

The Unified Three Teachings in the Rock Carvings of the Song Dynasty in Chongqing and Sichuan

A thesis submitted

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1. Introduction

1.1. Foreword

Confucianism, Daoism and Buddhism are the three primary colours of the ancient Chinese culture. Confucianism has been an official ideology since over 2000 years and the Confucians were the official literati and elites of the ancient Chinese society. As Max Weber pointed out the literati were the guards of the tradition and classical lifestyle.¹ Daoism as an indigenous religion has also been decisively influential for the formation of the culture and character of the nation. The great writer and scholar Lu Xun has once written that “the roots of Chinese are ... all in Daoism.”² Buddhism, although originally a foreign religion, has extensively merged with Chinese culture and deeply influenced the character of Chinese people. These three teachings are indeed the keys for the understanding of the religion, history and culture in China as well as in Eastern Asia.³

The three teachings were instituted in China, since Buddhism was introduced at the beginning of the Common Era. In a long time of almost thousand years afterwards, the three teachings have experienced both struggling against one another and benefiting from each other. Until the Song Dynasty (960-1280) the unification of the three teachings, *sanjiao* or *sanjiao heyi* in Chinese,⁴ has been accepted by the three parties, since the three are all indispensably beneficial to the education of common people. The hierarchy of the three teachings was then finally established with Confucianism as dominating teaching and Buddhism and Daoism as the supporting ones.⁵

As a cultural phenomenon the unification of the three teachings was conducted on various layers in one society contemporarily. The rulers or officials might propose one as leading

¹ Weber, Max, *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Religionssoziologie I*, 428.

² Lu Xun, *Luxun shuxin ji*, 18.

³ For the influence of the unified three teachings in the neighbouring countries like Korea, Japan and Vietnam see Huang Xinchuan, “Sanjiao heyi zai woguo,” 28-31. Li Suping, “Dongya de sanjiao hehe,” 7-12.

⁴ The concept *sanjiao* appeared firstly in *Erjiao lun* by the Buddhist monk Daoan (312-385). See Li Shen, “Chuantong de ru dao fo,” 26-28. For the discussion of *jiao*, meaning both religion and teaching in Chinese, in the historical context, see Kobayashi, “Sankyō”. For the historical development of the concepts *sanjiao*, “the three teachings” and *sanjiaohe heyi*, “the unification of the three teachings”, see Yan Yaoshong, “Lun ‘sanjiao’ dao ‘sanjiao heyi’.” The use of the term *sanjiao* in the Chinese indicates the three elements rather than a single religion unified from the three. See also Gentz, Joachim, “Die Drei Lehren (*sanjiao*) Chinas im Konflikt. Figuren und Strategien einer Debatte.”

⁵ In the Song time the unification was only a syncretic trend rather than a religion of syncretism. The three teachings were unified by some sects of later time as one syncretic religion, such as the Sanyijiao by Lin Chao-en in the late Ming Dynasty. For the study of the history of Sanyijiao, see Ma Xisha, “Lin zhaoen de sanjiao,” 25-28, Judith Berling, *The Syncretic Religion of Lin Chao-en*.

ideology and the literati or monk philosophers could have their own theoretical systems, whereas the beliefs and practices of common people might also appear different due to the influence of local culture and practical needs. However, while the historical documents are mostly concentrated on the activities and facts of the classes of knowledge and power, the history concerning the common people is always kept concealed.⁶

Fortunately, many activities of the common people, especially the religious activities, are reserved abundantly in stone, such as stone steles or statues of deities made of stone. The stone carvings are on the one hand original, since they were made directly by the person who wished to fulfil their prayers through them. While historical documents were mostly recited and filtered by historians, stone carvings show the after world the original beliefs, thoughts and activities of the common people. On the other hand, the carvings in stone are loyal. The carvings were chiselled on the hills or huge rocks and after hundreds of years they remain still in situ together with their original context, although changes might happen with the time to certain extent. Most of names in carvings are not seen in the historical documents, but with the original thoughts, beliefs and wishes in stone of the unseen majority who are lost in the history stone carvings tell a more unfeigned history than the texts.

Since ancient time in the Sichuan region⁷ shamanism and primitive religions have been prevailing.⁸ In the Eastern Han time (25-220) Daoism was founded there and since Tang Dynasty (617-907) Buddhism developed rapidly in this region while it tended to decline in north China. Besides Buddhism and Daoism the Sichuan School of Confucianism flourished in the Song Dynasty, which can be testified among others by the philosophical and literal achievements of Su Shi (1036-1101).⁹ As a place of thriving of Buddhism, Daoism and Confucianism, the Sichuan region was fulfilled with abundant rock carvings of all the three teachings. As the witness of the once prosperity, the rock carvings of the three teachings in all over the Sichuan region have a time span of more than 800 years from the beginning of

⁶ Japanese scholar such as Tokiwa and Kubota have done certain studies about the general history of the relation between the three teachings in 1940s. See Kubota Ryōon, *Shina judōbutsu kōshōshi* and Tokiwa Daijō, *Shina ni o yōru bukyō to jukyō dōkyō*. Araki Kengo, *Bukkyō to jukyō*, etc. The topics draw attentions again since recent years. For a summarizing research on the three teachings, especially Confucianism and Buddhism see Lin Yizheng, “Ru fo huitong fangfa,” 185-211.

⁷ In this paper Sichuan refers to its historical meaning and scope that includes the region of Chongqing today.

⁸ The sensational archaeological excavations in the region, like Sanxingdui or Jinsha revealed the rich spiritual activities of the people in the region in ancient time. See Qing Xitai, “Daojiao zai bashu chutan.”

⁹ Xiao Yongming, “Lun Su Shi shuxue,” 99-103. For the attitude of Su Shi to the three teachings see Cai Baoxing, “Shilun Su Shi sanjiao heyi sixiang.”

the 6th to the end of the 14th century. Those carvings open a window, through which the religious background of the three teachings, the beliefs of common people and the forms and changes of the representations in the period can be glanced.¹⁰

Rock carvings, especially Buddhist rock carvings prospered in China together with Buddhism from the Northern Wei Dynasty (386-534) to Tang Dynasty (618-907), whereas the Buddhist cave temples and rock carvings at Yungang and Longmen can be regarded as the summits of this prosperity.¹¹ While declined in north China in the Song Dynasty (960-1280), Buddhist rock carvings together with the spread of Buddhism developed fast in the Sichuan region since late Tang time. At that time the Esoteric Buddhism was especially popular and active in the Sichuan region, which was witnessed by the numerous rock carvings of this Buddhist school especially in the eastern part of the province such as in the counties of Anyue, Zizhong and Dazu.¹² As the crown of the rock carvings in the region, the complex Dafowan at Baodingshan in Dazu is esteemed as the last peak of Buddhist rock carvings in China.¹³ In addition to Buddhism the local Daoism was thriving and remained influential in the Song time. Parallel to the Buddhist rock carvings the Daoists have also many Daoist deities carved in stone, sometimes together with Buddhist deities. Under the historical background of the prosperity of the three teachings, Confucian figures appeared also in the rock carvings, mostly together with the other two teachings.

The carvings of the unified three teachings in the Sichuan region belong to the earliest known sculptures of this type in China. They are dated since the late 11th century and found in six places, exclusively in the counties of Dazu and Anyue (Fig. 1.1). In Dazu there are four sites: Shizhuanshan, Miaogaoshan, Fo'anqiao and Shibisi.¹⁴ Besides, the niches no. 15, 16 and 17 at Dafowan in Baodingshan are gigantic representations related with the three teachings, although not with all the statues of the three teachers. In the neighbouring Anyue county in

¹⁰ For a general study of the rock carvings in the Sichuan region, see Hu Wenhe, *Sichuan daojiang fojiang shike zishu*.

¹¹ For historical background of the Song time as the period when the three teachings were unified instead of opposing one another, see Han Yi, "Luelun songdai xueshushi," 12-13.

¹² For the historical background of the rock carving of the three teachings in Dazu, see among others Zhao Ruitao, "Cong dazu shike de 'sanjiao heyi'," 33-48.

¹³ For the comparison of the rock carvings in the Yungang, Longmen and Dazu, see Song Langqiu, "Changshi jiedu," 1-18.

¹⁴ A site called Fo'eryan in Baimu Village 40 km south from the Dazu county town is also alleged with statues of the three teachings according to Chongqing, *Dazu shike mingwen ku*, 314 and 319. But the inscription between the two statues shows in fact that they are statues of two Daoist deities from the Song time. The third one, probably a statue of Kongzi, is a later addition.

the cave Daboruodong which was carved in the Song time there are also the statues of the three teachers.¹⁵

Very few remained until today, the art works of the unified three teaching emerged under historical circumstance of the theoretical unification of Confucianism, Buddhism and Daoism in the Song time. Most of the earliest ones are recorded in historical documents of Sichuan or other provinces like Shandong or Zhejiang.¹⁶ While most the records in historical documents do not exist any longer, a stele dated to 1209 with the images of the three teacher in the Temple Shaolinsi is well preserved until today (Fig. 1.2).¹⁷ On the lower part of the stele Buddha stand in the middle with the hand gesture of welcoming and behind his head is a round halo with fire pattern. Laozi and Kongzi without halo flank him and appear a head lower than Buddha. They lean their bodies lean forward to Buddha and hold both hands before the chests as if disciples show reverence to their master.

Another artistic subject of the united three teachings in the literati painting since the Song time is the “Three Laughters by the Tiger Brook”, as a masterpiece reserved in Palace Museum in Taipei shows (Fig. 1.3).¹⁸ It represents the legend that the Buddhist monk Huiyuan (334-416) practised Buddhism in Lushan and for more than thirty years he kept his vow not to cross over boundary of Lushan, the Tiger Brook. As one day the Confucian Tao Yuanmin (365-427) and Daoist Lu Xiuqing (406-477) came together to visit him he was so exited that he broke his vow and crossed over the boundary while seeing his guests out. Thus he was warned by the gardian, a tiger near the brook and upon that the three bursted

¹⁵ The statues in Daboruodong cannot be confirmly dated to the Song time since they mostly were added in the Ming time (1386-1644). See the analysis in part 4.4.

¹⁶ Many early historical documents of the three teachings in stone carvings come from Sichuan. The earliest known one is a text for a sanctuary of the three teachings in Jianyang in 771. Nevertheless, it is not clear if in the sanctuary the statues of the three teachers were made or not. See *Jinshi yuanmu*, S., vol. II, b. 20, 14654. Another one was in the near of Chengdu und it was an inscription about the repainting of the three teachers in 1084. *Baqiongshi jingshi buzheng*, S., vol. I, b. 8, 5707. Also a stele for the ancient images of the three teachers in Rongxian County from the Song time was recorded by many epigraphers, while no details is known. See *Yanting jinshi conggao*, S., vol. III, b. 32, 582 and *Jinshi huimu fenbian*, S., vol. II, b. 27, 100. Outside Sichuan there are steles of the three teachings such as one of 1115 in Liqu in Shandong and one of 1233 in Jiaxing in Zhejiang was recorded by epigraphers. See *Linqiong jinshizhi* and *Linqiong jinshi xuzhi*, S., vol. III, b. 28, 7 and 23, also *Jiaxing fuzhi*, S., vol. III, b. 7, 418 and Shandong jinshizhi, S., vol. II, b.12, 9387.

¹⁷ For the records about the stele see among others *Huanyu fangbeilu*, S., vol. I, b. 26, 20021. *Jinshi huimu fenbian*, S., vol. II, b. 27, 33, *Baqiongshi jingshi buzheng*, S., vol. I, b. 8, 27. On the upper part of the stele an inscription was carved in the style of official script praising Buddha as the great-grand-teacher with the hierarchy from Kongzi to Laozi and then to Buddha, from lowest to the highest.

¹⁸ See Guoli gugong, *Songdai shuhua*, 270-271.

into laughter. The episode reflected the unification of the thoughts of the three teachings in the imagination of intellectuals and the ideal was symbolized in the literati painting.¹⁹

The earliest dated sculpture of the three teachers was carved on a hill called Silishan in Dongping county in the province of Shandong. On top of the small hill hundreds of Buddha figures of various sizes were chiselled on several huge rocks. The numerous Buddhist figures, sometimes overlapped carved, show the Buddhist activities in the place from the late 6th century until the Song Dynasty. The statues of the three teachers are located on the left lower corner of a huge Buddha statue (Fig. 1.4). According to the inscription the three teachers with their attendants were carved in 1057. In this earliest dated niche of the three teachers, Buddha Śākyamuni sits in the middle, while Kongzi and Laozi with their attendants flank him on his either sides.²⁰

Those early examples of the three teachings are either literati painting or single pieces which is isolated from its original context. Compared with the above-mentioned remains the carving of the three teachings in Sichuan are characterized in three following aspects. First, they belong to the earliest extant images of the united three teachings in China (from late 11th to 13th century). Confined in a small area and carved within one dynasty, the carvings coincided the theoretical unification of the three teachings and reflected the understanding of the common people at that time. Second, they are well reserved together with their original settings. The original contexts are preserved to certain extent and they offer important materials for the study of this special iconological subject. All the carvings of the three teachings in the six sites are not single piece, but they belong to a group of niches or caves, of which often certain programme is traceable. In addition, in some places they functioned or came into being under the context of certain rituals. Thirdly, their form and content either regarding the fashioning of the teachers or the manner of the combination are diversified, which offers the possibility to analyze the relevant historical situation and environment. Carved within 200 years by the local people from various social layers, the

¹⁹ The story was favored by the painter in the Song time and had been painted by many renowned painters, such as Shi Ke (active in 10th century), Li Tang (1066-1150) and praised by the great literati like Su Shi (1037-1101) and Huang Tingjian (1045-1105), etc. In fact as Lu Xiuqing (406-477) came to Lushan at the end years of Yuanjia era (423-453) Tao Yuanming (365-407) had died for over twenty years and Huiyuan (334-416) for over thirty years. The story was not seen in the materials until 7th century. The legend was probably invented as latest as in the middle Tang time, but in the manuscript of S. 972 from Dunhuang concerning Huiyuan the story was not included. See Zhou Weiping, "Yingcang si 2073," 37.

²⁰ For the report of the statues of the three teachings in Silishan, see Zhang Congjun, "Silishan moyao zaoxiang," Yang Hao, "Beifang zuizao de 'sanjiao liantong' kanxiang."

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rock carvings of the three teachings in the six sites were both connected and varied concerning their style and iconography.

The main interest of the paper is to deal with all the known sites with statues of the three teachings in the Sichuan region, so as to reveal the beliefs and activities of local people, their understanding, their wishes and the content and characteristics of their devotional activities concerning the three teachings. Through analyzing the works of the three teachings in detail the author try to answer the questions such as, how were the statues of the three teachings represented and what did they mean? What was the original programmes or contexts of the carvings and what were their function and status in relation to the other ones in the group? How was the unification of the three teachings reflected in the practices of common people? Who was the winner of the three teachings in the unification?

1.2. Scholarship on the Rock Carvings in Sichuan

Although the Sichuan region was rich with rock carvings, those cultural heritages have been neglected by scholars for a long time. Such situation is caused on the one hand by traffic difficulties since the region is located in mountainous area of the far southwest China; on the other hand the carvings, mostly niches or caves of small scale, are not concentrated in one place like those in the north China, but rather scattered over the whole province. Because of these reasons there were few scholars outside the Sichuan region who were able to research on the spot before 20th century, and even so to the expeditioners from Europe and Japan at the beginning of last century. The scientific research on the cultural and artistic heritage of the region, especially the rock carvings, began just from 1980's as those were opened again to the outer world. Since then the rock carvings in the Sichuan region became known to the world and highly valued by scholars.²¹ Retrospecting the history of the study concerning the rock carvings in Sichuan, it can be roughly divided into three periods:²²

²¹ The retrospect of the research on Chinese Buddhist art by Li Yuming shows, that the Buddhist art in Sichuan has never been valued by the generations of archaeologists or art historians either from the West or Japan or China since the 20th century. Li Yumin, "Zhongguo fojiao meishu." For the reason why Chinese scholars also neglect the carvings in Sichuan see the analysis by Ding Mingyi, "Gongyuan qi zhi shier," 424-453.

²² For the history of research of the rock carvings in Sichuan, especially in Dazu see Chen Dian, "Dazu shike de yanjiu," 39-46, Chen Zhuo, "Dazu shike bainian," 707-724. For the general study until 2002, see Liu Changjiu, "Dazu shiku yanjiu," 12-48.

The study of the first period are mainly the recordings of the epigraphers and some photographic documentations by the explorers from Europe in the early 20th century. As early as in the Southern Song Dynasty (1127-1279) local scholars have already made registers and records on the rock carvings in some places which are particularly valuable today since they provide the very direct observations from the contemporary scholars.²³ In the following time from 14th to 17th century there were no many meaningful studies made.²⁴ Since the Jiaqing era (1796-1820) of the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911) the county magistrate of Dazu Zhang Shu (1776-1847) systematically registered the rock carvings in this region for the first time and wrote more than ten articles regarding their history and content. His study are important references today since after almost 200 years many changes have happened to the rock carvings.²⁵ After him more and more epigraphers have become interested in the rock carvings in Sichuan, and their studies are recorded in various epigraphical writings or in the local annals of epigraphy.²⁶

By and large, since the epigraphers despised the activities of worshipping by the common people they were not familiar with Buddhism or Daoism. The epigraphical studies were made mostly from the interests of history and calligraphy and therefore the records are not always reliable due to incorrectness or incompleteness. Nevertheless, they are still important references since they might be the single contemporary record for the carvings which might be heavily weathered or even extinguish today.²⁷

Of the European expeditors it is known that Victor Segalan (1878-1919) had been in Guanyuan and Mianyang counties, while his interests were mainly on the tombs of the Han time rather than the Buddhist or Daoist rock carvings.²⁸ Ernst Boerschmann was also in Sichuan and took numerous photos of the architectures there which were partly related to the rock carvings.²⁹ Their routes were primarily along the Yangtse River and they did not entered the east and south parts of the Sichuan region. Nevertheless their photographic

²³ E.g. Wang Xiangzhi (12th to 13th century), *Yudi jisheng* and *Shu bei ji*.

²⁴ The records by the scholars of the Ming time seem to have taken those of the scholars in the Song time. E.g. *Shuzhong mingshen ji* by Cao Xuequan (1574-1646).

²⁵ Chen Zhuo, "Dazu shike bainian," 708.

²⁶ The epigraphical workings with extensive records of the rock carvings in Sichuan are among others *Yifengtang jinshi wenzimu*, *Jinshi huimu fenmian*, *Jinshiyuan mu*, etc.

²⁷ The extensive inscriptions and steles, especially of Buddhism and Daoism have been mostly compiled and published since recent years, such as Gao Wen and Gao Chenggang, *Sichuan lidai beike*, Long Xianzhao, ed., *Bashu daoqiao beiwen jicheng*, and *Bashu foqiao beiwen jicheng*, etc.

²⁸ Together with Segalan, Gilbert de Voisins and Jean Lartigues were in Sichuan for the expedition too. See Segalan, Victor, et al., *Mission Archéologique en Chine (1914 et 1917). Atlas Tome II*, plates 69-144.

²⁹ Boerschmann, Ernst, *Baukunst und Landschaft in China*, 111-113.

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documentation is valuable especially for those perished sites (such as the exploded parts of rock carvings in Guangyuan). Japanese scholars seemed to have seldom been in the Sichuan region, although they did many works in the north China for the Buddhist caves during the period of the 2nd World War.³⁰

The second period began from the middle of the 20th century to the end of 1970's. The rock carvings in Sichuan, especially those in Dazu, raised the interests of Chinese scholars. Under the local guide Chen Xishan, Yang Jialuo (1912-1991) led a group of experts to study the rock carvings in Dazu. Several articles about it were afterwards published and exhibitions were then organized in Chongqing.³¹ It was the first time that the rock carvings in Sichuan were studied and documented with scientific equipments and methods. The sensational exhibition made the rock carvings known to the scholars, but the studies were not continued further due to the beginning of the Civil War (1945-1949). In 1950's the first systematical survey of the rock carving in Dazu was done, and some other scholars have also worked on the carvings in the region.³² Accompanying the general investigation of cultural heritage countrywide some carvings in various sites in Sichuan were discovered and published on the archaeological magazines like *Wenwu*, *Sichuan wenwu* etc. Before the cultural revolution two groups of scholars visited and studied the rock carvings in Dazu: China Artists Association and the archaeological students from Peking University led by Yan Wenru. However no significant research has ever been published.³³ Among others the local scholars devoted themselves to the study of the rock carvings in Sichuan with numerous articles and published photographic documentations.³⁴ In that period some scholars from the USSR or Japan also published some introductory articles on the rock carvings in Dazu. During the Cultural Revolution there was generally no research made on the scientific level until the end of 1970's. The study of the second period was just initiative and the participants were mainly constrained with the circle of artists. The historical and artistic value of the rock carvings in Sichuan did not match the study they deserved.

³⁰ No records or photographs made by Japanese are known. Ōmura Seigai included some rock carvings in his book but the entries were based on Chinese epigraphical registers or rubbings. It seems that he had never been in Sichuan. See Ōmura Seigai, *Shina bijutsushi chōsohen*, 649-653, 659.

³¹ For the short studies by Yang Jialuo and Fu Zhenlun, see Liu Changjiu et al., *Dazu shike yanjiu*, 18-31.

³² Zhang Shengzang, "Dazu anyue de shiku yishu." Chen Xishan, *Dazu shike zhilue*. See Liu Changjiu et al., *Dazu shike yanjiu*, 37-41 and 183-356,

³³ Some observations and introductions by Yan Wenru are included in his book *Zhongguo shiku yishu zonglun*, 320-390

³⁴ The most outstanding scholars are Li Sisheng and Hu Wenhe. Both have done enormous field works with numerous valuable publications of research.

The third period began from 1980's as China was opened to the world again. The relatively well-preserved rock carvings in Sichuan, especially those in Dazu, raised the interest of art historian worldwide. In 1982 the Institute of Rock Carvings in Dazu was founded and devoted itself to the research and conservation of the rock carvings in Sichuan, especially in Dazu. The institute has also organized exhibitions and international conferences and published with five volumes of articles as well as colour photographical documentations.³⁵ In 1999 the rock carvings was listed in the World Cultural Heritage of UNESCO, for which their efforts were essential. In this period with the efforts of the art historian worldwide a great number of monographies and articles have been published. The study of rock carvings enters an international era with the focus on those in Dazu.

The publications of the rock carvings in Sichuan including monographs and articles, mostly in Chinese, are amounted over 1,000 items in the Journals like *Wenwu*, *Sichuan wenwu*, *Chendu wenwu*, *Kaogu*, *Kaogu yu wenwu*, *Shijie zongjiao yanjiu* etc. which can be generally categorized into three kinds:

The first kind is the archaeological reports. The archaeological researchs of the rock carvings in Sichuan are mostly finished by the local researchers of the bureau of cultural relics. Until now most of the known rock carvings have been published with such initial reports of study, which are the fundamental materials for the further study. Since all the archaeological works have been done by local researchers with various technical capabilities, the quality of the reports are often different. Definitely the archaeological works can be improved regarding to their reliability and correctness. Because of the lackness of an authoritative and systematical report of archaeological survey in some sites, the descriptive narrations are often repeated in some articles. In addition, relying on their own capability some local scholars have also made a quite comprehensive field works, which may include all the rock carvings in Sichuan, and their reports and studies are also important material of reference.³⁶ The Art Museum of Rock Carvings in Dazu (the former Institute of Rock Carvings in Dazu) has devoted themselves to the study of the heritage in the county since years and has published *Dazu Shike Zonglun* und *Dazu shike mingwenlu*, which offer relative complete materials for this region. Unfortunately there are over hundred mistakes in the latter book, which reduce its value and reliability.³⁷ Since recent years the

³⁵ Chongqing dazu shike, *Dazu shike yanjiu wenji* I-V, *Dazu shike diaosu quanji* I-V.

³⁶ E.g. Hu Wenhe, *Sichuan daojiao fojiao shiku yishu*, in which almost all the Buddhist and Daoist rock carvings in the Sichuan region are included.

³⁷ Li Chuanshou, "Du 'Dazu shike'", 415-443.

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fundamental works have been done further. Scholars with professional training of archaeology renewed the fieldwork of several sites of rock carvings with scientific methods and technologies. The publications of catalogues, such as *Guangyuan*, *Bazhong* and *Beishan* at Dazu are the most remarkable works in the field in recent years.³⁸

Related with the archaeological survey, the second category is the historical research, including dating, research on the historical figures such as monks, donors and artists, the programme and religious function of the carvings, the relation between the carvings in the setting of contemporary politic, religion and local culture etc. Although some works have been done, there are still some crucial historical questions should be further studied and clarified. Of the historical discussion the dating of the carvings is the first problem to be faced. Besides the dating of certain niches or cave without dating inscriptions, the periodization and dating of the groups of carvings such as those in *Guanyuang*, *Bazhong* and *Beishan* at Dazu are a significant work for archaeologists.³⁹ The most disputable is the dating of the carvings in *Baodingshan* at Dazu, which differs from the usual carvings, i.e. as there is no any inscription about the dating, donors etc. Now it is generally accepted that the carvings in the area were carved during the late 50 to 70 years in the Southern Song Dynasty, but for the exact dating or the reason why the project in *Dafowan* was suddenly stopped etc., there are still various opinions due to the lackness of historical proofs.⁴⁰

In Sichuan the historical figures related with the carvings like monks, donors or carvers are mostly unclear since there are normally no recordings in the historical documents. At present most of the materials come directly from the rock carvings such as inscriptions or steles.⁴¹ For the two historical figures *Liu Benzun* (active 8th to 9th century) and *Zhao Zhifeng* (active 12th to 13th century) have been many discussions. The opinion of *Baodingshan* as a mandala was also objected by scholars from the viewpoints of ritual of Esoteric Buddhism.⁴² Since recent years more and more scholars of art historian, archaeologists and buddhologists outside Sichuan have joined the study of the rock carvings in Sichuan. From

³⁸ Yao Chongxin, *Guangyuan shiku* and Lei Yuhua, *Bazhong shiku*, etc.

³⁹ For the study concerning the periodisation and the donors of the rock carvings in *Beishan* see Li Fangyin, "Dazu beishan," 47-74, "Dazu beishan," 308-350, Deng Can, "Jianshu shijie wenhua," 472-478. About the Esoteric Buddhism before Liu and Zhao in Sichuan reserved in *Guangyuan* and *Bazhong* etc., see Wei Wei, "Gudai Sichuan," 32-35.

⁴⁰ For the discussion of the dating of the rock carvings in *Baodingshan*, see the summary of Liu Changjiu, "Dazu shike yanjiu," 15-29. See also the footnote 392 in the 5th chapter.

⁴¹ E.g. it is found that a monk called *Xuanying* (7th to 8th century) had been influtial in the rock carvings in *Anyue*. See Fu Chengjin, "Anyue shike zhi xuanying kao."

⁴² Liu Changjiu, "Dazu shike yanjiu," 29-36. For the scholarship about the programme of *Dafowan* see the footnote 393.

their own disciplines or local materials they open new perspectives and provide more convincing explanations for the study of the carvings in Baodingshan and the relating figures.⁴³

Carvers and donors are also important topics. The carvings in Dazu and Anyue were mostly finished by the two families of carvers, the family Fu and family Wen, who left much information in the rock carvings.⁴⁴ Also the various statues of the donors of the rock carvings, from high local officials to common villagers, are also reserved in the carvings. Their social status, and the organisation of statue making are also worthy of further study, such as their origin, the relation between the generations of the carver families and the statues as well as their influence on the carvings in Baodingshan etc.⁴⁵ The most studies in that part are weak on the treatment of the iconological comparison which can reflect the artistic, historical and religious relations between those carvings in Sichuan and in the regions such as Dunhuang, Shaanxi and Yunnan etc.⁴⁶ Although there are still several articles concerning the historical contexts and occasions for the rock carvings in Sichuan, most of them are not enough as meaningful historical research. Obviously the task is rather difficult since such research demands the comprehensive knowledge of history, religion and art history and at the same time it demands the familiarity of scholars with the materials in different regions.

Thirdly, many iconographical studies were done in relation with art history. Some hot topics, such as history and images from Wanfosi, early Buddhism in Sichuan, Money tree,⁴⁷ the art of Esoteric Buddhism as well as certain kinds of images like Mañjuśrī, Guanyin, representation of the hell, etc were discussed by several scholars. Furthermore Daoist carvings, the architecture and music from the Tang and Song time seen in the rock carvings, the engraved Buddhist sutras in Wofoyuan etc., are all studied as important topics. Stylistic

⁴³ Those new results were included in *Dazu shike yanjiu wenji V*. Especially appreciable are the two articles by Hou Chong, “Lun dazu baoding wei fojiao shuilu,” and “Zongze ‘xiaoxinglu’.”

⁴⁴ For the study of the carver family Wen in the region, see Chen Xishan, “Dazu shike juanjiangren kao.” In Liu Changjiu et al., *Dazu shike yanjiu*, 354, He Wenhe, “Dazu shizhuanshan,” 76-79. Zhang Hua, “Dazu songdai shike juanjiang.” 411-422. Chen Mingguang, “Dazu shike tanyi,” 155-158, Deng Zhijin, “Jianshu juanzao,” 423-428.

⁴⁵ For the donors in the rock carvings in Dazu, see Deng Can, “Jianshu shijie,” 471-490, and Li Fangyin, “Dazu beishan shiku gongyangren,” 308-350.

⁴⁶ For the characteristics of Buddhism in Dunhuang from late Tang to early Song time see Dang Yanni, “Wantang wudai.” For the relation reflected in the texts between Dunhuang and Sichuan see Long Hui, “Dazu fojiao shike,” 82. The contemporary Buddhist caves carved in the northern Shaanxi province have also been neglected since years, which have many in common with those in the Sichaun region concerning the subject. See Jin Zhilin, *Yanan diqu shiku yishu*.

⁴⁷ The religious background of the so called money tree is still a disputable question. See Xian Ming, “Lun yaoqi daojiao yiwu yaoqianshu.” Zhou Kelin, “Yaoqianshu,” 15-22, etc.

1.2. Scholarship on the Rock Carvings in Sichuan

studies are comparatively less, probably due to the fact that only a small amount of art historian have taken part in the study of the rock carvings in Sichuan. The stylistical study of the relation between the rock carvings in Sichuan and other provinces and regions as well as the freestanding sculptures in Song time has not yet really begun.⁴⁸ In general many themes have been discussed but most of them need to be further explored. Also, the research of the rock carvings has been mostly confined with Buddhist contents.

The amount of the carvings of the unified three teachings in Sichuan is not large and the scholars from Dazu regard them normally as a special iconographical subject in their articles.⁴⁹ The studies till now believe that those carvings came into being under the historical background of the unification of the three teachings in the Song time. On grounds of the inscriptions and certain subjects in the carvings some scholars pointed out that they were closely combined with the ritual of *shuilu*. Some even believed that the sites with the carvings of the three teachings were the places where the ritual was held. Also some research attempt to study the background and origin of such kind of carvings by relating the historical figures in documents and in the carvings. The study of the relation between the three teachers and other deities make it possible for some scholars to periodize or categorize the known carvings of the three teachings.

In general the works on the theme are usually only introductory. Although many scholars have already pointed out the historical background of the unification of the three teachings, the similarity and difference of the beliefs between the local common people and those of the rulers, officials and the monks of Buddhism and Daoism have not been considered. For the aspects of religious function many judgments are often based on the inscriptions of certain carvings. Therefore the relation between the rituals such as the *shuilu* and the carvings of the three teachings has not been clear. The form and stylistical development as well as the iconographical origin of the three teachers have also not been studied. By studying the whole group and each related niches with those of the three teachings in detail, the author would make his efforts in this paper to explore such aspects on these important artistic representations of cultural phenomenon.

⁴⁸ The scholars like Hu Wenhe and Luo Shiping have made some meaningful attempts in such field. See For the stylistic study on the rock carvings in Dazu, see Song Langqiu, "Shishu dazu shiku waizai," 103-113.

⁴⁹ The overlooking studies on the carvings of the three teachings are among others Guo Xiangying, "Dazu shike yishu," 22-24, "Dazu shiku zhong de daojiao," 58-78, Li Fangyin, "Dazu songdai shiku zhong de ru shi dao," 276-280, "Dazu songdai shiku zhong de shuilu yiji," 93-102, Li Xiaoqiang, "Dazu shike zhaji," 335-339, Zhao Huizhi, "Fengji yu dazu shike," 537-543, Xie Shengbao and Xie Jing, "Shuilu d□och□n□ yu d□zu shike," 19-32, etc.

1.3. Structure and Method of the Paper

A systematic and historical understanding of the thoughts, historical evolution and history of images of the belonging religion is essential for the scientific research of religious art since it provides the necessary iconological preconditions for the studying and delivers a clear background and scope of the subject. For that reason a detailed introduction of the three teachings from the historical dimension, concerning its founder, philosophy, history will be made in the second chapter. While thousand works have been done in this field, the author will only draw a contour in this paper with the purpose to explicate the meaning and status of the images of the three teachings. Since the discussion of the relation of the three teachings is a focus point in the paper, a historical retrospect of the relation and the background of the three teachings especially in Song time will be carefully explored. As to the rock carvings in the Sichuan region, it is also meaningful to make an overview including the historical development of the three teachings in this region and the remainings of rock carving there until the Song time. The introductions of those aspects could thus deliver a concise summary of the historical conditions of the three teachings in the region.

In the second part of the chapter the relation between the Buddhist ritual *shuilu* and the rock carvings in Sichuan will be discussed. Religious art works are mostly connected with certain religious rituals and they usually fulfill specific historical functions. For a group of religious art works the knowledge on the relating ritual is decisive for the study of the iconography of the works. In the Sichuan region the inscriptions of the rock carvings show their close relationship with the rituals in the Song time, especially in the carvings of the unified three teachings. Furthermore, in its originating period of the rite *shuilu* was quite active in Sichuan, and for this reason the second part of the chapter begins with the history of the rite, its form and content as well as its function. With the historical documents and the materials reserved in the rock carvings several remains of *shuilu* in the rock carvings in the Sichuan region will be analyzed as one of the religious contexts of the carvings of the three teachings. The discussion on *shuilu* is especially informative for the understanding of the statues in Shizhuanshan and Shibisi.

