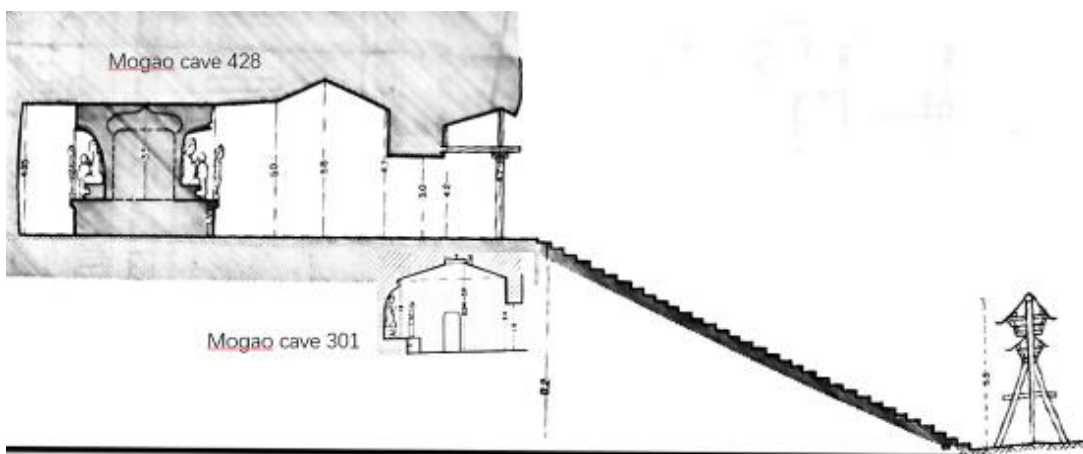


Fig. 5.1-90. Location of group G including Mogao Cave 428 and Mogao Cave 301.
Photograph by Yuanyuan Duan.



Fig. 5.1-91. Mogao Cave 428.
Photograph by Yuanyuan Duan, on Feb.28, 2019.



Fig. 5.1-92a. East face of central pillar of Mogao Cave 428.
Available from: <https://shibbolethsp.jstor.org/start?entityID=https%3A%2F%2Fidp.uni-heidelberg.de&dest=https://www.jstor.org/stable/community.18144880&site=jstor>



Fig. 5.1-92b. South face of central pillar of Mogao Cave 428.

Available from: <https://shibbolethsp.jstor.org/start?entityID=https%3A%2F%2Fidp.uni-heidelberg.de&dest=https://www.jstor.org/stable/community.18145490&site=jstor>

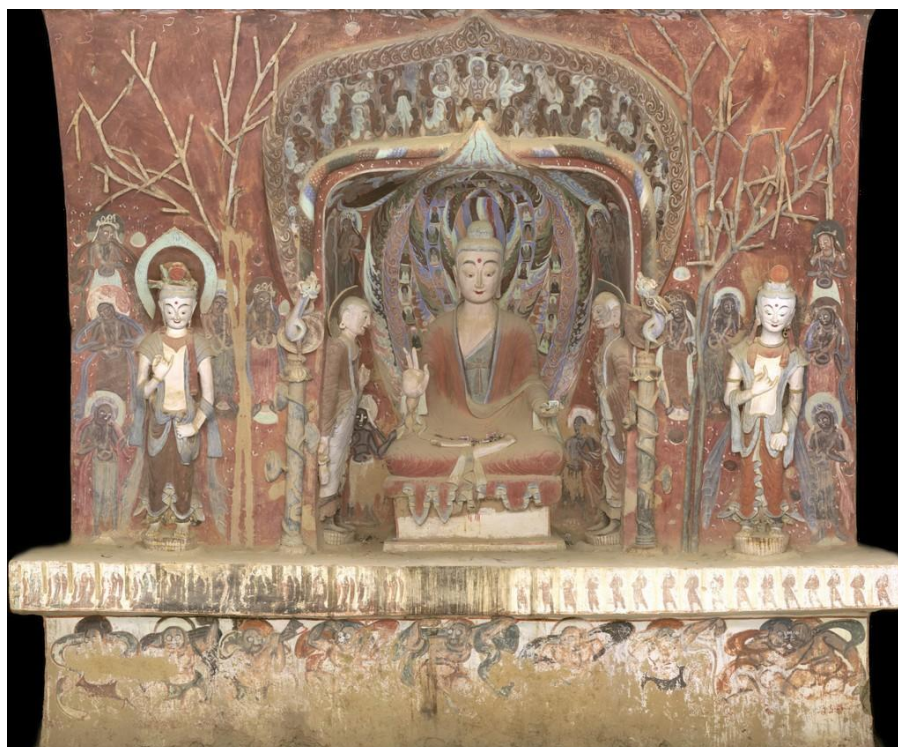


Fig. 5.1-92c. West face of central pillar of Mogao Cave 428.

Available from: <https://shibbolethsp.jstor.org/start?entityID=https%3A%2F%2Fidp.uni-heidelberg.de&dest=https://www.jstor.org/stable/community.18145713&site=jstor>

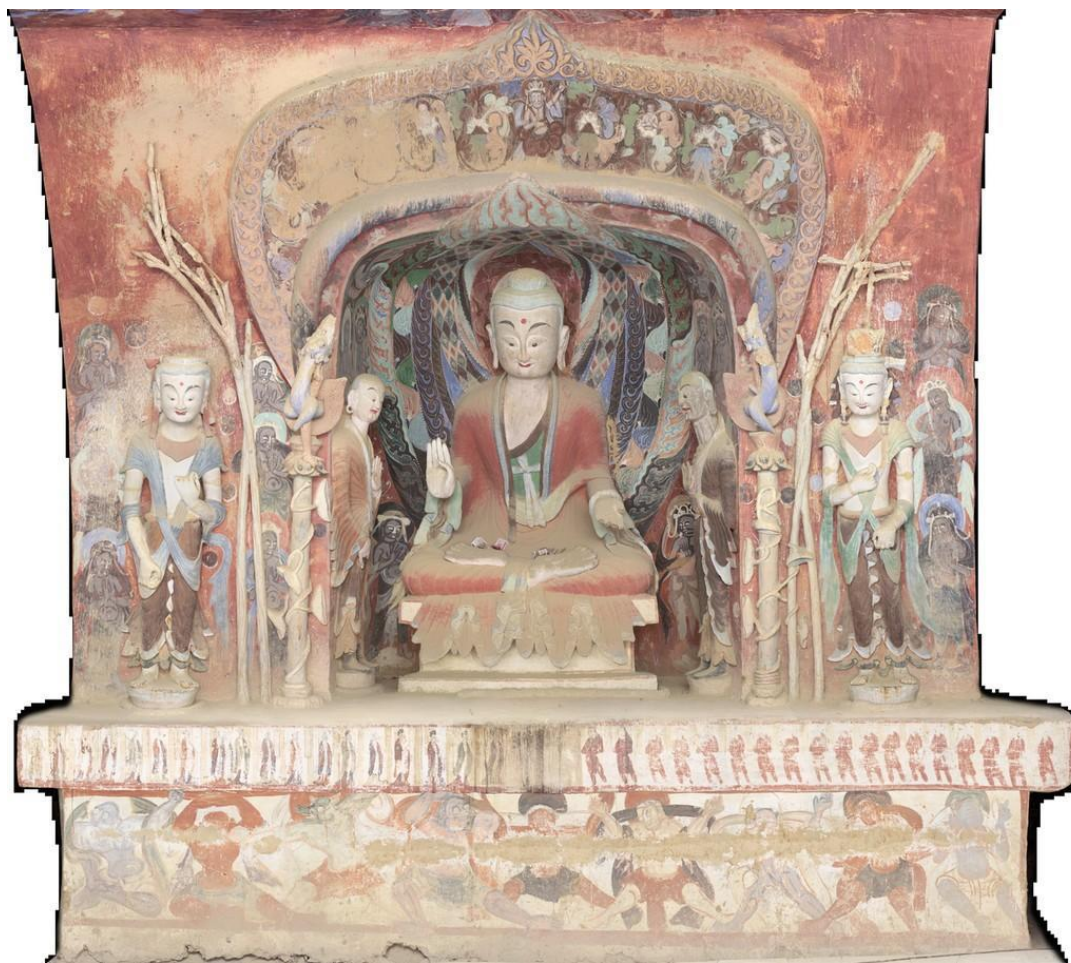


Fig. 5.1-92d. North face of central pillar of Mogao Cave 428.

Available from: <https://shibbolethsp.jstor.org/start?entityID=https%3A%2F%2Fidp.uni-heidelberg.de&dest=https://www.jstor.org/stable/community.18149590&site=jstor>

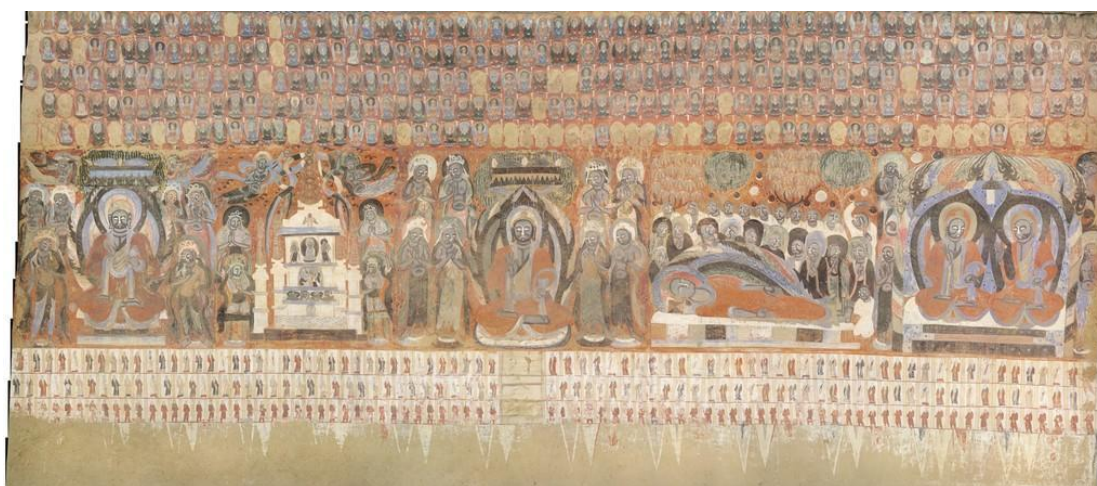


Fig. 5.1-93a. West wall of Mogao Cave 428.

Available from: <https://shibbolethsp.jstor.org/start?entityID=https%3A%2F%2Fidp.uni-heidelberg.de&dest=https://www.jstor.org/stable/community.18150387&site=jstor>



Fig. 5.1-93b. The first layout of mural on west wall of Mogao Cave 428.
Available from: <https://shibbolethsp.jstor.org/start?entityID=https%3A%2F%2Fidp.uni-heidelberg.de&dest=https://www.jstor.org/stable/community.18150387&site=jstor>

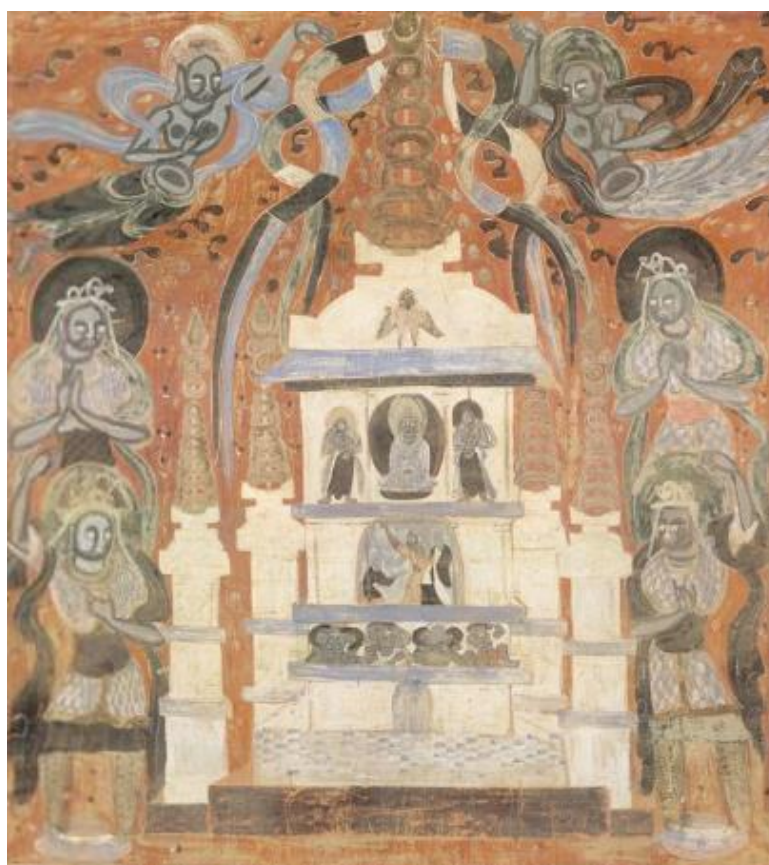


Fig. 5.1-93c. The second layout of mural in west wall of Mogao Cave 428.
Available from: <https://shibbolethsp.jstor.org/start?entityID=https%3A%2F%2Fidp.uni-heidelberg.de&dest=https://www.jstor.org/stable/community.18150387&site=jstor>



Fig. 5.1-93d. The third layout of mural on the west wall of Mogao Cave 428.
Available from: <https://shibbolethsp.jstor.org/start?entityID=https%3A%2F%2Fidp.uni-heidelberg.de&dest=https://www.jstor.org/stable/community.18150387&site=jstor>



Fig. 5.1-93e. The fourth layout of mural on the west wall of Mogao Cave 428.
Available from: <https://shibbolethsp.jstor.org/start?entityID=https%3A%2F%2Fidp.uni-heidelberg.de&dest=https://www.jstor.org/stable/community.18150387&site=jstor>

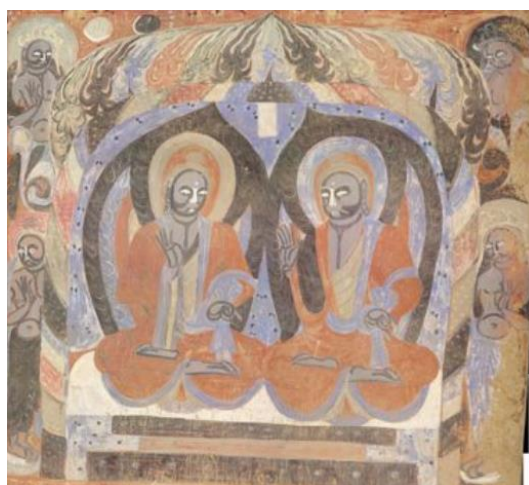


Fig. 5.1-93f. The fifth layout of mural in west wall of Mogao Cave 428.
Available from: <https://shibbolethsp.jstor.org/start?entityID=https%3A%2F%2Fidp.uni-heidelberg.de&dest=https://www.jstor.org/stable/community.18150387&site=jstor>



Fig. 5.1-94. Four layout of carvings from Madras museum.
Preserved in Madras museum, Amaravati.