According to the manner of the combination of the three teachings the six sites can be categorized into three types: the first one is Shizhuanshan with a dozen of independent niches and all niches were finished in the late 11th century (from 1082 to 1096). The second type includes the carvings of four sites. Miaogaoshan (around 1144) and Fo'anqiao (1140-

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1172) in the region of the south area of the county Dazu and Shibisi (1210) and the other Daboruodong (1240) in Anyue County in the northwest direction of Dazu. In the four sites the three masters were worshipped together in one niche or cave. The third type refers to the three niches in the complex of Dafowan which were finished from the late 12th century to the middle of 13th century. In Dafowan the images of Kongzi and Laozi are missing but the spirit there is definitely that of the three teachings. The making of the three teaching has developed from iconic combination of the three teachers to an ideological unification of the three teachings. In a chronological order at the same time these three types of carvings of the three teachings will be studied in the third, fourth and fifth chapter respectively.

Instead of merely examining the niches or caves with the statues of the three teachers, all the images in each site will be studied. Especial attention will be paid for the relation of the three teachers with other deities of the group, such as their status in the complex and their function in the whole programme. Based on the scholarship and the field works, the paper examines the carvings of three teachings not only from details but also from the whole complex thoroughly.

For each site there are three parts: At the beginning an overview of the whole site will be given, in which the general information of the site, location and distribution, dating and inscriptions, contents and form will be introduced. Then in the main part every niches will be carefully examined. All the niches of one site will be listed and studied in detail. Other niches, which were built in the same group with the carvings of the three teachings, will be regarded as the integrative parts of the whole site. Three most important questions will be involved during the examining of each niche: Firstly, the objects in each niche should be detailed described. The manner of handling of each niche resembles that of catalogue entries in an attempt to describe and explain the content of the statues clearly and accurately. The relevant aspects include: architectural form of the niche; main figures with its attributes; assistanting figures as well as the associating figures such as donor, guardians, etc. Secondly, with the method of iconology, though it is not always successful, identification and clarification the identity of contents of the images become possible. The other step is the attempt to connect the single work with its context, such as the status, relation and function with other niches and in regarding to the whole complex. The concerned aspects are the identity of the main figure and its function and explanation in canonical text, etc. Thirdly, the image study will be made by comparing the statues with the

relating pieces so that the characteristics, style or transformation can be clarified. All the aspects concerning analysing an artwork could be helpful, such as composition, colour, manner of representation etc. With comparison of the similar images in Sichuan the style or the characteristics of the statues will be considered. The work in such field can quite helpful to date the works if there are no inscriptions of date available. The last part is the summarizing of the site. In the evaluation of each site following points will be taken into consideration: firstly, the inscriptions and the background of the donor. With the help of the first hand historical materials, the thoughts, wishes and beliefs of the donor of the three teachings will be revealed and those are usually essential for the understanding of the programme of the whole group. Then is the discussion of the programme of the whole group. The study of the program is a necessary historical research and meaningful for the understanding of the function and status of the three teachings in the whole. In the end is the consideration of the relation between the three teachings and the whole group. Their function and the beliefs are the most concerned questions in the paper and at the end of each site those questions will be discussed in order to provide an understanding of the historical situation reflected by the carvings.

After studying all the sites with carvings of the three teachings there is a short conclusion at the end of the paper. Relying on the materials from rock carvings the historical process of unification of the three teachings in Song time will be evaluated and summarized according to the manner of the unification and its meaning, the hierarchy of the three teachings as well as its relation with the sinicization of Buddhism.

2. Historical Backgrounds

2.1. The Three Teachings

2.1.1. Buddhism

The teaching

Originated from ancient India, Buddhism was founded in the 6th to 5th centuries B.C. by Buddha Śākyamuni, “the Enlightened Saint of the Clan Śākya”, an honoured appellation of Gautama Siddhārtha by his disciples and followers. According to the legend the prince of Kapilavastu abandoned his life in palace at the age of twenty-nine after seeing the bitterness of human beings and decided to seek the truth of life. Six years later he accomplished his philosophical and religious system under a pippala tree, which was regarded as enlightened. After his enlightenment Buddha preached his teachings in north India for more than forty-five years until his death, or nirvana. Generally he is believed to be active in the duration of 565-485 B.C. or 563-483 B.C., approximately contemporary to Laozi (about 600-470 BC.) and Kongzi (551-479 B.C.) in China.⁵⁰

According to Buddha’s doctrines human beings are in one of a cycle of six status of existence. Because of ignorance and desire they are trapped in the cycle and suffer endless bitterness. The aggregation of the sufferings and their resultant karma will cause that next reincarnation of human beings. To delete the aggregated bitterness of the endless lives is through extinguishing and the method to reach that is the Buddhist way. Bitterness, aggregation, extinguishing and the Buddhist Way are four key words highly summarizing the contents of Buddhism. The final goal of a Buddhist is to become Buddha, or enter into nirvana, the ultimate emancipation from the world of bitterness. Buddha’s teachings and precepts were recorded in written form after his death and together with the treatises finished in later world they are compiled as the Buddhist classics called Tripitaka. Buddha, Dharma - Buddha’s teachings and Sangha are the three basic compositions of Buddhism and are called as the three treasures.

From north India Buddhism was spread to the south and north. In the south it reached in the countries of Southeast Asia and developed there. In north it firstly spread to the Central Asia, where new doctrines the Mahayana Buddhism were developed during the spreading

⁵⁰ For the life of the historical Buddha and Buddhism in India, see the study of Hajime Nakamura, *Indian Buddhism*, 16-21. For a general survey of the study of Buddhism see *Ibid.*, 1-11.

process. In contrast to Hinayana Buddhism - the original doctrines of Buddha, by which a self-salvation was mainly aimed, Mahayana Buddhism as polytheism with plenty of Buddhas and bodhisattvas claimed to save all the sentient beings. At the beginning of the Common Era both schools of Buddhism were simultaneously introduced via the Central Asia into China, where Mahayana Buddhism developed and was prosperous for hundreds of years under the efforts of generations of Buddhists. Further via China Buddhism was introduced into Korea and Japan and became a dominant religion in East Asia in the early Middle Ages. In the 8th to 9th centuries Mahayana Buddhism began to decline in India and Esoteric Buddhism came into being by absorbing Hindu elements and was introduced into China in the 8th century.⁵¹ However the introduction of Esoteric Buddhism in China was restrained due to political, economical reasons and only in Japan further spread and developed. In China some more localised schools such as Chan or Pure Land Buddhism became the main stream Buddhism for centuries until the beginning of 20th century.⁵²

Interaction with the other two teachings

As a foreign religion Buddhism had always to reconcile the conflicts between itself and the local Chinese culture since it was introduced into China. In the earliest period of Eastern Han (25-220 A.D.) time Buddhists used Daoist terms to translate the Buddhist sutras and worshipped the icon of Buddha together with that of Laozi. At latest in the time of the Three Kingdoms (220-280 A.D.) the Buddhists were in the opinion that the three teachings were essentially in accordance.⁵³ During the Six Dynasties (222-581 A.D.) Buddhism developed rapidly and became the dominating religion in China. In this period Buddhism did not assimilate itself into other religions anymore but absorbed the Chinese cultural elements in order to accommodate itself better in Chinese society. Some initiators advocated the unification of Buddhism with Daoism or Confucianism. For instance, from the Buddhist viewpoint Huiyuan (334-416) hold the view that Buddhism should be merged with other the two teachings.⁵⁴ The emperor Wudi of Liang (464-549) was also an early advocator of the unification of the three teachings.⁵⁵ Yan Zhitui (531-591) combined Confucianism and

⁵¹ About the influence of Daoism on Esoteric Buddhism see Huang Xinchuan, "Daojiao yu mijiao," 205-218 and Xiao Dengfu, "Lun fojiao shou zhongtu daojiao," 83-98.

⁵² For an overview of Buddhism in Song Dynasty see Lü Cheng, *Zhongguo foxue*, 384-396.

⁵³ E.g. *Lihuolun* by Mozi. About the relation between Buddhism and the other teachings in the 3rd to the early 5th century see Zeng Zhaonan, "Hanwei lianjin rushidao," 48-60.

⁵⁴ Fang Litian, "Huiyuan yu fojiao," 28-32.

⁵⁵ That story is seen in many historical documents such as *Liangshu*, *Erjiaolun* by Daoan or *Guanhongmingji* etc. See Wang Yuanhua, *Sibian fawei*, 118-119.

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Buddhism by comparing the Confucian Five Constant Virtues, *wuchang*, with the Buddhist Five Precepts, *wujie*, etc in parallel.⁵⁶ The advocations of the unification of the three teachings in the Six Dynasties were mostly simply resemblance and contrast, rather than unifying the three theoretically.⁵⁷ Most initiators claimed that the three came from one source and tried to absorb the other two into their own teaching. During the Sui and Tang time Buddhism reached its social summit.⁵⁸ The representative work on the unification of the three teachings from Buddhists was Zongmi's (780-841) *Inquiry into the Origin of Humanity, Yuanrenlun*. In response to the attacks on Buddhism made by Han Yu (768-824), Zongmi emphasized the unity of the three teachings, but simultaneously he pointed out the relative strengths of Buddhism in comparison to Confucianism and Daoism.⁵⁹ His effort to establish a system based on Buddhism by absorbing Daoism and Confucianism reflected the status of Buddhism in the Tang time and its confidence.⁶⁰

Entering into the Song time⁶¹ the unification of the three teachings became a main stream in the ideological realm.⁶² Different from earlier time the unification of the three teachings was built on the basis of Confucianism. The Buddhists then rejected the attitudes of earlier masters like Zongmi who held Buddhism in the centre and came closer to Confucianism for the sake of solving conflicts between various thoughts. The great scholar monk of the Northern Song Dynasty Zhiyuan (976-1022) advocated the unification of the three teachings by emphasizing the equivalence of meaning in spite of the difference of wording.⁶³ He thought that the three teachings should support each other and their different functions ought to be served together for the health of human's mind and body. Qihao (1007-1075)

⁵⁶ Shengkai, "Lun ru fo dao sanjiao lunli," 218-227.

⁵⁷ About the relation of the three teachings in the period of the Six Dynasties see Li Chenggui, "Ru dao fo sanjiao," 12-18.

⁵⁸ For the historical background and policies of the three teachings during the reign of the Empress Wu Zetian (re. 690-705), see Kou Yanghou, "Wu Zetian yu tangzhongzong," 19-26.

⁵⁹ For the different attitudes of Confucianists towards Buddhism like Han Yu, Liu Zongyuan and Li Ao in the Tang Dynasty, see Muo Zhongjian, "Cong Rufo guanxi kan Han Yu," 203-220.

⁶⁰ For Zongmi's attitude of the unification of the three teachings, see among others Kamata Shigeo, "Zongmi de sanjiaoguan." For the analysis how Zongmi connected the three teachings from the Buddhist viewpoint, see Wang Kaifu, "Zongmi yuanrenlun," 147-183.

To Zongmi the virtue of filial piety was also an important aspect, since he wrote an annotation to the Ullanbana Sutra. See Ibid., 153. For his attempt of combining the I Ching and Buddhism, see Wang Zhongyao, "Zongmi zhi yuan yi shuo fo," 263-285.

⁶¹ Under the influence of politics, economics and change of culture the prosperity of Buddhism in Song showed in a different appearance from that in Tang according to the opinion of some buddhological scholars. See Kasasa Masaaki. *Chōgoku bukkyō shakaishi kenkyū*, Tang Yongtong, "Wudai songyuan," and Li Qingling, "Song xia jin shiqi."

⁶² For the attitude to Buddhism from the imperial family of the Song Dynasty, see Makita Tairyū, *Chūgoku bukkyōshi*, 111-118. For the historical overview of Buddhism in the Northern Song, see Tong Wei, "Beisong fojiaoshi," 322-344.

⁶³ Lai Yonghai, "Songyuan shiji foru," 110-113.

was also an important figure for advocating the unification of the three teachings in the Northern Song time. Similar to the assertion of Zhiyuan he wrote more than hundred treatises supporting the unification that only with the difference on functions and depth the three teachings should all be oriented to lead the followers to the good. He compared the religions and claimed that Confucianism was for the mundane life and Buddhism for the supramundane world while all the three leading to the good. A characteristic of his theory thereby was his advocacy of the virtue of filial piety and loyalty to the emperor, which had been the main points that were used to attack Buddhism since long time.⁶⁴ He discarded all the related accusations against Buddhists and claimed that filial piety was mostly cherished by Buddhism. Thus Qihao brought the elements of Confucianism into Buddhism by supplementing the highly cherished virtue of filial piety.⁶⁵ Zonggao's (1089-1163) supporting way for the unification of the three teachings was expressing them with the short phrases in a Chan Buddhist style, such as "Confucianism is Buddhism; Buddhism is Confucianism."⁶⁶ Similar to the above mentioned two masters Zonggao emphasized the moral function in spite of different appearance. Besides the monks some renown lay Buddhists such as Li Zhichun (11th – 12th century), Guitang Jushi (12th -13th century) advocated the unification of the three teachings in their own viewpoints in combination with their situations. Guitang Jushi stood for the unification which Confucianism stayed in centre while Buddhism and Daoism served as assistants. He regarded the great lay Buddhist Vimalakīrti as the model for the lay Buddhists and claimed that a lay Buddhist should hold the Confucian classics as the guide of life although they might live a Buddhist life.⁶⁷

While many Buddhist monks appraised of the unification with Confucianism there were also monks learning from Daoism to accommodate Buddhist to the demand of the society. For instance, the monk Zhili (960-1028) introduced Daoist ritual into Buddhism by setting up Buddhist rituals after the Daoist models, *zhajiao*. Furthermore he used the dialectic argumentation developed by Laozi to argue for the coexistence of different teachings with obvious Daoist influence.

⁶⁴ In Buddhism the virtue of filial piety is also included. However this virtue is not so much emphasized by the Buddhists in India. See Thorpe, V.L., "Filial Piety and the Monk," 56-71, and Gu Zhengmei, "Dazu fo jiao xiaojing jingbian," 319-335. The filial piety of Buddhism focuses more on rewarding the kindness of parents from an emotional standpoint, while such virtue promoted by Confucianism stresses the maintenance of social order and hierarchy from a political viewpoint. See Zhu Lan, "Lun ru fo xiaodao guan," 40-47.

⁶⁵ About Qihao and his theoretical unification of Buddhism and Confucianism see Wei Daoru, "Cong lunliguan dao xinxinglun," 33-36. Lai Yonghai, "Songyuan shiji foru," 113-115.

⁶⁶ Lai Yonghai, "Songyuan shiji foru," 115-117.

⁶⁷ Yang Cengwen, "Nansong guitang jushi *daminglu*," 327-343.

2.1. The Three Teachings

In general all the Buddhist supporters for the unification of the three teachings in Song time changed their strategy drastically in viewing of the historical situation that Buddhism was not able to stand on the equal level with Confucianism. In order to survive and to be justified into the society they had to adapt themselves to the dominating ideology of Confucianism.

Buddhism in Sichuan

The central area of China including the middle and lower reaches of the Yellow River had been always the centre of politics, economics and culture of China since ancient time. In this region generations of great Buddhist monks had built monasteries and pagodas alongside the spreading way of Buddhism since it was introduced into China. The Sichuan region is located in the far southwest China and was only connected with north China through dangerous route. In Sichuan Buddhism has overwhelmingly influenced the culture, economics and social life for more than 2000 years. Many Buddhist monuments such as the influential historical monasteries with great monks near Chengdu or the gigantic stone statue of Buddha in Leshan witnessed the historical glory of Buddhism in this region.⁶⁸

It is still disputable when Buddhism was firstly introduced into Sichuan. According to many historical records and judgments from the decorative Buddha figures found in the local rock tomb in Mahao or on the basis of the Money Tree from Pengxian, it is plausible that Buddhism was already spread in Sichuan during the Eastern Han time.⁶⁹ The earliest record of Buddhism introduced into Sichuan was in 365 A.D. when the monk Fahe (4th century), later Tanyi and Huichi came to Sichuan and established the basis of Buddhism there. The earliest datable Buddhist statues in stone in the region were made in the beginning of the 5th century A.D., when Buddhism began to develop there, whereas they were constrained either along the important thoroughfares or around metropolitans of the time like Chengdu. During the Southern Dynasty (420-589) Buddhism was well developed due to the relatively

⁶⁸ About the Buddhist elements in early Chinese art see Wu Hung, "Mapping Early Taoist Art," 88-92.

⁶⁹ Besides the Buddha images of early Buddhism the introduction of Buddhism into the Sichuan region in the Eastern Han time can also be proved by the historical documents that numerous Buddhist temples were established in the places like Chengdu, Emei, Yibing, Hechuan etc. See *Huayang jinshizhi*, S., vol. III, b.14. But some scholars hold the opinion that the early Buddhism in Sichuan was only prevalent as a kind of magic and stopped in the late 3rd century. See Wu Hung, "Mapping Early Taoist Art." For the route and time of Buddhism's spreading into Sichuan, see Hu Changjian, "Fojiao chuanru bayu," 78.

peaceful society and the supports of the emperors, as shown by archaeological research on the monastery Wanfosi in Chengdu.⁷⁰

Since Sui time Buddhism developed quickly in Sichuan. During Sui and Tang Dynasties Buddhism in Sichuan reached its heyday with the flourishing of Chan Buddhism in the region. In Tang time the Buddhism in Sichuan was further promoted by the support from royal court or emperors themselves. In early Tang the rock carvings were made on the cliffs in the north Sichuan, such as Qiaofoya and Huangzesi in Guangyuan, and several sites were in Bazhong, Tongjiang, Mianyang, Anyue etc. After the rebellion of An Lushan and Shi Siming (from 755 to 763) the north was in chaos of war, while the Sichuan region was comparatively peaceful and economically and culturally prosperous. At the meantime Sichuan was in a place with military security. At that time the centre of making Buddhist caves and statues was moved into the Sichuan region.⁷¹ Following the two emperors of Tang Dynasty Xuanzong (re. 712-756) and Xizong (re. 873-888) who escaped from the dangerous warfare in the capital,⁷² many Confucian literati, great Buddhist and Daoist monks as well as many artisans moved also to the Sichuan region and they made the first booming of Buddhist art there.

Since the late Tang and the Five Dynasties Buddhism was further developed because of the stability of society while the northern was in bellicosely chaos. After the Song Dynasty reunited China again and with many monks and literati lay Buddhists Sichuan became the most important province for Chan Buddhism. Due to the good technical condition and long preserved tradition of Buddhism the first woodcut Buddhist canon *Kaibao Tripitaka* was accomplished in Chengdu in 971. In addition to Chan Buddhism the Esoteric Buddhism in Sichuan is also quite noteworthy: after disappeared in the north China since the late Tang it spread and flourished in the province for more than 400 years until the end of Southern Song time.⁷³ In that period Buddhist rock carvings in Anyue and Dazu were created as the

⁷⁰ For an overview about the Buddhist rock carvings in Sichuan, see among others Ueno Ryūzō. "Shisen niokeru tōsō jiki."

⁷¹ There were more than 56,000 monks and nuns, who were mostly concentrated in Chengdu, which was the main region of Buddhism in Sichuan at the beginning of the 11th century. See Cheng Minsheng, "Lun songdai fojiao," 38-47.

⁷² The close relation between Xuanzong and the Dashengcisi and Xizong with the monks and temple in Sichuan during their flights are the most well known.

⁷³ For the remains of esoteric Buddhism in Sichuan see Li Sisheng, "Chuanmi zaixiang," and "Sichuan mijiao zaixiang", 102-114, and Ding Mingyi, "Sichuan shiku," "Gongyuan qi zhi shier shiji," 424-453, etc.

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embodiment of the late Chinese Buddhist carvings, in which the sinicization, secularization and localization of Buddhism was fixed in stone in an excellent artistic manner.⁷⁴

After 8th century⁷⁵ the rock carvings in Sichuan developed from the north to south, from the west to east. About 200 sites of rock carvings in Leshan, Zizhong, Anyue and Dazu were finished since late 9th to the 13th centuries, while in the north no new Buddhist rock carvings in large scale have been made. Though the historical monasteries are mostly perished, incalculable preserved rock carvings in Sichuan were conserved as an echo to the once prosperity of Buddhism of the time.⁷⁶ The booming of the making of Buddhist statues was over together with the end of the Southern Song Dynasty, as the Mongols invaded the regions and broke the peaceful status of the society.

2.1.2. Daoism

The teaching

As the Chinese local religion the thoughts of Daoism was originated among others from Laozi, or Master Lao. Laozi or Master Lao is a respectful name for Li Dan (about 600-470 BC.), who lived in 6th century B.C. in Henan. It is not quite clear about his life and the origination of his thoughts.⁷⁷ By and large it is known that he was older than Kongzi and was an official in charge of history writing (also including astrology) of the Zhou Dynasty. In viewing of the decline of the Zhou Dynasty Laozi gave up his official position and travelled to the west without coming back. After the foundation of the religion Daoism he was apotheosised as one of the supreme Daoist gods Laojun or Taishang laojun (the Supreme Lord Lao).⁷⁸

It was alleged that before he left he had wrote an article of five thousand characters, *Daodejing*, Classic of the Way and Virtue, for the after world. In general the book *Daodejing* is

⁷⁴ For the historical development of Buddhism in the Chongqing region, the once eastern region of Sichuan, see Hu Changjiang, "Bayu diqu fojiao," 97-142.

⁷⁵ The carvings found in Jianshanzi in Dazu shows that the Buddhists had made statues in the region already as early as in the middle of 7th century. See Chen Mingguang and Li Fangyin, "Dazu jianshanzi," 100-104. For the analysis of the historical background of the rock carvings in Dazu and in Sichuan see Deng Zhijin and Chen Mingguang, "Shilun dazu shike," 92-97.

⁷⁶ The study of many historical records shows the close relationship concerning style, subject etc between the rock carvings in Dazu and the wall paintings in monastery in Chengdu. See Wang Weiming, *Dashengcisi huashi*.

⁷⁷ Mainly two sources about Laozi are delivered in *Zhuangzi* and *Shiji*, whereas the records in the two are not always consistent. The author of *Shiji* Sima Qian (145 or 135-86 B.C.) lived in the Han time, about 400 years after Laozi's death and he might have been influenced by certain Daoist belief during writing the life of Laozi.

⁷⁸ For the study of the life of Laozi, see Kusuyama Haruki, *Rōshi densetsu no kenkyū*, 373-392.

believed as a later work only in his name. The fact that the thoughts in *Daodejing* and the historical figure Laozi cannot be directly connected is quite different from the relationship of Buddha and Kongzi. The thoughts from more than one person were represented in the short book divided into two main parts and eighty-one chapters which consist of extremely extensive contents including cosmology and nature, human and society and thoughts absorbed from many other contemporary schools such as Yinyang, the Five Essences etc. Though Confucianism and Daoism were both originated from the ancient Chinese native cultural tradition, Daoism treated the question of mystery and metaphysics more directly and actively and paid more attention to individual and metaphysical thinking, while Confucianism was more engaged to set up a moral and political system. In such sense Daoism come closer to Buddhism and just for that reason the both have had many cooperative but also competitive interactions in the history.

The religion Daoism did not begin from Laozi, but was founded in the end of Eastern Han time. In Sichuan region Zhang Ling (34-156) reformed the thoughts from Huangdi and Laozi into a religion and combined it with secular political power in the name *Tianshidao*, Dao of Celestial Master, which is the earliest stage of Daoism. The religion with its political power was supported then by the Wei Dynasty (220-265) and developed rapidly from 2nd to 6th century at the time when the Buddhism was introduced into China.⁷⁹ Concerning all the important aspects Daoism learned many from Buddhism. With the efforts of the great Daoist monks in the Southern Dynasties such as Ge Hong (283-343), Lu Xiuqing (406-477), Tao Hongjing (456-536)⁸⁰ various thoughts and theories were developed and various Daoist schools were founded in the Northern Dynasty. Daoism was successfully reformed by Kou Qianzhi (365-448) and won the royal support. In Tang dynasty Daoism reached its summit and was supported by the royal family.⁸¹ In Song time the royal support for Daoism continued until the end of the Northern Song Dynasty. The last period of prosperity of Daoism was in the Yuan Dynasty and declined afterwards. As one of the most important cultural aspects Daoism deeply influenced the national character and Chinese culture.

⁷⁹ For Daoism in Sichuan in the time of the Northern Zhou, see Zeng Deren and Li liang, “Chengdu longquan yidao daojuan,” 40-48.

⁸⁰ For the activities of Tao Hongjing concerning the three teachings, see Liu Yongxia, “Tao Hongjing yu rudaoshi sanjiao.”

⁸¹ Even several emperors became Daoists, partly because they had the same family name li with the legendary founder of Daoism.

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Interaction with the other two teachings

The origination and development of Daoism has always closely combined with Confucianism and Buddhism. Many sources, such as the ancient religion and shamanism, legends of immortals and alchemists, traditional physical education and medicine, the philosophies of Laozi, Zhuangzi, the Confucians as well as those of other schools in the Eastern Zhou time, have contributed to the formation of Daoism. Among them the thoughts from Confucians have played an important role, as seen in many early Daoist classics. For instance the Confucian ethics, such as the three cardinal guides (ruler guides subject, father guides son and husband guides wife) and the five constant virtues (benevolence; righteousness, propriety, wisdom and fidelity) as well as the virtues of filial piety and loyalty, are preached in *Taiping jing* or *Laozi xianger zhu*. Ge Hong stressed also such Confucian virtue in his book *Baopuzi* and regarded them as the necessary conditions to become immortals. In the period of Southern and Northern Dynasties the trend of absorbing the Confucian ethical codes into Daoism was followed by the persons such as Kou Qianzhi, Lu Xiuqing and his disciples, among whom Tao Hongjing had even enclosed the Confucian saints Yao, Shun and Kongzi with his disciples in his genealogy of the Daoist deities in his book *Zhenling weiyetu*.⁸² The virtue of loyalty and filial piety as important precepts appeared in the Daoist classics.⁸³

Similar to Buddhism Daoism was not mainstream before Tang time. As competitor there were many conflicts between the two teachings in their competition of winning the royal support, followers and property, although they learned from each other constantly. As Buddhism developed rapidly in that period, Daoist imitated and learned many from Buddhism concerning theory, ritual and practice. The Buddhist theories of cause and effect, reincarnation, and the belief in hell and pure land appeared in the Daoist classics. Through imitating and absorbing Buddhism the Daoist precepts and systems of ritual were established and enriched and the primitive Daoism was reformed into a more matured religion. And in this practice Buddhist dharma was respected, Buddhist texts were read and

⁸² *Zhenling weiyetu*, D., vol., 3, 272-281. The first time when the equality of the three teachings became official policy was in the Northern Zhou Dynasty, as the Emperor Wu (561-580), against a background of anti-Buddhist measures, founded an academy around 574, named *Tongdao guan*, for the study of the three teachings in order to show the fundamental unity of all doctrines of the three. See Schipper, Kristofer and Verellen, Franciscus ed., *The Taoist Canon*, vols I, 17.

⁸³ Taoists had their own interpretation for the unity of the three teachings. They claimed that Kongzi was Laozi's disciple, and the Buddha the latter's manifestation. Hence the three teachings had a common origin in Laozi. About the historical difference and complementation of Confucianism and Daoism see Bai Xi, "Laozi sixiang yu rudaohu." "

studied and Buddhist statues were revered by the Daoists, among whom Tao Hongjing was the most prominent one who even claimed himself as the disciple of Buddha.

During the second five hundred years after the Common Era it was a period when the Three Teachings experienced strong struggle and mutual influence under the intervention of the rulers. The Confucian value was still cherished by the Daoist like Du Guangting (850-933), Tan Qiao (860/873-968/976) etc. Also the Buddhist theory, ritual and practice were further borrowed into Daoism, whereby the theory of emptiness, dhyana meditation and certain rituals of confession have influenced the Daoism considerably.⁸⁴ In that time a great amount Daoist classics were written and like the Buddhist the Daoist compiled also their first complete collection of the Daoist texts during the Kayuan era of Xuanzong of Tang (685-762).⁸⁵

In the Song time the main trend of the relation between the three teachings was that Confucianism was reformed into Neo-Confucianism by absorbing the other two teachings.⁸⁶ Similar to Buddhists the Daoists also advocated the equivalence or unification of the three teachings. Among others the Daoist Zhang Boduan (983-1082) was one of the activists. Accepting the theory of mind-nature (xinxing) from Chan Buddhism and Confucian explanation about the life he merged the three teaching in his theory of “Inner Alchemy” which was marked as a milestone in the history of Daoist philosophy. In his book *Wuzhen pian*, Article of Perceiving the Truth, he expressed his opinion of the unity of the three teachings and directly used the terms and methods borrowed from Chan Buddhism to demonstrate his theory.⁸⁷

As the founder of the *Quanzhenjiao*, “Teaching of the All Truths”, one of the both most important Daoist Schools in Song time, Wang Chongyang (1113-1170) was also an advocator and practitioner of the unification the three teachings. He listed the classics of the three, Daode jing, Heart Sutra and the Classic of Filial Piety, as the main classics for his school. He combined the essence of Mahayana Buddhism with Zhengong and the Confucian ethics for individuals into the practice of Zhenxing (Practising the Truth) in his school. In fact what

⁸⁴ Such as the School of Metaphysics, *Zhongxuanpai*, the practice of Sima Chengzhen, and the *Daomen kefan da quanji* by Du Guangting are the examples. For the compiling and developing of Daoist rituals by Du Guangting, see Sun Yiping, *Du Guangting pingzhuan*, 357-394.

⁸⁵ For the historical overview of Daoism in the Tang see Kohn, Livia and Kirkland, Russel, “Daoism in the Tang.”

⁸⁶ For the attitudes of the emperors of Song Dynasty to Daoism, see Ren Jiyu ed., *Zhongguo daojaoshi*, 464-488.

⁸⁷ About Zhang Boduan and his most important work *Wozhenpian*, See Zhang Zhengu, “Zhang Boduan,” 74-84.

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Wang advocated was a combination of Inner Alchemy of Daoism, Chan Buddhism and Neo-Confucianism. Different from other advocators Wang changed the thoughts of the unification of the three teachings into a Daoist school.

Generally under such historical background the Daoists changed their earlier policy of attacking the Buddhism into overtly absorbing the useful contents from it in order to strengthen Daoism and in such way they advocated the unification of the three teachings under new historical circumstances. After the enlargement by generations of Daoists the Daoist pantheon was much enhanced in the Song time with many evident Buddhist elements. Though in the Song time Daoism had not gained the dominating position, it made however good preparations for the further development in the Yuan Dynasty. Generally Daoism made progress by learning from the other two teachings concerning the thoughts and philosophy. In the meanwhile as Daoist absorbed nurtures from the other two teachings it lost its own power of influence and attractiveness as the same time, since its own characteristics weakened by and by and its development was therefore hindered. Under such historical circumstance it is no wonder that Daoist lost more and more places to Buddhists even in its home region Sichuan.

Daoism in Sichuan

The earliest icons of the deified Laozi appeared together with the beginning of the religion Daoism in the Eastern Han time. The making of Laozi's image was inspired by Buddhism and mostly closely combined with Buddha statues.⁸⁸ Since the temples dedicated to Laozi were built the icons of deified Laozi were made and worshipped and this can be attested by the images on the tombstone and historical recordings from the Han time nowadays. As the birthplace of Daoism there is a long and strong Daoist tradition in Sichuan.⁸⁹

Imitating Buddhism Daoist pantheon was developed in the Southern Dynasties by Lu Xiujing and Tao Hongjing.⁹⁰ In addition to Laojun, the Primordial Honoured One and the Jade Emperor were also invented and worshipped. From this period many images of Daoist deities were made together with Buddha statues on steles and reserved in Yaowangshan,

⁸⁸ For an overview of Daoist art and sculptures see Stephen Litte, "Daoist Art," and Li Song, *Chang'an yishu*, 485-509, and Hu Wenhe, *Zhongguo daojiao*.

⁸⁹ Concerning the mythology, religious origination, politics and historical figures of Daoism and the Sichuan region, see Xi Qingtai, "Daojiao zai bashu chutan."

⁹⁰ See *Dongxuan lingbao zhenling weiye tu*, D., vol., 3, 275, in which Kongzi ("Taiji shang zhengong kong qiu") and Yan Hui are listed as Daoist immortals.

north from Xi'an in Shaanxi Province.⁹¹ During the Six Dynasties Daoism developed further with extensive influence in the region.

As the originating place of Daoism (Wodoumi Dao), Sichun has been always prevalent with Daoism and has a great number of the Daoist rock carvings. In the Sui and Tang time the form of Laojun was fixed with a Daist furniture *shi* and a fan in the hand. In Sichuan many Daoist rock carvings from this period are reserved in Mianyang, Renshou, Jiange etc. In Sui and Tang time due to the support from the royal court Daoism in Sichuan reached its summit. Of the earliest remains are those at Yunüquan in Mianyan, Dafosi in Tongnan with mostly triads of Tianzun (Heavenly Honoured One).⁹²

In Tang time many Daoist scholars gathered in Sichuan, and they represented the highest level of Daoism philosophy. Among the common people Daoist gods were widely worshipped.⁹³ From the late Tang to the Five Dynasties the great Daoist Du Guangting (850-933) as leading figure of Tianshi Dao was supported by the royal court and in charge of Daoism in Sichuan. He compiled the influent Daoist rituals from Tianshi Dao and Maoshan Dao into a monumental work in the Daoist history. Another active Daoist school, Jindan Dao, was represented by Chen Tuan (871-989) from Anyue whose works *Neidan* and the diagramme of Taichi influenced the later Daoism the Quanzhen School especially. Later Quanzhen school became the dominating religion in the Yuan Dynasty.

In Tang time Daoism under royal support also experienced its prosperity in Sichuan with the rock carvings remained at Xuanmiaoguan in Anyue, Niujiashan in Renshou, Feixiange in Pujiang,⁹⁴ Longhaoshan in Danling, Hemingshan at Jiange.⁹⁵ Besides the triad of Tianzun or Laojun the subjects were including the Three Purities or Assemblage of Daoist deities with disciples or various Daoist deities.

Similar as Buddhism, since late 9th century Daoist rock carvings moved to the south and east of the Sichuan regions namely Anyue and Dazu, where the subjects of Daoist rock carvings

⁹¹ For the study of the collection of Daoist steles in Yaowangshan, see Hu Wenhe, *Zhongguo daojiao* vol. I.