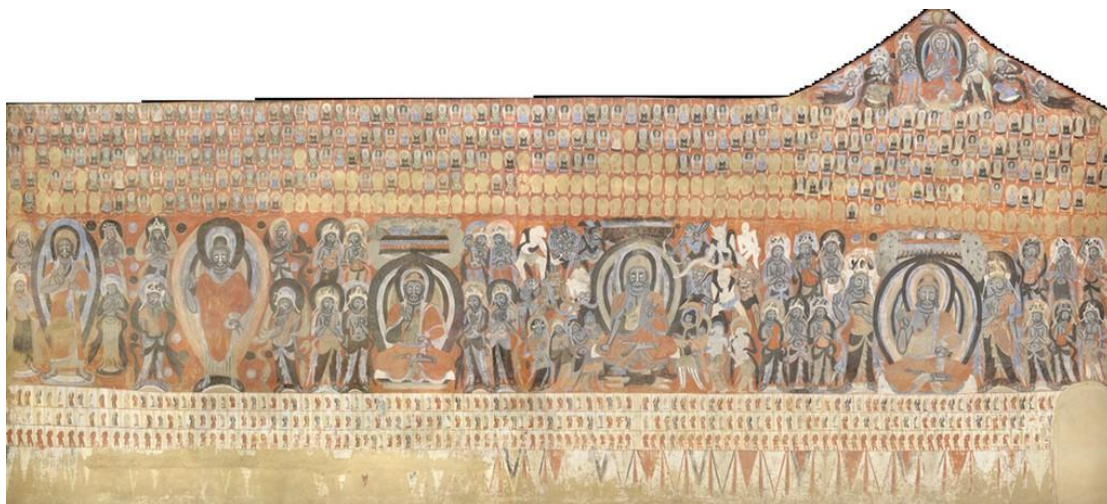


Fig. 5.1-95. North wall of Mogao Cave 428.

Available from: <https://shibbolethsp.jstor.org/start?entityID=https%3A%2F%2Fidp.uni-heidelberg.de&dest=https://www.jstor.org/stable/community.18134221&site=jstor>

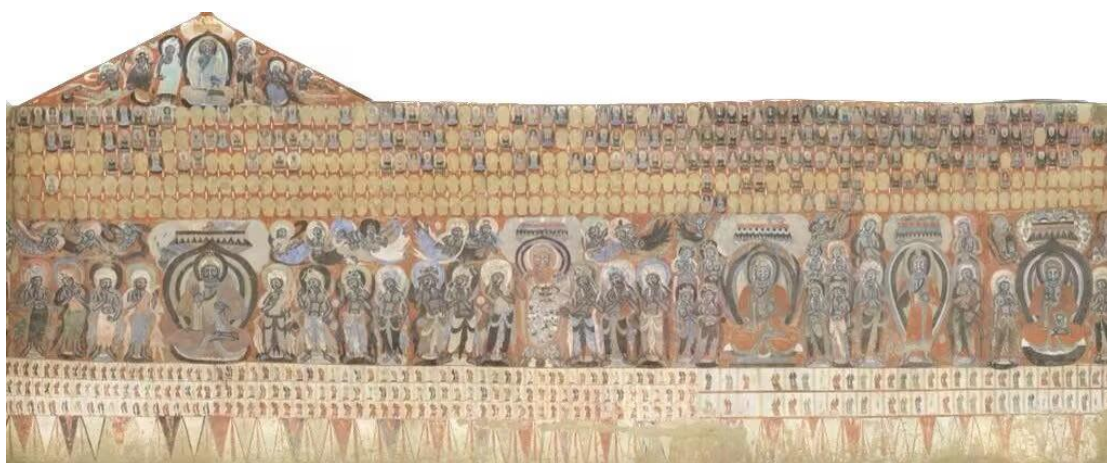


Fig. 5.1-96a. South wall of Mogao Cave 428.

Available from: <https://shibbolethsp.jstor.org/start?entityID=https%3A%2F%2Fidp.uni-heidelberg.de&dest=https://www.jstor.org/stable/community.18151252&site=jstor>



Fig. 5.1-96b. The image of Śākyamuni buddha on South wall of Mogao Cave 428.
Available from: <https://shibbolethsp.jstor.org/start?entityID=https%3A%2F%2Fidp.uni-heidelberg.de&dest=https://www.jstor.org/stable/community.18151252&site=jstor>



Fig. 5.1-97a. East wall of Mogao Cave 428.

W. 10.31 m, H. 4.61 m. Available from:

<https://shibbolethsp.jstor.org/start?entityID=https%3A%2F%2Fidp.uni-heidelberg.de&dest=https://www.jstor.org/stable/community.18144442&site=jstor>



Fig. 5.1-97b. North part of the East wall of Mogao Cave 428.

Available from: <https://shibbolethsp.jstor.org/start?entityID=https%3A%2F%2Fidp.uni-heidelberg.de&dest=https://www.jstor.org/stable/community.18144442&site=jstor>



Fig. 5.1-97c. South part of the East wall of Mogao Cave 428.

Available from: <https://shibbolethsp.jstor.org/start?entityID=https%3A%2F%2Fidp.uni-heidelberg.de&dest=https://www.jstor.org/stable/community.18144442&site=jstor>



Fig. 5.1-98. West shrine of Mogao Cave 301.
Photograph by Yuanyuan Duan, Feb.28, 2019.



Fig. 5.1-99. North wall of Mogao Cave 301.
Photograph by Yuanyuan Duan, Feb.28, 2019.



Fig. 5.1-100. South wall of Mogao Cave 301.
Photograph by Yuanyuan Duan, Feb.28, 2019.



Fig. 5.1-101a. Ceiling of Mogao Cave 301.
Photograph by Yuanyuan Duan, Feb.28, 2019.

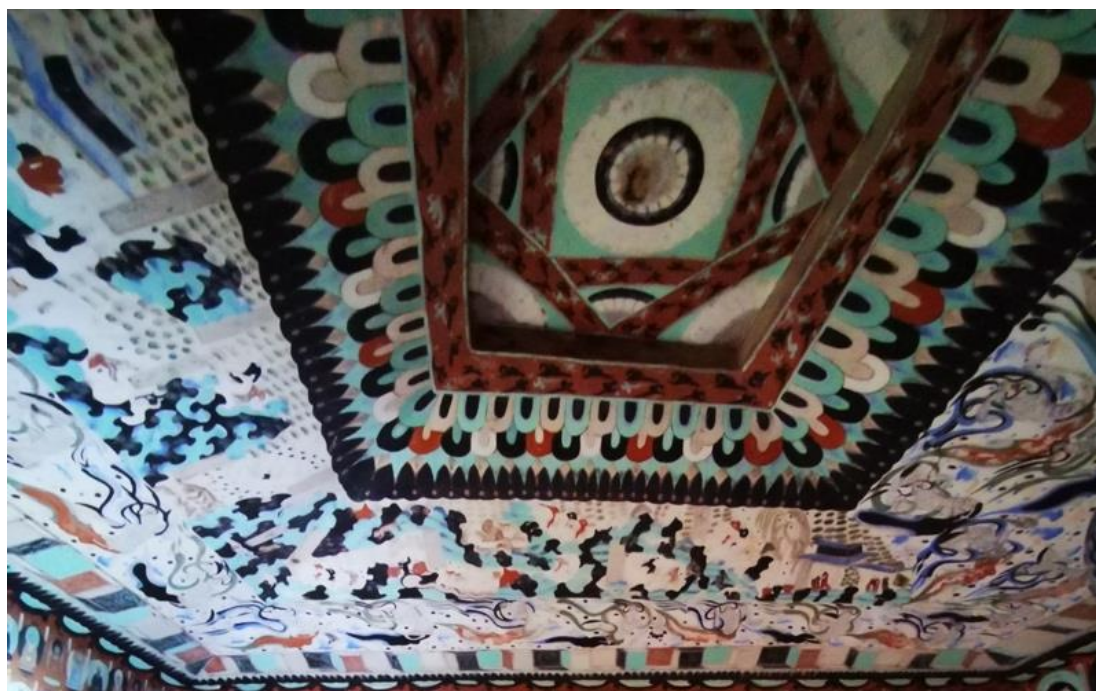


Fig. 5.1-101b. South ceiling of Mogao Cave 301.
Photograph by Yuanyuan Duan, Feb.28, 2019.

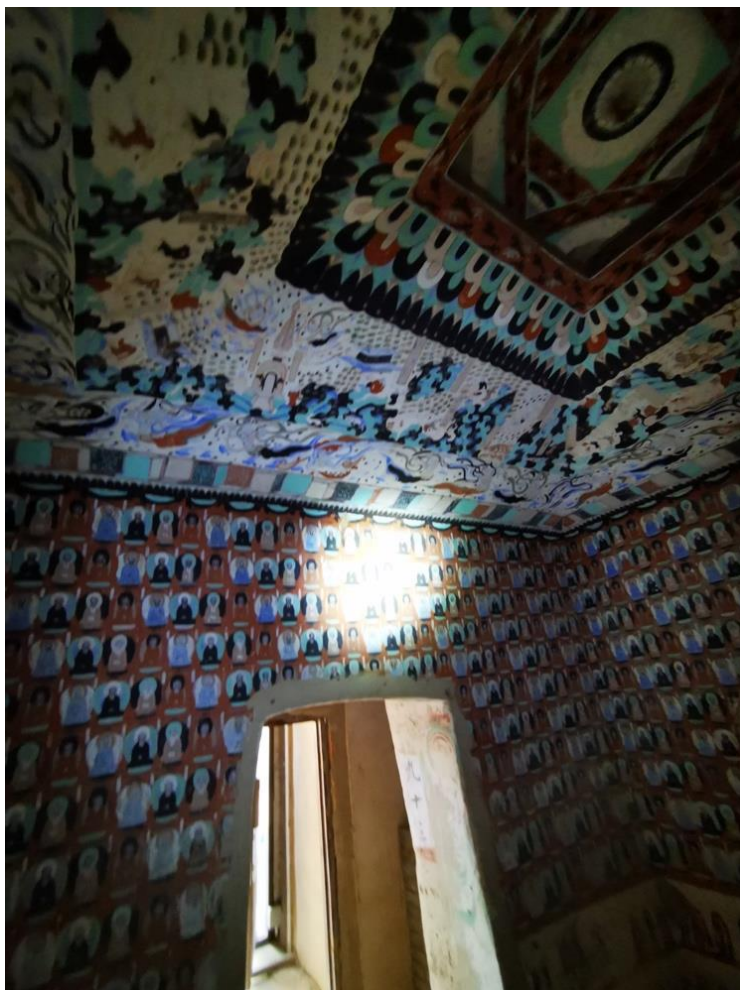


Fig. 5.1 -101c. East ceiling of Mogao Cave 301.
Photograph by Yuanyuan Duan, Feb.28, 2019.

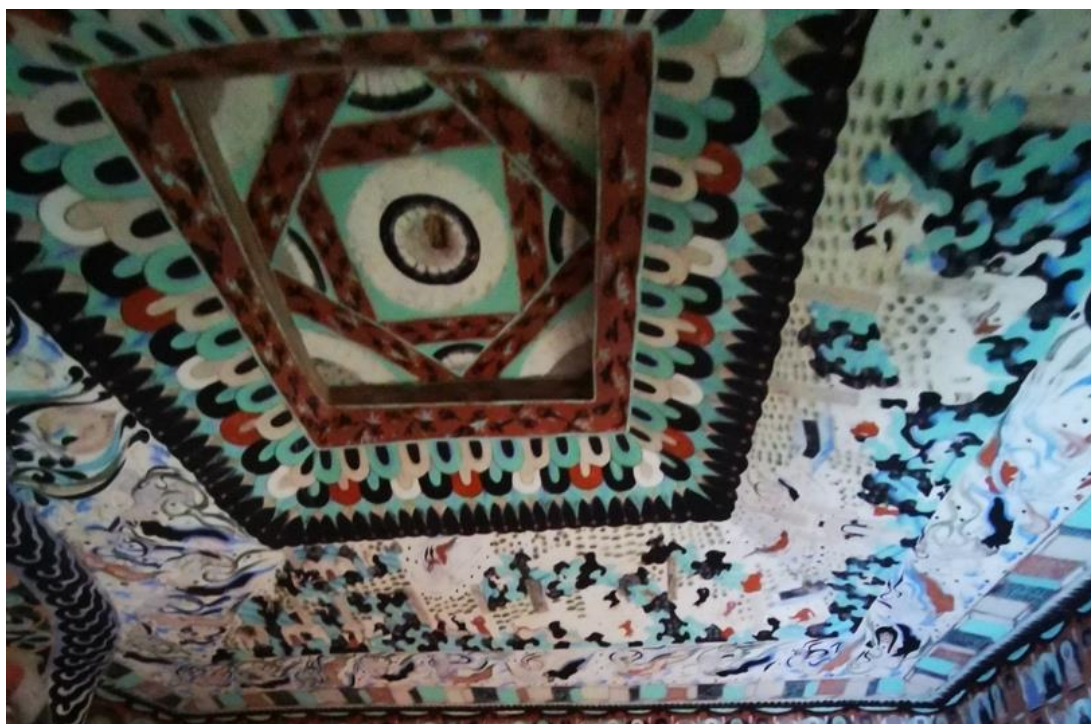


Fig. 5.1-101d. North ceiling of Mogao Cave 301.
Photograph by Yuanyuan Duan, Feb.28, 2019.



M.III.ii



M.III.viii

Fig. 5.2-1. Mural in tempera from dado of shrine M.III, Miran (2nd century).
After M.A. Stein, *Serindia, Detailed Report of Explorations in Central Asia and Westernmost China Carried out and Described under the Orders of H. M. India Government* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1921), Plate XL.

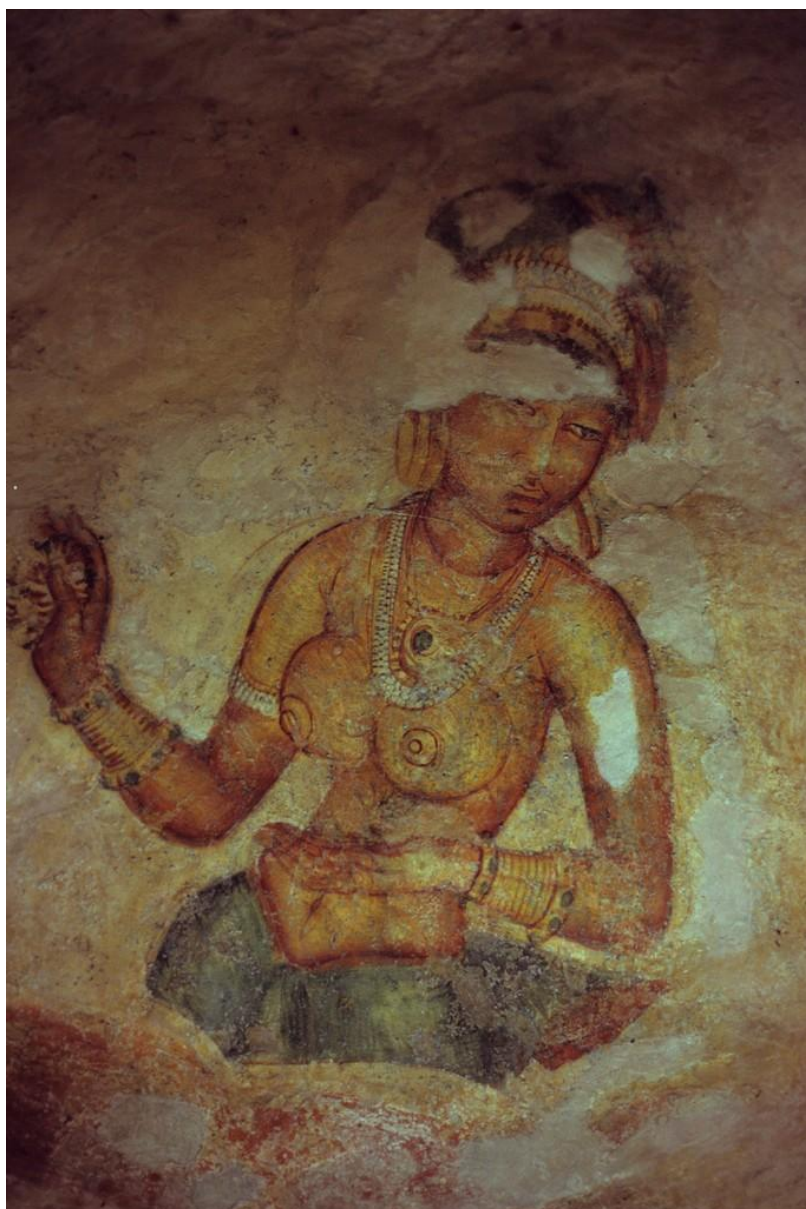


Fig. 5.2-2. The mural of Apsaras in Sigiriya at the end of 5th century.
Available from: <https://shibbolethsp.jstor.org/start?entityID=https%3A%2F%2Fidp.uni-heidelberg.de&dest=https://www.jstor.org/stable/community.14633535&site=jstor>



Fig. 5.2-3a. Figures on the mural of west wall of Mogao Cave 263 (Northern Wei Dynasty).
After Dunhuang Wenwu Yanjiusuo 敦煌文物研究所, *Zhongguo Shiku Dunhuang Mogaoku 1* 中国石窟 敦煌莫高窟 1 [Chinese Grottoes Dunhuang Mogao Caves] (Beijing: Wenwu Chubanshe, 1982), fig.55.



Fig. 5.2-3b. Figures on the ceiling of Mogao Cave 263.

After Dunhuang Wenwu Yanjiusuo 敦煌文物研究所, *Zhongguo Shiku Dunhuang Mogaoku 1* 中国石窟敦煌莫高窟 1 [Chinese Grottoes Dunhuang Mogao Caves 1] (Beijing: Wenwu Chubanshe, 1982), fig.56.



Fig. 5.2 -3c. Figures on the east wall of Mogao Cave 263.

After Dunhuang Wenwu Yanjiusuo 敦煌文物研究所, *Zhongguo Shiku Dunhuang Mogaoku 1* 中国石窟敦煌莫高窟 1 [Chinese Grottoes Dunhuang Mogao Caves 1] (Beijing: Wenwu Chubanshe, 1982), fig.57.



Fig. 5.2-4a. Figures on the west wall of Mogao Cave 285.

After Dunhuang Wenwu Yanjiusuo 敦煌文物研究所, *Zhongguo Shiku Dunhuang Mogaoku 1* 中国石窟敦煌莫高窟 1 [Chinese Grottoes Dunhuang Mogao Caves 1] (Beijing: Wenwu Chubanshe, 1982), fig.115.



Fig. 5.2-4b. Figures on the west wall of Mogao Cave 285.

After Dunhuang Wenwu Yanjiusuo 敦煌文物研究所, *Zhongguo Shiku Dunhuang Mogaoku 1* 中国石窟 敦煌莫高窟 1 [Chinese Grottoes Dunhuang Mogao Caves 1] (Beijing: Wenwu Chubanshe, 1982), fig.118.



Fig. 5.2-5. Figures on west wall of Mogao Cave 254.

After Dunhuang Wenwu Yanjiusuo 敦煌文物研究所, *Zhongguo Shiku Dunhuang Mogaoku 1* 中国石窟 敦煌莫高窟 1 [Chinese Grottoes Dunhuang Mogao Caves 1] (Beijing: Wenwu Chubanshe, 1982), fig.30.



Fig. 5.2-6. Figures on the west wall of Mogao Cave 435.

After Dunhuang Wenwu Yanjiusuo 敦煌文物研究所, *Zhongguo Shiku Dunhuang Mogaoku 1* 中国石窟 敦煌莫高窟 1 [Chinese Grottoes Dunhuang Mogao Caves 1] (Beijing: Wenwu Chubanshe, 1982), fig.68.



Fig. 5.2-7. Figures on the west wall of Mogao Cave 431.

After Dunhuang Wenwu Yanjiusuo 敦煌文物研究所, *Zhongguo Shiku Dunhuang Mogaoku 1* 中国石窟 敦煌莫高窟 1 [Chinese Grottoes Dunhuang Mogao Caves 1] (Beijing: Wenwu Chubanshe, 1982), fig.68.



Fig. 5.2-8. Flowers on the ceiling of Mogao Cave 288 (West Wei Dynasty)
 Available from: <https://www.dha.ac.cn/info/1425/3558.htm>

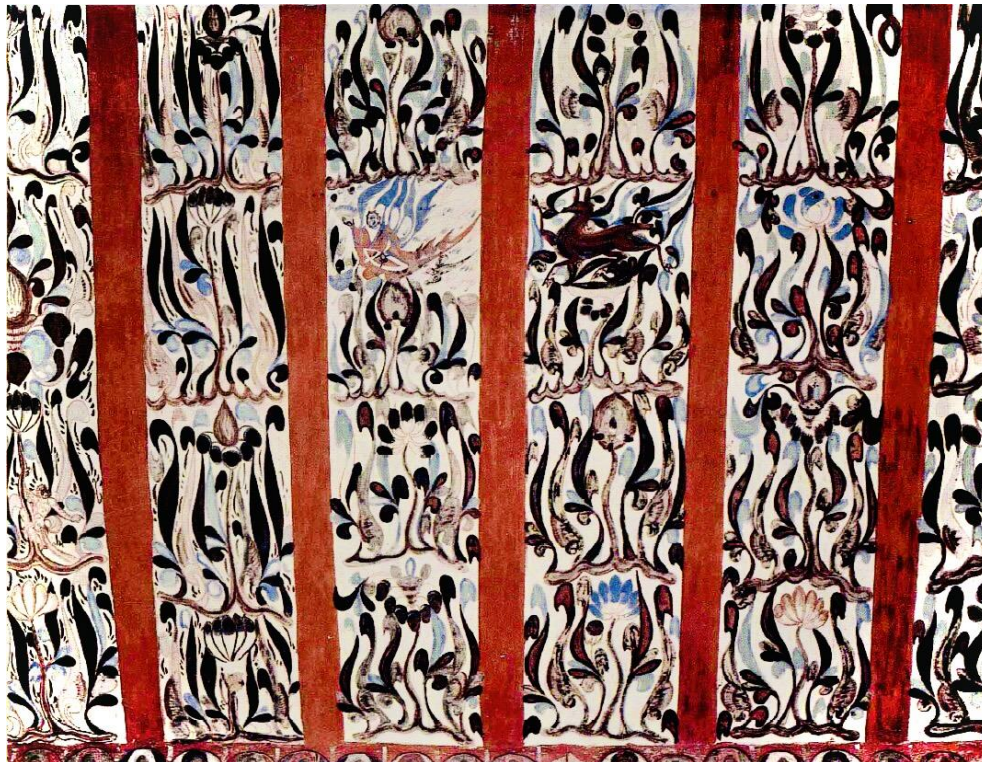


Fig. 5.2-9. Flowers on the east side of ceiling of Mogao Cave 428.
 After Dunhuang Wenwu Yanjiusuo 敦煌文物研究所, *Zhongguo Shiku Dunhuang Mogaoku 1*. 中国石窟 敦煌莫高窟 1 [Chinese Grottoes Dunhuang Mogao Caves 1] (Beijing: Wenwu Chubanshe, 1982), fig.172.



Fig. 5.2-10. Detail of Apsaras above the east niche of central pillar of Mogao Cave 428.

Available from:

https://www.jstor.org/stable/community.15426853?searchText=mogao+cave+428&searchUri=%2Faction%2FdoBasicSearch%3FQuery%3Dmogao%2Bcave%2B428%26groupfq%3DWyJjb250cmlidXRIZF9pbWFnZXMiXQ%253D%253D&ab_segments=0%2Fbasic_search_gsv2%2Fcontrol&refreqid=fastly-default%3A8690205ecbcd7afa0047fa20a916f14e&searchkey=1685429284019

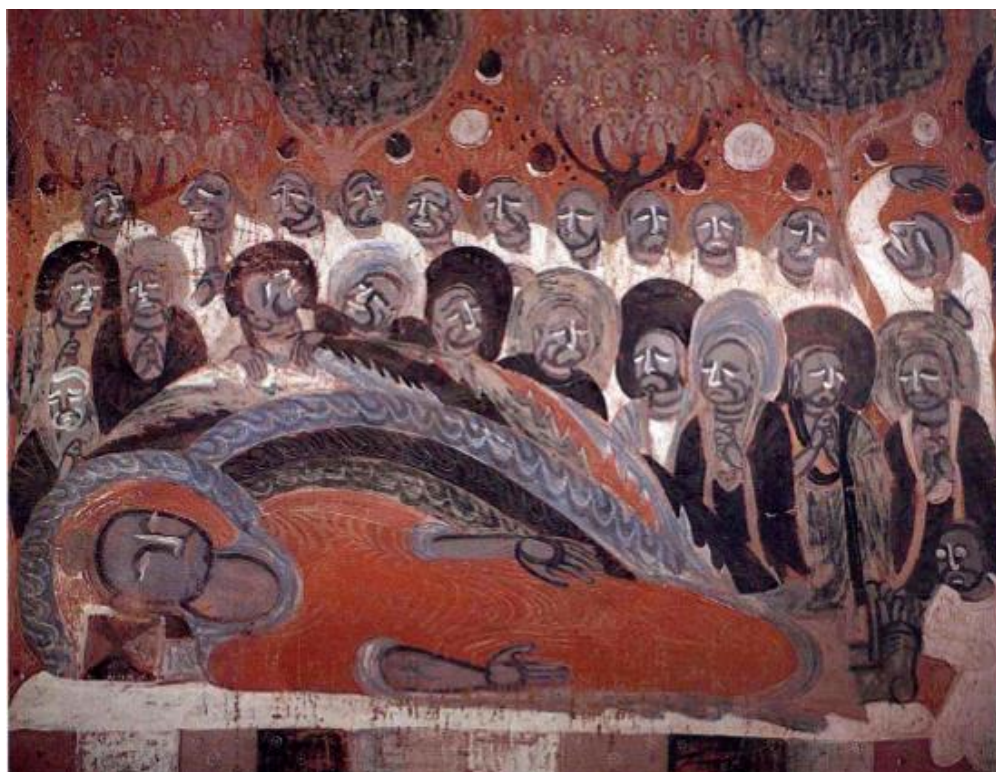


Fig. 5.2-11. Figures on the west wall of Mogao Cave 428.

After Dunhuang Wenwu Yanjiusuo 敦煌文物研究所, *Zhongguo Shiku Dunhuang Mogaoku 1*. 中国石窟 敦煌莫高窟 1 [Chinese Grottoes Dunhuang Mogao Caves 1] (Beijing: Wenwu Chubanshe, 1982), fig.164.



Fig. 5.2.-12a. Figures on the west wall of Mogao Cave 428.

After Dunhuang Wenwu Yanjiusuo 敦煌文物研究所, *Zhongguo Shiku Dunhuang Mogaoku 1*. 中国石窟 敦煌莫高窟 1 [Chinese Grottoes Dunhuang Mogao Caves 1] (Beijing: Wenwu Chubanshe, 1982), fig.163.



Fig. 5.2.-12b. Figures on the mural of Mogao Cave 428.
Available from: <https://www.dha.ac.cn/info/1425/3558.htm>



Fig. 5.2-13. Figures on the Jataka mural of East wall of Mogao Cave 428.