⁹² The earliest Daoist rock carvings in open air are found in Sichuan. About the subject and distribution of them see Huang Haide, "Zhongguo xibu gudai daojiao," 93-103. For the study of Daoist rock carvings in Sichuan and Chongqing see Hu Wenhe, *Sichuan daojiao*, and *Zhongguo daojiao* vol. II. Li Yuanguo, *Sichuan daojiao*. Especially for the Daoist carvings in Dazu, see Hu Wenhe and Liu Chaojiu, "Dazu shiku zhong de songdai daojiao zaixiang." 445-458 and Li Yuanguo, "Sichuan dazu daojiao shike," 429-436.

⁹³ For the competition between Daoists and Buddhists in Sichuan during the Tang time see Chen Yanling, "Luelun tangdai bashu," 51-56.

⁹⁴ Zeng Deren et al., "Pujiang feixiange," 85-90.

⁹⁵ For the rock carvings reserved in the hill Hemingshan where Taoism was allegedly originated see Zeng Deren et al., "Sichuan jiange hemingshan," 10-15, Mu Xueyong, 36-39.

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were quite different from those in other places. Many new unprecedented subjects, such as the pantheon with the Three Purities and Four Honourables, the Three Holy Mothers of Houtu (at Nanshan in Dazu), the Jade Emperor, the Three Emperors (at Shimenshan, Shuchengyan in Dazu), the Three Officers, the deities of Thunder and Lightning (in Anyue and Dazu), as well as the mixed representation with Buddha (at Yuanjuedong in Anyue), appeared.⁹⁶

2.1.3. Confucianism

The teaching

As one of the most esteemed teacher, thinker and social philosopher, whose teachings and philosophy have deeply influenced the thought and life in eastern Asia, Kongzi (551-479 B.C.)⁹⁷ lived in a turmoil time when the Zhou Dynasty was declining inevitably due to the threaten from the powerful military feudal princes. Comparatively his life was rather simple and quite. Born in a declined aristocratic family in Shandong he was well educated with six arts (ritual, music, shooting, riding, writing and arithmetic) and had been a low ranked office in the kingdom Lu. Since his 30s he began his career as a teacher. As the first professional teacher in China Kongzi advocated the education as the means to improve the society, gain knowledge and build one's character. In his 40s to 50s he participated the politics in Kingdom Lu, but his advocacy of merciful politics were not suitable for the princes in the turmoil society to conquer the others and thus he was never appointed in an important post by any contemporary princes. Nevertheless he attracted numerous followers, and he taught his disciples until his death.⁹⁸

His thoughts were reserved mostly in *Lunyu*, Analects of Confucius, in which Kongzi allerged his disciples to participate actively in the social politics. In this book Kongzi expressed his ideal to set up a classified and peaceful social order, what was almost contrary

⁹⁶ For an overviewing study of the Daoist rock carvings in Dazu, see Deng Zhijin, "Dazu shike zhong de dao jiao," 252-268.

⁹⁷ Confucius, a Latinized translation of *kong fu zi* (often *kong zi*), Master Kong, will be named in this paper as Kongzi. Confucianism is an invented word that has no corresponding one in Chinese. The word stands for everything originated from Confucius, either teaching, ethics, philosophy or religion. It was introduced to Europe by the Jesuit Matteo Ricci (1552-1610), who firstly latinised the name of "Kongzi". For the Jesuit Interpretation of Confucianism, see Rule, Paul., *K'ung-tzu or Confucius?*

⁹⁸ For the life of Kongzi, see Creel, H.G., *Confucius*, 25-56.

to the thoughts of Buddha or Laozi. In order to actualize the ideal Kongzi demanded the individual to keep filial piety and loyalty to the emperor, the ruler to have mercifulness and li, ceremonial rites and regulations which standardised the social order. His philosophy emphasized personal and governmental morality, correctness of social relationships, justice and sincerity. His teachings, though obviously useful for rulers to governing, was not recognized during his life time. Only after his death it was highly appreciated by almost all the rulers since Han time and became the official ideology for China for nearly 2000 years. The core of Confucianism is ritual and filial piety.⁹⁹ Kongzi's thoughts have been developed into a system of philosophy known as Confucianism

According to the opinion of Confucianism as a religion,¹⁰⁰ Confucianism began as a religion since Dong Zhongshu who advocated the dominating status of Confucianism. Though Kongzi was worshipped as the founder, the belief and thoughts did not originate from him and this fact was even admitted by Kongzi himself. The highest god in Confucianism, *Tian* or *Shangdi*, Heaven or the Supreme God, was a tradition since the era of the three Emperors. According to evidences from the modern archaeology the ritual of making offers to the Heaven existed at latest since the Shang Dynasty and was the main content of the national activities. The tradition was further followed in the Zhou Dynasty in the form of the rituals and regulations which connected the human being and the Heaven. Those rituals and regulations were nevertheless declined during the Eastern Zhou. Under such historical background Kongzi came up with the advocacy of the restoration of the ritual and regulation. The elements of the Interaction between Human and Heaven, und the thoughts from other philosophical schools such as Yin and Yang and the Five Essences etc. were added in Confucianism and this development made Confucianism a religion in the Han Dynasty. In the Six Dynasties Confucianism continued as the Buddhism was introduced into China and Daoism developed quickly.¹⁰¹ Even in the Sui and Tang time Confucianism was exalted to the dominating ideology in the state, but still incomparable to the development of the other two teachings. In the Song time Confucianism experienced great development

⁹⁹ For the setup of the *Script of Filial Piety* in Confucianism, see Itano Chōhachi. *Jukyō seiritsu*, 1-50.

¹⁰⁰ The question about whether Confucianism is a religion or not is quite disputable. According to the traditional opinion it was rather regarded as a school of philosophy or a teaching, but not religion. However since decades more and more scholar regard it as a religion. In this paper will not discuss if Confucianism is a religion, but from the viewpoint of image and history of art regard it as a teaching equivalent as Buddhism or Daoism. In fact, seen from the viewpoint of art history Confucianism is quite akin to a religion with all the characteristics, thus the religious aspects such as rituals will be also referred while discussing the icons or images.

¹⁰¹ About the influence of Buddhism on Confucianism in the Northern Dynasties see Wang Xiaowei, “Lun Fojiao dui beichao ruxue,” 36-43.

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when the Confucians such as Shao Yong, Zhang Zai and Cheng Yi and Cheng Hao in Northern Song and Zhu Xi in Southern Song began to introduce the philosophical and religious elements from Buddhism and Daoism in the Confucianism. The Confucianism was then enriched and rebuilt as Neo-Confucianism and became the dominating culture in China and even in Eastern Asia until the end 19th century.¹⁰²

Interaction with the other two teachings

Confucianism consists of two sources: one is the belief in heaven and destiny since Shang and Zhou time, the other is the philosophy founded by Kongzi and his disciples. Since the Emperor Wudi of Han Confucianism was established as the dominating school of philosophy under the Confucian Dong Zhongshu. The Heaven as the highest god was worshipped and the reverence of the feudal order was highly stressed. Kongzi as the founder was also worshipped as the head of the teachings mostly in the temples dedicated to him. While the mysterious relations between heaven and human society were advocated, Confucianism was lack of a speculative and rigorous system of theory before the Song time.

Although Confucianism as the orthodox has never showed the submission to the other teachings, it was strongly influenced during its formation and development by the other two especially in the Song time. As the school of metaphysics developed Confucianism absorbed also the nurture of Daoism and Yi Jing to enrich itself. In general though Confucianism was influenced by other teachings, as the ideology it always maintained and supported the ruling order of the feudal society. For this reason Confucianism was always favored by the rulers and the unification of the three teachings has shown the trend that the other two adapt to Confucianism or make compromise with it. In the Sui and Tang the dominating status of Confucianism became more and more prominent in the three teachings, while Confucianists learned the theories from the other two and made preparations for the establishment of the Neo-Confucianism. In this period both the emperor and the common scholars showed the interest for the three teachings. Xuanzong was famous for his annotations of the three classics: *Daodejing*, *Jingangjing*,¹⁰³ and *Xiaojing*.¹⁰⁴ Official scholars like Liu Zongyuan, Han Yu or Li Ao etc., supplement Confucianism with

¹⁰² For the influence of Confucianism since 19th century in eastern and southeastern Asia see Fan Xiaoping, "Jinxiandai zhongguo kongmiao," 79-83.

¹⁰³ The annotations by Xuanzong to *Jingangjing* were reserved in the stone sutras at Yunjusi in Fangshan near Beijing.

¹⁰⁴ In the later years of the reign of Xuanzong he changed his attitude of suppression to Buddhism to certain extent. See Xue Pingshuan, "Lun Tangxuanzong," 50-57, and Long Hui, "Dazu fojiao shike," 90.

theories from Buddhism and Daoism, although many of them appeared as the protestors against Buddhism. The insufficiency of Confucianism that it concentrated only on the worldly affairs and ethics was compensated by such efforts. Although the Neo-Confucianism was based on absorbing the philosophical and religious theories of Buddhism and Daoism, Buddhists and Daoists showed an overtly attitude of submission to Confucianism.

Though Confucianism functioned well as an ideology to support the rulers by governing, as a belief it lacked an ultimate appeasement for the souls since it focused on the human and ethics with the purpose of an ordered society. As the native thought, Confucianism gained always the support from the rulers and therefore it focused more on social ethics but neglected the spiritual careness for common people.¹⁰⁵ From this aspect it could not serve as an established and complete religion. The weakness was strengthened in a long historical period and in the Song time Confucianism was substantiated and replenished by the efforts of the thinkers.¹⁰⁶

The reformed or improved Confucianism was call *lixue* in Chinese and translated as Neo-Confucianism, which absorbed among others the Buddhist and Daoist theories, especially the concept of Tathāgata-garbha (originally from the Flower Garland Sutra). In fact the core ontological concept of *li* (reason) is comparable with the Buddha nature in Buddhism, and practically inspirited by Chan Buddhism. In general Neo-Confucianism had the Confucian ethic and moral in centre, combined with the Daoist cosmology and the Buddhist theory of Tathāgata-garbha, and formed a new Confucian theory based on the unification of the three teachings.

In fact almost all the Confucian philosophers studied or had a close relation with Buddhism or Daoism. In the early Northern Song Zhou Dunyi has a close friendship with Chan Buddhists and studied the theory of mind-nature of Chan Buddhism, which was decisive for his Confucian theories and practices of mind and nature. Another influential theoretician Zhang Zai once criticized Buddhism and Daoism drastically, however his theory of human nature was still shaped under the influence of Buddhist theory of purity of mind-nature. Other important thinker such as Cheng Yi, Cheng Hao and Zhu Xi had all the same

¹⁰⁵ E.g. Liu Yuxi (772-842) wrote that Confucianism declined with the comedown of the world since it did not deal with the nature and life of humans but only the moderate ethic, while on the contrary Buddhism became honorable since it saved the world from the bitterness with great merciness. See Liu Guozhong ed., *Zhongguo sixiangshi*, 89.

¹⁰⁶ For Confucianism and family rituals, see the comprehensive study by Ebrey, Patricia Buckley, *Confucianism*.

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experiences. Buddhist ontology and epistemology were brought into the Confucian ethics and social political philosophy and thus unified the three teachings within the Neo-Confucianism.¹⁰⁷ The Neo-Confucianism in the Song time absorbed the transcendent contents and enriched its system of philosophy. The strengthened Confucianism became the dominating ideology supported by the rulers.

Some emperors of the Song Dynasty also supported the unification of the three teachings. For instance, Zhenzong of Song (re.998-1022) related the Buddhist Five Precepts with the Confucian Five Essences, emphasizing the moral functions of the various teachings. Xiaozong of the Southern Song (1127-1194) continued the opinion of his ancestor and advocated the various functions of the three teachings: Buddhism for the mind, Daoism for the body and Confucianism for the social ethics, and all the three should be unified in the Neo-Confucianism.¹⁰⁸

It was already a long tradition for the scholar-bureaucrats to combine Confucianism with Buddhism and Daoism, but in Song time those practices became the main activities of the intellectuals. The scholar-bureaucrats were educated in Confucianism and through their friendship with the Buddhist and Daoist monks they saw the three teachings as one and thus actively motivated the unification of the three teaching ideologically. The prime minister Zhang Shangying (1043-1122), for instance, argued for Buddhism and compared the three teachings as remedies for human with various functions, namely Confucianism for the skin, Daoism for the blood and Buddhism for the marrow. Another prime minister Li Gang (1083-1140) held similar point of view by relating the Yi and Huayan on a philosophical level.

In general in the Song time Confucianism became the dominating ideology and adapted itself to the need of intensifying the centralism in feudal society and Buddhism and Daoism served at the same time as the assisting teachings. On the surface Confucianism criticized the other two teachings, but in fact it actively absorbed and assimilated their nourishing elements. In such circumstance the unification of the three teachings was realized and Chinese philosophy reached a new summit.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁷ For the study of the interaction of Buddhist and Confucian philosophy, see Araki Kengo, *Bukkyō to jukyō*.

¹⁰⁸ For the ritual and customs of offering to the ancestors by the Confucians in the Song time, see Wang Shanjun, "Songdai de zongzu jisi," 114-124.

¹⁰⁹ For the historical situation of Confucianism as a religion in the Song Dynasties, see Li Shen, *Zhongguo rujiao shi* (II), 86-497.

Confucian art

The research on Confucianism is mainly focused on the aspects of theory and history. Although the Confucianism has not yet been generally accepted by scholars as a religion, Confucian art as an important portion of Chinese art history has been more and more valued.¹¹⁰ The Confucian art, if one regards that it began with Kongzi, is closely related with the setup of Confucius temple and the worship of Kongzi as a saint.¹¹¹ Since then Confucianism was enriched and developed concerning the image making with the icons of Kongzi and his disciples and saints as the subject of sculptures and the images or hagiographies of Kongzi as the content for the painting.¹¹² Compared with the Buddhist and Daoist statues the Confucian statues are mostly historical figures with certain deities of immortals. Unlike Buddha, who had some traits of nonhumans, the image of Kongzi and was made after the human appearance. For the form of Kongzi there are roughly two types: the one is the historical Kongzi and the other is the non-existed appearance of a King. In addition the different head covers of Kongzi may indicate his different identities: for instance the soft hut represents him as a teacher, the official hut indicates him as the minister of Kingdom Lu, and the emperor's crown with tassels shows him as the Kong of Propagator of Culture.

Since Kongzi was worshipped as the founder of Confucianism in the Han time, his images became the object of worship.¹¹³ All images of Kongzi from the Han time are all found in the carved tomb stones and bricks since Kongzi's images was actually represented as a figure of certain stories and different from the images as icons.¹¹⁴ The Six Dynasties was the

¹¹⁰ Like Confucian thoughts, the Confucian art in an extensive sense originated from the ancient time. Related to the sacrificing to the Heaven and the cult of ancestors, all the remains, such as the bronze utensils or jade from the Shang Dynasty, can all be seen as the forerunners of Confucian art. Besides the ritual utensils, steles, all the things in Confucius temple can be regarded as the Confucian art. Further more by the religion of ancestor cult, all the implements and utensils for the purpose belong to the Confucian art. Especially, portraits of emperors of dynasties, the meritorious retainers and the portraits of genealogy of common people, as well as the illustrations in the Confucian Classics, such as the stories of sons of filial piety etc., are all the art of Confucianism and they became a special component part in the Chinese art history. In this paper the images of Kongzi and his disciples are the mainly studied objects of Confucian art. The wide range of Confucian art in Chinese culture is represented in the exhibition in Paris in 2003/04, in which the items are included from ritual bronze to printed classics. See Cheng, Anne, et al., *Confucius*.

¹¹¹ For general information about the history of the Confucius temples in China see Gan Shude, "Gudai gedi kongmiao," 28-31 and the intensive study of Zhang Xiaoxu, "Zhongguo kongmiao yanjiu zhuanji."

¹¹² See Murray, Julia, "The Evolution of Pictorial Hagiography in Chinese Art," 81-93.

¹¹³ It is recorded that since the Western Han the emperors found the tradition to make sacrifices to Kongzi without saying if there were images of him or not.

¹¹⁴ According to the historical documents Kongzi with disciples were often worshipped since the Eastern Han time either in imperial palace or in temples. It is recorded that Confucian temples were built as early as in the beginning of the era of Yuanhe (84-87 AD.). After *Shuijingzhu* (vol. 26) in Jingxian there has been a Confucian

2.1. The Three Teachings

important period for the forming of the images of Kongzi with disciples, which were much influenced by the abundant Buddhist and Daoist art during this time.¹¹⁵ The flourishing periods of building Kongzi's images were in the Tang and Song dynasties. During the reign of Emperor Xuanzong Kongzi was entitled as *Wenxuan wang*, the King Propagator of Culture. The royal decree on the fashioning of Kongzi that Kongzi should be represented as a king, who seated facing to the south and in the royal clothes. Also his ten disciples were beside him, flanking their master and receiving the reverence and offering. This form was standardized and then spread to the whole China. The reverence to Kongzi was taken over by Song Dynasty from Tang Dynasty and a form of Kongzi's imaging with the addition of a crown with twelve tassels emerged.¹¹⁶ In the Southern Song four great followers (Yanhui, Zengzi, Zisi and Mengzi) were added to the images of Kongzi with his ten disciples. This form which was seen in the Confucius Temple in Qufu in Shandong became prevalent afterwards until the end of Qing time. The images of Kongzi which were made in many dynasties were almost destroyed in the Ming time, since the emperor Shizong of Ming (1507-1567) in 1530 decreed the iconoclast of Kongzi's icons.¹¹⁷

As above mentioned the spread of Confucianism was chiefly carried out by the building of the Temple of Kongzi and its school. This fact was also applicable to the development of Confucianism in Sichuan. Compared with Buddhism and Daoism, the Confucianist images in Sichuan are quite few delivered and known. From various historical documents it is known

temple from Han time in which Kongzi was built together with his disciples. In the year of 124 AD. Kongzi with 72 disciples were worshipped in an imperial palace. Also in the Wei Dynasty in 246 Kongzi was worshipped together with his disciple Yanhui in imperial palace. See See Ōmura Seigai, *Shina bijutsushi*, 41, 47 and 114. For the study of Confucian art, especially the image of Kongzi see among others the earlier study of Laufer, Berthold, "Confucius and his Portrait."

¹¹⁵ According to the historical records the imagery of Kongzi with his disciples had experienced three different forms: a. in the beginning Kongzi was only with one disciple Yan Hui, which was a main type until Tang time; b. later Kongzi were with Yan Yuan and Zi Lu which was seldom seen after the Six Dynasties; and c. Kongzi were with ten disciples or Kongzi were with four great followers and ten or twelve disciples as the main type in Tang and Song time. The form of Buddha flanked by two or ten disciples might inspire the Confucian by making the images of their master. It is obvious that the images of Kongzi were influenced by Buddhism, especially the forms of two and three. See Ren Rong, "Rujiao yaoxiang," and Murray, Julia, "Portraits of Confucius."

¹¹⁶ Ren Rong, "Rujiao Zaoxiang" 12.

¹¹⁷ The iconoclast of the statues of Kongzi was due to two reasons: 1. According to the old tradition that there was no icons or images in the temple of ancestors thus it did not conform to the regulations (li) in Confucius Temple to worship icons; 2. It was against the virtue of filial piety since Kongzi and his followers were sculpted as the main cult icons while Kongzi's father was just painted on the wall in the assisting status. Therefore the emperor demanded to replace the statues of Kongzi with wooden memorial tablet. After the iconoclast in the Ming time almost all the statues were destroyed since most of the statues were in temples in the large cities. Though the building of Kongzi's statues was resumed from the end of Ming time, it was only the momentary recovery.

that a great amount of figures of Kongzi with his disciples and follower were made in the ancient time. They were just almost destroyed during the Ming Dynasty.¹¹⁸

Confucianism in Sichuan

From 478 B.C. when the first Temple of Kongzi was built in his hometown Qufu to the Six Dynasties the Temples of Kong were built quite widely in China. Nevertheless, it is notable that in the Han time the magistrate of Sichuan Wen Weng built a stone chamber in Chengdu, in which a seated image of Kongzi flanked by his 72 sitting disciples were carved on stone. Those carvings are the earliest known record of the sculpture of Confucious.¹¹⁹

After the unification of the whole China by the Tang Dynasty all the three teachings were promoted. Kongzi was entitled as the Kong of Propagator of Culture by Xuanzong of Tang, who also decreed to build up the Temples of Kong in the whole country. The temples of Kongzi in Sichuan were built also in this period. The earliest ones appeared already in the Sui time, in Jiajiang, Weiyuan and Nanbu and many more were built in the Tang time.

The prosperity of Confucianism in Sichuan occurred in Song Dynasty. In this period the tradition of reverence to Kongzi was followed and the schools and temples were built especially since reign of Zhenzong (997-1021) and the Era Qingli (1041-1048).¹²⁰ The temples of Kongzi in Dazu and Anyue were built during that periods of time, namely in the 11th century. In the Song time Confucianism was more revered and cherished by the emperors than in the Tang time. The economy developed rapidly because of the relatively stable society and therefore many literati immigrated from the north to Sichuan. For that reason the development of Confucianism there was stimulated. Confucian Academies (Shuyuan)¹²¹ and schools and temples were built in that time and the Song time. The *Shuxue*,¹²² Sichuan School of Confucianism, represented by the family Su (Su Xun, Su Shi and Su Zhe), indicated the highest accomplishment of Confucianism in Sichuan.¹²³ In Song time numerous high

¹¹⁸ Ren Rong, "Rujiao Zaoxiang," 14.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 11.

¹²⁰ Zhou Yuansun, "Songdai Sichuan kongmiao," 32-37.

¹²¹ Such Confucian academies and Confucian temples belonged to one system of Confucian education, and in the academies the images of Kongzi were also worshipped. See Qu Yingjie, "Lidai jingdu ji difang kongmiao kaoshu."

¹²² For the Sichuan school of Confucianism, see Hu Zhaoxi, "Shuxue yu shuxue yanjiu," 114-117.

¹²³ For the historical background of the success and failure of the school of Su Shi, see Hu Zhaoxi, "Songdai shuyuan yu songdai shuxue."

2.2. Rock Carving and Shuilu Rite in Sichuan

officials in the royal court came from Sichuan, what was directly related with the excellent social environment of Confucianism.¹²⁴

Confucianism has been the dominating ideology since Song time and in the Sichuan region many temples of Kongzi were built. Combined with other teachings the carvings Confucian images were mostly made in rock as images of the three teaching in the latest period in Dazu County. Besides the influential Temples of Kongzi in Deyang built in 1260 and Fushu with totally 238 *Jinshi*, those carvings reserved in the rock are the most characteristic in the remains of Confucianism in Sichuan from the Song time. The main types of representation of Kongzi, Kongzi with Yan Yuan and Zi Lu, and Kongzi with ten disciples can all be found in the rock carvings here. Definitely they are a perfect combination of the local tradition of Confucianism and the dexterous craft of artisans. The Confucian sculptures in the area are the earliest and best reserved ones in China, which reflected the interaction between the three teachings in the Song time vividly.¹²⁵ Concerning the spread of Confucian ethics and classics, *Xiaojing*, the Script of Filial Piety, engraved in Beishan in Dazu, where a Confucian holy script was inserted in a Buddhist site, is the single one in China and especially valuable due to its special version of the text.¹²⁶ The virtue of filial piety rendered in the text, as one of the key values cherished by Confucianism, was represented in great scale in the rock carvings, as the representative monument of Confucian art in the Sichuan region in the Song time.¹²⁷

2.2. Rock Carving and *Shuilu* Rite in Sichuan

As pointed out, the remaining statues of the unified three teachings were not independently sculpted, but rather fashioned under certain ritual context. The coexisting inscriptions of the many images in the Sichuan region demonstrate that they were closely associated with either Buddhist or Daoist rites, like *zhai*, *jiao* or *shuilu*, which were quite active in the region in the Song time.¹²⁸ As the inscriptions reveal, the images were made either for the purpose

¹²⁴ Hu Zhaoxi, "Songdai shuxue chuyi." "Dazu baoding shike," 101.

¹²⁵ For the general study of Confucianism reserved and reflected in the rock carvings in Dazu, see Li Zhengxin, *Rujiao zaoxiang*.

¹²⁶ For the study of the carved text, see the study of Ma Heng, "Song fanzuyu shu," 77-81.

¹²⁷ For the study of the virtue of filial piety represented in the rock carvings in Dazu and its historical backgrounds, see Hu Liangxue, *Dazu shike xiaowenhua*, Li Zhenxin, "Dazu shike zhong de rujiao," 269-275.

¹²⁸ For the close relation between the carvings in Dazu and the rituals, see Luo Zhao, "Dazu Baodingshan," 186-191.

of preceding certain rites, or were finished thereafter.¹²⁹ The donors, mostly common people or Buddhist layers, might have participated in the rites and donated the images for the purpose of wishing fortune, dismissing adversity, or transcendently saving the spirits of their late relatives. The close relation between the rock carvings and rituals in Sichuan during the Song time is an important characteristic of the common religion.¹³⁰

In particular, the rite *shuilu* was mentioned repeatedly in the inscriptions together with the rock carvings in the region. The rite was developed rapidly since the Song time and became a dominant Buddhist rite in China over thousand years. Different cultural elements, especially those of the three teachings, were absorbed in the rite and amalgamated as a “veritable *Gesamtkunstwerk*”.¹³¹ As a matter of fact, the rite is associated with some of the sites where the images of the three teachers were fashioned. Two sites among them have even explicit inscriptions. The following comprehensive analysis of all those sites will show that the unification happened sometimes within the frame of the *shuilu* rite, though this relevance could not be confirmed by historical inscriptions.

Although it is still disputable about the origination of *shuilu* rite,¹³² this relevance preserved in the rock carvings in Sichuan region are generally accepted as one of the earliest relating historical materials. Those materials are distinctive and therefore crucial for the study on the *shuilu* in Song time, as the rite thrived in its earlier form. At the meantime, those remains as the religious background for the unification of the three teachings are also significant, despite the fact that the images of the three teachings were not always exclusively related with the *shuilu* rite.

2.2.1. Historical overview

Shuilu zhai, or *shuili fahui*, *shuilu daochang*, etc., means literally the “rite for deliverance of creatures of water and land”, and is the most spectacular in the Chinese Buddhist rites. The

¹²⁹ For example, the inscription of Shuchenyan no. 5 records that a Daoist rite, *jiao*, was held near the niches after they were finished. It shows that images were made for the rite. See Liu Changjiu et al., *Dazu shike yanjiu*, 564.

¹³⁰ Hou Chong, “Songdai de xinyangxin fojiao,” 197-212.

¹³¹ Strickmann, Michel, *Mantras et mandarins*, 375. For the Confucian and Daoist rituals reflected in *shuilu*, see Ebrey, Patricia Buckley, *Confucianism and Zhang Zehong*, *Daojiao zhajiao*.

¹³² See Xie Shengbao and Xie Jing, “Dunhuang wenxian,” 40-43, in which they date the origin of the rite to the time as early as 6th century, while most other scholars insist that the ritual *shuilu* could not begin before the Tang time. See Li Xiaorong, “Shuilu fahui yuanliu,” 42-52.

2.2. Rock Carving and Shuilu Rite in Sichuan

purpose of this costly and complex rite is to salvage the unrebirthed, loitering souls in the atmosphere, in the water and on the earth, especially those late relatives of the donor, who might harass the human beings. The phrase “water and land” in its name refers generally to all the souls, in both water and land, while divergent interpretations exist based on different understanding of the rite itself.¹³³ The rite is essentially a salvating rite for the deceased souls, while the function of propagating Mahayana Buddhism and converting believers is conspicuous throughout the rite. As a Buddhist technology of compassion and conversion, and therefore endowed with the power of dismissing adversity and bringing fortune, the rite has also been used for protection of nation and praying for timely rain, celebrating the New Year or other occasions throughout the history.¹³⁴

Concerning the history of the rite, since most of the remains come from the late Tang (618-907) and Song time (960-1279), it is generally believed that the rite took its form in the late Tang or Five Dynasties (907-960), and rapidly developed in the Song time. Nevertheless, in the light of re-evaluating the materials including manuscripts and hanging paintings which are deposited in Dunhuang, some hold the opinion that the rite might have originated from the Emperor of Wu of Liang (464-549), namely the early 6th century, only but it was not named as *shuilu* in the beginning.¹³⁵ Interestingly, the claim is consistent to the legendary story about the origin reserved in many historical documents, in which after a period of oblivion in the 6th century due to the warfare the missed ritual texts were rediscovered and the rite thereupon saw its revival in the Tang time.¹³⁶ Since the Song time it was widely spread and enjoyed great popularity.¹³⁷ From the beginning the *shuilu* was not a homogeneous rite and during its development it was teemed with instability and changes.

¹³³ For instance, the widely adopted explanation for “water and land” is from Zunshi (964-1032). His belief that “the immortals take their food from flowing water and the ghosts take their food from the clean land” (X., vol. 101, 427), shows in his understanding the rite is bestowing foods to the spirits at the first place. This explanation differs from what is disclosed in the early manuscripts from Sichuan. See Hou Chong, “Lun dazuo baoding,” 208, also the narration of Zongze (11th -12th century) about the origin of the rite, in *Shuilu yuanqi* (X., vol. 101, 441). In the texts by Yang E it was explained more than one time, that *shuilu* is to salvage the sentient beings “to make all sentient beings departing from misery and obtaining happiness” (X., vol. 101, 446 and 450). However, his *shuilu* texts were compiled by Zongxiao under the title of *Shishi tonglan* (A General Overview of Food Bestowal) in 1205.

¹³⁴ For a brief introduction to the rite see Stevenson, Daniel, “Text, Image and Transformation,” 30-33.

¹³⁵ The opinion is newly proposed by the researchers in Dunhuang. See Xie Shengbao and Xie Jing, “Dunhuang wenxian,” “Dunhuang yihua,” and “Shuilu daochang.”

¹³⁶ The story of rediscovering the ritual text is recorded in many historical texts, among which *Fozu tongji*, T., vol. 49, no. 2035, 368) and *Shishi jigou lue*, T., vol. 49, no. 2037, 818, are only two prevalent ones.

¹³⁷ From the historical records that in the late 9th century the famous painter Zhang Nanben painted the complete set of the Shuilu hanging scrolls, it is reasonable to presume that the rite had a period of development before Song Dynasty. See the further discussion in part 2.2.2.

This feature led to the division of the rite into southern and northern schools consequently in the later time.¹³⁸

Based on the Buddhist *Wuzhe dahui*, “Assembly of Non-restriction” and rite of food bestowal, especially the *fanyankou yi*, the “rite of deliverance of the flaming-mouth hungry ghost”, the all enclosing rite *shuilu* absorbed the Daoist *huanglu zhai*, “rite of yellow records” as well as the Confucianist family rite of culting the ancestor further. As a cultural unification of the three teachings, the Buddhist rite *shuilu* was sinicized and intergrated into the Chinese culture and thus has been prosperous over thousand years until the middle 20th century.

By and large the lavish rite is held nowadays in a monastery by numerous clerical personnel and observed by innumerable lay believers, while an enormous expenditure of resources will be involed and consumed in the duration of seven days and nights. During this process certain special foods as offerings and massive quantities of vegetarian feast for participants are to be consumed, and thousand ritual paraphernalia in the rite will be used (mostly burned in the process). Spatically it takes place usually in seven halls with one as the inner altar and six as the outer altars. The main sanctuary, the inner altar with visual upper and lower halls, is generally decorated with elaborate iconographical scrolls or prepainted with wall paintings of the deities.¹³⁹ While the core of the whole rite taking place in the inner altar consequently, complex layers of activities, such as revering and bringing offers to the deities as well as intonating sutras are being carried out concurrently in the outer altar.¹⁴⁰ Practically all the Buddhist deities of the upper hall are invoked and summoned at the site of inner altar, and the unenlightened beings of the lower hall are to be assembled, feted, and converted so that they would be reborn in the western Pure Land.

Before discussing the *shuilu* in the historical dimension it would be helpful to give a spatial and chronical outline about the rite nowadays.¹⁴¹ The six outer altars with the related contents are shown in the following table:

¹³⁸ For a historical overview of the *shuilu* see Makita Tairyū, *chūgoku bukkyō shi*, 213-235.

¹³⁹ For the relation between the pictures and the ritual itself see Ye Xiaojian, “Shuiluhua ji shuilu fahui yishi.” For instance a *shuilu* hall with wall painting from the Ming time (1386-1644) is reserved in Zhaohuasi at Huai’an in the province of Hebei. See Xu Jianzhong, “Huai’an zhaohuasi,” 58-62.

¹⁴⁰ Zhuhong (1532-1612) et al., *Shuilu yigui*.

¹⁴¹ The following description of the *shuilu* is based chiefly on three sources: Yirun et al., *Shuilu yigui*; Kamata Shigeo, *Chūgoku no bukkyō girei*, 123-164; and Klose, Petra, *Der Shuilu ritus*.

2.2. Rock Carving and Shuilu Rite in Sichuan

Name	Main icons	Intonated texts
Great Altar, (or Altar of Medicine Buddha)	Guanyin	<i>Lianghuangchan</i> Diamond Sutra <i>Fanwang jing</i> (Brahmajala Sutra) <i>Yaoshi jing</i> (Bhaisajyaguru Sutra)
Flower Garland Altar	Vairocana Triad Śākyamuni	Flower Garland Sutra
Dharma Lotus Altar	Guanyin	Lotus Sutra
Pure Land Altar	Amitābha with representation of the Pure Land	Buddha names
Altar of All Sutras	Śākyamuni Triad	<i>Wuliangshou jing</i> (Aparimitayus Sutra) <i>Jinguangming jing</i> (Survana-prabhasa Sutra) <i>Liaoyi jing</i> (Buddhatrata Sutra)
Shurangama Altar, (or Altar of Emperor Wu of <i>Liang</i>)	Trikaya Buddha, Arhats und the ten kings of hell	<i>Lengyan jing</i> (Shurangama Sutra) <i>Lianghuangchan</i>

Table 2.1 Six outer altars of *shuilu*

The six outer altars take each a hall lightened by innumerable burning oil lamps, in the middle of which the images of the main icons are hung together with several stripes of characters (mostly related with the diseased). During the whole rite dozen of monks keep reading aloud various sutras, Buddha names and the text of confession etc. The main icons, namely the most important Buddhas and bodhisattvas, correspond generally with the name of the altar respectively, while some of them repeat those in the inner altar. The intonated sutras are the most influential Buddhist texts, such as the Flower Garland Sutra, Lotus Sutra or the *Liang huang chan*, the “Confession of Emperor Wu of Liang”, etc. In addition, the “rite of deliverance of the flaming-mouth hungry ghost” is held in the altar of Flower Garland. The outer altars have only the auxiliary function and the activities there proceed concurrently with those in the inner altar, where the core procedures of *shuilu* take place.