Available from

https://www.jstor.org/stable/community.18144442?searchText=mogao+cave+428&searchUri=%2Faction%2FdoBasicSearch%3FQuery%3Dmogao%2Bcave%2B428%26groupfq%3DWyJjb250cmlidXRIZF9pbWFnZXMiXQ%253D%253D%26doi%3D10.2307%252Fcommunity.15426853&ab_segments=0%2Fbasic_search_gsv2%2Fcontrol&refreqid=fastly-default%3A97b7119386928347e7f610bf0ae6157&searchkey=1682931191241



Fig. 5.2-14a. Figures in Mogao Cave 290.
Available from: ARTstor, [http:// www.artstor. Org](http://www.artstor.org)



Fig. 5.2-14b Figures in Mogao Cave 290.
Available from: ARTstor, [http:// www.artstor. Org](http://www.artstor.org)



Fig. 5.2-15. Figures on west wall of Mogao Cave 461.

After Dunhuang Wenwu Yanjiusuo 敦煌文物研究所, *Zhongguo Shiku Dunhuang Mogaoku 1* 中国石窟 敦煌莫高窟 1 [Chinese Grottoes Dunhuang Mogao Caves 1] (Beijing: Wenwu Chubanshe, 1982), fig.153.

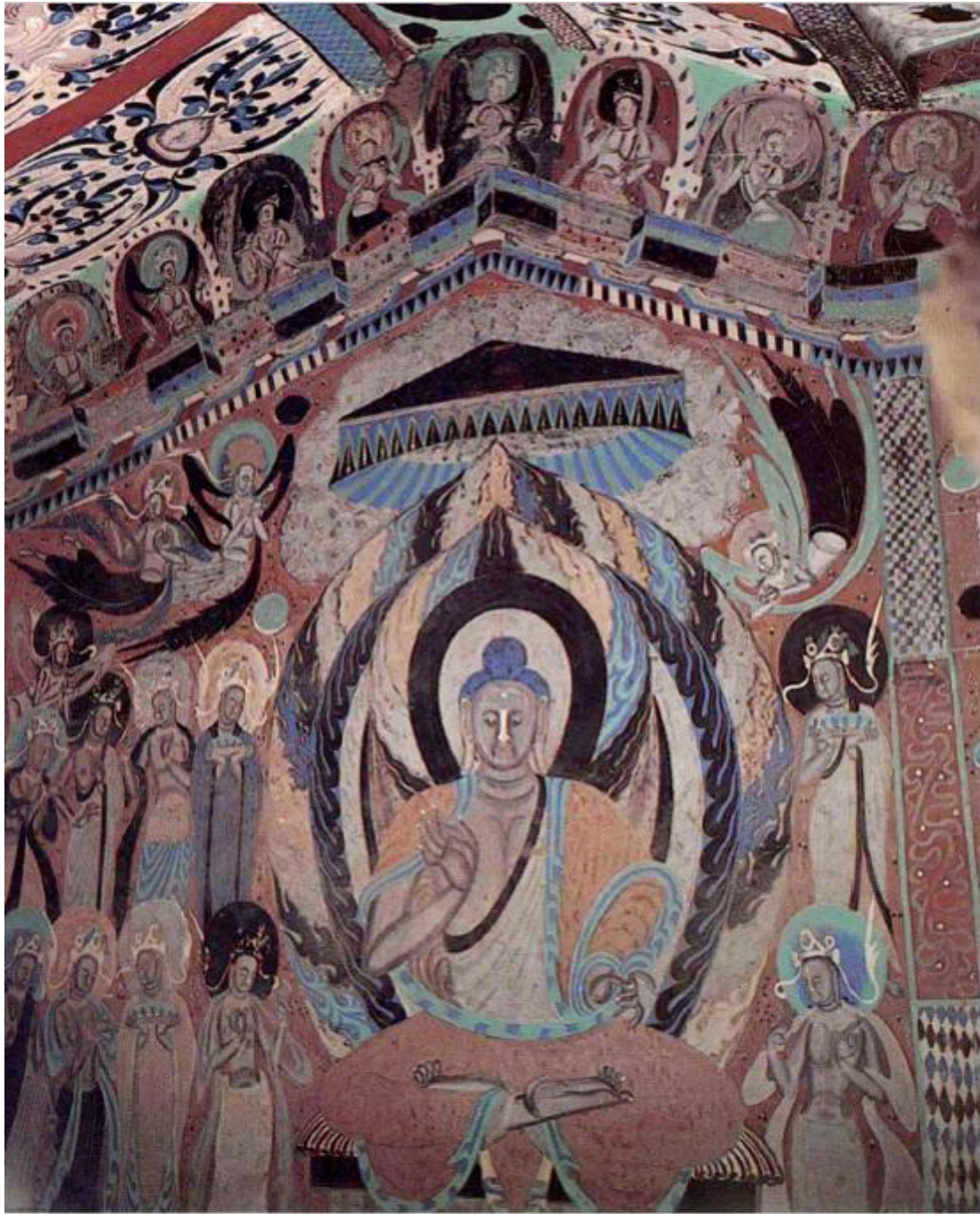


Fig. 5.2-16a. Figures on south wall of Mogao Cave 288.

After Dunhuang Wenwu Yanjiusuo 敦煌文物研究所, *Zhongguo Shiku Dunhuang Mogaoku 1* 中国石窟 敦煌莫高窟 1 [Chinese Grottoes Dunhuang Mogao Caves 1] (Beijing: Wenwu Chubanshe, 1982), fig.109.



Fig. 5.2.16b. Figures on east wall of Mogao Cave 288.

After Dunhuang Wenwu Yanjiusuo 敦煌文物研究所, *Zhongguo Shiku Dunhuang Mogaoku 1* 中国石窟 敦煌莫高窟 1 [Chinese Grottoes Dunhuang Mogao Caves 1] (Beijing: Wenwu Chubanshe, 1982), fig.113.



Fig. 5.2-17. Figures on the upper section of south wall of Mogao Cave 248.

After Dunhuang Wenwu Yanjiusuo 敦煌文物研究所, *Zhongguo Shiku Dunhuang Mogaoku 1* 中国石窟 敦煌莫高窟 1 [Chinese Grottoes Dunhuang Mogao Caves 1] (Beijing: Wenwu Chubanshe, 1982), fig.86.



Fig. 5.2-18. Figures on the upper section of North wall of Mogao Cave 248.

After Dunhuang Wenwu Yanjiusuo 敦煌文物研究所, *Zhongguo Shiku Dunhuang Mogaoku 1* 中国石窟 敦煌莫高窟 1 [Chinese Grottoes Dunhuang Mogao Caves 1] (Beijing: Wenwu Chubanshe, 1982), fig.84.



Fig. 5.2-19. Figures on the upper section of south wall of Mogao Cave 249.

After Dunhuang Wenwu Yanjiusuo 敦煌文物研究所, *Zhongguo Shiku Dunhuang Mogaoku 1* 中国石窟 敦煌莫高窟 1 [Chinese Grottoes Dunhuang Mogao Caves 1] (Beijing: Wenwu Chubanshe, 1982), fig.93..

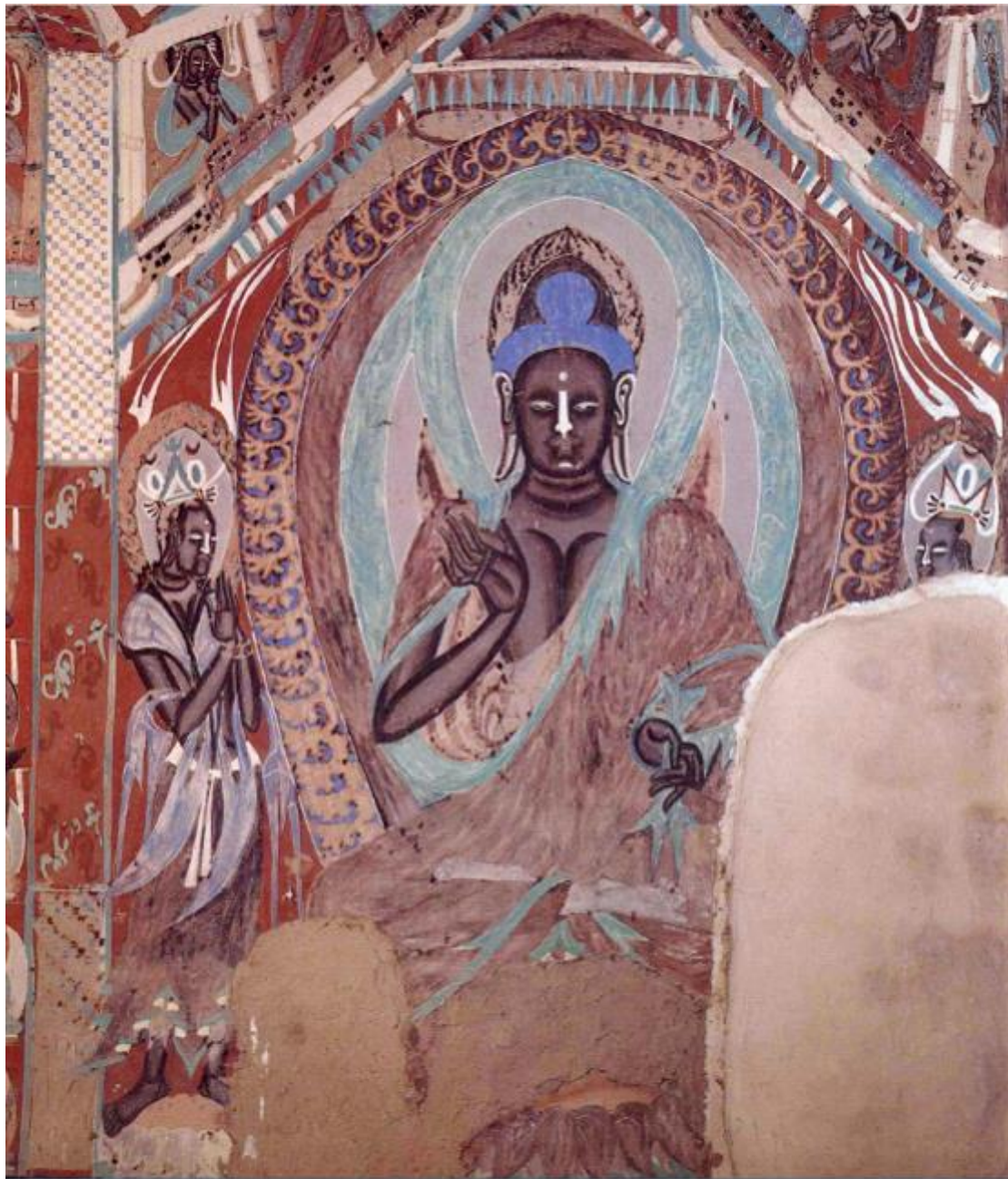


Fig. 5.2-20. Figures on north wall of Mogao Cave 435.

After Dunhuang Wenwu Yanjiusuo 敦煌文物研究所, *Zhongguo Shiku Dunhuang Mogaoku 1* 中国石窟 敦煌莫高窟 1 [Chinese Grottoes Dunhuang Mogao Caves 1] (Beijing: Wenwu Chubanshe, 1982), fig.69.

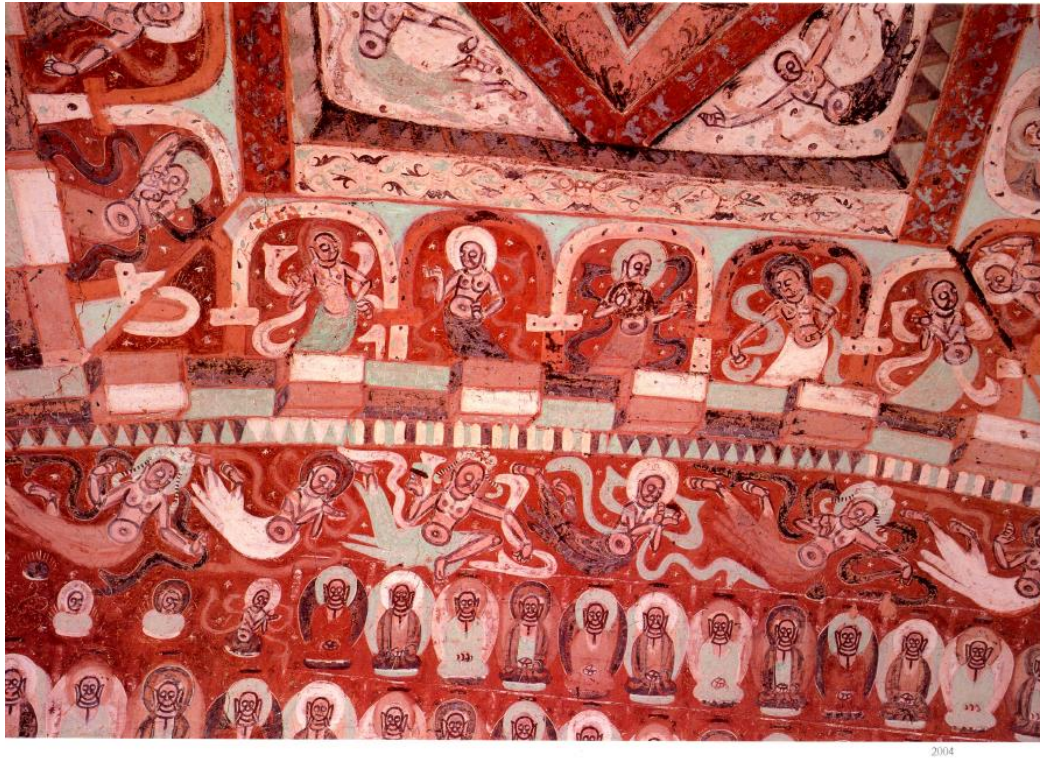


Fig. 5.2-21 The image of balustrade on the ceiling of Mogao Cave 272.
 After Dunhuang Yanjiuyuan 敦煌研究院, *Dunhuang Shiku Quanji Diyijuan Mogaoku Di Erliliu Erliuba Erqier Erqiwu Ku Kaogu Baogao Dier Fence* 敦煌石窟全集 第1卷 莫高窟第266、268、272、275窟考古报告第二分册 [Caves 266-275 of Mogao Grottoes The Dunhuang caves] (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2006), Plate 145.