Occupied a large hall where the irrelevant observers may not be allowed to enter, the inner altar consists of the upper and lower halls and each of them is made up of ten and fourteen stations respectively. The stations of the two halls are not strictly separated spatially, but rather virtually.¹⁴² All the stations are assembled in the one Buddha hall, except the main Buddha (the first station of the upper hall) which takes the central place. The upper hall contains of Buddhas, bodhisattvas and other Buddhist deities of higher rank, while those of

¹⁴² See the diagram in Yirun et al., *Shuilu yigui*, 13.

the lower hall mainly come from the satient world or from the Six Paths. The following table is a list of the stations in the inner altar after the translation of Stevenson:¹⁴³

Upper hall:	Lower hall:
1. Buddhas	1. Deities of the celestial bureaucracy
2. Dharma	2. Deities of the terrestrial bureaucracy
3. Bodhisattvas	3. Officials of the human bureaucracy
4. Pratyekabuddhas	4. Humans
5. Srāvakas	5. Demigods and demonic beings
6. Chinese Buddhist patriarchs	6. Hungry ghosts
7. Immortals	7. Kings of the hell
8. Dharma-protecting gods	8. Denizens of the hell
9. Divine protectors	9. Animals
10. Great masters of the <i>shuilu</i>	10. Liminoids in the process of rebirth
	11. Local deities of city, shrine, village
	12. Protecting deities of the monastery
	13. Departed spirits of abbots, teachers and monastery donors
	14. Departed spirits of ancestors, relatives, etc., of the <i>shuilu</i> sponsors

Table 2.2 Stations in the inner altar of *shuilu*

Each station takes one table, on which the name tablet is placed and behind the tablet one or more hanging scrolls are hung. In a *shuilu* hall with wall painting, the name tablet of each seat is not always necessarily corresponding with the painted deity behind it. After the tables are covered with the food offerings, the incense and lamps are burned and lightened in the hall, and numerous paper strips with either charaters of confession or praying for fortune are hung, the inner altar is ready for the rite.¹⁴⁴

As aforementioned the rite takes generally a week to proceed, in which various rites are held in various places concurrently. The rite in inner altar begins generally from the 2nd or 3rd night, and lasts until the end of the whole. There are roughly 13 procedures within the five days, some of which begin as early as two or three o'clock in the night:¹⁴⁵

1. Connection of the worlds;
2. Releasing writs and raising banners;
3. Invitation of the deities of the upper hall;
4. Offering for the deities of the upper hall;

¹⁴³ Stevenson, Daniel, "Text, Image," 51.

¹⁴⁴ Most of the painting materials are from Ming Dynasty (1386-1644). A set wood cut from the Ming time reserved in Beijing includes about 150 pages as the pattern for the painting in the rite. See Anonymous, "Shuilu daochang shengui tuxiang." From the set in Baoningsi 139 pieces are reserved. See Shanxisheng bowuguan, *Baoningsi*.

¹⁴⁵ A more detailed description see Klose, Petra, *Der Shuilu Ritus*, 26 -68.

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5. Pronouncement of absolution;
6. Praying Buddhas through intonating Kṣitigarbha sutras;
7. Invitation of the deities of the lower hall;
8. Preachment of the rules for the Netherworld;
9. Praying Buddhas through offering the text of confession;
10. Offering for the deities of the lower hall;
11. Complete praying;
12. Burning the complete incense;
13. Dismissing the deities.

The rite is held by three main cleric personnels, *Zhufa*, *Zhengbiao* and *Zhubiao* together with other assistants. The *Zhufa*, the main master, is the media to connect to the deities and the rite, and he realizes this goal through meditation most of time. The *de facto* director of the rite is actually the *Zhengbiao*, the chief announcer, who leads the procedures, recites various texts and dharanis during the whole rite. Moreover, many assistants and especially the donor of the rite, called *Zhaizhu*, play also active roles in the rite.

During the rite certain actions are repeatedly proceeded: such as the *Zhengbiao* reads aloud various texts and dharanis; pure water are often used to purify the places symbolically; incense are burned to bring offerings to the deities; the personnel in the inner altar circumambulate the Buddhas several times; paper omens or effigies are burned to send them to the spiritual world, and so on. Through such activities of the body, speech and mind, the three Mysteries according to the Esoteric Buddhism, all the Buddhist deities are invoked and invited to come down to the altar site. After the deities of the upper hall have been summoned into their presence, the unenlightened beings of the lower altar are also assembled and feted in the similar way. The core procedure is to make the unenlightened converted in Buddhism and brought into the salvific fold of the Buddhist three Jewels, so that they are thus sent on their way to eventual rebirth in the western Pure Land. After the process is virtually achieved and the salvation is celebrated, the deities are gratefully dismissed and the rite comes to the end.

2.2.2. *Shuilu* rite in Sichuan in the Song Dynasty

Shuilu in the historical records from the Sichuan region

Though some Duhuang manuscripts and banners might be regarded as the remains of the forerunner of the *shuilu* rite according to some scholars,¹⁴⁶ the undoubtedly accepted earliest materials associated with the *shuilu* have been found in the Sichuan region both in the historical documents and the rock carvings since the late 9th and early 10th century.

The historical record about the famous painter Zhang Nanben (active in late 9th to 10th century) in the late Tang Dynasty is quite noticeable. As an expert on painting the Buddhist and Daoist figures as well as depicting the fire, Zhang left his paintings in several great monasteries in Chengdu during the late 9th century, such as *Dashengcisi*, *Shengshousi*, *Jinhuasi* etc.¹⁴⁷ For the yard of *shuilu* rite in *Baolisi* temple he was alleged to have finished a set of *shuilu* hanging scrolls of more than one hundred and twenty. In that set all the deities of the three teachings with other “deities, spirits, dragons and beasts” together were vividly depicted. It is also said that the set by Zhang was copied and thus substituted, and later the authentic one was sold to a man from *Jinghu* (in nowadays Hunan province).¹⁴⁸ If this record is reliable, it shows that the deities of the inner altar of *shuilu* were already quite comprehensive even at the end of the Tang time, and come almost near to the famous *Baoningsi* set from the early Ming time (1386-1644).¹⁴⁹ Besides, the rite was also active out of Sichuan in the late 9th century.¹⁵⁰

Another record is related with a monk called Shouzhen (893-971) in the Northern Song, who was ordained in the *Shengshousi* in Chengdu as a monk of the school of Esoteric Buddhism. One of his great accomplishments was that he was alleged to have held the *shuilu* rite for more than twenty times during his life.¹⁵¹

¹⁴⁶ See footnote 135.

¹⁴⁷ Wang Weiming, *Dashengcisi*, 17, 85, 150-153. The narration about him is reserved in *Yizhou minghua lu* by Huang Xiufu (10th -11th century) and *Tuhua jianwen zhi* by Guo Ruoxu (11th -12th century), whereby the latter referred the former one for certain contents. See *Ibid.*, 93-96.

¹⁴⁸ Huang Xiufu, *Yizhou minghua lu*, 13-14.

¹⁴⁹ For the *Baoningsi* set see Shanxi bowuguan, “*Baoningsi*.” It is also suggested in recent years that the pictures of *shuilu* in *Baoningsi* were finished as early as in the Yuan Dynasty (1206-1386). See Li Deren, “Shanxi youyu *baoningsi*,” 61-64.

¹⁵⁰ Also several sets of *shuilu* picture from Ming Dynasty reserved in the province of Gansu draw the attention of scholars. See Xie Shengbao, “Gansu hexi *shuiluhua*,” 8-11.

¹⁵¹ The rites were not all proceeded in Chengdu since he died in the *Kaibaosi* in Kaifeng. See T50, no. 2061, 871, and T51, no. 2071, 125.

2.2. Rock Carving and Shuilu Rite in Sichuan

The above two entries in the historical documents show that the *shuilu* took already a noticeable place in the temples of Chengdu as early as the late 9th and 10th century. Famous painters and influential monks engaged themselves actively in the rites and their activities were highly evaluated by the contemporary people. Also the *shuilu* rite was spread from Sichuan region to the eastern provinces and became one of the principal conducts in Buddhist monasteries.

With the consideration that the Buddhism in Sichuan region was significantly under the influence from the north, especially from the capital Chang'an, it is reasonable to assume that the rite might have come from Chang'an. Since there is no document delivered about the origination of *shuilu* in Sichuan,¹⁵² Also the cultural importing together with the flights of the two emperors Xuanzong (re. 712-756) in 756 and Xizong (re. 873-888) in 880 into Sichuan is noteworthy.¹⁵³ In Sichuan the rite was further developed through combination with the local Daoism, in which certain rites took an important place. In the monasteries of Chengdu in the Song time there must have been much more relating works,¹⁵⁴ but they are not extant unfortunately and only the remains reserved in the remote place of the region, especially those together with the rock carvings, are delivered to today.

The most well know story about *shuilu*, which is mentioned almost in every narrative about the origin of the rite, is related with the great writer Su Shi (1037-1101). In 1093 he invited a famous monk Shanben (11th -12th century) to hold a rite of *shuilu* for his late wife Wang to save her spirit from falling into the hell. He wrote hence a set of sixteen poems to praise the corresponding icons hung in the inner altar. In the foreword he commented that the rite had been expanding and the original (and better) approach was reserved in the Sichuan.¹⁵⁵ Since Su Shi originated from Meishan in Sichuan, the rite related with him was then named as *Meishan shuilu*. The sixteen stations of the inner altar in the *shuilu* praised by Su Shi are as following:

¹⁵² After the legend the revival of the rite is attributed to a Chan master Ying in Chang'an during the Xianheng era (670-673) of Tang Dynasty. See among others T49, no. 2035, 321.

¹⁵³ Wang Weiming, *Dashengcisi*, 6, 8.

¹⁵⁴ For instance in the greatest monastery of Chengdu, *Dashengcisi* there was a *shuilu yuan*, "Yard for Shuilu", according to the record by Fan Chengda (1126-1193). See Wang Weiming, *Dashengcisi*, 253.

¹⁵⁵ X., vol. 101, 443.

Upper hall	Lower hall
Buddhas	Officials and attendants
Dharma	Heavenly beings
Sangha	Asuras
Great bodhisattvas	Human beings
Great pratyekabuddhas	Denizens of hells
Great arhats	Hungry ghosts
Gods and Immortal with Five Supernatural Powers ¹⁵⁶	Animals
Dharmapalas and divine dragons	Beings outside the Six Paths

Table 2.3 Sixteen stations in the inner altar of *Meishan shuilu*

Although the *shuilu* sponsored by Su Shi in 1093 was not carried out in Meishan or Sichuan and the responsible monk did not come from Sichuan, its relation to Sichuan should still be taken into consideration.¹⁵⁷ A Buddhist layer Yang E (11th -12th century) collected and compiled the ritual texts of *shuilu* into three volumes according to the old tradition, which was prevalent in the Sichuan region in the Song time.¹⁵⁸ Since the structure and deities in the inner altar described in the text of Yang E are the same as those in the “*Meishan shuilu*”, the text of Yang E could have been the “old approach” referred by Su Shi. Probably the rite by Yang E was then quite influential and the *shuilu* sponsored by Su Shi was carried out according to the ritual text by Yang E, even if the rite was not held in Sichuan at the time.

The excerpts of four delivered texts by Yang E bring an outline of a ritual text.¹⁵⁹ The first text is like the beginning of the ritual that one should set up his four great minds, the mind of Bodhi, Broadness, Great Wish and Great Merciness in order to make the preparation for “cultivating the practice of bodhisattva”.¹⁶⁰ The next two texts are the core parts, in which

¹⁵⁶ The group of gods and immortals are noticeable. Referring the detailed explanation of them in the text of Yang E, it is conspicuous that they are Daoist deities. X., vol. 101, 447. Together with the (confucian) officials of the lower hall the three teachings are all available in the “*Meishan shuilu*”.

¹⁵⁷ The name “*Meishan Shuilu*” brings the impression, as if the rite was proceeded in or originated from Sichuan. However, the chronicle of Su Shi shows that he could not be in Sichuan in 1093. His wife died in August in Kaifeng and he assumed the governorship of Dingzhou in Hebei since September until the spring in 1094. The rite was carried out in November, and then Su Shi must have been in Dingzhou or Kaifeng. See Kong Fanli, *Su Shi nianpu*, ch. 32. The monk Shanben (1035-1109) who was the director of the rite, did not come from Sichuan, but from Yingzhou in the province Anhui. See X., vol., 137, 555. They knew each other since Su was governor in Hangzhou. At the time when Su’s wife died he was the leading monk of Fayunsi in Kaifeng. See Grant, *Mount Lu Revisited* 140, 144-149. The interpretation of Grant, that Su had seen how the *shuilu* was carried out when he was growing up in Meishan, cannot be proved, and Shanben did not originate from Sichuan as she presumed.

¹⁵⁸ According to Zongze (11th -12th century) the ritual text compiled by Yang E during 1068-1077 was prevailing in Sichuan and the most traditional one. See X., vol. 101, 443.

¹⁵⁹ *Chu ru daochang xu jian shuilu yi, Xuanbai zhaoqing shangtang bawei shengzhong* and *Xuanbai zhaoqing xiatang bawei shengfan, Shuiluzhai yiwen houxu*. X., vol. 101, 445-450.

¹⁶⁰ X., vol. 101, 445.

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the deities and spirits of the upper and lower halls in the inner altar were invited and summoned. but since it is incomplete, it is not clear what would proceed after they were assembled. Noticeably the figures of the inner altar are as same as those in “Meishan *shuilu*” of Su Shi.¹⁶¹ The last one, an afterword, is quite short, but it stresses again the *shuilu* as “the approach of salvation”, “to see no one on the earth not to accomplish the Buddhahood”.¹⁶² The four texts are quite incompleted and seem to be excerpted from Yang E’s three volumns of *shuilu* ritual texts. Nevertheless, the purpose, core part, and roughly structure of the rite as well as the brief style of text are still tangible.

The three volumes of Yang E have not been delivered. However, the discovery in Yunnan in recent years brings new light to the subject, especially to the old approach of Yang E in the Song time. Several prints from Song and Yuan time reserved in Yunnan reveal an overview and some details of the rite to us.¹⁶³ It is called *Chongguang shuilu fashi wuzhe dazhai*, the “re-expanded great non-restriction rite of the Buddhist service *shuilu*”, from which the outline, the preface of teaching, inviting the holy monks, and the 5th and 6th parts are included.¹⁶⁴ Though it is claimed that the texts come from the Emperor Wu of Liang Dynasty and Yang E, it is more likely the compilation of Zujue (1087-1150), since the texts are much lavisher and thus quite different from those of Yang E. Nevertheless, the expanded texts still reflect the rite in Sichuan region in the Song time.¹⁶⁵

Based on the outline and other three parts the programme and certain details of the rite are still comprehensible regardless of incompleteness of the texts. The whole rite consists of 144 sections, which can be grouped into two parts: “preaching before the altar” and “rites of the six times”. The first part has ten sections, which tell about the rules of the sanctuary, the mysterious stories, etc, and is more likely a spiritual preparation for the rite and for the mass. Then it begins with the rites of six times. In the key part the each eight figures of upper and lower halls of the inner altar are invited and summoned, in which the structure

¹⁶¹ There is slight discrepancy in the arrangement and name of the Path of Animals.

¹⁶² X., vol. 101, 450.

¹⁶³ Hou Chong mentioned many manuscripts or prints of the Song time relating with *shuilu* or other rites reserved in Yunnan, but those are mostly unpublished and unaccessible. I express my gratitude to him for his generous sharing of some of his charitable collections of histotic materials. See Hou Chong, “Lun dazu baoding,” 193-194, and “Songdai de xinyangxing fojiao,” 197-212. Concerning the Buddhism practised by the common people in the Song time also refer to Li Silong, “Minsu fojiao,” 55-60. Also Dai Xiaoyun, “Bei shuilu fahui,” 48-57.

¹⁶⁴ About the discovery and maintenance of the prints see Hou Chong, “Lun Dazu,” 202-203.

¹⁶⁵ See the analysis by Hou Chong, *Ibid*, 192-213.

is still the same as by Su Shi and Yang E.¹⁶⁶ The procedure, compared with the above described 13 parts, is twice simpler, but the whole structures are still similar in general.

The long and lavish texts together with numerous Buddha names and dharani, etc., in the style of plain text, gata, poem and verse, would have been read aloud through the whole rite. In the texts the Buddhist philosophy and ethics was mixed with mysterious wonder words, and it must have been a good chance to preach Mahayana Buddhism as the Buddhist spectacular was observed by the crowd of common people. Here the ritual texts had the similar status like sutras for the donor, since the donor paid the costs of copying the rite text and would like to leave his name on the prints for the sake of his merits.

Through the delivered ritual texts, it is clear that the rite is quite comprehensive compared to that of Su Shi and Yang E. Though the text might not necessarily coincide with the rite, a roughly outline about the rite in the Sichuan region in the Song time can still be obtained. And it is also clear that the salvation, preaching and accumulating merits are the main purpose of the rite.

Shuilu in rock carvings of the Sichuan region

The rock carvings, scattered in Sichuan region, are situated either in the near of the once temples or in the important historical traffic lines. Though no traces of *shuilu* has ever been found in the rock carvings near Chengdu due to the weathering, the extant remains in stone are seemingly spread geographically from the metropole to the east, to the inner part of Sichuan region, such as Anyue, Dazu and Laitan etc., among which Dazu has the richest of materials.¹⁶⁷ The following is an overview of the sites related with the *shuilu* in a chronological order.

The earliest known site is in Anyue, Antangsi no. 7. Together with Amitābha, Maitreya and Kṣitigarbha in the weathered inscription the word *shuilu* is found.¹⁶⁸ However, the inscription is quite weathered so that it cannot be affirmed whether the word “*shuilu*” in it refers definitely to the rite or not.

¹⁶⁶ Again with slight discrepancies in the arrangement and name of the Path of Animal.

¹⁶⁷ Relating the periodization of the sculptures concerning *shuilu* in Dazu refer to Li Xiaoqiang, “Dazu shike zhali,” 335-340.

¹⁶⁸ Hu Wenhe, *Sichuan dao jiao*, 215.

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The niche no. 253 in Dazu Beishan with Guanyin and Kṣitigarbha with the ten kings of hell, is definitely associated with *shuilu* according to an inscription of repainting outside the niche. “..... sincerely completed to express the celebration after performing the rite *shuilu* on 8th day of the 2nd month of 1001.”¹⁶⁹ Guanyin and Kṣitigarbha with the ten kings of hell are the essential deities in the rite, but it is hard to clarify the relation between the images and the rite.¹⁷⁰ It is unlikely that a sanctary of *shuilu* in small scale had been set up before the niche was presumed,¹⁷¹ but rather the rite was probably performed in the temple nearby and the donors had repainted the niche to celebrate the rite after it had been held.

In 1986 in the ruins of Dazhongsi temple, about 30 kilometers east from the Dazu county town, more than fifty sculptures and icons were excavated. Many inscriptions on the icons, most of which are statues of Arhats, or *Luohan* in Chinese, refer to Buddhist rites, *zhai* and the No. 20 refers unquestionably to “performing the *shuilu zhai*” in the year 1056.¹⁷² *Luohan* or holy monks, as shown above, played a key role in the rite.

In Shizhuanshan, 15 kilometer south of the Dazu town, a group of middle-sized niches from the Northern Song time are fairly well reserved. The niche No. 6 and 7 possess inscriptions of the performing of the rite *shuilu* on 7th day of 10th month in 1088. Several hundred meters away is the ruin of temple *Fohuisi*. Since all the niches are from the pantheon of the *shuilu*, it is arguable what a role the group of niches might have played in the rite. The inscription of the donor and the new discoveries of three niches are an ideal example for the research. The images and function of the group will be discussed in detail in the paper.

About 12 kilometers away from *Shizhuanshan* there is another small hill named *Miaogaoshan*¹⁷³, where a large Buddhist temple and the rock carvings from Song time are located. There are four big caves and one huge standing Buddha in high relief with three small niches here. The *Huayan* triad with sixteen *Luohans* is located in the cave no. 3, the so called “Cave of *Luohan*”. On the halo of one *Luohan* a laudation text written by Su Shi in 1093 for his late wife was carved. Further in the cave of Water-moon Guanyin an inscription by a contemporaneous visitor referred the place as “*jiao tan*”, (Daoist) sanctuary of rite.¹⁷⁴ The

¹⁶⁹ Chongqing, *Dazu shike mingwenlu*, 72-73.

¹⁷⁰ Stevensen, Daniel, “Text, Image,” 64, endnote 43.

¹⁷¹ Xie Shengbao and Xie Jing, “Shuilu daochang,” 31.

¹⁷² Deng Zhijing, “Dazuxian dazhongsi,” 108.

¹⁷³ The name *Miaogaoshan* appears in certain diagrams of the *shuilu* rite text. See Yirun et al., *Shuilu yigui*, 424.

¹⁷⁴ Normally *jiao* refers to Daoist rite, but there are examples in which *shuilu* are also called as “*jiao*”. See Li Xiaoqiang, “Dazu shike,” 337.

inscriptions and the iconography of the sculpted statues there show that the images are also likely related with the rite *shuilu*.¹⁷⁵

About 28 kilometers north from Dazu town on top of a small hill is the ruin of temple *Shibisi* with the hall of “three teachings”, where the icons of the three teachers with Jade Emperor and the scenes of hell etc. were chiselled on a huge rock. In situ a stele from 1210 is delivered, and it shows that the carved text seems to be a dedication text in *shuilu* performed by the local people. The text is unique and records many details of the *shuilu* held there, such as the purpose or names of beneficiaries as well as the cited dharanis etc. It is earliest known *shuilu* text carved on stone and helpful for the study of *shuilu* in the region in Song time. Noticeably the text shows a strong influence from Daoist texts of rite and further discloses the relation between Daoist elements and *shuilu* in the Song time.

As for the great complex of Dafowan in Baodingshan one breakthrough of research since recent years is the argument about the close relation of the complex with the Buddhist rites, especially with the *shuilu* rite. The historical documents reserved in Yunnan demonstrate arguably the connection between the monumental images with the *shuilu* rite. Though it is still disputable if the site was the sanctuary or not, it is no doubt that certain number of the statues were produced according to the iconography and rite text of *shuilu*.¹⁷⁶

Outside the Dazu County there are still some traces of *shuilu* to be found. In Yuanjuedong No. 12 in Anyue County a stele was carved as the inscription for a huge Guanyin with lotus sprout. The stele tells that the *shuilu* rite was performed and the Four Great Sutras were preached after the project of building Guanyin statue was finished in 1107.¹⁷⁷ The *shuilu* performed there has twofold meanings: the one was to fulfil the wishes of ancestor, and the other was to celebrate the accomplishment of the gigantic Guanyin statue.

The rock carvings in Erfosi in Laitan of Hechuan County are generally regarded as Chan-Buddhist, though the tradition of the sect was totally anti-iconic. Nevertheless there is the inscription “... performing the great rite of *shuilu*...” in 1180 near the statue of Subhuti

¹⁷⁵ See Li Xiaoqiang, “Dazu shike zhaji,” 337. The site is also likely related with certain rituals of *Jingtu*, the Pure Land. See the analysis in the part of Miaogaoshan.

¹⁷⁶ Since only the three niches of no. 15-17 will be studied in the paper, the programme and general function of the whole complex will not be discussed in this paper. See the recent research by Luo Zhao, “Dazu baodingshan,” 186-191 and Hou Chong, “Lun dazu,” 192-213.

¹⁷⁷ The Great Four Sutras are also found carved in the Yuanjue Cave in Dafowan, and their titles are proved to be the object of cult in *shuilu*. See Houchong, “Lun dazu,” 197.

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donated by a monk.¹⁷⁸ Subhuti often plays a role in the preaching assembly of Buddha and appear often in the sutras relating Prajnaparamita. He is said to be extraordinary outstanding in understanding the meaning of *sunya*, the Emptiness, thus he was entitled as “the foremost for understanding the Emptiness”. For Buddhist he is most familiar one as the audience of Buddha in the well-known Diamond Sutra. As disciple of Buddha he accomplished the stage of Arhat, and thus is corresponding to the sage monk or luohan in *shuilu* rite.

Except for the aforementioned sites with inscriptions of *shuilu* there are still numerous rock carvings bearing the inscription relating with certain rites, like *zhai*, or *xiu zhai* (performing rite).¹⁷⁹ Though it is impossible to clarify if those rites were related with *shuilu* or not, the function of those rites revealed by the inscriptions come near to the purpose of *shuilu* rite such as praying for fortune and dismissing adversities. It is noteworthy that the Buddhist rites were quite active since Five Dynasties until the end of Song, and must have facilitated the fashioning of the icons in stone.

At the same time, an important fact is that there are still considerable differences regarding the iconography, scale and sometimes function among the images related with *shuilu*. Some questions keep still open: such as to what extent the remains can reflect the performance of the rite; whether the rites have been ever held before the icons as well as the function of the images in the presumed ritual sites. Those carvings are mostly in a small scale and located in the nearby of small temples. It seems that those images come from the iconography of *shuilu*, whose ritual texts play the role like the sutras, but most likely they did not serve as the sanctuary place, and the rite was rather held in the temple nearby. Therefore the small scale found in the carvings related with the rite *shuilu* does not match the large scale of that recorded in the historical documents. The rite had a deep influence on the belief of common people, and under its influence the deities of the prevalent rite became the subject of the rock carvings.

As mentioned, in the places like in Shizhuanshan and Shibisi the images of the three teachings are closely related with the rite *shuilu*. Concerning the background of *shuilu* in the region it is possible that the development of *shuilu* rite was one of the historical and

¹⁷⁸ Li Xiaoqiang, “Dazu shike,” 338.

¹⁷⁹ Just in Dazu there are more than sixty sites associated with inscription of rites. See Hou Chong, “Lun dazu,” 197.

religious reasons for the thriving of the unification of the three teachings. Naturally there are still many statues of the three teachings which are not related with the rite. Although both image making and ritual forming of the three teachings came into being under the same historical background, *Shuilu* and the unification of the three teachings have overlap but they were not identical.

3. Neighboring Harmoniously – Shizhuanshan

3.1. Overview

Shizhuanshan (“Stone Seal Mountain”) is a small hill located about 15 km southwest of Dazu County town (Fig. 1.1) in a village called *Fohui* Village which was named after the Buddhist temple which was once there. The name Shizhuanshan originates from the saying that the stones on top of the hill resemble the form of Chinese seal characters.¹⁸⁰

On the southern side of the hill from the west to the northeast are nine niches of various sizes forming a gallery of almost 90 meters long 6 meters high. Another three niches were just recently discovered about 300 meters southeast from the main group. About 350 meters east from the main group of nine niches is the ruin of temple *Fohuisi* (“Temple of Buddha Assembling”), which has become a living area of peasants and only some stone statues and steles of more recent times are extant. A pagoda, called *Fohui* Pagoda (Fig. 3.53 and Fig. 3.54), stands further about 100 meters east from the temple and it is relatively well preserved and contemporary with the niches (Fig. 3.1). In the east about 750 m from the nine niches there is still another group of 10 niches named *Qianfoya* (“Cliffside of Ten Thousand Buddhas”), which were completely carved in the Ming Dynasty (1386-1644) and irrelevant from the niches from the Song time.

It is recorded in the stele from 1413 that the earliest buildings of the temple were destroyed at the end of Southern Song Dynasty (1127-1279). More than one hundred years later in 1412, a monk called *Langran* (active 15th – 16th century) restored the whole temple by rebuilding the Buddha halls and the pagoda. The ruin of the temple now seems to come from that time.¹⁸¹

According to a stele, likely a reproduction of the original inscription in the Ming time, more than ten niches were donated by a Buddhist layman *Yan Xun* in the late 11th century. The donor had altogether fourteen statues made: Buddha *Vairocana*, *Śākyamuni* and *Maitreya*, Buddha of Flaming Light and Eleven Stars, Bodhisattava *Avalokiteśvara*, Long Life King, Bodhisattava *Mañjuśrī* and *Samantabhadra*, Bodhisattava King *Kṣitigarbha*, *Laozi*, *Kongzi*,

¹⁸⁰ Liu Changjiu et al., *Dazu shike yanjiu*, 336, note 4.

¹⁸¹ About the temple no archaeological research has been made. The text about the history of the temple which is carved on a stele standing approximately 100 meters further east from the temple. For the transcription of the text, see Liu Changjiu et al., *Dazu shike yanjiu*, 333.

Monk Zhigong, Sun Simiao (581-682), Hārītī and God Earth.¹⁸² With the recent discovery of three niches, all niches have been found with the content and names identified. Besides the inscription from the donor of the niches from the Song time, some niches also bear inscriptions that reveal additional information about the carver, donor, dating and function of the niches, of which in two niches the rite *shuilu* were mentioned.

Although the scale of rock carvings in Shizhuanshan is not large, the carvings are relatively well and completely preserved together with the numerous inscriptions from the donor and carver. As the earliest extant site of the three teachings in the rock carvings in Sichuan, Shizhuanshan is one the most important site especially for the study of the unification of the three teachings in the Song time. Different from the sites in later time, the three masters with their disciples here were enshrined in their own niches respectively rather than gathered within one niche or cave.

3.2. Twelve Niches

Niche 1: Niche of Holy Mother

The niche no. 1 is 2.10 meters high, 2.58 meters wide and 1.23 meters deep with a slightly inward inclined opening facing to the southwest.¹⁸³ Outside the niche there is no trace of any architectural decoration in stone, but holes left by wooden constructions (Fig. 3.2).

Inside the niche it is a lively scene of a common woman's everyday life presented in a symmetrical manner. The Holy Mother Hārītī sits on a throne in the centre of the niche, wearing a flowing garb with long sleeves and carrying a high crown on her head. A shawl is put over the shoulders and long belt ribbons knotted before her chest falling down between the legs. She is holding a small boy on her left knee with her left hand, and in her right she is holding a lucky fruit that the small boy tries to grasp.

To either side of her stands a young maid, with the hair twisted and braids put at both ears to nests. With both hands they hold either a square object of offering (left), or a round fan before the chest (right). At the feet of the left maid two boys are playing and to the right of

¹⁸² It is disputable how many niches were made. The number fourteen in the donor's text is mostly understood as referring to the niches. See the analysis in the evaluation part. For the original names of the niches see Table 3.1.

¹⁸³ All data of the niches in Shizhuanshan come from Hu Liangxue and Chen Jing "Dazu shizhuanshan," and Yang Fangbing, "Dazu shizhuanshan."

3.2. Twelve Niches

the maid on the right hand side maid an amah holds a sucking or sleeping boy before her chest with both hands. On the amah's left stands a small boy, who seems to help her nourishing the baby. At both sidewalls of the niche sit two playing boys. They are either beating a drum between the knees, amusing themselves with a peach and a bell (left), or playing together with a sparrow (right). Altogether there are nine boys in the niche.

Though no original inscriptions is found inside the niche,¹⁸⁴ according to the iconographic programme and the text the donor, the niche was dedicated to goddess Hārītī, or Mother of Demons with her nine sons. Hārītī is a minor deity as a protectress and children provider in Buddhism. In the relating Buddhist canonic texts, Hārītī is originally described as a *yakṣa* and the mother of a thousand demon-children. Due to an evil vow in a previous life, she devoured children of the city *Rājagrha*. By hiding one of her children and making her aware of the grief she made to other mothers, Buddha converted her to a guardian of Buddhist temples and abodes of monks and nuns, and also she was instructed to give children to childless couples who desired them.¹⁸⁵

The cult of the goddess has a long history. The deity Hārītī might have been assimilated into Buddhism together with her consort Pāñcika in Gandhāra in the 2nd century. As a deity of children provider representations, the female deity was already represented with several children around her in the Gandhāran sculptures. As Buddhism expanded to China, the goddess alone, mostly represented as a static icon of providing children, became more and more popular throughout the Buddhist world. The Buddhist “Madonna” was worshipped in many Buddhist monasteries from Java to Turfan. Since the rise of Esoteric Buddhism in Tang Dynasty the presumed powers of the deity was further enlarged, and she was associated in rites of mandalas, in which images or statues of Hārītī were worshipped. The cult was carried out in Song Dynasty and spread to the whole East Asia.¹⁸⁶ After Song time the goddess became similar to Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara (Guanyin in Chinese) in certain

¹⁸⁴ In the right outside the niche two steles were inscribed from the late Qing time (1881), showing that down to the late Qing dynasty the Buddhists were still active in the area.

¹⁸⁵ Several texts tell the essentially same story, but vary in details such as the number of her children or the manner of her conversion. See *Foshuo guizinu jing*, T., vol. 21, no. 1262. *Genben shuoyiqieyoubu binaiye zashi*, scroll 31, T., vol. 24, no. 1451. *Za baozangjing*, scroll 9, T., vol. 55, no. 2146. *Dayaochanü huanximu bing aizi chengjiu fa*, T., vol. 21, no. 1260. *Helidimu zhenyan jing*, T., vol. 21, no. 1261. *Mohemoye jing* scroll11, T., vol. 12, no. 383. *Nanhan jigui neifa zhuan*, scroll 1, T., vol. 54, no. 2125, etc. For the origin and transformation of the themes in Chinese painting see Murray, Julia, “Representations of Hārītī,” 253-284 und Lesbre, Emmanuelle, “La conversion de Hariti au Buddha,” 98-113.

¹⁸⁶ Murray, Julia, “Representations of Hārītī” 253-255. For the study of the goddess from the viewpoint of divine feminine, see Suchuan, Tom, “Esoteric Buddhism and the divine feminine,” 67-92.

functional respects. Besides providing children Hārītī also is also referred to many times in the Buddhist texts in relation with rites of offering foods or *shuilu*.¹⁸⁷

Though the cult of the goddess Hārītī was wide spread in north China and some remains are reserved on paper or silk. In earlier Buddhist caves in the north no sculptural image of the goddess are known. Since the middle Tang time the goddess enjoyed enormous popularity in the small caves and niches in Sichuan region.

The earliest examples in Sichuan are found in Bazhong, the niches no. 68, 74 and 81 of the southern group. According to an inscription of repainting in 888 A.D. by a donor. The main figures of the three niches were called *Guizimu fo*, “Buddha Mother of Demons”. The three Mothers of Demons were all carved in shallow relief, showing a woman in each niche sitting on the ground, holding a baby in arms and each were surrounded by four small boys symmetrically on either side. She has no halo or aureole and was dressed in clothes and skirts of common women in the Tang Dynasty.¹⁸⁸

Besides niche no. 1 in Shizhuanshan there are several sites with the same iconographical theme of the Song time, such as niche no. 9 in Shimenshan (Fig. 3.3), and niche no. 122 (Fig. 3.4) and no. 289 (Fig. 3.6) in Beishan. The representations of the goddess in Dazu are totally different from those in Bazhong, for in Dazu they were namely all represented as noble women. They sit mostly regally in the centre of the niches and are dressed in luxiously-jewelled garments. They all hold a baby on their knees, and on either side stand maids in a courtly dress, with an amah sitting on the ground stilling a baby in her breast before them. Besides, several boys play with each other on the ground in the niches. Though some were heavily weathered and can not be clearly counted, generally there are nine boys.

Comparatively speaking the construction of Hārītī in Shizhuanshan differs slightly from the other three, though they were made in one period and clearly in the same style. The figures in the niche here were loosely arranged with the boys scattered on the either side in the niche rather than assembled before their mother. Possibly the Hārītī here in Shizhuanshan was made earlier than those in other sites.¹⁸⁹ Compared with Hārītī’s image from Gandhāra

¹⁸⁷ See X., vol. 130, 801 and vol. 101, 436.

¹⁸⁸ Hu Wenhe, *Sichuan daojiao*, 231.

¹⁸⁹ The niches in Shimenshan are dated by inscriptions from 1094 (niche no. 4) to 1151 (niche no. 1). Since the niche of Hariti is located on the back part and it could have been much later. Niche no. 289 in Beshan was finished in 1171, and niche no. 122 has no inscription.

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those in Sichuan mostly continue the static iconic tradition of the goddess,¹⁹⁰ but the maids, amah, clothes and decoration of the goddess as well as the toys the boys play with are all sinisized and localised.¹⁹¹

As a popular goddess in Sichuan region in Song time, the goddess Hārītī must have been made in great amount. On the foot of Mingshansi in Anyue County one niche of the goddess was fashioned on a huge stone block together with other niches (Fig. 3.6). Though the images were heavily weathered and there is no inscription discernible today, the composition and style of the niche is in accordance with its counterparts in other sites in Dazu. It seems that the deity was possibly made from a general pattern at the time, and as a scholar pointed out, the pattern and form of the Buddhist goddess was then assimilated in the Daoism after some slightly change of the appearance and received the worship of the Daoist, as seen in Shuchengyan in the region.¹⁹²

Niche 2: Niche of Monk Zhigong

Carved on a stretching corner of a cliff, the niche without sidewalls is 2.34 meters high and 2.54 meters broad. Around the niche are patterned clouds and in the centre two figures stand, a master followed by his servant carrying his accessories (Fig. 3.7).

The master, with the appearance of a middle-aged man, has a round soft hat on his head, wearing a knee-long garb with broad sleeves. His footwear is worn out, with two toes stretched out from the left. Standing in stride, he seems to smile at the viewer. In his left hand he holds an angle and a pair of shears are tied up at the wrist. The master reaches out two fingers of the right hand toward his servant boy behind him, who carries a powerful beam hung with a *dou*¹⁹³, scales and a straw broom over the shoulder. The boy wears a garb with closed sleeves and looks toward his master cheerfully.

Above the two figures on the wall is a rectangular table painted with flora patterns, on which a heavily weathered inscription was discovered in recent years. The fifteen-lined

¹⁹⁰ See Zwalf, Wladimir, *A Catalogue of the Gandhara*, plate III.

¹⁹¹ The deity in the famous scroll attributed to Zhang Shenwen in Dali (1180) was much more luxuriously painted, but the construction and iconography is still akin to those in Dazu. See Li Sisheng, “‘Fanxiangjuan’ yu baodingshan,” 258.

¹⁹² Long Hui, “Dazu shike,” 135-140.

¹⁹³ A traditional Chinese measuring equipment for capacity.

inscription describes an episode about Monk Zhigong's witty answer to the question of Emperor Wu of Liang (464-549).¹⁹⁴ At the end is a signation of the carver: in the year of Yichou (1085) engraved by Wen Weijian from Yueyang.¹⁹⁵

According to that inscription and donor's text the main figure in niche no. 2 can be definitely identified as the monk Zhigong (415-514, also named as Baozhi).¹⁹⁶ In various historical materials¹⁹⁷ monk Zhigong was a legendary figure with certain supernatural power and active in the courts of the Southern Qi (479-502) and Liang Dynasties (502-557). He was also remembered as one the founders of the *shuilu* rite.¹⁹⁸ According to the legends, the Emperor Wu of Liang invented the rite after he had the Buddhist texts scanned under the suggestion of monk Baozhi. As he was believed to be a transformation of the bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara, painted or sculpted images of him were worshipped at latest since the Tang Dynasty (618-907). The image of Zhigong, as many early historical materials recorded, was represented as an old monk wearing a cloth as head dress and carrying a long stick on which several gears like scissors, mirror, silk band etc. were hung as attributes.¹⁹⁹ Besides the numerous records in the historical text, his image was also found in the Grotte no. 72 in Dunhuang in the wall painting that attests to the popularity of the legendary monk.²⁰⁰

Like the goddess Hārītī, no sculpted image of monk Zhigong was known in the grottes in north China, but there are many remains of the legendary monk in Sichuan region, such as Guangyuan, Jiange and Anyue, etc. Mostly, he was represented together with other

¹⁹⁴ For transcription see Chongqing, *Dazu shike mingwenlu*, 316

¹⁹⁵ The name of the carver was firstly seen in Dazhongsi where he carved with his father. See Deng Zhijing, "Dazuxian dazhongsi," 111.

¹⁹⁶ The main figure has been once identified as the great architect Lu Ban (3rd century B.C.), on grounds of labels outside the niche and a later added stone arch before the niche and the attributes of angle, shears and scales, etc., which seem to belong to an architect. See Hu Liangxue and Chen Jing, "Dazu shizhuanshan," 43 and Chen Mingguang, "Dazu shizhuanshan," 90-93 and Gu Sen, "Dazu shizhuanshan," 33-38.

¹⁹⁷ See the relating narratives in the following historical records: *Gaosengzhuan*, T., vol. 50, no. 2059, 394-395, *Luoyang jialan ji*, T., vol. 51, no. 2092, 1014, *Ji shenzhou sanbao gantong lu*, T., vol. 52, no. 2106, 434, *Jingde chuan deng lu*, T., vol. 51, no. 2076, 429, *Fozu tong ji*, T., vol. 49, no. 2035, 346-349, *Biyuan lu*, T., vol. 48, no. 2003, 197, *Shen seng zhuan*, T., vol. 50, no. 2064, 969.

¹⁹⁸ The monk Zhigong is a figure directly connected with the origination of *shuilu*. In the legend the Emperor Wu of Liang was told in the dream that the rite was the greatest of the merits to console the spirits who are confined in the Six Paths and Four Births and suffer endlessly. It was Zhigong who advised the emperor to search the answer about the rite in the Buddhist texts extensively. With his help the emperor created the Shuilu Rite after three years' study (X., vol. 130, 802). Though the long inscription above the niche of monk Zhigong did not narrated the story his close relation with the Buddhist emperor and his contribution to the *shuilu* must have been well known to the believer, which was a reason why he was chosen and carved there.

¹⁹⁹ Matsumoto Eiichi, "Shikō hensōkō," 214.

²⁰⁰ For a detailed study about the legendary monk Zhigong see Makita, *chūgoku bukkyō shi*, 56-84.

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legendary monks like Sengjia (628-710), whereby the examples in niche No. 177 in Dazu Beishan (Fig. 3.8) and in Qianfoya No. 91 in Jiayang are well reserved (Fig. 3.9).

In niche no. 91 in Qianfoya in Jiayang, three main great monks were carved in the main wall, they were Sengjia in the middle and on his left Zhigong and on the right Monk Daoming. Behind them are shallow relief of landscape, while two assisting figures stand at either sidewall. Monk Zhigong wears monk's garments, holding a stick in his right hand with shears, duster etc. In Beishan No. 177 the statue of Sengjia was placed in the centre, and Zhigong was represented as an assisting figure at his left. Wearing a hut and clad in a monk's garment and sitting on a chair, the Monk Zhigong shows a miserable face, prays with right hand before the chest and carries a stick hung with various attributes, even with a small mouse.²⁰¹ In both cases Zhigong appears together with Sengjia as his assistant figure, not the main figure of the niches. Like Sengjia the monk Zhigong in the both sites was actually worshipped as the transfiguration of the bodhisattva Guanyin. In an appearance of a monk the image of Zhigong in Song time has followed the tradition since Tang time with some changes concerning the attributes.²⁰²

The image of Zhigong here in Shizhuanshan appears quite different from those in Dazu Beishan and Jiayang. He was no more an assisting figure, but rather the main figure in the niche, and the composition and his motivated facial expression are notably different. Also his attributes have been changed. He holds shears, an angle and his boy carries a *dou*, a scale and a straw broom for him, which are different from the historical records and the representations in other places.²⁰³ It is noteworthy, though the cult of Zhigong was wide spread, his iconographical appearance including mimic and his attributes varied slightly in different places. The image in Shizhuanshan is one of the most unique and extraordinary. The short humorous dialog between him and the emperor Wu of Liang seems to imply the unique and humorous facet of the miraculous monk. That appears to be in accordance with the image here. Furthermore the combination of Zhigong and Emperor Wu of Liang has similarities to the story of the origin of the rite *shuilu*, which can not be traced in the above two sites of Jiayang and Dazu Beishan.

²⁰¹ Hu, *Sichuan dao jiao*, 326-327.

²⁰² Another statue of Zhigong in Dazu County is found in the Duobao Pagoda in Beishan (niche no. 131) with similar appearance like the one in Beishan. See the report of Chen Mingguang, "Dazu Duobaota," 16.

²⁰³ Some scholars suggest that the attributes might imply the dynasty he has served with the wordplay, that the monk experienced three Dynasties of Qi, Liang and Chen. See Hu Wenhe, *Sichuan dao jiao fo jiao*, 327.

Niche 3: Niche of Earth God

Facing south the niche is actually a relief within a rectangular area of 1,55 meters high and 1,65 meters wide. Destroyed today to a large extent, only two standing figures can be recognized. With faces and hands mostly broken, the two figures seem to be dressed in the clothes of officials (Fig. 3.10).

Since no trace of inscription is found in the niche, there are different opinions for the identification of the figures in the niche. First they were identified as the Long Life King and his son, but recent discovery of the remote three niches shows that the niche is most likely to be a representation of Earth God.²⁰⁴

The cult of Earth God belongs to the popular religion, and in China it has been absorbed into Daoism. Worshipped mainly by the local people, the Earth God is generally a protecting deity of a place like a village. The god originates from the cult of earth and enjoys the worship of people all over the world.²⁰⁵ Though in China the cult of earth might exist as early as in the prehistorical period, the cult of Earth God by common people became popular in the Song time.

Historically there are two kinds of deities of earth: the deity for the whole earth is *houtu*; the deity protecting the village is *she*. The former was worshipped generally by the emperor for bringing good weather and fortune for the whole country and the latter enjoyed his worship mainly from the people from a local community, *hui*.²⁰⁶ In Daoism, the goddess *houtu* became the spouse of Jade Emperor and one of the Four Divinities, and thus was elevated to the highest ranking.²⁰⁷ The Earth God is comparable with a local official who is in charge of local, natural and social affairs, such as the flourishing of plants, good weather, social safety and even dismissing of diseases.²⁰⁸ The images of *houtu* and *she*, corresponding to their status and function, are that of an empress and a lower official respectively.

²⁰⁴ See Hu Liangxue and Chen Jing “Dazu shizhuanshan,” 43. The discovery report in 2005 by Yang Fangbing still continues the mistake by recognizing the newly discovered Niche of Long Life King as “Niche of the King Mountain”. See Yang Fangbing “Dazu shizhuanshan,” 7.

²⁰⁵ Du Zhengqian, “Lun tudishen,” 7-10.

²⁰⁶ About the fundamental integration of Daoist community in the Chinese culture, see Schipper, Kristofer, “Taoism: The Story,” 50.

²⁰⁷ As seen in Nanshan the goddesses are represented together with other Daoist deities on the front side of the central pillar.

²⁰⁸ The Earth God acquired its social effects of controlling the local society in the Song time and was thus instituted in almost every village. Yang Jianhong, “Lun songdai tudishen,” 83-84.

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In Sichuan region there are very few images of Earth God from Song time known to us. In Dazu County there is one example for the two types of deities of earth reserved. The one is niche no. 4 in Nanshan, the three Holy Mothers of *Houtu* (Fig. 3.11); the other is in *Shimenshan*, niche No. 13 with an inscription of year 1095 (Fig. 3.12). In Nanshan niche no. 4 throne, three noble goddess wearing luxurious head dresses and dressed in royal garments under canopies. The Earth God in *Shimenshan* was either unfinished or badly weathered. Flanked by two assisting figures, one holding a scroll on his left and one holding a sword on his right, the deity sits like a local official in the centre of a small niche. The Earth God in *Shimenshan* is like a counterpart to that in *Shizhuanshan*, since they are protecting deity for the village there.

The Earth God in *Shizhuanshan* has a different form from the one in *Shimenshan*, though they are similar in some respects. The two figures in niche no. 3 wear different clothes: the left one wears a short skirt and can be an attendant for the heavily damaged Earth God on the right who is clad in a long garment with a round collar. The left one seems to reach for something to the right. Their head dresses and official clothes reveal that they were local officials. The two examples of Earth God in the late Northern Song show that the deity at that time had an appearance of local official rather than an old man with his wife as seen in the later cases, and the form of the deity has no fixed appearance but with variable appearances of lower local officials.²⁰⁹

Niche 4: Niche of Medicine King the Perfect Man Sun

The niches no. 3 and no. 4 are adjacent, whereas niche no. 4 is on the higher right of the no. 3. With a semicircular arch the partly weathered shallow niche measures 2, 06 meters high, and 0.90 meters wide (Fig. 3.13).

In the niche there is a single standing male figure viewing outward. Carrying a small soft hat with two wing-like accessories on the head, he wears a long garb with broad sleeves and has a girdle on the waist. The two tails of his hat are blown up and the broad sleeves are

²⁰⁹ An old man with his wife as the couple of Earth God and Goddess appeared at latest in the Southern Song, and the appearance of Earth God as local official in Northern Song is in accordance with the historical records. See Qing Xitai, *Zhongguo daojiao*, 252.

blown by wind out of the either side of the niche. He rests his hand on the belly with the left hand seizing the wrist of the right.

In the light of the donor's inscription the engraved figure in this niche can be identified as the Medicine King, Sun Simiao (581-682), who was a celebrated Daoist priest and medical expert of the Tang Dynasty.²¹⁰ Sun never sought an official position, but lived in seclusion in mountains and forests. Besides a good knowledge of the Daoist, theories of Laozi and Zhuangzi, Sun was familiar with the various schools of thoughts, including Buddhism.²¹¹ Owing to his significant contribution to medical science and pharmacognosy, he was addressed respectfully as “the Medicine King” in later ages. As a Daoist he was posthumously conferred the title, *miaoying zhenren*, “Perfect Man of Subtle Correspondences” in the Northern Song Dynasty.²¹²

Like Earth God, the Medicine King is nowadays quite commonly worshipped, while the early images are seldom delivered. The known places in China where the Medicine King is worshipped are Yaowangshan in Shaanxi, his hometown and recluse place, and Baiyunguan (Temple of White Clouds) in Beijing. In the Sichuan region the niche of Sun in Shizhuanshan is the single one in Song time.²¹³ Normally, there is no niche for Daoist immortals as main figures in the niche, since almost all Daoist niches were dedicated to Daoist deities. The immortals were mostly represented as assistant figures for their master, as it is seen in the niche no. 7 of Laozi and his disciples.²¹⁴

The cult of Medicine King is related with the desire of common people who wish to dismiss diseases and keep healthy. It is not accidental that the Medicine King Sun was carved

²¹⁰ For identifying the niches with the names from the donor there are two means: a. inscriptions inside niches, such as niches no. 2, 6, and 8, in which the name or relating text of the main figures are inscribed; b. iconographical features, such as niche no. 1, 5, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12. Those niches either have apparent iconographical features for main figures or the represented images can be easily identified. Only niche no. 3 and 4 are extraordinarily represented without any iconographical features or comparable contemporaries. They are mainly identified on base of the text from the donor.

²¹¹ As he became a hermit on Zhongnan Mountain, where he was on friendly terms with the Monk Daoxuan (596-667). About his attitude to Buddhism see the legendary records about him in *Fozu tongji*, T., vol. 49, no. 2035, 368.

²¹² As a Daoist immortal Sun was included in the *Xu xian zhuan* (Continued Biographies of the Immortals) compiled by Shen Fen in the time of Five Dynasties. See D., vol. 5, 77.

²¹³ The No. 2 in Nanshan was once called *yaowang dong* (Cave of Medicine King), but there is no image left inside any more. Liu Changjiu et al., *Dazu shike yanjiu*, 519.

²¹⁴ In a site called Xianrenya where various deities of the three teachings were made mainly from the Ming Dynasty the Medicine King was fashioned together with the God Earth as assistants of the deified Guan Yu (160-220), see Dong Yuxiang, “Xianrenyan shiku,” 35.

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immediately next to the Earth God, since both were commonly asked for the fortune and health of common believers.

Stylistically, the Medicine King, holding the elbows and looking into the afar in a long Daoist robe, appears akin to the traditional Daoist like Li Bo (701-762) or Lü Dongbin (8th -9th century).²¹⁵ However, if one examines the mimic of the Medicine King one will find that his facial appearance is quite different from the normal peaceful faces of Daoist immortals, who may often be seen in the contemporaneous paintings. He opens his extraordinarily large eyes wide and bulges them outward, and opens his mouth exposing all his teeth as if he was loudly crying (Fig. 3.14). Thus his facial expression comes near to that of the Buddhist heavenly kings or protecting deities rather than that of Daoist immortals. If compared with the protecting guardians outside of the niche No. 7 (Fig. 3.15) and some kings of hell in the niche No. 9, one would find obvious stylistical similarities.²¹⁶ The angry expression of the Medicine King could have been an artistic invention of the master inspired by the Buddhist heavenly kings or guardians, since the angry expression could intimidate and dismiss ghosts and devils. An angry face of the Medicine King would then scare and dismiss the ghosts of illness on the bodies of believers.

Niche 5: Niche of Bodhisattava Mañjuśrī and Samantabhadra

Facing southeast, niche no. 5 has a circular shape and is 1,92 meters deep with a form of a small cave of 1,57 meters in diameter. It was carved on a huge rock that is about 4 meters high from the ground (Fig. 3.16). Inside the niche a round edge is carved so that an inner chamber for the main figures is formed, where two Bodhisattvas are sitting almost symmetrically cross-legged on lotus seats carried by their riding animals (Fig. 3.17).

The bodhisattva on the left wears a high crown with flower decoration and there is a sitting Buddha in the front. With his long hairs falling onto the shoulders and wearing a robe with short sleeves, the bodhisattva is adorned with long earrings, chest decoration and a round halo behind his head. With his right hand resting on the knee, he holds a scroll of sutra, the emblem of wisdom, in his left hand. To the left of his riding animal, a lion, stands a lion-

²¹⁵ See Litte, Stephen, *Taoism and the arts of China*, 324-327.

²¹⁶ The form of eyes and cheekbone are almost the same between the King Qinguang, King Biancheng and the Medicine King. They seem to have been chiselled by a same carver.

keeper, who has an appearance of a central Asian. Behind them is the inscription carved on the wall “Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī with the green lion”, *Wenshu pusa qingshizi*; beside are still four characters: “The large achievements of the Mañjuśrī”, *Shili daxing*. Thus the bodhisattva is definitely identified as Mañjuśrī.

Facing Mañjuśrī is bodhisattva Samantabhadra, who is identified by the inscription behind him, “Samantabhadra with the white elephant with teeth hanging down”, *Puxian baixiang chui ya zai*. His appearance resembles that of Mañjuśrī with a fully ornamented crown and the jewelled clothes. Holding a *Ruyi* sceptre before the chest in his right hand, he sits steadily on a lotus seat carried by an elephant with six tusks. The elephant keeper, who also looks like a central Asian, is exerting his strength to hold the elephant with a rope.

Outside the inner chamber two figures flank the entrance. Both wear short dresses and have jade rings on the joints of their hands and feet (Fig. 3.18). The two hold their hands before the chest and stand barefooted on clouds happily. Their names were also carved on the wall behind them: the one is “the boy of incense burner and flower before the World-Honoured One”, *Shizun qian xianghua tongzi*; the other is “Ananda of the east sea before the World-Honoured One”, *Shizun qian donghai anan*. On the right outside wall is the inscription of the carver: “Inscribed by the carver Wen Weijian and his sons *Ju' an* and *Juli* from *Yueyang* on the day of mid-autumn of the year Gengwu (1090)”.²¹⁷

While the cult of Samantabhadra plays an important role in the Sichuan region, Mañjuśrī is more widely worshipped in China. Mañjuśrī belongs to the earliest bodhisattvas who appeared together with the texts of Mahāyāna Buddhism. There are more than 30 sutras relating to him, even before the early Tang time, up until the 7th century.. In sutras he is usually the head of the attending disciples of Buddha assembly.²¹⁸ The earliest image of the bodhisattva appeared at the latest before the fifth century. Besides together with Samantabhadra as assistant figure of Buddha, there are still several other kinds of iconographies, such as in a scene of dialog with Vimalakirti, with a thousand hands and an alms bowl, or as apparition in Wutaishan, etc. Recent research shows that the image of Mañjuśrī has experienced a long period of sinicization until he finds the current form. In contrast though the history of Samantabhadra can be traced to as early as Mañjuśrī. Only

²¹⁷ Chongqing, *Dazu shike mingwenlu*, 318.

²¹⁸ Sun Xiaogang, *Wenshu pusa*, 9.

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later did he become sinisized and became the main cult figure in Mount Emei just at Song time.²¹⁹

Since the virtues represented by the two Bodhisattvas symbolize the paramount completion of Mahāyāna Buddhism,²²⁰ those two Bodhisattvas generally appear in pair's attendants of Buddha Śākyamuni or Vairocana. Often seen mounted on a white elephant with six tusks, Samantabhadra is generally on Buddha's right side and as a counterpart, Mañjuśrī appears on Buddha's left, riding on a blue lion and holding the reverse positions. As in most Buddhist caves in north China the two bodhisattvas, Mañjuśrī and Samantabhadra, are also quite common in the Sichuan region, mostly as assisting figures either for Buddha Śākyamuni or Vairocana or three Buddhas.²²¹

Both the bodhisattvas in Shizhuanshan are stylistically in accordance with the tradition, while Mañjuśrī was carved as the king of Khotan²²² and can be found with similar images in many other sites in the region. But the iconography here is noteworthy in two aspects: first, the two bodhisattvas were no longer assistant figures for Buddha but became the main cult figures in the niche.²²³ Second, the combination of the two groups show new content of iconographic variations, for Ananda instead of Sudhana, and boy with incense and flowers became the new attendants of both the bodhisattvas respectively, though the image of the two boys remained unchanged.²²⁴ It is unclear why the name was changed with the same image. It could have been influenced by the new legendary or iconographic development of both bodhisattvas in the region in Song time.²²⁵

²¹⁹ Ibid., 182. About a detailed study about the origin of the image of the bodhisattva Samantabhadra see Kojima Aya, "Kizō fugen to kishi monju no zuzō," 43-59.

²²⁰ Mañjuśrī represents the knowledge, wisdom, and enlightenment of the Buddha, and Samantabhadra symbolizes the teaching, meditation, and practice.

²²¹ Sun Xiushen, "Sichuan diqu wenshu pusa," 85.

²²² Since the Five Dynasties a new pattern of Mañjuśrī came into being, which has the King of Khotan as the lion keeper instead of the slave from Karakorum. For the study of the new pattern of Mañjuśrī, see Sun Xiushen, "Zhongguo xinyang wenshu," 44-52.

²²³ There are still several examples that the two were made without the main Buddha in Sichuan, which is possibly a local characteristic and a new development different from the north. Such as in Guangyuan, Beishan niche no. 111 and niche no. 5 in Dazu Yingpanpo, niche no. 144 in Zizhong Beiyuan and Houjiawan in Anyue etc.

²²⁴ In the cave Daboruodong in Anyue under Mañjuśrī stand Ananda. See the relating analysis below.

²²⁵ Sun Xiushen, "Sichuan diqu," 85.

Niche 6: Niche of King Propagator of Culture

Niche 6 faces south and measures 2 meters high, 3,50 meter wide and 0.90 meter deep. In the niche are statues of Kongzi with his ten great disciples (Fig. 3.19). The central figure Kongzi is sitting on a throne with both hands putting on his knee and holding a fan with his right hand before the chest. With his hair tied up together under a soft cap, Kongzi has an almost square face and an appearance of a middle-aged man. There are several strips on his forehead that expresses his age, while his head and body do not show any traces of aging. He wears a long garb with broad sleeves and a round collar, while two belts under the chest along with the large pendant falling down to the feet in high cloud boots (Fig. 3.20). Behind him is an inscription which reads: *Zhisheng wenxuanwang kongzi* – the Greatest Sage King Propagator of Culture Kongzi.

On either side three disciples stand at the rear wall and two at the sidewall. The ten disciples of Kongzi were sculpted in a somewhat similar manner. In official head dresses they all wear long garbs with broad sleeves, round collars and large hanging pendants, and each holds a tablet in both hands before the chest and stands in high cloud boots (Fig. 3.21 and Fig. 3.22). The carver might have attempted to differentiate them by adding a beard or changing the gesture of holding the tablet or turning their bodies aside slightly. They all are associated with carved names behind them. Those on the master's right are *Zhongyou*, *Rangeng*, *Zaiwo*, *Ranqiu* and *Bushang*; on the left *Yanhui*, *Minshun*, *Ranyou*²²⁶, *Duanmu* and *Yanyan*. Except for some nuance of beard or gesture, all the ten disciples are dressed in long garments and official headdresses and holding jade tablets. Without the engraved names behind them, they would be hardly identifiable. With the appearance of court officials, they flank Kongzi as if ministers by an emperor, which is underlined especially by the tablets in their hands.

Outside the niche stand two guardian figures in soft clothes. Holding weapons like short sticks over their shoulders, they flank the niche and protect the master and disciples inside from evil spirits (Fig. 3.23). On the left doorjamb the inscription is engraved: “After celebrating and praising the proceeding the rite *shuilu* on the seventh day in the first winter (10th) month in the year *Wuchen* of the era *Yuanyou* (1088). The disciple of offering and sustaining Yan Xun has made up his mind to have this niche carved, hoping generation

²²⁶ Ranyou is actually another name for Ranqiu. The disciple should be named as Ranyong. See Ren Rong, “Rujiao Zaoxiang,” 15.

after generation to be smart and intelligent. The gentlemen carver Wen Weijian from Yueyang.²²⁷ It seems that the inscription was carved after a *shuilu* rite was held. Notably the donor expressed his wish for his future generations, not for the late relatives. That shows that the rite had been held for the sake of merits in future, not only as a mortuary ceremony.

As mentioned above, the combination of Kongzi with his ten disciples is one type of Kongzi image, which came into being in the Tang time under the influence of Buddha with ten disciples.²²⁸ According to the legend, Kongzi had three thousand followers and he taught his disciples the Six Arts in the Apricot Courtyard. The reserved painted or printed images of Kongzi show often the scene, in which Kongzi is sitting on a platform and was surrounded or flanked by his ten disciples.²²⁹ Here in Shizhuanshan the representation is different from the traditional pattern of Kongzi with the ten disciples.

The fashioning of Kongzi and the ten disciples here seem to be a mixture of two types: historical and iconic. On one hand he has an appearance of a teacher with a soft towel as headdress. The sculpted Kongzi wears the garment similar to that of his disciples, holds a fan in hand and has soft hair covering his head instead of headdress, which identify him as a venerable teacher as a historical figure. Such fashioning was actually an old pattern before Kongzi was made with an appearance of a king in the Tang time. On the other hand he is regally throning and receiving the reverence of the audience at the same time. In the background of the niches there are no hints about the place, and Kongzi sits on a throne uprightly, instead of a platform or in a courtyard. The centred Kongzi does not seem to communicate with his disciples; instead, he sits regally in contemplation or receives the reverence from the audience. The composition of Kongzi with ten disciples does not resemble that in the extant paintings or prints, but probably akin to that in the temple of Kongzi.

The composition here seems to be determined by its function since the image of Kongzi is not a historical depiction of the master teaching his disciples, but rather a statue to whom the believer would like to show reverence. Similar to the masters of the other two

²²⁷ For the transcription of the inscription see Chongqing, *Dazu shike mingwenlu*, 317. Outside the niche there stand two further stone steles set up in the late Qing Dynasty.

²²⁸ In Dunhuang Cave No. 138 there is an example of similar composition of Buddha with his ten standing disciples painted on the rear wall, which date also to the Song time.

²²⁹ Murray, Julia, "Portraits of Confucius," 23.

teachings, Buddha and Laozi, Kongzi receives the audience and offerings here.

Correspondingly, different from the Buddhist wishes such as rebirth in the Pure Land, as usually seen by Buddha images, the donor expressed his wishes also in accordance with the characteristics of Confucianism, that he wishes the generations after him will be clever and wise.

Niche 7: Niche of Buddha Vairocana, Śākyamuni and Maitreya

The south-orientated niche is 1.47 meters high, 6.36 meters broad, and 1.38 meters deep. Around the entrance outside the niche an imitation of architecture was made. Two columns, carried by muscular monsters on both sides, enclose the main niche in the middle and thus form the niche like a hall in which the three Buddhas dominate with their attending figures. Outside the pillars two guardians protect the niche on its either side (Fig. 3.24).

According to the donor's inscription the three Buddhas are Vairocana in the centre, Maitreya on the right and Śākyamuni on the left (Fig. 3.25). All the three Buddhas are sitting cross-legged on lotus seats and associated with the curved cloud motif behind their heads. Vairocana has a high crown decorated with flowers, jewels and a vajra reel in the centre. Wearing a monk robe with broad sleeves, he holds his two hands before the chest forming the hand gesture of supreme wisdom. On the lower part of the base a circling dragon was engraved.²³⁰ On the right of Vairocana stands an old monk, Kashyapa holding a box; and on Buddha's left is the younger disciple, Ānanda with folded hands in front of his chest. The other two Buddhas have both curled hair and wear monks's robe runnings over the shoulders and forming a U-form over the chest. Śākyamuni's hands both rest upon the knee or legs. On his right stands a disciple with a bowl in both hands and on Buddha's left stands a bodhisattva decorated with a high crown and long ear pendants holding incense burner. Buddha Maitreya keeps his left hand resting on the knee and his right makes the gesture of preaching dharma before the chest. Beside Maitreya, one sees the same combination of assisting figures as those by Śākyamuni, only the bodhisattva holds a plate with flowers. It is noteworthy that Buddha Maitreya does not sit in the western gesture as usual, but cross-legged with the gesture of preaching dharma. If there had been no indication from the

²³⁰ Dragons as pattern in the rock carvings in Dazu are seen in many sites. About the transformation of Naga in India from snake to dragon in China see Hu Wenhe, "Dazu baoding 'jiulong'", 139-145.

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donor's text, a Buddha with such a hand gesture would not have been identifiable as Maitreya. Through such a combination of the three Buddhas the donor might want to express his belief that the Buddhist teachings will be carried on by Maitreya in the future.²³¹

All the fourteen standing sculptures in the niche are almost equally high at 1.10 meter and their lower parts below the knees are heavily weathered. At both sidewalls of the niche stand each three disciples. Together with the four assisting monks beside the three Buddhas they are the ten great disciples of Buddha. Like the disciples of Kongzi they were originally associated with engraved names behind which however are now hardly legible due to weathering.²³² They hold various kinds of things in their hands, like a fan, a rope, ruyi sceptre etc. as attributes (Fig. 3.26 and Fig. 3.27).

At either corners in the niche there stand a female and a male figure (Fig. 3.28). The woman with high-worn hair and long skirt has the hands in the sleeves before her chest and the man in narrow garb with round collars holds an unidentifiable object (now broken). Since the niche was donated by the family Yan Xun the two donors here are presumably the representations of the couple Yan Xun.²³³

Inside the niche near the right pillar is the inscription: "Engraved by Wen Weijian from Yueyang, with his sons Wen Juzheng, [Wen] Juyong and [Wen] Juli. On the third day of the 8th month of the year Renxu (1082)." On the inside surface of the left pillar is another inscription: "On the 7th day of the 10th month of the year Wuchen (1088) after celebrating and praising the practicing of the *shuilu* rite"²³⁴ The niche of the three Buddhas was finished in 1082, and the inscription of *shuilu* was added in 1088 after the rite had been carried out as seen in the niche Kongzi.

Vairocana is the main Buddha in *Avataṃsaka-sūtra*, representing the dharma body of Buddhahood. He became popular around the 7th century in China, particularly after Esoteric Buddhism was introduced to Tang Dynasty. Correspondingly, Śākyamuni represents the response body of Buddha and Buddha of the present world and is the historical Buddha and common in Buddhist iconography. Worshipped as the Buddha of the future time, Maitreya

²³¹ See Chen Zhuo "Dazu shike" 356.

²³² The ten principal disciples of Śākyamuni are Ananda, Aniruddha, Mahākāśyapa, Mahākātyāyana, Maudagalyāyana, Pūrṇa, Rāhula, Śāriputra, Subhūti, and Upāli. On the left wall they are most weathered and illegible (the names of Aniruddha, Upāli, Śāriputra, etc. are still visible).

²³³ Still in niche no. 12 there are two donors, see the analysis below.