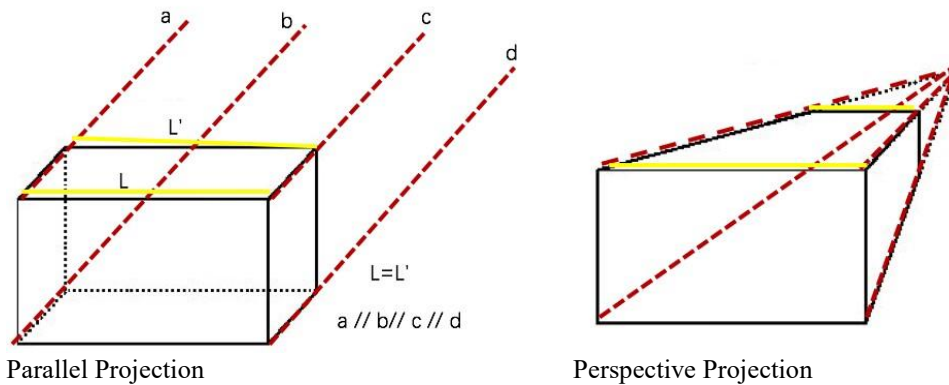


Fig. 5.2-22. Parallel Projection and Perspective Projection.
 Draw by Yuanyuan Duan



Fig. 5.2-23. The image of balustrade on south wall of Mogao Cave 251 (Northern Wei).
 After Dunhuang Wenwu Yanjiusuo 敦煌文物研究所, *Zhongguo Shiku Dunhuang Mogaoku 1* 中国石窟 敦煌莫高窟 1 [Chinese Grottoes Dunhuang Mogao Caves 1] (Beijing: Wenwu Chubanshe, 1982), Plate 49.



Fig. 5.2-24a. The image of balustrade on west wall of Mogao Cave 435 (Northern Wei).
 After Dunhuang Wenwu Yanjiusuo 敦煌文物研究所, *Zhongguo Shiku Dunhuang Mogaoku 1* 中国石窟 敦煌莫高窟 1 [Chinese Grottoes Dunhuang Mogao Caves 1] (Beijing: Wenwu Chubanshe, 1982), Plate 73.



Fig. 5.2 -24b. The image of balustrade on the north wall of Mogao Cave 435 (Northern Wei). After Dunhuang Wenwu Yanjiusuo 敦煌文物研究所, *Zhongguo Shiku Dunhuang Mogaoku 1* 中国石窟 敦煌莫高窟 1 [Chinese Grottoes Dunhuang Mogao Caves 1] (Beijing: Wenwu Chubanshe, 1982), Plate 72.



Fig. 5.2-25. The image of balustrade on the south wall of Mogao Cave 248 (Northern Wei). After Dunhuang Wenwu Yanjiusuo 敦煌文物研究所, *Zhongguo Shiku Dunhuang Mogaoku 1* 中国石窟 敦煌莫高窟 1 [Chinese Grottoes Dunhuang Mogao Caves 1] (Beijing: Wenwu Chubanshe, 1982), Plate 86.



Fig.5.2-26a. The image of balustrade on the west wall of Mogao Cave 249 (Northern Wei).
After Dunhuang Wenwu Yanjiusuo 敦煌文物研究所, *Zhongguo Shiku Dunhuang Mogaoku 1* 中国石窟 敦煌莫高窟 1 [Chinese Grottoes Dunhuang Mogao Caves 1] (Beijing: Wenwu Chubanshe, 1982), Plate. 89.



Fig. 5.2-26b. The image of balustrade on the south wall of Mogao Cave 249 (West Wei).
After Dunhuang Wenwu Yanjiusuo 敦煌文物研究所, *Zhongguo Shiku Dunhuang Mogaoku 1* 中国石窟 敦煌莫高窟 1 [Chinese Grottoes Dunhuang Mogao Caves 1] (Beijing: Wenwu Chubanshe, 1982), Plate 93.

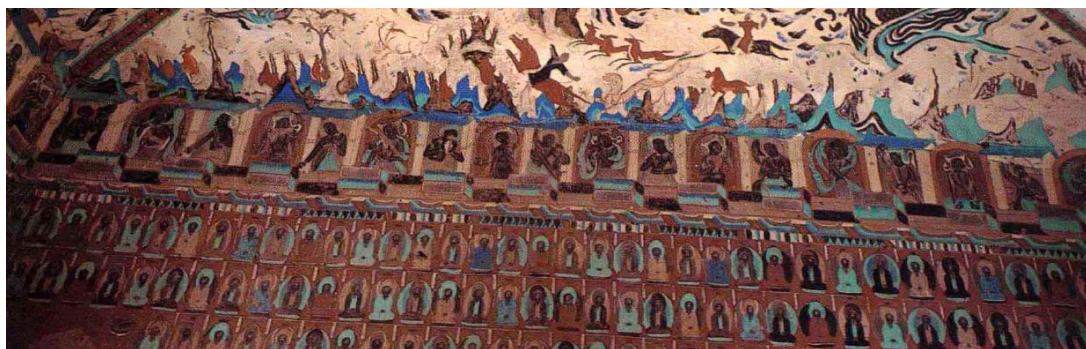


Fig. 5.2-26c. The image of balustrade on the north wall of Mogao Cave 249 (West Wei).
After Dunhuang Wenwu Yanjiusuo 敦煌文物研究所, *Zhongguo Shiku Dunhuang Mogaoku 1* 中国石窟 敦煌莫高窟 1 [Chinese Grottoes Dunhuang Mogao Caves 1] (Beijing: Wenwu Chubanshe, 1982), Plate 98.



Fig. 5.2-27. The image of balustrade on the ceiling of Mogao Cave 296 (Northern Zhou).
After Dunhuang Wenwu Yanjiusuo 敦煌文物研究所, *Zhongguo Shiku Dunhuang Mogaoku 1* 中国石窟 敦煌莫高窟 1 [Chinese Grottoes Dunhuang Mogao Caves 1] (Beijing: Wenwu Chubanshe, 1982), Plate 126.



Fig. 5.2-28. The image of balustrade on the ceiling of Mogao Cave 297 (Northern Zhou).
After Dunhuang Wenwu Yanjiusuo 敦煌文物研究所, *Zhongguo Shiku Dunhuang Mogaoku 1* 中国石窟 敦煌莫高窟 1 [Chinese Grottoes Dunhuang Mogao Caves 1] (Beijing: Wenwu Chubanshe, 1982), Plate 156.



Fig. 5.2-29a. The image of balustrade on the north ceiling of Mogao Cave 299 (Northern Zhou). After Dunhuang Wenwu Yanjiusuo 敦煌文物研究所, *Zhongguo Shiku Dunhuang Mogaoku 1* 中国石窟 敦煌莫高窟 1 [Chinese Grottoes Dunhuang Mogao Caves 1] (Beijing: Wenwu Chubanshe, 1982), Plate 196.



Fig. 5.2-29b. The image of balustrade on the south ceiling of Mogao Cave 299 (Northern Zhou). Photograph by Yuanyuan Duan.



Fig. 5.2-30a. The image of balustrade on the north ceiling of Mogao Cave 438 (Northern Zhou). Photograph by Yuanyuan Duan.



Fig. 5.2-30b. The image of balustrade on the south ceiling of Mogao Cave 438 (Northern Zhou).
Photograph by Yuanyuan Duan.



Fig. 5.2-31. The image of balustrade on the ceiling of Mogao Cave 461 (Northern Zhou).
After Dunhuang Wenwu Yanjiusuo 敦煌文物研究所, *Zhongguo Shiku Dunhuang Mogaoku 1*. 中国石窟 敦煌莫高窟 1 [Chinese Grottoes Dunhuang Mogao Caves 1] (Beijing: Wenwu Chubanshe, 1982), Plate 154.

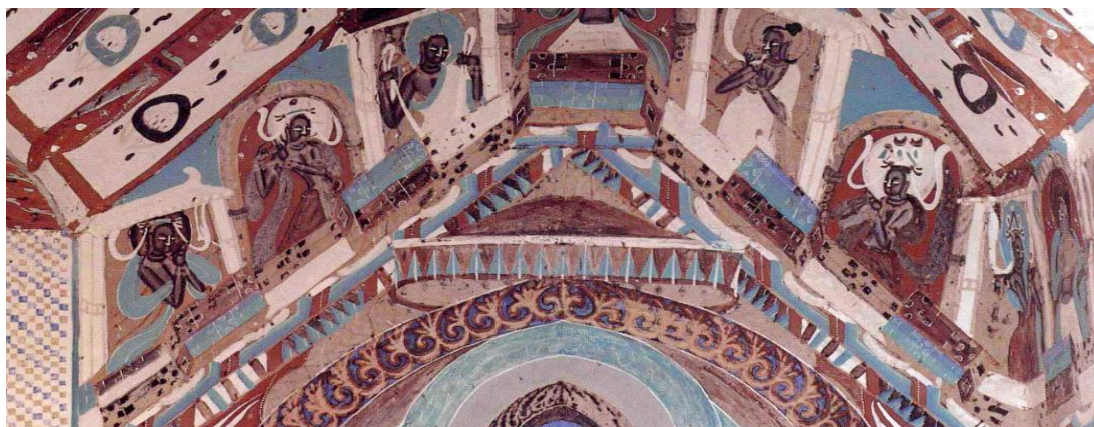


Fig. 5.2-32. The image of balustrade on the north wall of Mogao Cave 435 (Northern Wei).
After Dunhuang Wenwu Yanjiusuo 敦煌文物研究所, *Zhongguo Shiku Dunhuang Mogaoku 1*. 中国石窟 敦煌莫高窟 1 [Chinese Grottoes Dunhuang Mogao Caves 1] (Beijing: Wenwu Chubanshe, 1982), Plate 69.

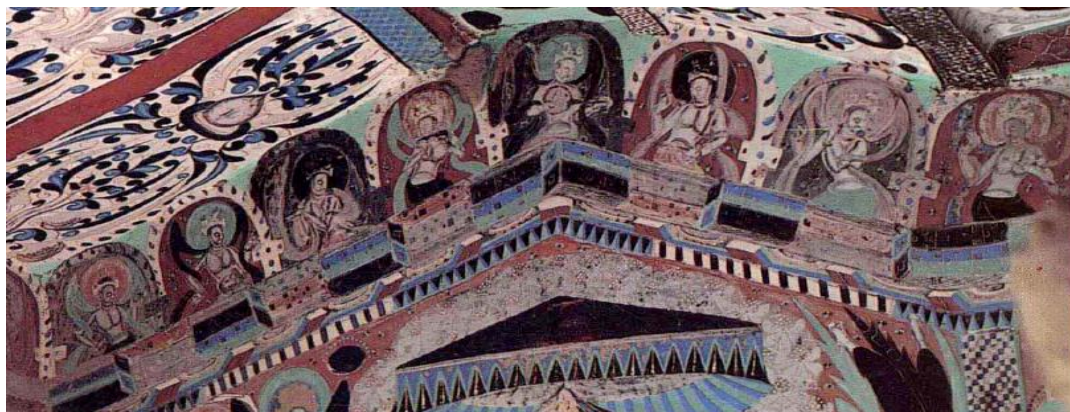


Fig. 5.2-33. The image of balustrade on the south wall of Mogao Cave 288 (Western Wei).
After Dunhuang Wenwu Yanjiusuo 敦煌文物研究所, *Zhongguo Shiku Dunhuang Mogaoku 1*. 中国石窟 敦煌莫高窟 1 [Chinese Grottoes Dunhuang Mogao Caves 1] (Beijing: Wenwu Chubanshe, 1982), Plate 109.

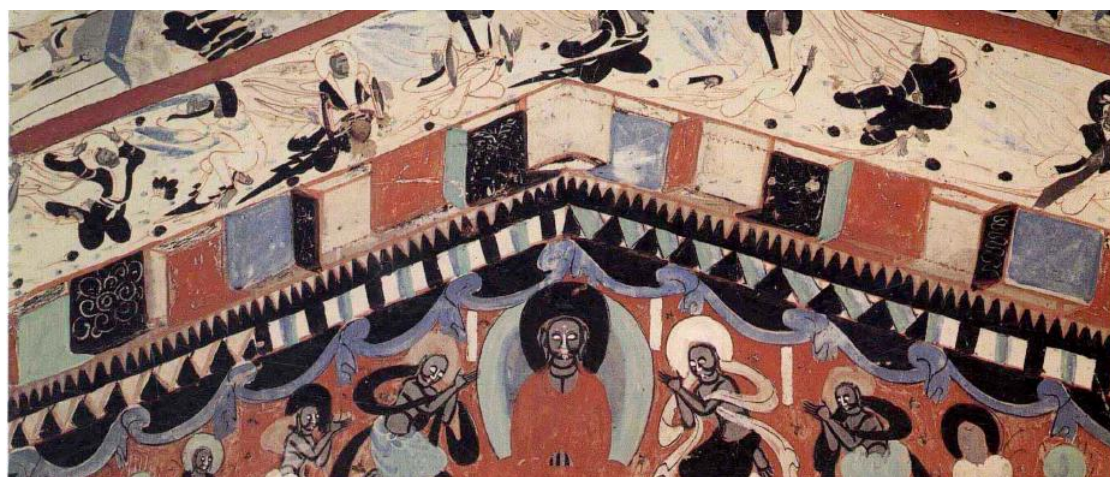


Fig. 5.2.-34. The image of balustrade on the upper section of south wall of Mogao Cave 290 (Northern Zhou)
After Dunhuang Wenwu Yanjiusuo 敦煌文物研究所, *Zhongguo Shiku Dunhuang Mogaoku 1*. 中国石窟 敦煌莫高窟 1 [Chinese Grottoes Dunhuang Mogao Caves 1] (Beijing: Wenwu Chubanshe, 1982), Plate 181.



Fig. 5.2.-35. The image of balustrade on the north wall of Mogao Cave 251 (Northern Wei).
After Dunhuang Wenwu Yanjiusuo 敦煌文物研究所, *Zhongguo Shiku Dunhuang Mogaoku 1*. 中国石窟 敦煌莫高窟 1 [Chinese Grottoes Dunhuang Mogao Caves 1] (Beijing: Wenwu Chubanshe, 1982), Plate 48.