²³⁴ For the transcription of the inscription see Chongqing, *Dazu shike mingwenlu*, 317.

will descend from the Tuṣita Palace in millions of eons down to the earth and preach the Buddhist dharma to save sentient beings. The combination of the three Buddhas is not in accordance with the usual combination of the three Buddhas of the three worlds or the three bodies, but rather seem to be a combination of the two.²³⁵ With Vairocana - the dharma-body Buddha, Śākyamuni - the response-body Buddha and Buddha of the Present World and Maitreya - Buddha of the future world, they are a combination of the three-body and three-world Buddhas in this niche.²³⁶ Of the Buddhas of the three bodies Maitreya takes the place of Buddha Rocana, and if the Buddhas of the three worlds Vairocana takes the place of Dīpaṃkara Buddha, since the Vairocana represents the highest Buddha. Such combination is quite unique and only known in Shizhuanshan.²³⁷ The niche was not named as “niche of the three Buddhas”, but just the “Niche of Vairocana, Śākyamuni and Maitreya” properly by the donor. It is also possible that the three Buddhas came from the repertoire of *shuilu*, since in the inner altar of *shuilu* the three Buddhas are doubtlessly worshipped, usually with Buddha Rocana and Amitābha.²³⁸

Further the attendants in the niche are worth noticing. Normally, Buddhas are associated with steady attendants, as seen in most Vairocana, Amitābha, or Śākyamuni triad. In the niche the arrangement of ten disciples of Śākyamuni for the three Buddhas is unique, which is not seen in any canonical texts and or in any other places.²³⁹ In the second chapter it was mentioned that Luohans, or saint monks, have a prominent place in the *shuilu* rite. At the beginning of *shuilu* a lavish rite inviting the saint monks would be held. The combination of the figures in the niche can be well understandable if they are recognized under the context of a *shuilu* rite. Unlike the usual iconography as seen in most caves in northern China, where the statues were mostly carved based on Buddhist canons, the statues here were made according to the *shuilu* rite. Therefore the deities appear in a different manner than

²³⁵ The most common combination of the Three Buddhas in the region of Shaanxi and Sichuan during the Tang and Song time was Śākyamuni, Maitreya and Amitābha. Three Buddhas with Vairocana as the centre Buddha is only seen in the North Pagoda of Chaoyang (1043) from the Liao Dynasty on which however Buddha Rocana and Śākyamuni were carved. See Li Jingjie, “Tang song shiqi sanfo.”

²³⁶ Generally in Buddhist iconography there are two kinds of combination of three Buddhas, those of the three-bodies, i.e. the Dharma-body (Vairocana), the Reward-body (Rocana or Amitābha) and the Response-body (Śākyamuni); and those of the three-Worlds, i.e. the Buddha of the Last World (various, e.g. Dīpaṃkara, or the Last Seven Buddhas), Buddha of the Present World (Śākyamuni) and Buddha of the Future World (Maitreya).

²³⁷ A combination of Śākyamuni, Maitreya and Amitābha is quite common in Sichuan, such as in Pujiang Feixiang No. 36, Jiajiang Qianfoya No. 25 and No. 30, Beishan No. 51 in Dazu, and Antangsi No. 7 and Yuanjuedong No. 33 in Anyue, dating to late 9th to early 10th century.

²³⁸ See Xie Shengbao and Xie Jing, “Dunhuang wenxian,” 43. In extant *shuilu* sets of the later time the images of main Buddhas are various. See Klose, Petra, *Der Shuilu Ritus*, 340-343, whereby she recognizes the three Buddhas in Shizhuanshan as Vairocana, Śākyamuni and Rocana based on the Chinese publications mistakenly.

²³⁹ For the study of the Buddha Vairocana in Dazu, see Cheng Mingguang, “Shiku yicun,” 159-173.

those made according to the canons, which is a new characteristic of iconography in the Song time. Such phenomenon can often be seen in the contemporaneous rock carvings, for the rites such as *shuilu* has played an important role in the popular Buddhism in the Song time.²⁴⁰ The niche would be better understood as the niche of the three treasures than that of the three Buddhas (The dharma is preached by Maitreya.), since Buddha, dharma and monks are placed in the utmost place in the upper hall of the inner altar. Only the visualization in stone is much simpler and more conceptual than what one would see in the hanging scrolls in a *shuilu* rite.

Niche 8: Niche of Supreme Lord Lao

Facing to the southwest the niche measures 1.60 m high and 3.79 m wide (Fig. 3.30). In the centre sits Laozi cross-legged on a square seat decorated with motives of clouds and a buffalo in the centre. The master wears a loose robe with a round collar and broad sleeves. He has his hair piled up in the shape of a lotus and bears with a long beard. He rests his left hand on a three legged stand, *shi*, on the seat and holds a fan in his right hand. With the carved name on his back wall, *taishang laojun*, Supreme Utmost Lord of Lao, the main figure in the niche is dedicated to the deified Daoist master Laozi (Fig. 3.31).

On his either side stand each seven figures side by side, four at the rear wall and three at the sidewall (Fig. 3.32 and Fig. 3.33). They appear as attendants of Laozi or Daoist immortals. All of them bear small lotus-shaped hats on the head, wear long garbs and hold tablets before the chests. All the others look alike except the one on Laozi's right with sideburns. They are partly identifiable with carved names, but some inscriptions are not legible anymore. On the left they are *xuanzhong dafashi*, *taiji zhenren*, *ruguang zhenren*, *pude zhenren*, etc; and on the right are *santian dafashi*, *taiyi zhenren*, *difa zhenren*, *zhenyi zhenren* etc.²⁴¹

Outside the niche on either side stands each a protecting figure (Fig. 3.34). Both are dressed in armaments with metal panels and hold short sticks with both hands before the chest. Above the doorjamb one reads the weathered inscription: “..... from Changzhou engraved..... inscribed on 22nd day of the sixth monthly in the sixth year *Guihai* of the era *Yuanfeng* (1083).”

²⁴⁰ Hou Chong, “Songdai de xinyangxin fojiao,” 197-212.

²⁴¹ For the names of the disciples see Chongqing, *Dazu shike mingwenlu*, 316.

Like the niche of Kongzi, the group of Laozi here also takes the form of a Buddha niche with their master in the centre and disciples flanking on either side. At first glance, Daoist traits in this niche are still apparent. For instance, the clothes of Laozi and his attendants resemble those of officials; Laozi rests his hand on the Daoist stand *shi* and holds a fan. The appearance of Laozi is a typical form of representation of deified Laozi and fixed since the Tang Dynasty.²⁴² In the Sichuan region Daoist statues were notably prevalent since the Sui and Tang Dynasty. There are many Daoist niches found in the sites like Dafosi in Tongnan, Yunüquan in Mianyang, Xuanmiaoguan in Anyue, Niujiiaozhai in Renshou, Feixiang in Pujian and Hemingshan in Jiange, etc. The image of Laozi in Shizhuanshan is quite consistent with the traditional stereotype during the Tang time. The iconographical attributes, like lotus headdresses, long beards, holding a fan and being seated on Daoist furniture, *shi*, etc. are often seen either in extant single sculptures or in the Daoist rock carvings in Sichuan. Though the Laozi of Shizhuanshan was made in the Song time, it followed the pattern from Tang without many changes. Until Tang time, the deified Laozi and *Yuanshi Tianzun*, the Premondial Heavenly Worthy had been the dominant subject of Daoist statues. In the Song time the iconography of Daoist carvings became more rich and vibrant than ever. Closely connected with the orientation of the royal court, many new Daoist subjects and deities appeared during the time, especially the Jade Emperor, but in the Sichuan region the triad of Laozi or Tianzun was not as popular as before.²⁴³ In the Song time the representation of Laozi had not been carved anymore except for those in the three teachings.

The attendants of Laojun are also not free from questions. Normally Daoist assistants are akin to those of Buddha, such as two disciples flanking their master and forming a triad. Although there are examples of Daoist deities with more attendants in the rock carvings in Sichuan, they are subordinates of several masters, as the case in Renshou. The niche here is extraordinary since so many assistants flank one master. The attendants also follow the old patterns by wearing Daoist headdresses, robes and holding jade tablettes. Though some have long or short beards and some not, their appearances are mostly alike and seem monotonous. The identities of the attendants are unclear. The seven carved names have never appeared together in any Daoist texts. The two next to Laozi are entitled with *fashi*, “Law teachers”, which means that they are hierarchically higher than all others as *zhenren*,

²⁴² Ibid., 53-55. Howard et al., *Chinese Sculpture*, 328.

²⁴³ Hu Wenhe, *Sichuan daojiao*, 365-366

“Perfected Men”. *Xuanzhong dafashi*, the “Great Law Teacher of Black Middle” on Laozi’ left is actually one of Laozi’s ten alias, and was used often to the deified Laozi.²⁴⁴ His counterpart on Laozi’ right is *santian dafashi*, “Great Law Teacher of three Heavens”. The name is usually related to Zhang Ling (or Zhang Daoling, 34-156), the founder of the early Daoism in Sichuan.²⁴⁵ For *taiji zhenren*, “Perfect Man of Taiji” there are three historical persons with the same name: the legendary Daoist priest Du Chong (10th century B.C.), honored as the third patriarch of Daoist school, Louguandao; the Taoist Liu An (179-122 B.C.) and Xu Laile.²⁴⁶ *Taiyi zhenren*, “Perfect Man of Taiyi” is the counterpart of *taiji zhenren* and is one of the twelve celestial gods.²⁴⁷ *Zhengyi zhenren*, “Perfect man of Right One”, is another name of Zhang Daoling. The rest of the names of *zhenren* are unclear, but the above names have already shown the chaotic situation of the Lao’s assisting figures. The combination of *dafa* or *zhenren* appears neither in any Daoist texts, nor in any other region.

Obviously, the niche of Laozi with his attendants are not in a real Daoist context. Similar to other deities, they came from an extensively enclosing repertoire of deities in *shuilu* rite. The deified Laozi and followers here were not a direct reflection of the Daoist practices in Song time in the region, but rather the actors in the pantheon of *shuilu* playing their role in the rite. The iconographical inconsistency such as one deity or figure being carved more than one time with different appellations, or the unusual numerous attendants of Laojun can be well explicable under the context of *shuilu* again, since the deities in the rite often appear as group and not always necessarily iconographically correct

Niche 9: Niche of Bodhisattva King Kṣitigarbha

The niche is 1.80 meters high, 5.50 meters broad and before the figures there is a long pit of three meters long. The niche was dedicated to bodhisattva Kṣitigarbha and the ten kings of hell (Fig. 3.35).

Sitting in the centre bodhisattva Kṣitigarbha looks mild and has an appearance of a monk, with clouds patterning behind his head and clad in a kaṣāya (Fig. 3.36). His left hand rests on the knee, while his right hand makes the preaching gesture before his chest. His left leg lies

²⁴⁴ See *Daomen jingfa xiangcheng cixu*, D., vol. 24, 796.

²⁴⁵ See *Taishang laojun shuo changqingjing jing zhu*, D., vol. 17, 141.

²⁴⁶ Refers to *Juji qiqian*, 3rd scroll, D., vol. 22.

²⁴⁷ See Hu Fuchen ed., *Zhonghua daojiao*, 784.

bended on the seat, with the right standing on a lotus stool under the seat. On either side of the bodhisattva stand an assisting figure. The left one, a monk, lifts his two hands before the chest, and the right one, a maid, holds Kṣitigarbha's long staff with nine rings in her hands.

Flanking the triad of Kṣitigarbha two rows of figures are arranged at both their sides. The ten kings of hell sit in the front row, with their attendants behind them in the rear row. For the convenience of narration the kings of hell are numbered here from I to V on Kṣitigarbha's left (Fig. 3.38) and from A to E on Kṣitigarbha's right (Fig. 3.37).²⁴⁸ King 1 wears an emperor headdress and a long garb with ornaments, falling down alongside his chest, holding a tablet with both hands. He has a friendly expression. Right behind the king stands a servant with a cap and in his hands he holds a lance. To the left stands a maid with high-put hair, carrying a scroll with both hands. King II folds the forehead, looks rigidly and has a long beard. In a square hat his garb is similar to that of King I. Left behind him stands a servant with a cap on his head and a tablet in both hands. King III also looks rigid, with his hat and clothes alike to the previous one. Like King 1 he holds a tablet before the chest. Left behind him stands his servant, making a gesture of admiration with both hands. King IV has a small friendly face and a similar appearance like the former one. Behind him stands one servant on both sides, which either folds the hands before the chest or holds a scroll. King is dressed to his colleagues, but with leopard eyes and a lion nose. Left behind him stands a monster with an ox head folding the hands, and on the other side stands an official of hell opening a scroll with his hands.

King I wears a helmet and an armament with his hands folded as if making a greeting gesture and appears angry with widely opened eyes and mouth. Left behind the king stands a servant holding a lance with both hands. On his right a maid stands with high-put hair holding a scroll in both hands. Also holding a tablet, King II has a square hat on his head and is clad in a long garb similar to that of King 1. To his right stands a robust servant with a curly beard and hands folded before the chest. King III is represented as an old man with a long beard, hiding the hands in the sleeves and holding a tablet casually with a servant right behind him. King IV shows a peaceful face with a similar appearance to king B. The servant left behind him has a sword in his hand, and the one on his right holds an unrecognisable object in both hands. King V has a short beard and appears similar to the

²⁴⁸ Their names are: Yanluo wang (King Yama); Wuguan dawang; Songdi dawang; Chujiang dawang; Qinguang dawang; Biancheng dawang; Taishan dawang; Pingdeng dawang; Dushi dawang; Zhuanlun dawang. They cannot be identified since no inscriptions were carved.

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one next to him. Right behind the king stands a monster with a horse head, keeping both hands folded up before the chest. On both edges of the niche stands a hell official, each holding a banner in both hands.

Outside the niche stand two guardians of the hell (Fig. 3.39). With their muscular torso naked, they wear only short skirts tied together at the hip and have a terrifying appearance. The left one steps on a python under his feet, holds a lance in the right hand and stares outward with widely opened eyes and outstretching teeth. The right guardian looks no less wild. Sitting on a beast he opens his eyes and mouth widely up. In his left hand he holds a short stick and in the right he seizes a knife decorated with a monster head.

On the left pillar an inscription was carved: “Engraved by *Wen Weijian* from *Yueyang* and inscribed by his sons *Ju’an* and *Juli* in the year *Bingzi*, the 3rd year of the era *Shaosheng* (1096).”

Kṣitigarbha and the ten kings of hell are a combination of the rulers of the underworld in Indian and Chinese mythologies.²⁴⁹ Under the supervising of Kṣitigarbha the ten kings judge the damned souls in hell according to their deeds in the world while they pass through the hell before their rebirth.²⁵⁰ From the extant material the belief came into being in the late Tang time. In the manuscripts from Dunhuang there are two apocryph “Sutras of the Ten Kings” which are attributed to a monk named Zangchuan (d.u.) from Chengdu of late Tang. Based on both Indian Buddhist and Chinese Daoist beliefs,²⁵¹ both apocryph Buddhist texts are regarded as the texts for the representation of the hell. Since the author of the texts stemmed from Sichuan, it presented the belief about the Kṣitigarbha and the ten kings of hell. This came from the Sichuan region, where many of the earliest datable scenes of hell have been found.²⁵² Since the early 10th century the belief became prevalent and was rapidly spread out, what is attested among others numerous remains of paintings in Dunhuang.

The image of Kṣitigarbha has enjoyed great popularity since the Tang Dynasty. With various appearances and combinations such as Buddha, bodhisattva, monk or represented with the Six Paths, the images of Kṣitigarbha are found in Dunhuang Longmen, Binxian, etc. In

²⁴⁹ For the formation of the mythology of the ten kings of hell under Chinese Daoist influence, see the study of Xiao Dengfu, *Daofu shiwang diyu shuo*.

²⁵⁰ Zhang Zong, *Dizang*, 108.

²⁵¹ The idea of the hell came from India together with Buddhism, but the kings and the trial process in the hell are closely related with the Chinese Daoist belief. The ten kings are a combination of Buddhist and Daoist deities which was formed since Tang and settled in the Song time. See Xiao Denfu, *Daofu shiwang*.

²⁵² The earliest datable representation of the kind, see Zhang Zong, *Dizang*, 197.

Sichuan region, such as in Beishan in Dazu there are more than 30 niches dedicated to the bodhisattva and his accompanies (mostly Avalokitesvara).²⁵³ The scene of hell with Kṣitigarbha and the ten kings of hell in Sichuan region are reserved in a great amount. Numerous representations of the subject carved in stone are found there, such as in the west cliff (No. 83) of Zizhong, Qingxixiang of Neijiang, Yuanjuedong (No. 80, 84) in Anyue, Beishan (No. 205, 253) in Dazu,²⁵⁴ and Baodingshan (No. 20), etc. They are mostly symmetrically arranged. In the middle the bodhisattva Kṣitigarbha dominate and the ten kings of hell flank him on either side. Often under Kṣitigarbha and the kings of hell are the scenes of hell. The most splendid representation in stone is niche No. 20 in Baodingshan, where ten Buddhas on the upper layer and detailed horrifying scenes of hell with inscriptions are on the lower were added to the Kṣitigarbha with this ten kings part.

Bodhisattva Kṣitigarbha and the ten kings of hell are the dominators in the underworld, where the spirits of the dead may be detained and tortured before their rebirths. The purpose of the *shuilu* rite is to bring offerings and consolatory to the ghosts wandering between the fields of water and land and make them reborn quicker or salvage them from the ordeal. Therefore the rulers of the hell are the key figures to be worshipped and prayed to in the rite. Compared with the composition of other places niche no. 9 in Shizhuanshan has a static and iconic character. The miserable scenes of hell are dropped here and bodhisattva Kṣitigarbha, with the ten kings of hell and their attendants, resemble the assemblance of a king with his ministers or a master with his disciples as seen in the last three niches. Though such arrangement was unique in the known representations of hells in stone in Sichuan region, similar examples are found in some paintings.²⁵⁵ Different from other places the niche here does not seem intent on giving a depiction of the hell, but rather for the Bodhisattva and his attendants to receive the audience. The Kṣitigarbha and the ten kings of hell together with other three niches of the three teachers build the core of the group of the niches. It is no accident that this niche was placed near those three niches, because they are in charge of the beings in the hell, the dead. The importance of the ruler of

²⁵³ Zhang Zong, *Dizang*, 185-190. For an overview of the bodhisattva in other sites of Sichuan region see Ibid, 199-204, and Zhang Zong, “Dazu shike diyu,” 206-215.

²⁵⁴ Just in the county of Dazu there are more than 70 niches of the bodhisattva reserved. See Hu Liangxue and Jiang Decai, “Dazu shike de dizang,” 41. Also Song Langqiu and Zhang Xingyu, “Dazu shike zhong de dizang,” 49-64.

²⁵⁵ Zhang Zong, *Dizang*, 303.

3.2. Twelve Niches

the hell reminds again about the close relation of the niches with the Shuilu Rite, which was *de facto* a mass for the dead.²⁵⁶

The four niches of Kongzi, three Buddhas, Laozi and Ksitigarbha with the ten kings of hell are formally similar. They all have a rectangular form with main static and iconic deity in the centre flanked by their attendants in the niche and guardians outside. The guardians were also correspondingly fashioned, those of Kongzi are military generals, those of three Buddhas are *vajrapani*, those of Laozi are armored guardians, and those of Ksitigarbha, monsters of hell. It seems that the four niches have been designed with regards to each other and appear consistent concerning their style and composition.

Niche 10: Niche of Buddha Prajvala and Eleven Stars Gloriousness

The three niches no. 10 to no. 12 were newly discovered in 2003, located about 300 meters southeast from the main group of the other nine niches. The sameness of Hu damaged original and the reproduced inscription of the donor confirm that the three are the ones which disappeared long ago.²⁵⁷

Facing to the south, niche no. 10 is badly damaged with the ceiling and right sidewall collapsed. The remaining niche is about 1,79 meters high, 4,27 meters wide and 1,75 meters deep (Fig. 3.40).

The sitting Buddha, the central figure, was destroyed up until his breast, but his *kaṣāya* with broad sleeves is still visible. His right side and hand were destroyed, and in his left hand he holds a golden reel before the chest. Cross-legged he sits on a throne, in the middle of which a lion was carved within an oval frame decorated with clouds patterning.

The main Buddha is flanked by five figures on either side. Most of them wear shoes with clouds head and stand on patterned pedestals. The first figure on Buddha's left (Fig. 3.42 and Fig. 3.43) is a disciple. With his upper part damaged, he wears a monk's garb with both hands joined before the chest. The second one stands one step forward from other assisting

²⁵⁶ For the relation between Ksitigarbha and the Pure Land belief, see Li Xiaoqiang, "Jianshu tangsong shiqi," 497-511.

²⁵⁷ For the three newly discovered niches see Chen Zhuo, "Dazu shike shizhuanshan," 353-355 and Yang Fangbing, "Dazu shizhuanshan," 6-10, whereas the former is more reliable concerning the identification and designation.

figures, and only his legs are existent. Between the first two figures stands a buffalo emerging from the background. The third figure seems to be a warrior. With his face weathered, he wears a hat with hairs piled up. In armour he holds a jade tablet before the chest. Under him rests a snake, on the clouds, with the warrior. The face of the fourth figure has also been heavily blurred. Wearing an abundantly decorated crown with flowers and long earrings he wears a long garb with broad sleeves with ribbons falling from the chest. He holds the ribbon with his right hand and a tablet with the left. The fifth one has a soft towel as a head covering. In a long garb he hides his hands in the sleeves before the waist and holds a tablet before the chest. Between the fourth and fifth figure is a monkey, looking upwards with its body twisted and holding something with both hands over its right shoulder. Further, on the left sidewall stand two heavily damaged figures. The first one wears a long garb holding a tablet before the belly and the second has only the lower part visible that appears almost the same as the one next to him. Between them emerges a lion from the wall and seems to jump and roar.

On Buddha's right side the assisting figures were symmetrically arranged to those on the opposite side (Fig. 3.44 and Fig. 3.45). From the left to the right, a disciple with folded hands before the chest, a figure in a long garb with broad sleeves and a tablet, also an indiscernible animal between the first and second figure, a warrior in the third place, an official-like figure with his hands hidden in the broad sleeves. Under the feet of the third and fourth figure there is by each a turtle, and between the fourth and fifth stand a damaged animal. The rest of the figures on the right wall have fallen onto the ground as they were discovered. As pendants to those at the left sidewall, two figures also stand here. The upper part of both of the figures were badly damaged and between them stands an elephant.

Outside the niche stands each a heavily damaged guardian figure wearing armours and holding weapons in their hands over their shoulder.

On the door jamb near the left warrior one reads the inscription: "..... the carver gentleman Wen Weijian from Yueyang." On the left outside the niche there is a long inscription with a honeysuckle decoration carved on a surface of the wall (Fig. 3.46). From the remaining characters, the donor can identify it with the reproduction as the original inscription. This will be discussed in the evaluation part.

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According to the donors inscription, niche no. 10 is a niche dedicated to Buddha prajvala with his attendants, the Eleven Stars. In this niche the main figure is Buddha Prajvala, Buddha of flaming light with golden reel. The Buddha was introduced to China in Tang time together with Esoteric Buddhism, especially through the sutra translated by Amoghavajra (705-774).²⁵⁸ The related evil deeds done by the evil stars can be dismissed and avoided by the dhāraṇī of Buddha Prajvala. Altogether, the stars are eleven heavenly bodies including five planets and four astrological phenomens named as *Rāhu* and *Ketu* and *Ziqi* and *Xuebei*. *Rāhu* and *Ketu* are the eclipse and comet respectively. *Ziqi* and *Yuebei* came from Daoism, which are certain astrological phenomenon of the moon.²⁵⁹ Together with the sun and moon they are the eleven “glourinesses”, attendants of Buddha Prajvala.²⁶⁰ The combination of the Eleven Gloriousness was actually the amalgamation of Buddhist and Daoist beliefs.²⁶¹

The making of the image of the Buddha Prajvala began from the Tang Dynasty and kept its form unchanged in the Song and Yuan time, while the image of the stars experienced developments together with the changes of beliefs. Besides numerous records in historical materials²⁶² the existent remains are mostly wall paintings or scroll paintings reserved in Dunhuang.²⁶³ The patterns of the image are generally categorized into three kinds: a. Buddha Prajvala on a chariot followed by the attendants regally; b. a static and iconic pattern with Buddha in the centre while the stars as assisting figures flanking him symmetrically; c. Buddha Prajvala triad with the sun und moon as assisting figures.²⁶⁴ Also, the Buddha with his attendants appears frequently in *shuilu* trite and is found in almost all the known *shuilu* paintings.

²⁵⁸ The Buddha is referred in several sutras, of which the most influential is *Foshuo Chishengguan daweide xiaozai jixiang tuoluoni jing* T19, no. 963, 337, as well as another translation from the same original text, *Foshuo daweide jinlun foding chishengguang rulai xiaochu yiqie zainan tuoluoni jing* T19, no. 964, 338.

²⁵⁹ The exact meanings of the last four gloriousnesses kept changing with the time. See Liao Yang, “Chishengguang fo,” 74.

²⁶⁰ *Foshuo daweide jinlun foding*, T19, no. 964, 338.

²⁶¹ In a scroll (approximately Northern Song or earlier) from Osaka Municipal Museum of Art the Five Planet together with Twenty-eight Lunar Mansions were depicted with a representation of a combination of Chinese cosmological beliefs and western astrology that was brought to China with Buddhism (especial in the *Scripture of the Great Assembly of Great Doctrinal University, Dafangdeng dajijing*). See Little, Stephan, *Taoism*, 132-133.

²⁶² According to the legend the famous painter Wu Daozi had firstly painted the image of the Buddha Prajvala with his attendants. See Meng Siwei, “Chishengguang fo,” 34.

²⁶³ E.g. the Cave 67 in Dunhuang. In other places during the Song time the Buddha Prajvala was also worshipped and together with other the stars painted, for instance in historical Tangut many materials were recently published. See Kira Samosyuk, “Xixia wangguo d xingsu chongbai.”

²⁶⁴ Meng Siwei, “Chishengguang fo,” 38-39.

Except few remains in stone near Hangzhou,²⁶⁵ most images of Buddha Prajvala in stone are found in the Sichuan region, such as in West Cliff in Zizhong county niche no. 13, 27 and 90,²⁶⁶ and in niche no. 39 and 169 in Dazu Beishan. Dated to 922 A.D. niche no. 39 in Beishan (Fig. 3.47) is a relatively small one with Buddha Prajvala and the flaking nine stars, arranged in three layers from above to the ground and identifiable from their attributes and appearances. Niche no. 169 (Fig. 3.48) was believed to have been carved in Song time and is much more iconic enriched than niche no. 39. In front of the Buddha Prajvala Jupiter burns an incense burner while the other ten stars are arranged on either side with various decorations of trees and cloud patterns in a similar way as with niche no. 39. Wearing various headdresses and shoes and carrying tablets in hands, the stars all have appearances of Daoist officials. On both sidewalls the other twenty-eight stars and numerous donors are carved (only fourteen stars are left on the right wall).

The construction of the niche here in Shizhuanshan definitely belongs to the second pattern static iconic of image. All the figures are represented as either civil or martial ministers of a royal court. Their garments with broad sleeves and the jade tablets remind stylistically of the ten kings of hell in niche no. 9.

However, the identification of stars in the niche is quite difficult since most of them were heavily damaged as excavated. Of the altogether 17 assisting figures, except for two guardians and Buddha with two disciples, twelve figures cannot be identified with the eleven stars. As seen in the different materials from various place and time the iconography of the deities are also variable.²⁶⁷ Stylistically the figures in Shizhuanshan come near to those in niche no. 169 in Beishan since both niches have eleven stars with appearances of officials. Thus based on the reference of niche no. 169 and the attributive animals, the eleven stars in Shizhuanshan could have been seen to have been arranged in such a manner (Fig. 3.41).

Compared with the two niches in Beishan, the attributes of the stars, especially the various animals were denoted here. They were namely not carved as decoration on the head addresses but represented as assisting animals by their masters or under their feet. Also,

²⁶⁵ Buddha Prajvala without stars carved in stone is found in Yanxiadong near Hangzhou according to the record Yan Wenru in his book *Zhongguo shiku*, 320. In Feilaifeng no. 37 the Buddha was carved together with nine stars in a quite simplified manner in the Yuan time. See Lai Tianbing, “Feilaifeng” 45-49.

²⁶⁶ Hu Wenhe, *Sichuan dao jiao*, 49.

²⁶⁷ Liao Yang, “Chishengguang fo,” 79.

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they are much larger than those in the two small niches in Beishan. The function might be different from the other two, since it was not only made for the sake of gaining rewards for the donor but also functioned well to be worshiped by the believers as icons.²⁶⁸

Niche 11: Niche of Long Life King

With the ceiling collapsed, the niche is located next to niche no. 10 with a rectangular form of 1,37 meters in height and 3,02 meters in width (Fig. 3.49).

Not like other niches, in which figures were mostly arranged static and symmetrically, this niche seems to represent a narrative scene. From the right to the left are five figures. The upper part of the first one (Fig. 3.50) is weathered until the chest, but it is visible that he has a square hat and wears a long garb with narrow sleeves. Holding a long stab he folds both hands by the waist and stands on a pedestal in round-headed shoes. The second figure was also clad in a garb with narrow sleeves and has a towel bound around the waist. With two clusters of coins in his left hand by the waist he holds something before the damaged chest in his right hand, which is damaged. Between the first two figures at the corner there is a pile of carved clustered coins, orderly arranged. The third figure (Fig. 3.51) is a woman with her head weathered. Wearing a long garb with narrow sleeves and opened seam, she stretches out from a door.²⁶⁹ Her body is partly hidden behind the door with her right thigh exposed from the opened seam. She touches the handle, inclines the body against the door and watches out from the room. The fourth figure looks like a greedy dwarf (Fig. 3.52). He has soft towel as a head covering, opens his eyes wide and carries a bag of money on his head. In a short garb and trousers and bear footed he seems to walk in a hurry. The fifth figure has a crown and looks majestic and dignified. In a long garment with a round collar and broad sleeves and a belt around his waist, he holds an object before his chest in both hands, and stands on a pedestal in round-headed shoes. Between the last two figures there are objects that are unclear between them.

²⁶⁸ Another statue of Buddha Prajvala in Dazu County is found outside the Duobao Pagoda in Beishan with nine assistants. See the report of Chen Mingguang, "Dazu Duobaota," 10.

²⁶⁹ Both Yang Fangbing and Chen Zhuo recognize the figure as an old man, but from the garment the figure looks more like a maid.

Though there have been some doubts about the content of the niche,²⁷⁰ it can be convincingly proved the donor's inscription that it is the niche of Long Life King.

According to the relevant sutras, the story about the Long Life King belongs to the earlier parables preached by Buddha.²⁷¹ Buddha preached the story to appease the struggle between the monks at that time and the story was regarded as a jataka story that tells the altruistic deeds when Buddha was in his previous life.

In the story, the Long Life King was a pleasant ruler of a peaceful and cheerful country. As the evil king aggressed his country, he refused to fight with the enemy and left his country with his son, since he believed that the war would cause the death of his countrymen. On their refuge, the king gave up his own life by following a Brahmen to the evil king in order to give donation to him. The evil king then killed him and his son vowed to avenge his fathers death. Though the prince had gained a good chance to kill the evil king, following the will of his father he gave it up. The evil king was thus regretful and gave the kingdom back to the prince. The details of the story vary in the different texts, either more detailed or synoptic, while the main plots and the key remains unchanged.

In the rock carving, the story was represented in a quite extraordinary way. In the niche, there is neither deified Long Life King in the centre, nor certain narrative scenes, but five almost independent figures arranged in a sequence. No action is identified between them and in the story they never appeared together. It is a unique way of depicting narrative stories compared with the patterns in north China, like in the early Chinese tomb painting or the sutra transformations on wall or silk paintings in Dunhuang.²⁷²

According to the sutra, the five figures here could be roughly identified, from the right to the left as Long Life King near his fortune, the Brahman with his reward, the wife or countrywoman at the door,²⁷³ the evil king with his plunder, and the prince with the seal of

²⁷⁰ The niche is recognized as either the niche of "Mountain King" or the niche of Long Life King. See Yang Fangbing, "Shizhuanshan shiku," 7 and Chen Zhuo, "Dazu shike," 354.

²⁷¹ See *Zhong ahan jing*, T., vol., 01, no. 26, 532-535. *Zengyi ahan jing*, T., vol., 02, no. 125, 626-628. *Liudu jijing*, T., vol., 03, no. 152, 5. *Changshouwang jing*, T., vol., 03, no. 161, 386-387, *Chuyaojing*, T., vol., 04, no. 212, 693. *Misha saibu hexi wufenlü*, T., vol., 22, no. 1421, 159.

²⁷² About the sorts of Chinese narrative images see Murray, Julia, "The Evolution of Buddhist Narrative," 126-127.

²⁷³ The motif of woman at door is very beloved one in the Sichuan region, which was found from the Han to Song time on various of occasions and places, such as stele, stone coffin, tombs, pagoda, Buddhist or Daoist caves or niches (Beishan niche no. 176). Though it is a scene of the intervene of two space, like inside and outside, this world and other world, etc., the meaning can be different in various occasion which deserves further study.

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the regained country. Thus the sutra was represented synoptically with five main figures with their attributives. The order is roughly corresponding to the development of the story, though the images do not represent any scene. It is textual and iconic rather than narrative. The audience before the niche were expected to be either familiar with the background of the story or it would be explained by someone else, e.g. a monk, who could conveniently tell the story with the help of the figures in order.

In the Sichuan region no other remains or records of the subject is known.²⁷⁴ In general, there are not many narrative scenes in stone in the region, but mostly iconic, since sculpture is more suitable for anthropomorphic icons than narrative scenes.²⁷⁵ That the Long Life King was not carved as merely iconic, but corresponding to the sutra, must have been new to the master Wen and his disciples. It is noticeably that all figures of the assemblage came from available pattern or repertoire: the Long Life King with his son and the Brahma resemble either the contemporary donors or certain Daoist figures (like in niche no. 10), the evil king carrying his plunder resembles a guardian, the woman at the door came directly from prevailing pattern.²⁷⁶

Niche 12: Niche of Bodhisattava Avalokiteśvara

The niche is located 100 meters east from niche no. 10 and 11. The southfacing niche without a right wall has a rectangular form and is 2,91 meters in height, and 2,52 meters width (Fig. 3.55).