Fig. 5.2-36. The image of balustrade on the north wall of North Wei Mogao Cave 248.
After Dunhuang Wenwu Yanjiusuo 敦煌文物研究所, *Zhongguo Shiku Dunhuang Mogaoku 1. 中国石窟 敦煌莫高窟 1* [Chinese Grottoes Dunhuang Mogao Caves 1] (Beijing: Wenwu Chubanshe, 1982), Plate 84.



Fig. 5.2-37. The image of balustrade on the ceiling of Bamiyan Cave 530.
After Miyaji Showa, *Niepan he Mile de Tuxiang Xue 涅槃和弥勒的图像学: 从印度到中亚* [Iconography of Parinirvana and Maitreya: from India to Central Asia], trans. Li Ping 李萍 (Beijing: Wenwu Chubanshe, 2009), fig.277.



Fig. 5.2-38a. The image of a balustrade(balcony) on the front wall of Kizil Cave 38.
After Li Zhao, *Haiwai Kezher Shiku Bihua Fuyuan Ji 海外克孜尔石窟壁画复原影像集*. (Shanghai: Shanghai Shuhua Chubanshe, 2018), fig.30.



Fig. 5.2-38b. The image of balustrade on the upper section of wall of Kizil Cave 38. Preserved in the Museum of Asian Art, Berlin, photo number B 0816. After Li Zhao, *Haiwai Kezier Shiku Bihua Fuyuan Ji* 海外克孜尔石窟壁画复原影像集. (Shanghai: Shanghai Shuhua Chubanshe, 2018), fig.3.

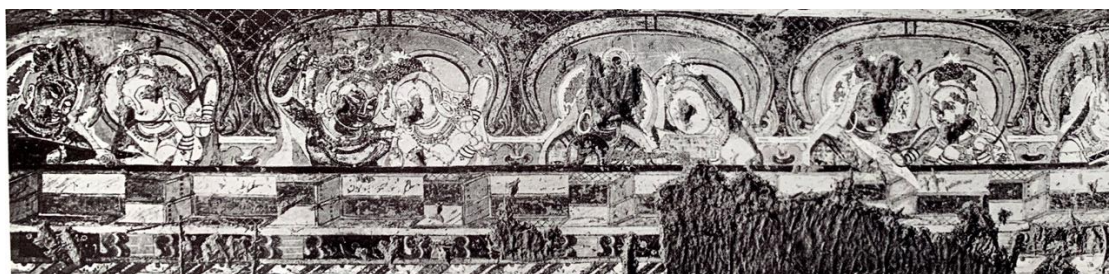


Fig. 5.2-38c. The image of a balustrade on the upper section of left wall of Kizil Cave 38. Preserved in the Museum of Asian Art, Berlin, photo number B 0430. After Li Zhao, *Haiwai Kezier Shiku Bihua Fuyuan Ji* 海外克孜尔石窟壁画复原影像集. (Shanghai: Shanghai Shuhua Chubanshe, 2018), fig.11.



Fig. 5.2-39a. The image of balustrade on the right wall of Kizil Cave 76. Preserved in the Museum of Asian Art, Berlin, photo number IB 8648. After Li Zhao, *Haiwai Kezier Shiku Bihua Fuyuan Ji* 海外克孜尔石窟壁画复原影像集. (Shanghai: Shanghai Shuhua Chubanshe, 2018), fig.6.



Fig. 5.2-39b. The image of balustrade on the upper section of left wall of Kizil Cave 76. Preserved in the Museum of Asian Art, Berlin, photo number IB 8648. After Li Zhao, *Haiwai Kezier Shiku Bihua Fuyuan Ji* 海外克孜尔石窟壁画复原影像集. (Shanghai: Shanghai Shuhua Chubanshe, 2018), fig.6.



Fig. 5.2-40. The image of balustrade on Kizil Cave 117. Preserved in the Museum of Asian Art, Berlin, photo number III 9102. After Zhao Li, *Haiwai Kezier Shiku Bihua Fuyuan Ji* 海外克孜尔石窟壁画复原影像集. (Shanghai: Shanghai Shuhua Chubanshe, 2018), fig.4.



Fig. 5.2-41. The image of stupa on the south wall of Mogao Cave 254.

After Dunhuang Wenwu Yanjiusuo 敦煌文物研究所, *Zhongguo Shiku Dunhuang Mogaoku 1*. 中国石窟 敦煌莫高窟 1 [Chinese Grottoes Dunhuang Mogao Caves 1] (Beijing: Wenwu Chubanshe, 1982), Plate 36.



Fig. 5.2-42a. The image of buildings on the east wall of Mogao Cave 428.

Available from: ARTstor, <http://www.artstor.org>

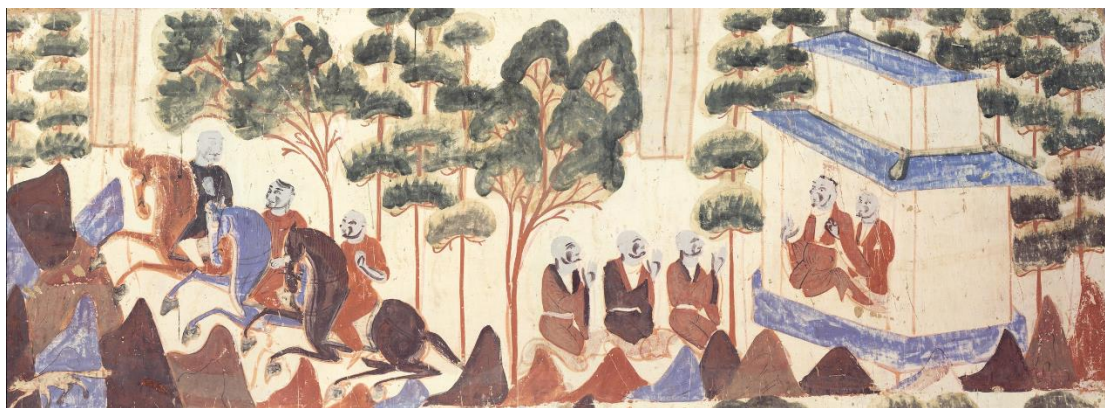


Fig. 5.2-42b. The image of buildings on the east wall of Mogao Cave 428.

Available from: ARTstor, <http://www.artstor.org>

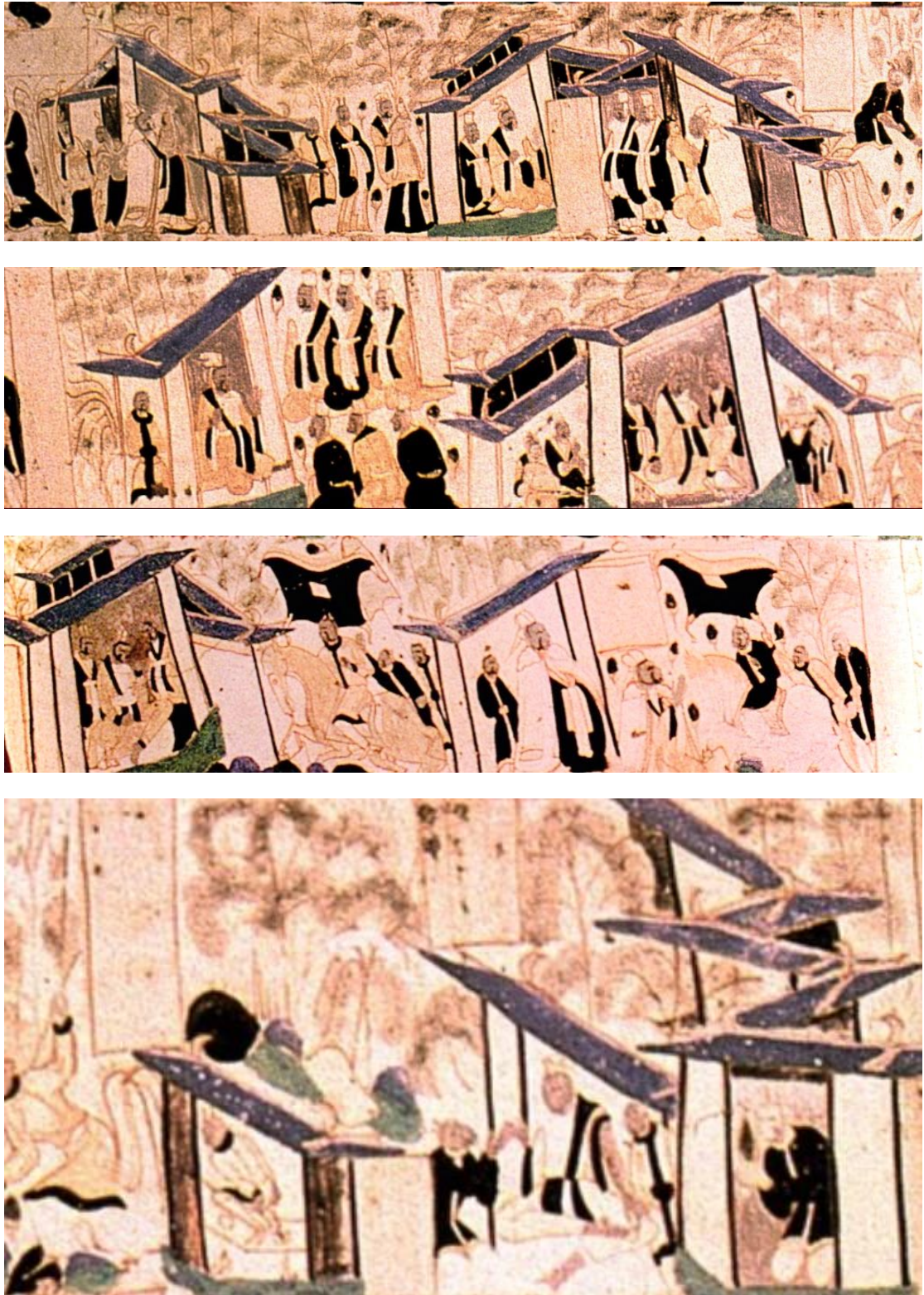


Fig. 5.2-43a. The image of buildings on the east ceiling mural of Mogao Cave 290
Available from: ARTstor, [http:// www.artstor. Org](http://www.artstor.org)



Fig. 5.2-43b. The image of buildings on the east ceiling mural of Mogao Cave 290
Available from: ARTstor, [http:// www.artstor. Org](http://www.artstor.org)

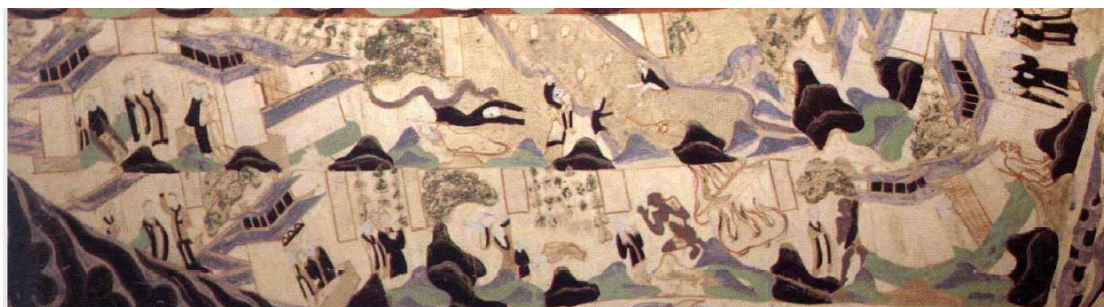
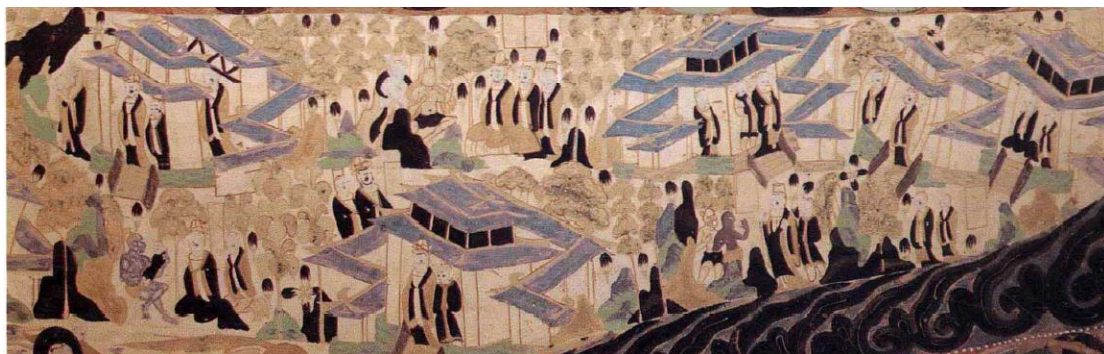


Fig. 5.2-44a. The image of buildings on west ceiling of Mogao Cave 296.

After Dunhuang Wenwu Yanjiusuo 敦煌文物研究所, *Zhongguo Shiku Dunhuang Mogaoku 1*. 中国石窟 敦煌莫高窟 1 [Chinese Grottoes Dunhuang Mogao Caves 1] (Beijing: Wenwu Chubanshe, 1982), fig.186-188.

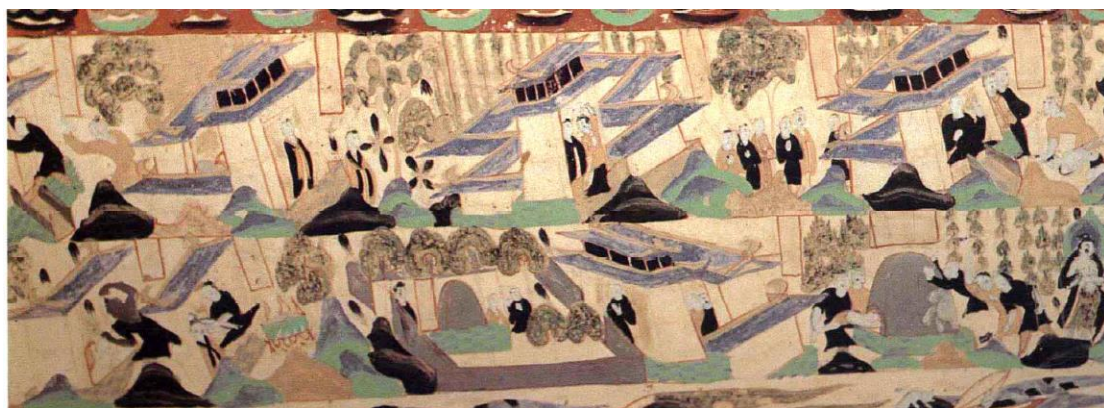


Fig. 5.2-44b. The image of buildings on north ceiling of Mogao Cave 296.

After Dunhuang Wenwu Yanjiusuo 敦煌文物研究所, *Zhongguo Shiku Dunhuang Mogaoku 1*. 中国石窟 敦煌莫高窟 1 [Chinese Grottoes Dunhuang Mogao Caves 1] (Beijing: Wenwu Chubanshe, 1982), fig.189



Fig. 5.2-44c. The image of buildings on south ceiling of Mogao Cave 296.

After Dunhuang Wenwu Yanjiusuo 敦煌文物研究所, *Zhongguo Shiku Dunhuang Mogaoku 1*. 中国石窟 敦煌莫高窟 1 [Chinese Grottoes Dunhuang Mogao Caves 1] (Beijing: Wenwu Chubanshe, 1982), fig.190-192.

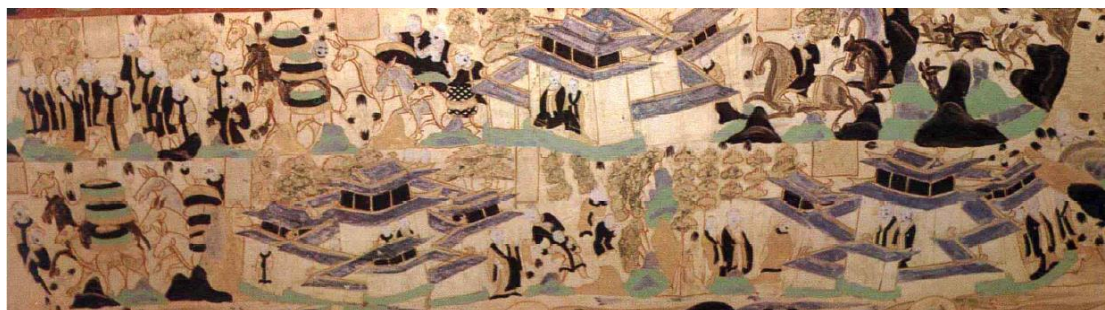
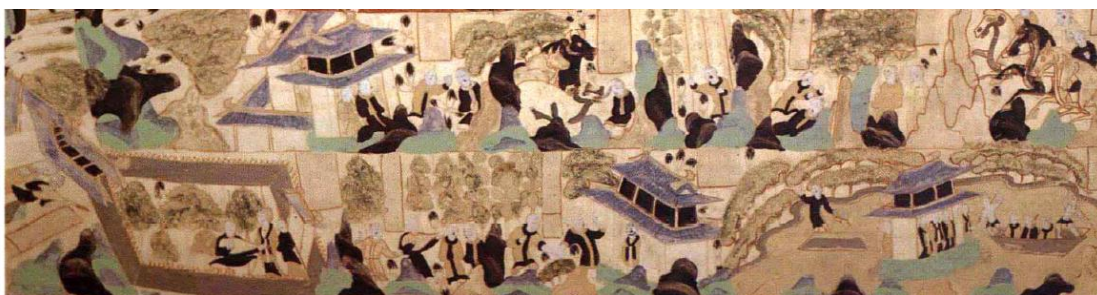


Fig. 5.2-44d. The image of buildings on east ceiling of Mogao Cave 296.

After Dunhuang Wenwu Yanjiusuo 敦煌文物研究所, *Zhongguo Shiku Dunhuang Mogaoku 1*. 中国石窟 敦煌莫高窟 1 [Chinese Grottoes Dunhuang Mogao Caves 1] (Beijing: Wenwu Chubanshe, 1982), fig.191-193.

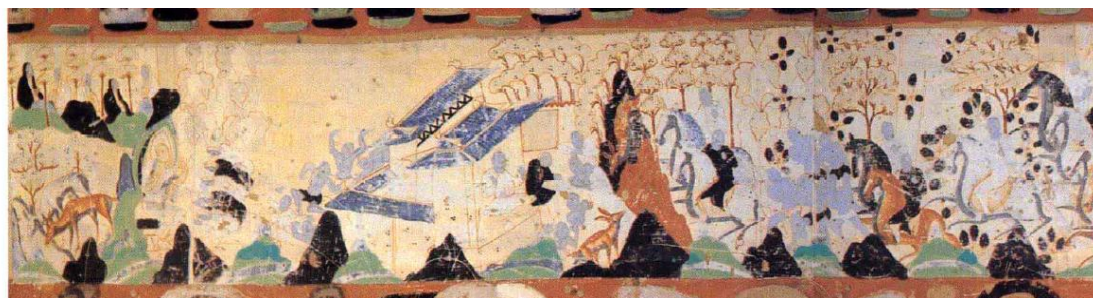


Fig. 5.2-45a. The image of buildings on south wall of Mogao Cave 296.

After Dunhuang Wenwu Yanjiusuo 敦煌文物研究所, *Zhongguo Shiku Dunhuang Mogaoku 1*. 中国石窟 敦煌莫高窟 1 [Chinese Grottoes Dunhuang Mogao Caves 1] (Beijing: Wenwu Chubanshe, 1982), fig.195.



Fig. 5.2-45b. The image of buildings on north wall of Mogao Cave 296.

After Dunhuang Wenwu Yanjiusuo 敦煌文物研究所, *Zhongguo Shiku Dunhuang Mogaoku 1*. 中国石窟 敦煌莫高窟 1 [Chinese Grottoes Dunhuang Mogao Caves 1] (Beijing: Wenwu Chubanshe, 1982), fig.194.



Fig. 5.2-46. The image of buildings on east ceiling mural of Mogao Cave 299.

After Dunhuang Wenwu Yanjiusuo 敦煌文物研究所, *Zhongguo Shiku Dunhuang Mogaoku 1*. 中国石窟 敦煌莫高窟 1 [Chinese Grottoes Dunhuang Mogao Caves 1] (Beijing: Wenwu Chubanshe, 1982), fig.197.



Fig. 5.2-47. Architecture on west ceiling of Mogao Cave 294

Available from: ARTstor, <http://www.artstor.org>



Fig. 5.2-48a. Group of buildings on east ceiling of Mogao Cave 290.

After Dunhuang Wenwu Yanjiusuo 敦煌文物研究所, *Zhongguo Shiku Dunhuang Mogaoku 1*. 中国石窟 敦煌莫高窟 1 [Chinese Grottoes Dunhuang Mogao Caves 1] (Beijing: Wenwu Chubanshe, 1982), fig.176.



Fig. 5.2-48b. Group of buildings on west ceiling of Mogao Cave 290.

After Dunhuang Wenwu Yanjiusuo 敦煌文物研究所, *Zhongguo Shiku Dunhuang Mogaoku 1*. 中国石窟 敦煌莫高窟 1 [Chinese Grottoes Dunhuang Mogao Caves 1] (Beijing: Wenwu Chubanshe, 1982), fig.177.

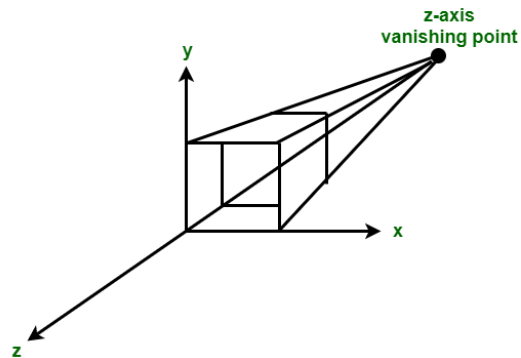


Fig. 5.2-49a. One Point Perspective Projection.

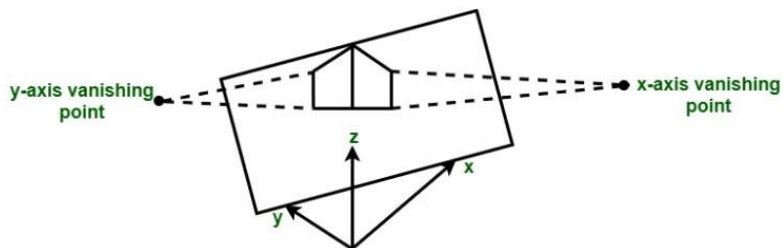


Fig. 5.2-49b. Two Point Perspective Projection.

Two point perspective projection occurs when projection plane intersects two of principal axis. In the above figure, projection plane intersects x and y axis whereas z axis remains parallel to projection plane.

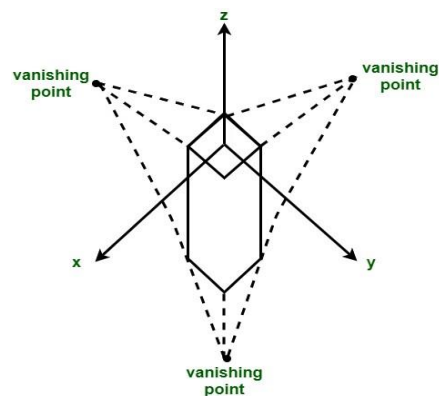


Fig. 5.2-49c Three Point Perspective Projection.

Three point perspective projection occurs when all three axis intersects with projection plane. There is no any principal axis which is parallel to projection plane.

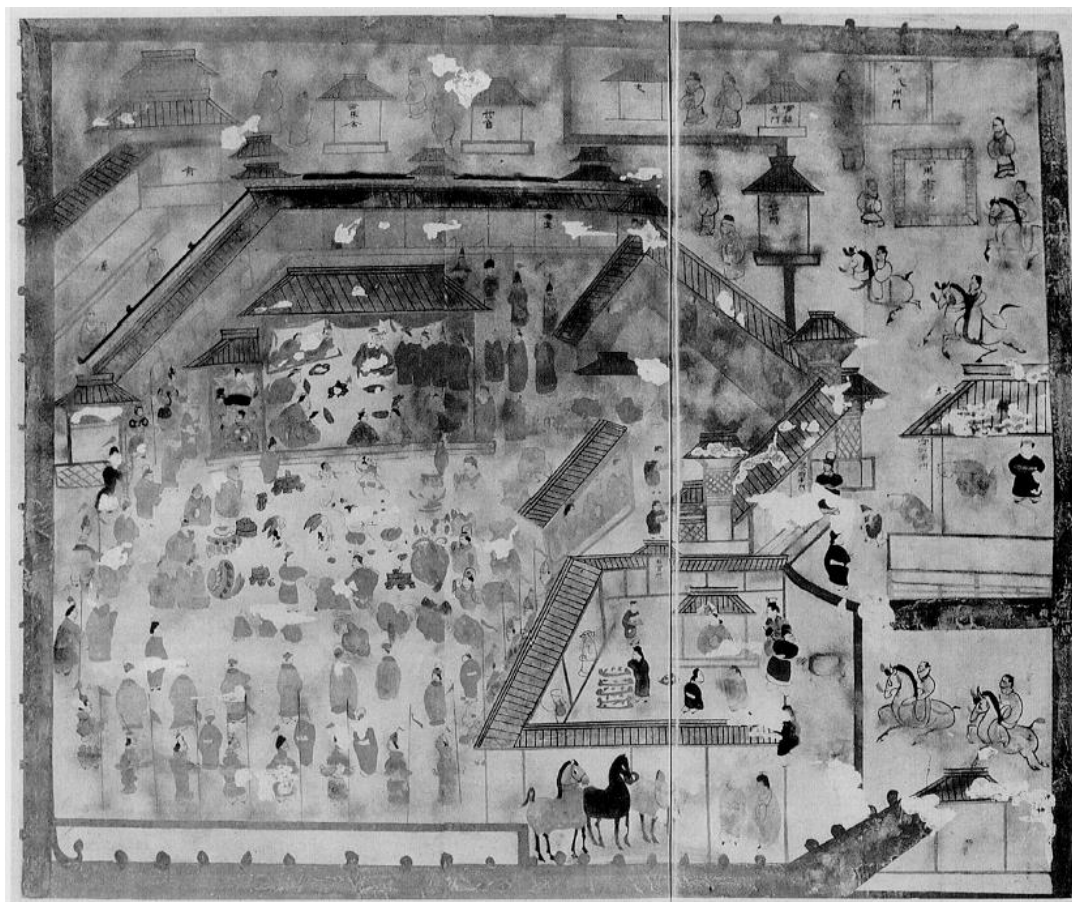


Fig. 5.2-50. A group of buildings on the mural of Helingol in Inner Mongolia.
After Wen Fong, "Why Chinese Painting Is History," *The Art Bulletin* 85, no. 2 (2003): Plate 16.

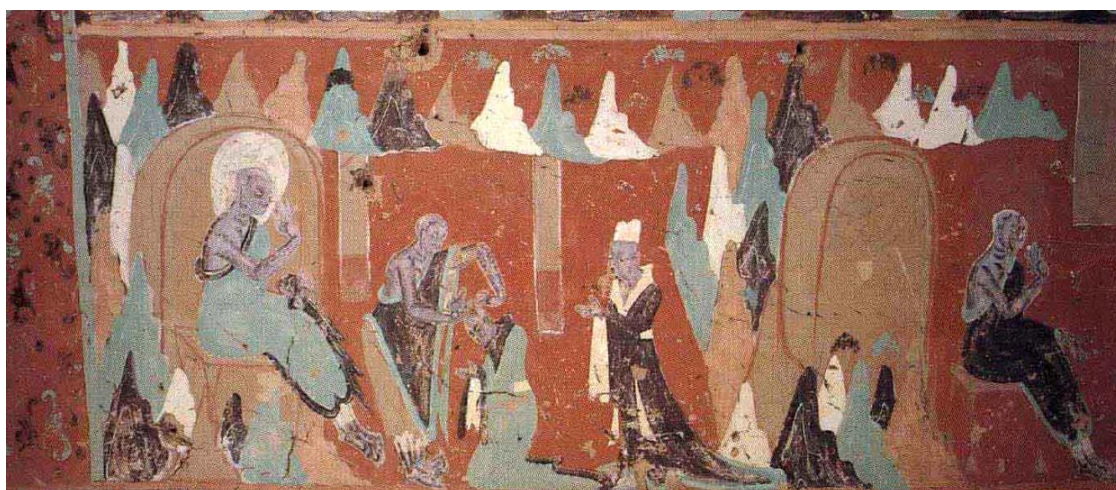


Fig. 5.2-51. Group of mountains on south wall of Mogao Cave 257.
After Dunhuang Wenwu Yanjiusuo 敦煌文物研究所, *Zhongguo Shiku Dunhuang Mogaoku 1*. 中国石窟 敦煌莫高窟 1 [Chinese Grottoes Dunhuang Mogao Caves 1] (Beijing: Wenwu Chubanshe, 1982), fig.43.