The main figure in the niche is Avalokiteśvara, or Guanyin in Chinese (Fig. 3.56). He wears a crown with flowers and a sitting Buddha can be seen in the centre. Two decorating ribbons fall on the shoulders and behind the head is a large peach-shaped halo on a rear wall and on the ceiling. The bountiful face of the bodhisattva was carved with clear profile and decorated with earrings. With his body, which is slim and graceful like a lady, he wears soft thin garb with short sleeves and a girdle around the waist. Bare footed standing on a

²⁷⁴ Anyue Qianfozhai No. 24 inscription: "Tathāgatha of the Long Life King", which refers to Buddha Amitābha dated to 1192. See Hu Wenhe, *Sichuan dao jiao*, 72.

²⁷⁵ Nevertheless there are still some excellent examples like the No. 10, 20 and 30 in Dafowan, No. 245 in Beishan (predella) and the Sudhana's story in several places like in Beita in Beishan or Huayandong in Anyue.

²⁷⁶ Such subject is seen in many different context, for instance in a tomb of the Song time the scene was carved at the bottom of the rear chamber. See Deng Zhijing and Zhao Fuhua, "Song taimiao zhailang," 149, Tang Yilie, "Qiantan dazuo songmu," 572. Here is the compilation of available patterns can be regarded as another example of modul production. See Ledderose, Lothar, *Ten Thousand Things*.

pedestal of lotus, he holds a precious pearl before the chest in his left hand and with the right hand he reaches to the plate of a female donor by his right side. Standing on a pedestal in round-headed shoes. The female donor (Fig. 3.57) carries a head covering with flowers to her ears and wears a long and loose garb with a V-formed collar and broad sleeves and her waist curdled with a belt. Holding a plate filled with offerings in her left hand, she puts her right hand before the chest pointing at the offerings, or Guanyin, cheerfully. On the left side of Guanyin stands a donor in the clothes of an official. With the appearance of a middle-aged man, he wears an officer's headdress (*Jinxianguan*), long garb with round collar and broad sleeves. Smiling satisfactorily, with both hands he holds a tablet before the chest, facing to the bodhisattva. From the appearance and the donor's inscription the two figures here might possibly be the idealized portraits of the donor Yan Xun and his wife.²⁷⁷

As one of the most popular Buddhist deities, the bodhisattva Guanyin, or Avalokiteśvara in Sanskrit, is mentioned in over 80 sutras in the Buddhist canon. Among them, the Lotus Sutra and the Flower Garland Sutra are the most influent, for in the two texts the bodhisattva is narrated with the power of fulfilling the needs of the prayer or saving prayer from various dangers. Since both sutras were translated into Chinese, the belief in Guanyin became more and more popular, which was attested by the numerous copies of relating texts and fashioning of his images.

Originally his image was akin to that of ancient Indian prince, and after more than a thousand years of development and sinicization his image was established as a female goddess in China. The earlier images of Guanyin, until Tang time, like those in the paintings or sculptures from north China, still resemble an aristocratic young man with a moustache often on his lip and the attributes of lotus flowers and bottle in the hands. The bodhisattva often appears together with another bodhisattva Mahasthamaprapta as attendants of Buddha Amitābha, forming the well beloved “three Saints of the West”. Because of his close relation with the Buddhist paradise (pure land) and Buddha Amitābha, he is sometimes depicted as the King Guide Bodhisattva for the dead and has the image of Buddha Amitābha in the crown as an attribute. Since the introduction of Esoteric Buddhism, some new supernatural images of Guanyin appeared, like that with Eleven Faces, holding a lasso, holding a Dharma wheel and wish-granting jewel, or with a thousand hands and a thousand

²⁷⁷ In his inscription Yan said that he was growing old and had three sons, so he must be about fifty years old, but the donor here looks quite young. So it can only be their idealized representation.

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eyes, etc.²⁷⁸ At the same time since the Tang and Song time certain images of Guanyin free from Buddhist texts began to appear, especially Guanyin of Water and Moon. This kind of image was proved to be a combination of an Indian Buddhist deity with the Chinese literati tradition and was widely spread and fashioned in Song time. Furthermore, many kinds of images of Guanyin kept developing, such as holding a fish basket, with South Sea, or in white robe, which are only several well-known examples during the long lasting development and sinicization of the bodhisattva.²⁷⁹

In the rock carvings in the Sichuan region Guanyin had been fashioned since the 9th century in great quantity either as an assisting figure for Buddha, or in combination with other deities, or as a single deity. Formally, the image of Guanyin since the late Tang time mostly had a soft hermaphrodite appearance, wearing high head dress with flowers with Buddha in centre, dressed with jewelled garments or skirts stylized with elegant stripes. In Song time many attributes appeared such rosemary or mirror what are seen in several caves of group of Guanyin's manifestation in Miaogaoshan, Shimenshan, Beishan, etc.²⁸⁰

The single Guanyin in Shizhuanshan is stylistically in accordance with the most contemporaneous images of Guanyin in the region. Interestingly, sheltered under one niche with two donors the shapely large deity does not throne regally receiving the donors worship, but he reaches his hand to the offerings from them. The two donors, not like the most donors with pious expression adoring their lord as usual, show a cheerful and relaxed expression, and the woman even dares to point to the bodhisattva with her hand. As a scene of interaction between the deity and donors this extraordinary unique niche is a reflection of the secularisation of Buddhism in Song time.

²⁷⁸ Yü Chün-fang, "Guanyin: The Chinese Transformation," 151-155,

²⁷⁹ Yü Chün-fang, "Guanyin: The Chinese Transformation," 155-157.

²⁸⁰ Hu Wenhe, *Sichuan dao jiao*, 227. For a detailed discussion on the images of Guanyin in Dazu, see the relevant part in the next chapter.

3.3. Evaluation

From the analyses of each single niche it is shown that each one has special characteristics concerning either iconography or style. With its relatively good status of the reservation of the whole group, inscriptions and representations of the donor, the twelve niches in Shizhuanshan belong to the most valuable masterpieces in the rock carvings of the Sichuan region.

Donor's inscription

The donor's inscription was reproduced on a stone plate in a form of a stele and reserved in the Fohuisi temple. It is not clear when this reproduction was made, but a text inscribed on the back of the stone plate in the Ming time (1386-1644) shows that the text was probably reproduced by those who, long after completion of the niches, hoped to preserve the content of the donor's text before it was destroyed.²⁸¹ Though the comparison of the remained original text and the reproduction shows discrepancies concerning some words and the lower artistic level of calligraphy, the reproduced text is reliable by and large regarding to the content.²⁸² Since the text came directly from the donor, it is a crucial historical material for the study of the niches and it is worthwhile to examine the long text in detail.

The reproduced inscription has a strange name: *Jing ren sundong zhu zunxiang ji zhefa kan tan qianhou songbai zaipei ji*, "A text warning those who many damage or move the icons and cut or chop the planted pines and cypresses around the niches and pagoda". The title could have been added by the later copier after the original one had been weathered. The original title might have been *Shanshen changzhu fohuita ji*, "A text of Gods of mountains ever abiding with the pagoda of Fohui Temple", as mentioned in the text itself.²⁸³ In the long text there are by and large five aspects consequently:

²⁸¹ For the dating of the text on the backside, see Chongqing, *Dazu shike mingwenlu*, 334 -335.

²⁸² Though most characters of the original inscription were not delivered, the remained text shows that the re-cut was loyal to the original except for several mistakes. Also it is presumed that in the copy the first line or the title of this inscription was dropped. See Chen Zhuo, "Dazu shike shizhuanshan," 354 and Yang Fangbing, "Dazu shizhuanshan," 7.

²⁸³ See Chen Zhuo, "Dazu shike" 354.

3.3. Evaluation

1). The donor Yan Xun believed that Buddhism was the highest truth and he lived 2039 years after Buddha's nirvana.²⁸⁴ As a lay Buddhist he read Buddhist texts and kept Buddhist fast for long time. However he admitted that he was not familiar with Buddhist rites any more. 2). The donor spent 500,000 units of money to buy the place in Shizhuanshan, and had the niches of statues carved there. Altogether fourteen statues were carved. In the year of 1090 they were all finished and thereafter trees and flowers were planted the around them, and the place became an enjoyable site for the local people. 3). He expressed three hopes about the achievements for the world after him: a. not to damage the statues unintentionally; b. not to cut the trees around the niches; c. rude persons are unwelcome. He wished the niches, Buddha hall and pagoda to be well preserved for others to visit and revere them. 4). He narrated the origin of his family, his supporting for the Buddhist activities and the warning to his three sons to preserve the trees and the Buddhist statues. 5). The motive for him to record his achievements and wishes was that he hoped the text on the rock to be read in the future world. At the end of the text is the dating, names of donors, carvers and calligrapher: "On the 25th day of the second month of the year *gengwu* in the Yuanyou era (1090), written by Yan Xun, inscribed by his sons Jiayu and Chengji, text written by his nephew the monk of sermon Xizhou from Suizhou."²⁸⁵

In the light of the inscription it is known that the niches in Shizhuanshan was donated by the single donor family of Yan Xun, carved by a family of artisans Wen Weijian with his sons, and a Buddhist monk, Xizhou has also joint in the project as calligrapher. About them there are no records in the documentary sources. The monk Xizhou was the only monk in the project. His job title was a *Biaobai seng*, a monk of leading Buddhist rites, or preaching and explaining Buddhism, and it is mentioned that he was the nephew of the donor and originated from Suizhou as his uncle. Although the Fohuisi temple nearby was not mentioned, it is likely that the making of the niches have been under the direction under the monks there and Xizhou came probably from that temple.²⁸⁶

²⁸⁴ The text was written in 1090 and thereof the year of Buddha's nirvana should be around 949 BCE, when the King Mu of Western Zhou (976-922 BCE) ruled, which is similar to the legendary date of Buddha's nirvana according to *Fozutongji* (923 BCE). About the study of the date of Buddha's nirvana see Lü Cheng, "Tan fomie niandai," etc.

²⁸⁵ The inscription was firstly transcribed in Liu Xihai. See *Jinshiyuan*, S., vol., I, b. 9, 6377. For the transcription of the inscription see also Liu Changjiu et al., *Dazu shike yanjiu*, 538-539 and Chongqing, *Dazu shike mingwenlu*, 326-327. For the punctuated text in Chinese and English translation by the author see the appendix.

²⁸⁶ In the late 10th century lived a great monk also named "Xizhou", who was one of the nine great Buddhist poets in the early Song time. It was less possible for him to join Yan Xun's project. See Hu Zhaoxi, "Suizhou Xizhou," 223 – 227 and Chen Zhuo, "Dazu shike bianyi," 89.

Curiously, the donor claimed that he had altogether fourteen made while only twelve niches in the inscription can be confirmed. It seems that the word “fourteen” did not refer to the niches, but the statues, as definitely said in the text: “... have the cliffside chiselled and the statues sculpted with altogether fourteen ones.” In niche no. 7 there are three Buddhas, Vairocana, Śākyamuni and Maitreya, which might have been counted as three statues.²⁸⁷ The names of the twelve niches in the inscription is listed in a different order from the present numbering:²⁸⁸

Present No.	Names of niches in the order in the inscription
Niche 7	Niche of Buddha Vairocana, Śākyamuni and Maitreya
Niche 10	Niche of Buddha of Flaming Light with Eleven Lively Gloriousness
Niche 12	Niche of Bodhisattava Avalokiteśvara
Niche 11	Niche of Long Life King
Niche 5	Niche of Bodhisattava Mañjuśrī and Samantabhadra
Niche 9	Niche of Bodhisattva King Kṣitigarbha
Niche 8	Niche of Supreme Lord Lao
Niche 6	Niche of King Propagator of Culture
Niche 2	Niche of Monk Zhigong
Niche 4	Niche of Medicine King the Perfect Man Sun
Niche 1	Niche of Holy Mother
Niche 3	Niche of Earth God

Table 3.1 twelve niches in the order in donor’s inscription

The order of the niches in the inscription does not match the actual chronological order of their making. Though not all niches were carved or reserved with inscriptions of dating, the available dating of the niches can still show a roughly chronological order. The niches no. 10 to no. 12 have no dating information, but since they are located 300 meters away from the main group of the nine niches and carved with the inscription of 1090, thus the three niches might have been finished at last. Following is the chronological order of the niches:

²⁸⁷ About the punctuation and analysis for this question in the original text see the appendix.

²⁸⁸ The numbering of the niches varies according to various sources. The current numbering is based on their geographical positions. See Chen Zhuo, “Dazu shike shizhuanshan,” 352-353.

Year	Present niche no.	Names of niches
1082	No. 7	Niche of Buddha Vairocana, Śākyamuni and Maitreya
1083	No. 8	Niche of Supreme Lord Lao
1085	No. 2	Niche of Monk Zhigong
1088	No. 6	Niche of Kongzi
1090	No. 5	Niche of Bodhisattava Mañjuśrī and Samantabhadra
1090		Original inscription
1096	No. 9	Niche of Bodhisattva King Kṣitigarbha
N/A	No. 1, 3, 4	Niche of Medicine King; Niche of Earth God; Niche of Holy Mother;
N/A	No. 10, 11, 12	Niche of Buddha Prajvala with eleven Stars; Niche of Long Life King, Niche of Bodhisattava Avalokiteśvara;

Table 3.2 Chronological order of the niches

The inscription claimed that all the images were finished until 1090, but in the niche no. 9 the carver signed in 1096 curiously. The whole group might have not been completely finished in 1090 as the donor claimed. Obviously the niches in the inscription were not ordered chronologically, but the order seems to be an idealized rearrangement of the niches. Why did the donor change the order of the niches, and what did it mean with such an order?

The 12 niches in Shizhuanshan and the *shuilu* rite

Although Yan Xun did not mention the *shuilu* rite directly in the long inscription, the inscription in niche no. 6 and 7 expressed definitely the rite had been carried out there on the 7th day of the 10th month in the year 1088. Furthermore, some figures of the group, such as Zhigong, were closely related with the rite and all the deities of the twelve niches could have come from the pantheon of the *shuilu*.²⁸⁹

In terms of time and content, a *shuilu* rite sponsored by the great literati Su Shi (1037-1101) for his late wife Wang in the year 1093 comes nearest to the one of Shizhuanshan. As discussed, the *shuilu* rite held by Su Shi seems different from that in Shizhuanshan at the first glance, i.e, the rite by Su Shi has 16 stations and here only 12 niches; the one by Su Shi has groups in an arranged order and here are only different deities. Nevertheless the

²⁸⁹ Xie Shengbao and Xie Jing, “Shuilu daochang yu dazhu shiku” 26-27.

arrangement of two groups still shows certain affinities concerning the structure and content. In the so-called “Meishan *shuilu*” the deities in upper hall are hierarchically higher, free from the Six Paths, while those in lower hall are lower and belonging either to the Six Paths or non-Buddhist creatures.

Similar structure is seen in Shizhuanshan. After the order in donor’s inscription all the niches can be divided into groups with each six niches: the first consists of totally Buddhist deities, almost in a hierarchal order; the second includes the sages and figures who are either not belonging to Buddhism (Laozi, Confuzius, Sun Simiao, God earth) or lower in the hierarchy of Buddhist system (Hariti from the Gati of Ghost) or historical figure relating to *shuilu* (Monk Baozhi).

Divided into two groups, the twelve niches in Shizhuanshan have a similar structure of a inner altar of the *shuilu* rite with upper and lower hall:

Niche no.	First six niches	Niche no.	Last six niches
7	three Buddhas	8	Laozi
10	Buddha Prajvala	6	Kongzi
12	Guanyin	2	Monk Baozhi
11	King Longevity	4	Medicine King
5	Mañjuśrī and Puxian	1	Holy Mother
9	Ksitigarbha	3	Spirit Earth

Table 3.3 two groups of niches in Shizhuanshan

Such a division of the twelve niches is only a presumption since there are no comments in the inscription that they might form an inner altar of the rite. But it might answer the question of why the donor changed the chronological order of the niches after they were finished. During the carving the twelve niches would have surely been influenced by the construction of the *shuilu* rite. The “inner altar” was not planned in the beginning, but later completed with additions, since the niches were not carved for the purpose of holding the ritual. However, since the statues like the three Buddhas and Monk Baozhi, as key figures in the *shuilu* rite, were carved in a quite early time (e.g. niche 9 in 1085), it is probable that they were made under the influence of *shuilu* at the very beginning.

Although the twelve niches resemble an inner altar of a *shuilu* rite, it is still not known if there were still other deities in the inner altar, and about the rite itself there is no further

3.3. Evaluation

information. The similarity between the *shuilu* by Su Shi and that in Shizhuanshan shows that the *shuilu* in Shizhuanshan could have been a simple one, in the “old manner” as Su Shi claimed.²⁹⁰

Relation of the three teachings

From the analysis above it is noticeable that the three teachers were actually assembled in the frame of the *shuilu* rite. As explained above the *shuilu* is ceremony of transcendentally saving the deceased spirits, and in the rite the supplicated and benefited are not only those of the three teachings, but rather all deities and spirits in the universe, both in water and land. The assemblage of the three teachings was contained in the gathering of deities and spirits from the universes.

Under such circumstance there is great hierarchical distance between the three in the rite. Buddha as the upmost deity of the upper hall in the inner altar, is the dominating deity of the whole pantheon, while Laozi and Kongzi were merely arranged in the lower hall as representatives of the sentient beings. In the *shuilu* rite their status are much lower than that of Buddha and cannot be equally worshipped by believers.

However, as seen that in the rock carvings the relation between the three teachers is not corresponding with what was prescribed in the rite. The three teachers with their followers were placed unincidentally next to each other. The great hierarchical distance in the inner altar was not represented in the actual rock carvings. Although the groups of Kongzi and Laozi seem to flank the three Buddhas in the middle, the three niches are independent per se, which actually brings a sense of equality between the three. Such arrangement is probably related to the historical fact that Kongzi and Laozi were revered as the greatest sages in China in the Song time. The arrangement of the three niches reflected to a certain extent the concept of the donor who was a Buddhist lay persons and at same time appeared as a Confucian scholar as seen in the niche no. 12. Presumably the assemblage of the three teachers could have been under the influence of the donor, which was a reflection of the time when the ideological unification of the three teachings became a trend in the society. Although the Confucian and Daoist masters were absorbed and subordinated in Buddhist rites as lower attendants, the believers still brought them to the equivalent status of Buddha in the rock carvings.

²⁹⁰ *Shuilu faxiang zan binxu* by Su Shi. See X., vol. 101, 443.

As analyzed above, both chronological order and spacial arrangement of the niches show definitely that the niches were not completely planed and executed, but rather they came from certain entirety, i.e. the inner altar of *shuilu*. Instead of Buddhist sutras the ritual *shuilu* became iconographical sources for Buddhist carvings. By donating the statues the donor made merits, offeren place for the believer to visit and pay reverence to the deities, as stated in the inscription that “the place for the countrymen to visit and rever [the holy statues]”. They are still functioning today, almost more than a thousand years later.

4. Under One Roof – Miaoganshan, Fo'anqiao, Shibisi, Daboruodong

4.1. Miaogaoshan

4.1.1. Overview

About five kilometers northwest from Shizhuanshan and about 38 km southwest from Dazu county town is Miaogaoshan, “Wonderful High Mountain”.²⁹¹ Sheltered by trees and bamboos, the rock caves and niches were carved on the foot of a perpendicular cliff.

In Miaogaoshan there are one large standing Buddha, four parallel caves chiselled and three small niches from the Song time (Fig. 4.1). In the four caves are statues of the three teachers, Vairocana triad with the sixteen arhats, Amitaba triad with the ten Guanyin and Water-Moon Guanyin. The eight niches or caves are of different size and dating, and cannot be made at one time. Only the four neighboring great caves have similar form, size and style, and seem to be together designed and carved. The three teachers in the cave no. 2 is characterized by their equivalent relation and excellent skill. Like those in Shizhuanshan they belong the best-reserved sculptures of the three teachings in the Sichuan region.

On top of the hill stood once an old Buddhist monastery called *Miaogaosi*. According to the historical records until Ming Dynasty more than 3500 monks dwelled in the monastery with numerous marvellous architectures which were however desolated during the Qing time.²⁹²

Though there is no any historical stele or inscriptions about the origin of the carvings in situ, in the cave no. 2 and no. 5 one finds inscriptions dating the main four caves to the Southern Song Dynasty. From the inscriptions and historical materials it is known that the rock carvings and the once monastery are closely related to a historical figure called Feng Ji. Feng was a lay Buddhist and official of higher rank of the Southern Song Dynasty and he donated the four caves. Miaogaoshan is a case by which the images of the three teachings can be directly related to a figure found in historical documents.

²⁹¹ The name Miaogaoshan is also found as the residence of Asura in a manual of shuilu rite. See Yirun et al., *Shuiluyigui*, 424.

²⁹² For the narration about the temple in the 1835, see Li Xinglian, “You miaogaoshan ji”, in Long Xianzhao, *Bashu fojiao*, 781-782.

4.1.2. Caves and niches

Niche 1: Buddha Amitābha

The niche is heavily damaged and no trace from its original form is visible. Different from other north-facing niches or caves this one faces east and No inscription is found in the niche (Fig. 4.2).

The sober Buddha has an excrescence, or *uṣṇīṣa* in Sanskrit, above his conch-tuft hair stretching to either side of the ears, and reaching almost to the robe over his shoulders. With two strokes elaborate moustach above his mouth und three intertwined strokes on the chin, the Buddha has his eyes half opened and shows an expression of meditation. Behind his head is a round halo decorated with pattern of fire on the rim (Fig. 4.3). In a broad robe with double collar the Buddha's body is harmoniously proportioned. While the upper part of his body well preserved, his legs and feet are heavily damaged. His two hands are forming a certain hand gesture before his chest. While the left one partly destroyed, the right hand with thumb to the palm is above the left one, as if holding a round object.²⁹³

The form and style of the standing Buddha is consonant with of the seated Buddha in cave no. 2 dated to the Song time. Judged from the stylistical characteristics and the location, the Buddha might have been carved in the latter half of 12th century, contemporary to the four large caves.²⁹⁴ Since the four main caves have taken almost all the north-facing side, it is likely that circa 4,4 meter high standing Buddha was fashioned shortly after the four caves.

No inscription or assisting figure gives hint about his iconographical identity. The Buddha is identified by most scholars as Buddha Amitābha on base of the hand gesture. The hand gesture here is “gesture of turning the Dharma wheel”, which belongs to Buddha Śākyamuni,²⁹⁵ rather than a gesture of receiving of Buddha Amitābha.²⁹⁶

²⁹³ Liu Changjiu et al., *Dazu shike*, 554.

²⁹⁴ Hu Wenhe dated the statue roughly to the song time based on its style. See Hu Wenhe, *Sichuan daojiao*, 102. I date it to the second half of 12th century on account of the dating of the main group of Miaogaoshan (1144-1167) and the Shimenshan no. 6 (1136 – 1141) where the Buddha has the same hand gesture. See the analysis below.

²⁹⁵ No such hand gesture has been found in the thousands of given diagrammes of hand gestures in the Taisho bands of Buddhist images (IV, V and VIII). I am grateful here to Prof. Luo Zhao who has gave me the hint.

²⁹⁶ Among the earliest study of the site by the group led by Yang Jialuo the Buddha outside the caves was identified as Buddha of Receiving (Amitābha). See Yang Jialuo, “Dazu longgang,” 29.

the same hand gesture has the Buddha in Shimenshan cave no. 6, only in a reversed manner, that is, left hand above and right hand underneath (Fig. 4.4).²⁹⁷ The Buddha is flanked by two Bodhisattvas, who are definitely identified by the attributes in their crown, a Buddha and a vase, as Guanyin and Dashizhi.²⁹⁸ The original inscription also called them “Amitābha Buddha and the Ten Holy Bodhisattvas”.²⁹⁹ Thus the Buddha in Shimenshan no. 6 can be undoubtedly confirmed as Buddha Amitābha. Based on the above facts it is proper to identify the Buddha in Miaogaoshan as Amitābha iconographically. The combination of Amitābha Buddha and the gesture of turning dharma wheel could have been a local character in the making of Buddha statues in the Southern Song time.

Huge statues of standing Buddha are common in Buddhist sculpture. They may be clad in various kinds of robes, have or have not attendants, make different hand gestures whereas the huge standing Buddhas in Bamiyan and those in Yungang are the famous examples. In Sichuan, especially since the Song Dynasty there are seldom huge single standing Buddhas fashioned in the traditional manner. Some standing Buddhas have often extraordinary iconography in comparison to the early ones from the Tang time. For Instance, the standing Buddha Śākyamuni of Yuanjuedong no. 10 with a flower in hand or Vairocana of Minshansi no. 5 etc., are all with a different iconographical content. The standing huge Buddha in Miaogaoshan was fashioned under the same historical background, and the combination of hand gesture and his identity was determined by the contemporary or local belief reflecting the new Buddhist iconography of the Southern Song time.

Niche 2: Cave of the Three Teachings

Finished according to one scheme, the four caves from no. 2 to no. 5 are all squarish caves with even roof of about 3 meters high and wide. Outside the caves the cliffs are heavily weathered and damaged. The lower part underneath the caves are renewed, and it is impossible to reconstruct the original architectural appearance of the group (Fig. 4.1).

The cave of the three teachers is 2,75 meters high, 2,52 meters wide and 3,33 meters deep, wherein the three teachers sit at the three walls assisted by their disciples on their either

²⁹⁷ On a stone beam over the entrance of the cave there is an inscription from the Qing time left that in the cave are Buddha Śākyamuni and twelve Bodhisattvas. It is but not correct.

²⁹⁸ Hu Wenhe, *Sichuan daojiao*, 281-282.

²⁹⁹ Chongqing, *Dazu shike mingwenlu*, 352.

side (Fig. 4.5). Near the opening of the cave one reads the inscription that they were carved by “the assiduous carver from Dongpu (Anyue) Wen Zhongzhang, and his nephew Wen Yi and Wen Zhu in 1144.”³⁰⁰

Facing north, against the rear wall Buddha Śākyamuni is seated cross-legged on a huge lotus seat above a socket decorated with a twined dragon (Fig. 4.6). Similar to the standing Buddha of the niche no. 1 outside he has also the conch-tuft hair to his ears, with his hair on the upper part arranged in regular four layers. Also the square shape of his face looks similar to the standing Buddha. With the eyebrows bent down and half-opened eyes he gives a smiling expression (Fig. 4.7). The Buddha is clad in a monastic robe with doubled collar and broad sleeves forming a U-formed collar before the chest and with a knot hanging before the left shoulder. His robe over the lotus seat is so elaborately carved that it looks as if a soft robe was hanging over the solid lotus seat naturally, while the fluent vertical line of the robe are contrasted with the static eclipse pattern of the lotus petals of the socket. He put his left hand on the knee while holding the right before the chest in the gesture of preaching (now broken). Behind him there is an aureole and a round halo with fire pattern directing to the ceiling.

On Buddha's either side stands each a disciple in monastic robe with round halo behind (Fig. 4.8). They joined their hands with bangles before their chest (Both their heads were destroyed now). The robes of the two disciples were carved in different manner. The one on Buddha's left has more folds on his robe so that more dynamic waving and diagonal line are formed. The right one wears a monk's robe with long broad sleeves and crossed collar, which is dominated by the static perpendicular lines. In such a manner the carver enriched the contrast of the two disciples by using dynamic and static lines of the folds on the robes.

As pointed out, the head of the sitting Buddha appears quite akin to the standing Buddha outside stylistically (compare Fig. 4.3 and Fig. 4.7). It shows that they might have been carved by the same group of carvers or imitated one after the other. Besides, the Buddhas in Shizhuanshan, especially Buddha with the preaching hand gesture must have influenced the making of this Buddha in Miaogaoshan (see Fig. 3.26).³⁰¹ They were sculpted in a similar

³⁰⁰ For the inscription see Chongqing, *Dazu shike mingwenlu*, 324. At Yutan in Dazu there is also an inscription by Wen Zhongzhang, which was carved during the era of Shaoxing (1131-1161). According the study of Chen Mingguang the year sign Jiazi is the year 1144. See Chen Mingguang, “Dazu shike ‘tianyuan jiazi’,” 97-99.

³⁰¹ About the stylistical similarities between the two sites of Shizhuangshan and Miaogaoshan see Hu Wenhe, “Dazu shizhuanshan,” 70-75.

manner such as the socket with twined dragons, the lotus seat, the manner of robes over the lotus petals, the way of arranging folds of the robes, and even the smiling expression of the Buddha.³⁰² Only the one in Shizhuanshan is simple due to his size and scale. By comparing the two groups of sculptures were fashioned by the artisans from one family it is seen that the craftsmanship and style of fashioning Buddha statues seem to be carried on generation after generation.³⁰³

Laozi inhabits the west wall with his two attendants (Fig. 4.9). In an appearance of a Daoist he has his hair bound with a lotus-shaped coronet and sit on a platform in the western style wrapped in the Daoist robe with knotted belts falling from the chest to the belly. With long eyebrows falling alongside the face and a massive beard he was fashioned as an old man, though his mien still appears quite young (Fig. 4.10). In the expression of contemplation he put his left hand before his belly while holding an object in the right hand before the chest. Normally the attribute is a fan, which is however broken long before. His seat is just a square platform and quite simplified compared to that of the Buddha or the traditional presentation of Laozi. Behind him the surface of the wall is quite coarse and no halo is seen.

³⁰⁴

On Laozi's either side stand his attendants, who is proportionally smaller than their master (Fig. 4.9). The one on his right has also a Daoist appearance who is dressed in a long robe and has his hair bound with a lotus coronet. In his hands before the chest he holds an object (broken, probably a jade tablet) assisting his master. The surface of his robe were rather coarse executed and probably unfinished. Compared with his colleagues in niche no. 7 at Shizhuanshan he was fashioned in a different manner (see Fig. 3.30). The one on Laozi's left is definitely unfinished. It has just assumed the shape of a figure with also a lotus coronet and two hands before the chest. In the whole cave only the Laozi triad was kept unfinished, namely the both disciples, the wall behind Laozi and his seat).³⁰⁵ Actually one would not notice them, since the unfinished parts in the cave are either hidden by the ring of the cave or too far for the viewer to see.

³⁰² See Chongqing, *Dazu shike mingwenlu*, plate 109.

³⁰³ The carvers of Miaogaoshan belong to the fourth generation of the family Wen, while those of Shizhuanshan the second and third generation. See the study of Hu Wenhe, "Dazu shizhuanshan", 77-78.

³⁰⁴ The aureole behind the triad of Laozi may have been unexecuted rather than undevised.

³⁰⁵ It is puzzling why the cave was unfinished but carved with an inscription with names of carvers and dating. See the analysis below.

The fashioning of Laozi is quite extraordinary. As seen in Shizhuanshan (see Fig. 3.31) the form of the statue of Laozi was established since Tang Dynasty. Usually Laozi appears with bound hair, long beard, clad in Daoist robe, while the left hand touching the *shi* and the right holding a fan before the chest, and sits with crossed leg on a socket. Here though the Laozi has the hair, long beard and is clad in Daoist robe, but he has no *shi*, and sits on a simple platform with two legs down on the ground. In the region where images of Daoist deities were made in the Song time there are Daoist deities taking the sitting gesture with legs down to the ground, such as the three Holy Mothers in Nanshan, the three Emperors in Shimenshan, and the deities in Shuchengyan, etc. But in Song time there is no image of Laozi or the Three Purities appearing in such a manner.³⁰⁶ In the cave the sitting gesture of Laozi might be adjusted so that the master appears symmetrical to Kongzi who always sits with two legs down to the ground. While the main cult figure Buddha sitting on a pompous lotus seat with crossed legs, the extraordinary sitting gesture of Laozi with the western manner instead of cross-legged to has an effect of degrading.³⁰⁷ Interestingly, if one compares the statue of Laozi in Miaogaoshan and that of Kongzi in Shizhuanshan, one would find out that the two statues are comparable in terms of gesture of the both arms, the manner of the sitting legs and the clothes falling along the body symmetrically (see Fig. 3.20).

Kongzi in Miaogaoshan is represented as a king. Facing the threesome of Laozi sits Kongzi regally on a platform with his attendants flanking their master (Fig. 4.11). Without beard on his face Kongzi appears as a man of middle age. Wearing the coronet of an emperor with twelve tassels and ear-protectors the Confucian master thrones somber receiving his audience (Fig. 4.12). Wrapped in a broad robe he holds a jade tablet with two hands before his chest. While the jewelled decor falling before the chest and the twin belt in the middle running down through a ring the master rests his feet on the pedestals with cloud pattern within two cassettes. His broad sleeves are particularly noteworthy for they are as half long as the length of the seated figure. Behind him is the cloud pattern in the triangle shape emulating the aureole behind the Buddha.

³⁰⁶ The Three Purities carved in the early 20th century of niche no. 23 in Dafowan of Baodingshan in Dazu are seated on simple platform in the western manner. See Hu Wenhe, *Zhongguo daojiao II*, 89.

³⁰⁷ In the Haoshanguan no. 2 of the Longshan Daoist caves of the Yuan Dynasty, the three Purities are sitting cross-legged while the Percepted and attendants sitting in the western manner on the side rows. See Hu Wenhe, *Zhongguo daojiao II*, 362.

Both his attendants are headless. In broad robes they seem to hold jade tablets before their chest. Next to the disciple on Kongzi's right and near the entrance of the cave stands still a heavily damaged figure, which is also enclosed by the cloud shaped halo.³⁰⁸

The image of Kongzi as a king began since Tang Dynasty. In 739 Kongzi was entitled by the royal court as the "King Propagator of Culture", and since then he was fashioned in the appearance of a king. As the Emperor Xuanzong (685-762) decreed that the statue of Kongzi should be placed facing south and dressed in the regal clothes.³⁰⁹ Such fashion was then spread from Kongzi Temple such as the state Confucian school (Guozijian) in Chang'an and Luoyang and the Kongzi temple in Qufu to the whole country. As mentioned in the 2nd chapter, most of the statues of Kongzi had been destroyed due to the iconoclast initiated by Emperor Shizong of Ming Dynasty, so the historical statues of Konzi are quite rare. The statues of Kongzi in the Sichuan region belong to the best reserved ones from Song time. In the other places such as Fo'anqiao, Shibisi or Daboruodong, as discussed later, are either too small or have been repainted that they have lost their original appearance and artistic less valuable than the Kongzi statue in Miaogaoshan.