Fig. 5.2-52. Mountains on the mural of south wall of Mogao Cave 285
Available from: ARTstor, [http:// www.artstor. Org](http://www.artstor.org)



Fig. 5.2-53. Palaces on the mural of south wall of Mogao Cave 285
Available from: ARTstor, [http:// www.artstor. Org](http://www.artstor.org)



Fig. 5.2-54. Figures on the mural of the south wall of Mogao Cave 285.
Available from: ARTstor, <http://www.artstor.org>



Fig. 5.2-55. Group of mountains on mural of the west wall of Mogao Cave 257
Available from: ARTstor, <http://www.artstor.org>

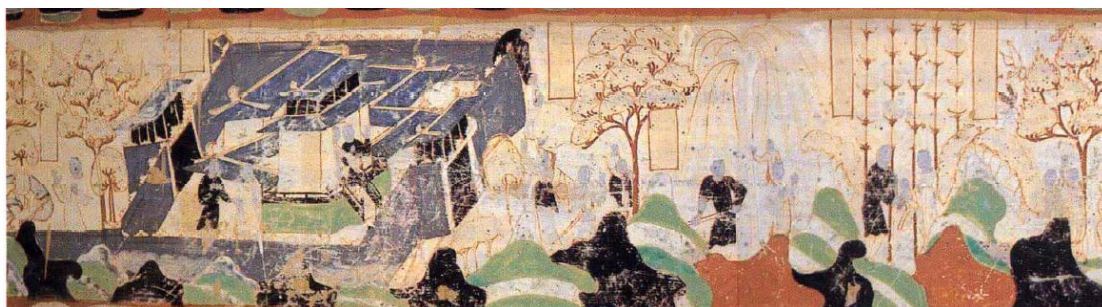


Fig. 5.2-56 Group of architectures on mural of north wall of Mogao Cave 296.
After Dunhuang Wenwu Yanjiusuo 敦煌文物研究所, *Zhongguo Shiku Dunhuang Mogaoku 1*. 中国石窟 敦煌莫高窟 1 [Chinese Grottoes Dunhuang Mogao Caves 1] (Beijing: Wenwu Chubanshe, 1982), fig.194.

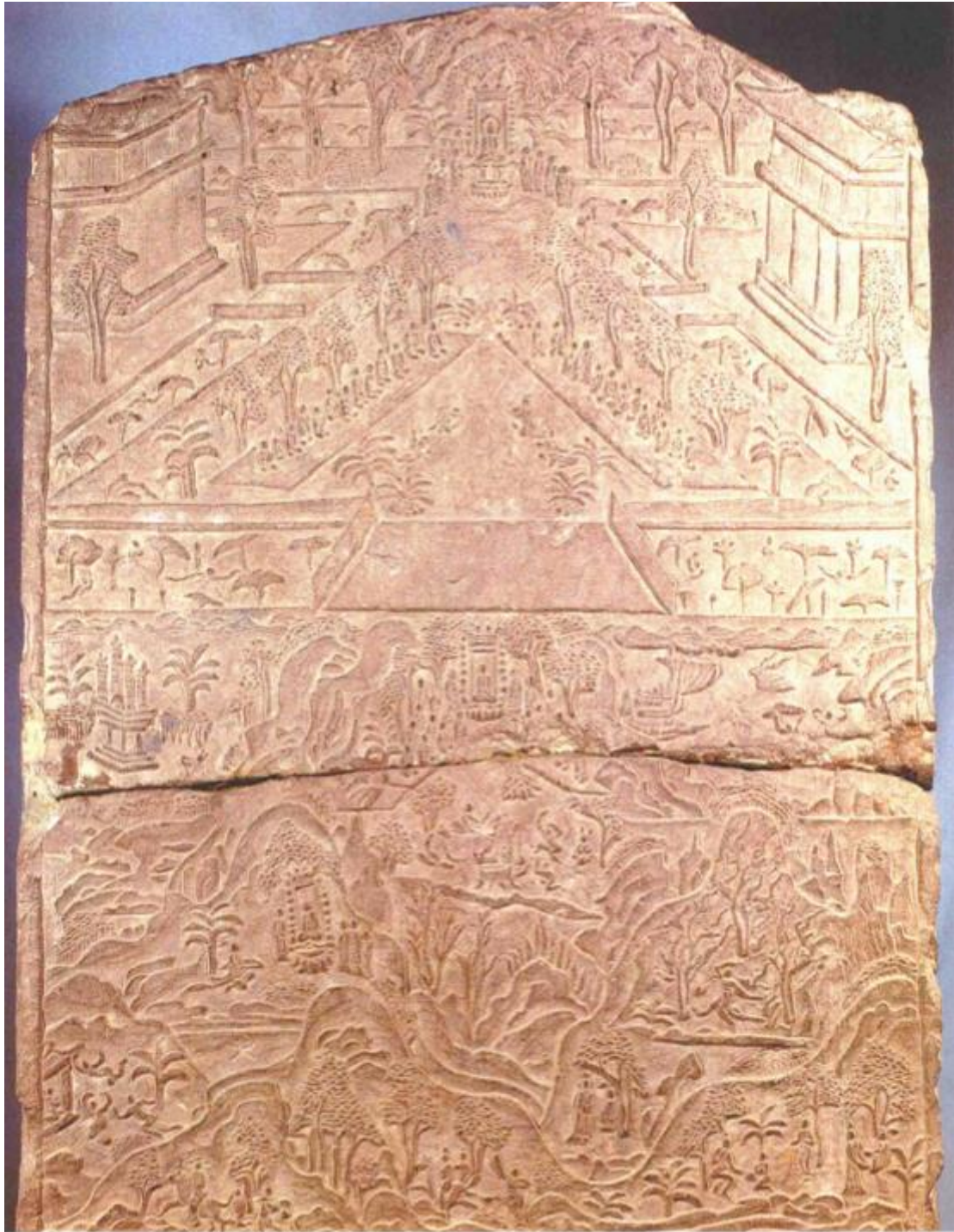


Fig. 5.2-57. Wsz 48 Stele of Wanfo Temple in Sichuan.

H. 120cm, W. 64cm. After Zhongguo Meishu Quanji Bianwei Hui 中国美术全集编委会, *Zhongguo Meishu Quanji Diaosubian Weijin Nanbeichao Diaosu* 中国美术全集 25 雕塑编 魏晋南北朝雕塑 (Beijing: Renmin Meishu Chubanshe, 2015), Plate 63.



Fig. 5.2-58. Back of WSZ 49 Stele of Wanfo Temple in Sichuan
H. 65 cm; W. 59 cm. After Shuguang Yuan, "Sichuan Sheng Bowuguan Cang Wanfosi Shike Zaoxiang Zhengli Jianbao 四川省博物馆藏万佛寺石刻造像整理简报," *Wenwu* 文物[Cultural Relics], no.10 (2001): Fig.25.



Fig. 5.2-59. The image on the relief carving of Cave-Temples of Xiangtangshan
Northern Qi dynasty, H. 159.3 cm, W. 334.5 cm. Unearthed from Cave Temples of Xiangtangshan, Fengfeng, Handan Municipality, Hebei Province by unknown party. by 1920 to 1921. Preserved in Freer Gallery of Art (Copyright Freer Gallery of Art).



Fig. 5.2-60. Group of squares on the ceiling of Mogao Cave 272.

After Dunhuang Yanjiuyuan 敦煌研究院[Dunhuang Academy], 敦煌石窟全集 第1卷 莫高窟第266、268、272、275窟考古报告第二分册[Caves 266-275 of Mogao Grottoes The Dunhuang caves, I](Beijing:Wenwu chubanshe,2006), Plate 143.



Fig. 5.2-61. Group of squares on the ceiling of Mogao Cave 249.

Available from: ARTstor, [http:// www.artstor. Org](http://www.artstor.org)



Fig. 5.2-62. Group of squares on the ceiling of Mogao Cave 285.
Photograph by Yuanyuan Duan.



Fig. 5.2-63. Group of squares on the ceiling of Mogao Cave 294.
Photograph by Yuanyuan Duan.

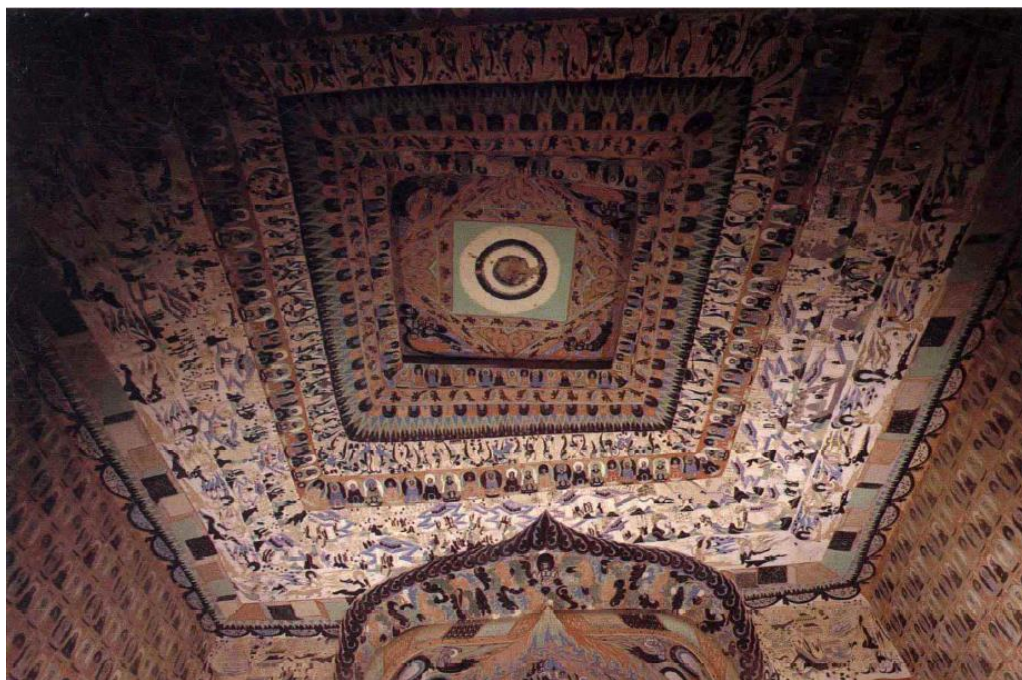


Fig. 5.2-64. Group of squares on the ceiling of Mogao Cave 296.

After Dunhuang Wenwu Yanjiusuo 敦煌文物研究所, *Zhongguo Shiku Dunhuang Mogaoku 1* 中国石窟 敦煌莫高窟 1 [Chinese Grottoes Dunhuang Mogao Caves 1] (Beijing: Wenwu Chubanshe, 1982), fig.184.

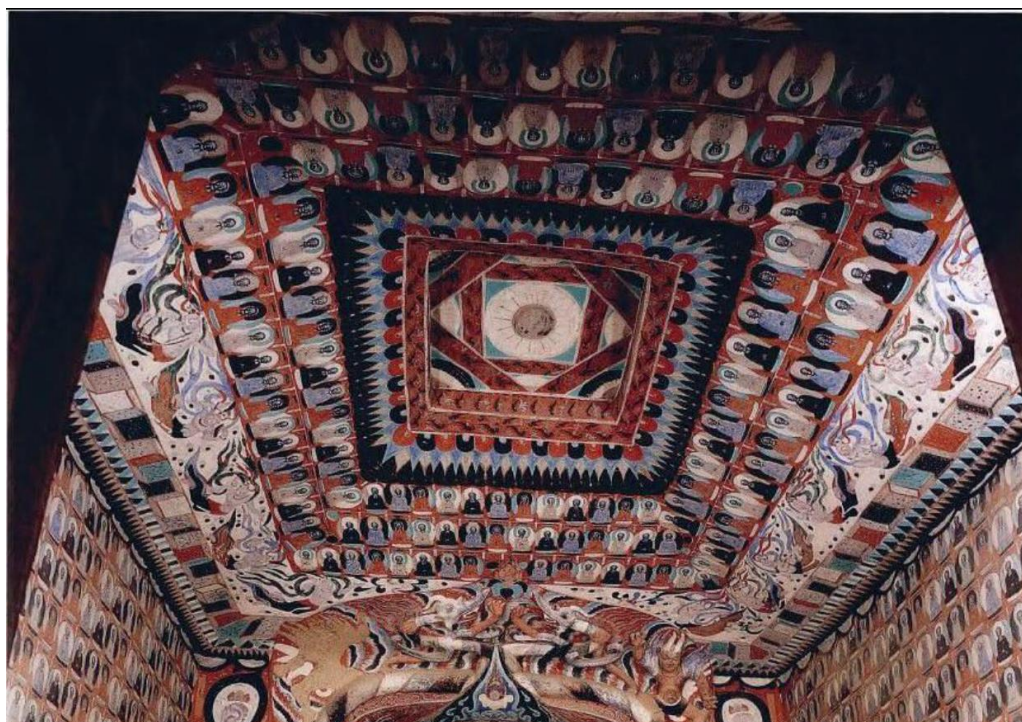


Fig. 5.2-65. Group of squares on the ceiling of Mogao Cave 297.

After Dunhuang Wenwu Yanjiusuo 敦煌文物研究所, *Zhongguo Shiku Dunhuang Mogaoku 1* 中国石窟 敦煌莫高窟 1 [Chinese Grottoes Dunhuang Mogao Caves 1] (Beijing: Wenwu Chubanshe, 1982), fig.155.



Fig. 5.2-66. Group of squares on the ceiling of Mogao Cave 299.
Photograph by Yuanyuan Duan.



Fig. 5.2-67. Group of squares on the ceiling of Mogao Cave 301
Photograph by Yuanyuan Duan.



Fig. 5.2-68. Group of squares on the ceiling of Mogao Cave 438
Photograph by Yuanyuan Duan.