A woodprint made in the 17th century after a statue in Kongzi temple in Qufu which was saved from the iconoclast shows Kongzi with an appearance quite comparable to the statue in Miaogaoshan.³¹⁰ In the woodcut Kong appears as an old man with a beard, wearing a crown of emperor with twelve tassels, dressed in garment with broad sleeves decorated with diagrams of stars, mountains and dragons etc. Holding a jade tablett before his chest with two hands, he sits regally on an armed chair, while both broad sleeves falls aside the knees and a long decorating ribbon stretches almost to the ground midst the legs. Here the imperial coronet with twelve tassels, the broad sleeves and the pose of sitting are similar to the statue in Miaogaoshan. Hence the form of Kongzi in Miaogaoshan might reflect those in the local temple of Kongzi, which followed the standardized fashioning of the image of Kongzi from Tang time.

Similar to the Buddha, Kongzi is also associated with two attendants at his either side, which has no comparable example from the Song time. Nevertheless such combination was mentioned in some early historical documents that Kongzi was accompanied by his two

³⁰⁸ Kongzi has been never attributed with three disciples in the traditional representation. It seems to be a guardian of the cave.

³⁰⁹ *Jiutangshu*, see Ren Rong, "Rujiao Zaoxiang," 12.

³¹⁰ See Murray, Julia, "Portraits of Confucius," 18.

favorite disciples Yan Yuan and Zi Lu.³¹¹ The Kongzi triad might come into being under the influence of Buddhism at the time when Buddhism was prosperous and influential. Since the pattern of Kongzi with his ten disciples became the main form at the Tang time, the Kongzi triad appeared rather rarely ever since. The statue of Kongzi in Miaogaoshan is thus quite extraordinary, in that Kongzi took the standard regal appearance but with two disciples, what are not easily categorized into any known iconography of Kongzi.

The reason for the “abnormal” fashioning of Kongzi and Laozi, presumably is because that the masters are not in his own setting, but embedded in a Buddhist context. They play roles in the cave, which in fact is similar to the situation in Shizhuanshan. Though the three teachers in Miaogaoshan share one cave and appear equal, it is still obvious who dominates and who is subordinated. Kongzi and Laozi with two attendants were made to be in accordance with the appearance of Buddha, and it is thus no wonder that their images were accordingly adjusted to certain extent and did not conform with their own tradition and form of imaging.

The three teachers in Miaogaoshan were not enshrined in their own niches independently as in Shizhuanshan, rather, they came closer and gathered together in one cave “under one roof”.³¹² But as the analysis above shows that the three are still not equal but there is a definite hierarchy with Buddha as the dominator.

Niche 3: Cave of the Vairocana Triad and the Sixteen Arhats

Next to the cave of the three teachings is the cave no. 3. It measures 2,83 meter high, 3,50 meters wide and 5,37 meters deep with a rectangular groundplan (Fig. 4.13).

At the main wall dominates the Vairocana triad, Buddha Vairocana and his two great attendants bodhisattva Mañjuśrī and Samantabhadra. Wearing a sumptuous flower coronet with a seated Buddha in the middle (broken) and dressed in monastic garment, Buddha Vairocana has full and round face with deeply arched eyebrows and benign smiling facial expression. He is seated with interlocked legs on a lotus sockel and performs the hand

³¹¹ *Shuijingzhu* and *Luoyang jialan ji*, see Ren Rong “Rujiao Zaoxiang,” 12.

³¹² A comparable case can be found in Yuanjuedong No. 37, where the three masters, Buddha, Laozi and Tianzun (instead of Kongzi) gathered in one niche, each occupied one side with their attendants. Only the difference is, in Yuanjuedong it is Tianzun, the high Daoist deity who dominated the whole niche, but in Miaogaoshan Laozi and Kongzi are subjected to the dominating Buddha Śākyamuni. See Hu Wenhe, *Sichuan daojiao*, 73.

gesture of Supreme Wisdom before the chest. The lotus seat of the Buddha is carried by an hourglass shaped pedestal with a twined dragon in the middle representing the Mount Sumeru. The Buddha is backed by overlapping aureole and halo. The two flames from the top of the halo cross and circle three times toward the ceiling of the cave.³¹³ Near the flame on the ceiling two propitious clouds were carved with dozen of musical instruments (Fig. 4.14).³¹⁴ On either sidewall of the Buddha there kneels an apsara with offerings facing to the Buddha in a cloud hovering in the air.

Flanking the Buddha are the assisting bodhisattva Mañjuśrī on Buddha's left and Samantabhadra on his right, who are proportionally reduced and symmetrically arranged. Like Buddha Vairocana they are seated with interlocked legs on lotus seats carried by their riding animals, a lion and an elephant with keepers respectively. Both are dressed sumptuously and backed by overlapping halo and aureole. Mañjuśrī has a scroll of sutra and his counterpart holds a *Ruyi* scept as the attribute. The three main statues of the cave are characterized by the light and graceful mode with the suave line of the clothes and the upward flying details such as the ribbons of Buddha's coronet, the floating clouds of the apsara, etc.

Vairocana triad is the three great saints of the "Lotus Store World" described in the Flower Garland Sutra. As discussed in Shizhuanshan Vairocana Buddha represents the Dharma body of the Buddha and the two bodhisattvas represent the perfect Buddhist wisdom. The cult of the Vairocana triad became popular since the 7th century. In the Sichuan region, especially in the area where the local Sichuan Esoteric Buddhism was active, Vairocana was a quite beloved subject in rock carvings. Besides those in Miaogaoshan and Shizhuanshan, the Buddha is also found in Huayandong in Anyue, niche no. 4 at Dafowan of Dazu, Dafoyan in Gaosheng and several niches in Beishan.³¹⁵

The Vairocana triad of niche no. 4 in Dafowan are standing figures, and the statues of Vairocana in Anyue County are all incomparable with the triads here in terms of scale or form. What most closely appears, is again the statues in Shizhuanshan. There the Vairocana

³¹³ For the comparison between the halo and aureole seen in Dazu and Dunhuang, see Lu Xiuwen, "Dazu shike beiguang," 586-594.

³¹⁴ The instrument represented here are similar to those that carved in the niche no. 245 at Beishan. According to the study of scholars the instruments carved here may reflect the orchestra of "yanyue" in the Tang time. For the study of musical instruments in the rock carvings in Dazu, see Duan Xumei, "Dazu shike yueqi," 134-140, Qin Fangyu, "Beishan shike yueqi," 406-410, Liu Guangxia, Dazu baodingshan," 472-278.

³¹⁵ See Sun Xiushen, "Sichuan diqu wenshu pusa," 77.

Buddha is the main Buddha in niche no. 7 and the two assisting bodhisattvas are placed in a separated niche no. 5. Definitely, they are different from the triad as in Miaogaoshan iconographically, but stylistically they are comparable. The two Vairocana Buddhas are similar in size with resembling appearance. Both Buddhas wear flower crowns of alike form. Both have round cheeks, and curved eyes and show smiling facial expressions. Clad in kaṣāya they both hold the hand gesture of supreme wisdom before their chest. They sit cross-legged on lotus seat above a pestral decorated with dragons. Also the lower hem of their kaṣāya are hung over the lotus seat in a same way. However, the differences of the two are also obvious. The Buddha in Miaogaoshan as the main cult figure in the cave is decored in a more splendid manner with doubled pattern of fire on the halo and aureole reaching to the ceiling with heavenly instruments inside. Beside the aureole there are still two apsaras in the clouds falling down from heaven in a magnificent manner. Comparatively the Buddha in Shizhuanshan is quite simply decored, with only a cloud behind his head. Further the stripes of Buddha's robe in Miaogaoshan are more elaborate and fluent than the one in Shizhuanshan. The details on the Sumeru basis and the carving of the dragon in Miaogaoshan etc., all exceed those in Shizhuanshan. The differences were decided on one hand by the space and environment that in Shizhuanshan there are limited space for many figures, on the other hand it shows that the craftsmanship of the carvers from family Wen was developed and enhanced after generations.³¹⁶

Compared to the counterparts in Shizhuanshan, the bodhisattvas of Mañjuśrī and Samanthabhadra in Miaogaoshan has similar situation like the Vairocana Buddha (Fig. 3.17). In a similar manner the bodhisattvas in both sites wear flower crown, are decored with luxuriant jewelry, sitting on lotus seats carried by lion or elephant. Pulled by their keepers. Different is that, in Miaogaoshan, the keepers are closer to the animals than those in Shizhuanshan; the bodhisattvas are associated with halo and aureole and their jewelry are much more delicate; and their bodies are better proportions and elegant than those in Shizhuanshan. Again, all those differences are related with the space of the cave as well as the skill of the carvers.

The both sidewalls are inhabited by each eight arhats with their attributes. They are all clad in monastic robes and has a round and flat halo behind, mostly seated on a long bank cross-

³¹⁶ Altogether 16 carvers from the family Wen were found in the rock carvings there. The reason for the carvings of their names are probably because that the statues were donated by single families and the self-consciousness of the artisans increased in the time. For the study of the carver in the region, see footnote 44.

leged, and performing different hand gestures with or without attributes. Before them various figures, animals or implements are presented. Through those devices the carver represented lively two groups of sitting monks according to their iconographical characteristics. Only all the arhats with their attendants are pitifully headless.³¹⁷

At the west wall the arhats from inside outwards were fashioned as following (Fig. 4.20 and Fig. 4.21): the first arhat seems to hold a long *Ruyi* scept before the chest without any attendants; the second one is performing the meditative hand gesture while a figure with floating ribbons holding an object standing below him; the third one holds a rosary with both hand before the belly, and beneath his stand a tall table with incense burner and a figure bending to pour water out of the bottle in his hands; the fourth one puts up his right hand before the chest and rests his left hand on the leg while a powerful dragon twines below him on rocks (Fig. 4.22); the fifth one sits in the western style holding an unidentifiable object (*Ruyi*?) with both hand before the chest; the sixth one grasps dust-cleaner in his both hands over the legs and below him is also a high table with incense burner. Between him and the seventh arhat stand a horse-keeper and a horse; the seventh arhat holds an object before him and is backed by a rectangular cartouche in a cloud; the eighth one seems to wear a scarf over his head and performs also the meditative hand gesture with an attendant figure beneath him.

In a symmetrical manner as the west wall are the arhats at the east wall arranged from inside outwards (Fig. 4.15 and Fig. 4.16): the first arhat holds a bottle before the chest without any attendants; the second one rests one hand on the leg and holds the right hand before his chest (now broken) and his attendant is a standing boy folding the hands before the chest; in the halo one reads an inscription: The Great King of Shower, written by Fengji in the second year of Chinghua era,³¹⁸ the third arhat holds his left leg with both hands and sits with the right leg twisted, and below him stands a tall table with incense burner; the fourth one sits with one leg twisted and the left fallen down to a pedestal in a shape of rock on his either side a figure is climbing and one tiger reaching the arhat (Fig. 4.17); the fifth

³¹⁷ From the stylistical similarity between the two sites especially concerning the three Buddhas one could roughly imagine the appearance and expressions of the beheaded sixteen arhats from the ten disciples in the niche no. 7 in Shizhuanshan. The sixteen arhats should have had the appearances of monk of young and old with Chinese or Indian facial traits.

³¹⁸ The inscription is curious since Fengji lived in the Southern Song time and cannot sign the name of era of Ming Dynasty. But in the tenth year of era Chinghua an inscription of Fengji was copied and carved on a stele according a text of Li Xingdian. It shows that the historical figure Fengji was still remembered and influential in the place long time after his death. See Liu Changjiu et al., *Dazu shike yanjiu*, 343.

one sits cross-legged with both hands joined before the chest, and below him stands a figure with a jar and a high table with incense burner; the sixth one sits in the western manner with a book in one hand on his leg and the other hand before his chest, his attribute is a tortoise with a long flame or light out of the mouth; the seventh arhat holds a *Ruyi* scepter on the right hand and rests the other hand on the leg and sits with interlocked legs with an attendant below him; the eighth one holds his both hands before the chest while an attendant figure stands below him.

The backgrounds of the two rows of arhats are represented in a symmetrical way. Underneath and above the arhats on long benches the patterns of rocks are carved, which shows that they are actually imbedded in the mountains. However the backgrounds of mountains were only represented in a less apparent way that they are only hinted by the patterns of rocks in almost two dimensions. Also the surfaces of the rocks are carved with the pattern of “工” to indicate the texture of the rocks, but in fact the representation of the mountains or rocks appear quite patternized and unnatural.

In the mountain behind the arhats, three things are carved in a huge scale compared to the mountains. Between the first two arhats is a huge tree with only trunks and twigs, and some twigs are transformed into the heads of birds. Between the fourth and fifth arhats is a tree growing out prosperously with leaves in groups.³¹⁹ Between the sixth and seventh arhats is a cloud with a rectangular cartouche inside. The inscriptions on the west are still legible: “They are so great to know, as the mountains move along the lines; they are so small to enter the non-space, to bath themselves in the Kundika bottle; Though I cannot (like them), (but) I can set up this rite, knowing all those people³²⁰ who mastering those wonder.” It is one of the sixteen praises written by Su Shi (1036-1101) as he had *shuilu* rite held for his late wife Wang in 1093.³²¹

According to the sutra *Da aluohan nantimiduoluo suoshuo fazhuji*, sixteen arhats vowed to Buddha to stay in this world and protect the true dharma.³²² They were: Piṇḍolabbaradvāja, Kanakavatsa, Kanakabharadvāja, Subinda, Nakula, Bhadra, Kālīka, Vajraputra, Jīvaka,

³¹⁹ There two kinds of trees related to Buddha coming near to the two kinds of trees depicted here. The one is the tree of śāla. It is said that the trees beside Buddha Śākyamuni turned in the white like white crane and withered into death at once after Buddha went into nirvana. See *Dabo niepanjing*, T12, no. 377, 905. The trees are also translated into Chinese as “the woods of crane”. The other is the tree of aśvattha, which had witnessed the enlightening of Buddha and has magnificent appearance. See *Xiuxing benqi jing*, T03, no. 184, 470.

³²⁰ It is “dharma” instead of “people” in the original text by Su Shi. See X., vol. 101, 444.

³²¹ See *Shuilu faxiang zan bingxu*, X., vol. 101, 443-445.

³²² Kent, Richard K., “Depictions of the Guardians of the Law,” 183.

Panthaka, Rāhula, Nāgasena, Aṅgaja, Vanavasin, Ajita, Cūḍapantbaka. The sixteen Arhats were widely worshipped after the translation of the sutra, and became a favourable subject in Buddhist monasteries or caves. Since in the sutra there was no description or regulation on how the arhats should look like, their images were made relatively freely.³²³ Normally they have the appearance of Buddhist monks and have relaxed poses, which might reflect actually the great and wise monks in reality. In addition to the group of sixteen arhats, the group of eighteen arhats was also quite widely spread. The additional two arhats were usually either Bodhidharma and Budai or Xianglong and Fuhu.³²⁴ Furthermore there were also representations of five hundred arhats, who indicated Buddha's five hundred disciples or those who firstly assembled to write the sutras after Buddha's nirvana.

The images of the sixteen arhats appeared since the late Tang time, when the great poet Wang Wei was alleged to have painted three sets of the arhats. In the wall paintings of late Tang in Dunhuang images of the sixteen arhats are also painted, such as those reserved in the cave no. 16 and no. 79 in which the grotesque appearance might have been painted under the influence of by Guan Xiu during the Five Dynasties. As reliefs or sculptures they were also often made in Buddhist caves or temples, such as in Longmen Kanjingsi, Taishan Lingyansi, Feilafeng in Hangzhou,³²⁵ Shanxi Chongqingsi, etc. After Song time the arhats became also a beloved subject by many great artists.

In Sichuan it was recorded that the images of arhats were brought by Lu Lengjia in the middle of 8th century and their images were widely painted on the wall of temples in Chengdu. In Hechuan Laitan no. 173-188 groups Arhats (Fig. 4.23) were made and in Dazu there are also many sites with the representations of the sixteen arhat, such as niche no. 36 and no. 220 (Fig. 4.24 and Fig. 4.25). Also in Fo'anqian and Daboruodong there are also arhats carved, which will be discussed later.

The extraordinary iconographical features of the arhats in Miaogaoshan is that each has his own attributes and attendants, but they are not identifiable iconographically without heads and inscriptions. Also the combination of Vairocana Triads with the Sixteen Arhats is not

³²³ One of the grotesque representations of the sixteen arhats were drawn by Guan Xiu (832-912) which were carved on stone and therefore reserved to the present in Hangzhou. See Jiang Lin, "Guanxiu yu shiliu luohan."

³²⁴ According to the records by Su Shi the Eighteen arhats appeared at latest in the 9th to the 10th century with Nandimitra and Piṇḍola.

³²⁵ In Feilafeng the luohans were together carved the Maitreya with a bag (monk Qici). See Gao Nianhua ed., *Feilafeng zaoxiang*, 106-111.

common in Buddhist iconography.³²⁶ According to Buddhist doctrine, arhats are originally the enlightened beings in the Hinayana Buddhism and seldom related to Vairocana triads. The combination here could be related with Chan Buddhism. Chan Buddhism originated from the thought in the Flower Garland Sutra, and emphasized at the same time their teachings directly from Buddha. It is possibly made under the influence of the donor Fengji, to gather the Vairocana triads and the sixteen arhats in one cave, since he was an important Chan Buddhist. Considering his close relation with the Chan Buddhism, his inscription on the halo of one arhat is not accidental in spite of the problem of dating.

The Arhats in the cave have also the function of guardians since they are believed to be able to protect the Right Law. Generally speaking, the Buddhist caves in the Sichuan region are characterized by the combination of certain Buddha triads with dozens of arhats or bodhisattvas, which is quite different iconographically from the traditional caves in north China. Besides the two caves in Miaoganshan (no. 3 and no. 4), there are still many such caves in the Sichuan regions such as Huayandong, Yuanjuedong, Baodingshan, Shimenshan. On the one hand it shows that the Buddhism in the Song time absorbed more deities and the believers would pray before more deities for fortune; on the other hand at the time of "Latter days of the Law" all the bodhisattvas, arhats or indras can be regarded as guardians of the Right Law. From such viewpoint it is notable that Laozi and Kongzi are positioned almost at the same level of those guardians.

Niche 4: Amitābha Triad and Ten Manifestations of Bodhisattva Guanyin

The cave with a rectangular groundplan has almost the same size as that of cave no. 3, with 3,09 m in width, 3,39 m in height and 4,01 m in depth. (Fig. 4.26).

Amitābha triad

At the rear wall is the Amitābha triad. Buddha Amitābha with two bodhisattvas Guanyin and Dashizhi, are all seated cross-legged. In the middle thrones Buddha Amitābha whose head is marked by the slightly elongation and pensive expression. His hair is formed as usual as curled tuft with excrescence on top of head, and he is backed by aureole and overlapping

³²⁶ In Sichuan region there are many caves or niches dedicated to the arhats. Another example is in Fo'anqiao where the sixteen arhats are gathered together with the three teachers and in Daboruodong with eighteen arhats. See the analysis below.

halos with flaming reaching to the ceiling of the cave. Clad in a monastic robe with U-formed collar Buddha performs the pensive hand gesture with the skirts hanging over the lotus seat with the form of lotus petal still visible. The massive lotus seat is carried by three monstrous creatures on an octagonal platform (Fig. 4.27). Beside the monsters patterns of clouds emerge from the platform.

Compared with Buddha Amitābha his two assisting bodhisattvas retrace themselves close to the rear wall and appear smaller in scale (Fig. 4.28). Both bodhisattvas are symmetrically arranged with evident contrast concerning their hairdresses and coronets, the folds of the robes, the hand gestures, the decorating jewelries, the manners of the falling of the clothes, and the appearances of the rocks under them. They both are backed with aureole and halos and seated on platforms over mountains, or vajra seats, which are represented by the imitation of the rocks beneath them. They both wear spectacular coronets and leaving their bejewelled garments hanging over the seats. On Buddha's left sits Guanyin holding his implement before him, which is now broken but might have been a lotus. In the centre of his flower crown is a seated Buddha as Guanyin's attribute. On Buddha's right bodhisattva Dashizhi joins both his hands before the chest holding certain attribute (broken). In his crown he has a vase in the middle. The rocks under Dashizhi look smaller and broken, while those under Guanyin resemble the natural rocks with the similar pattern of “工”, as seen in the cave no. 3. Different from the last cave the apsaras are placed not on either side of Buddha, but on either side of bodhisattvas in round-shaped flying clouds with flowers and offerings in hand.

The main Buddha of niche no. 4 is Amitābha, who has unlimited light and endless life according to the *Amitābha Sutra*. His world is the Pure Land in the west, and according to the *Sutra of Endless Longevity* the Buddha would receive those who call his name to his world after their death. Together with the assisting bodhisattvas Guanyin and Dashizhi the three are revered as the “Three Holy Ones of the Western”. Over 200 Buddhist texts are related with the Buddha and his pure land. Together with the spread of Mahayana Buddhism and the popularity of the belief in the west pure land, Amitābha triad became the most beloved and fashioned Buddhist subject in China.

The Bodhisattva Guanyin has been seen in Shizhuanshan. Here he appears as the attendant of Buddha Amitābha. The most important Buddhist text related to him is the “Chapter of the Universal Gate” in the Lotus Sutra, which tells about his 33 different appearances to

save sentient beings accordingly. His appearances are various since he transforms according to the situations. Of the images of Guanyin some are based on sutras but also many came from the local belief which might be mixed with Buddhism. The making of images of Guanyin began since India and the Central Asia, and then spread via China to Korea and Japan. As the most popular Bodhisattva in Buddhism his image developed in China after the earliest translation of the Lotus Sutra in the Western Jin (265-316) especially since the Northern Wei Dynasty (386-534). Today great amount of the statues of the bodhisattva are found in the caves in Yungang or Longmen. Since the spread of the Esoteric Buddhism in Tang time various of kinds of Guanyin had also been made, such as in Dunhuang where his images take almost the half amount of all the bodhisattvas. Many examples have been also found in the Sichuan region, especially in Dazu County.

Another assistant figure of Buddha Amitābha is the bodhisattva Dashizhi. Mostly appearing symmetrically with Guanyin he symbolizes Buddhist wisdom while Guanyin the merciness. The sutras related to him are among others *Shou lengyan jing*, *Bei hua jing*, and especially *Guan Wuliangshoufo jing*, which explains that after Guanyin Dashizhi is also a candidate Buddha after the nirvana of Amitābha. Seldom sculpted singly but always together with Guanyin, Dashizhi has a similar appearance like Guanyin with a lotus in his left hand and a horsetail whisk in the right and a vase in the middle of his crown. Together with Guanyin as one of the 25 bodhisattvas sent by Amitābha to receive the souls of the dead, Dashizhi belongs to the most important bodhisattva for the practitioners of the pure land.

Ten manifestations of bodhisattva Guanyin

Arranged in a similar way as cave no. 3 two sidewalls of this cave are inhabited by two ranges of deities, the ten manifestations of the bodhisattvas Guanyin (Fig. 4.30 and Fig. 4.31). The ten statues of Guanyin inside the cave appear generally similar. They have halos behind their heads, are clad in the long robes and stand elegantly on lotus or rock pedestals. They differentiate themselves only through their hand gestures, attributes and their dresses and crowns. No inscription in the cave clarifies the identity of the series of Guanyin. They are all wearing jewelled coronets, backed by round halo, ornamented by jewelry before the bosoms and lower part of legs, dressed in sumptuous garments and standing bare footed on lotus pedestals. Variable are their hand gesture, attributes in the hands as well as the details of embellishments either on the coronets or on their bosoms. Some of them have their ribbons of the coronets flying upwards onto the halos (Fig. 4.32).

Five statues of Guanyin's manifestations stand on the west wall. From inside outwards: the first one has a seated Buddha in the middle of the coronet and holds a mañi-jewel in the left hand while a flaming light irradiate circling upwards to the ceiling; dressed in a mantel covering from the head to the body the second one is performing the gesture of welcoming with both hands; the third has also a sitting buddha in the crown. He tilts the body slightly to the left while the left hand grasping the right sleeve; the fourth one holds a rosary in the right hand which is grasped by the left hand before the belly; the fifth is mostly destroyed with only part of the right leg and ribbons visible.³²⁷

The five manifestations of Guanyin on the east wall are comparatively well reserved. From inside outwards: the first one holds in both hand a small mirror with long knotted ribbons falling down; the second one has a bowl in the left hand while the right holds upwards (broken); the third one wears a mantel covering from the head with a lasso in the joined hands; the fourth one holds a bottle in one hand before the belly while the other held upwards before the chest (broken), the fifth one carries a twig of lotus leaf over the left shoulder.

The both rows of standing bodhisattvas along the sidewalls are the "Ten Holy Guanyin".³²⁸ As aforementioned the bodhisattva Guanyin transforms himself in order to save sentient beings accordingly. Since the spread of the Esoteric Buddhism the images of Guanyin were combined with local beliefs and became diversified. In Shimenshan cave no. 6 there are also ten manifestations of Guanyin which stylistically and contemporary to those in Miaogaoshan (Fig. 4.33 and Fig. 4.34). They are all associated with inscribed names that offer important iconographical reference to those in Miaogaoshan. The ten holy Guanyin in Shimenshan are named after their attributes in their hands, as "Guanyin with Kundika in Hand", "Guanyin with Precious Pearls in Hand" etc. In the same way the Guanyin on the west wall in cave no. 4 of Miaogaoshan can be named from inside outwards as: 1. Guanyin with Precious Pearl in Hand, 2. Guanyin with Hand Gesture of Bestower of Fearlessness, 3. Damaged, unidentifiable, 4. Guanyin with Rosary in Hand, 5. destroyed; on the east wall outwards as: 1. Guanyin with Precious Mirror in Hand, 2. Guanyin with Precious Bowl in Hand, 3. Guanyin with Noose in Hand, 4. Guanyin with Kundika in Hand or Guanyin with Willow-branch, 5. Guanyin with Lotus in Hand.

³²⁷ That can possibly be the Guanyin with a hand of ruyi pearl according to the study of Yan Juanying. See Yan Juanying, "Dazu shiku qianshou," 147.

³²⁸ For the study of the series of Guanyin in Dazu, see Yan Juanying, "Dazu shiku qianshou," 140-148.

The corresponding sutra for the manifestations of Guanyin is *Qianshou qianyan dabeixin tuoluoni*. In the sutra the power in saving from the calamities by Guanyin and the related dharani are narrated with corresponding hand gestures (mudra) and spells (mantra). From the totally more than forty illustrations only several can be found in the rock carvings in Dazu. Possibly there had been other texts or references for the fashioning of the ten Guanyin in Miaogaoshan. The ten Guanyins should be regarded as some of the transformations of the Guanyin with Thousand Hands and Eyes.³²⁹ The arrangement of the ten Guanyin in the cave is similar to that of the arhats in the neighboring cave. So the status and function of the ten Guanyin is similar to the arhats and can be regarded as the attendants of the dominating Amitābha triads in the cave.³³⁰

The construction, arrangement and the style of the statues in cave no. 4 and no. 3 appear similar at first glance, but if compared in detail the two caves were made by no means identical. Except for the differences regarding the hand gestures, clothes, attributes and riding animals which were represented in an abundant manner, the non-iconographical elements were also expressed in a thoughtful manner. For instance, the imaging and placing of the flying apsaras, the size, shape and flame pattern of the halos behind Buddhas, and the decorating or carrying monsters underneath the seat of Buddha (three monsters versus twined dragons), etc. are all varied. All those show the craftsmanship of the carvers that enabled a vivid variety of the sculptures within a unified style. The main Buddha Amitābha follows the manner of Buddha in Shizhuanshan, just like Buddha Śākyamuni and Vairocana in the last two caves. Although the hand gesture differs, the portion of head and body, the U-formed collar, the arrangement of the folds of the clothes are all showing the stylistical continuity between the two sites (see Fig. 3.27). It is apparent that the statues in Shizhuanshan have had an influential impact on those in Miaogaoshan.

The fashioning of Guanyin with various appearances was common in Dazu county, especially in Beishan during the Song time. The series of similar representations of Guanyin is a speciality in the region and can be found in Beishan, Fo'anqiao and Shimenshan. The manifestations of Guanyin in standing pose found in Beishan cave no. 180 with the thirteen transformation of Guanyin were made during 1116 to 1127 (Fig. 4.35). While their modelling

³²⁹ Hu Wenhe, *Sichuan Daojiao*, 282.

³³⁰ Another iconographic source for the manifestation of Guanyin was the monk Baozhi. There is twelve representations transformed by the monk Baozhi and in the temples in Chengdu there were many images of dozens of Guanyin as wall-paintings according to various historical records. See Hu Wenhe, *Sichuan Daojiao*, 279.

are similar to those in Miaogaoshan, the skill of carving appear rather stiff or archaic. There are two similar standing Guanyin in the cave no. 136 in Beishan finished in the same years (1142-1164) as those in Miaogaoshan. The both Guanyin show stylistical similarities to those in Miaogaoshan but they were decorated with jewelry on their robes and appear more splendid, which are regarded as the most beautiful ones in the whole site. In my opinion since the dating and style of carvings in cave 136 in Beishan come quite near to that of Miaogaoshan, the both Guanyin there might have been made by the carver Wen Zhongzhang with his sons.

Concerning the combination of Amitābha triad with the ten holy Guanyin, cave no. 6 in Shimenshan is the one with the same content. Both were made within a short period of time in the Southern Song.³³¹ The statues in Shimenshan cave no. 6 were all associated with inscriptions and donated by various Buddhist believers for the sake of making good fortune or healing diseases etc., which differs from the situation in Miaogaoshan (only one donor). Except for the subject and arrangement the two caves are actually different in many aspects. Regarding the subject matter there are still four Heavenly Kings outside the cave, Sudhana and Dragon Daughter inside near the door in Shimenshan, which are not seen in Miaogaoshan. Although the dominating triads of both caves are Amitābha triads, they are actually different concerning hand gesture, shape of halos and aureoles, crowns, clothes and folds, facial expression, size and shape of the lotus seats etc., and even the three carrying monsters and twined dragons under the seats are seemingly similar but actually at variance.

Of the two series of the ten manifestations of Guanyin in the two places most of them have different attributes some have same attributes in hand but with different appearance. It seems that the representations of the series of the ten Guanyin were not fixed in song time. The ten statues of Guanyin in Shimenshan are better reserved than those in Miaogaoshan. All hold attributes and stand on doubled lotus pedestals growing from bottles. Notably the two rows of Guanyin within the cave in Shimenshan are two different types. Those on the left side of Buddha are clothed in long garments with exposed jewelry, and those on the right side are clad with sumptuous vestures full of jewelry with the lower hems crossed before the legs, which makes them much more spectacular than their counterparts on the opposite side. Such contrast is not to find in Miaogaoshan where the ten Guanyin are all

³³¹ Shimenshan in 1141 according to the inscription in cave no. 6 and Miaogaoshan in 1144 depending on the inscription in cave no. 2

clad in long robes with the jewelry, and appear in accordance with those on Buddha's left side in Shimenshan. Even those "similar" five Bodhisattvas are still different in the two sites regarding their shape of halo and aureoles, form of the folds on the clothes, hand gesture and lotus pedestals, etc. Especially noteworthy are the facial expression of the bodhisattvas in the two sites. Those in Miaogaoshan mostly smile with full round faces and appear to be peaceful and harmonized together with the static folds of clothes, while those in Shimenshan smile in a slightly stubborn manner and less inspired but appear more dynamic because of the lively folds on their clothes. It is apparent that the statues of the both sites were not made by a same group of carvers. Although the scale of Miaogaoshan is relatively smaller, the craftsmanship shows that the statues were made at the highest artistic level in that time.

Niche 5: Cave of Water-Moon Guanyin

Similar to the former three caves in shape, the cave of Water-moon Guanyin is the smallest of the four, with 3 meters high, 1,95 meters wide and 2,25 meters deep.

At rear wall the bodhisattva Guanyin is sitting on a seat and assisted by Sudhana and the Dragon Daughter. He is backed by a great full round moon in relief as the all-enclosing aureole, and the water before him is represented by clusters of lotus (Fig. 4.36). Being seated on the stone seat Guanyin steps his left foot on a lotus flower and his right on the seat. His left arm supports him on the seat while the right is put on the right leg leisurely (now broken). Wearing the floral crown with a sitting Buddha in the upper part, the bodhisattva is dressed with a light bejewelled garment with floral pattern which hangs down from the stone seat onto the lotus flower underneath his foot. Slightly tilted to his right the smiling Guanyin shows a gracious and relaxed pose. Both attending figures are fashioned proportionally smaller (Fig. 4.40). On Guanyin's left stands Sudhana who is represented as an old man with the hair bundled on his headtop and a beard. He holds offerings with both hand before the chest. The Dragon Daughter on Guanyin's right in gracious jewelled garments stands piously with both hands holding an offering (broken). Her high coronet is decorated with a fish-dragon on the front.

Different from other three caves there is no statues at both side walls in this cave, but only inscriptions by visitors in the year of 1166 and 1167.³³² On the right side wall one reads an inscription, which tells about a group visiting the place in the year 1166 together with their friends and relatives. Noticeably the place was called as *Jiaotan* “altar of ritual”.³³³ Another inscription was carved in the following year as another group of visitors came and praised the scenery and statues here.³³⁴

The form that the bodhisattva Guanyin sits with one leg on the seat and the other down to the ground on a lotus pedestal, with a round aureole on his back as a full moon is named “Water and Moon Guanyin”. It is one of many manifestations or transformations of the bodhisattva Guanyin and originated from both the Buddhist texts and Chinese painting, especially those of the Daoists immortals. In the Flower Garland Sutra the place of Guanyin, *Potala*, is depicted as fulfilled with flow fountains and flourishing woods, which sounds consonant with the ideal of Daoist recluses. According to the historical documents at latest in the first half of the 9th century A.D. the pattern of Guanyin with Water and Moon became prevalent in China. The historical texts discovered in Dunhuang show that the worship of this type of Guanyin was closely related with the belief of Pure Land. Furthermore, it was also recorded by Zhang Yanyuan that the painter Zhou Fang (8th to 9th century) created the pattern of Water and Moon Guanyin, and he had once painted the bodhisattva on a screen wall. It is plausible that the pattern of Guanyin with woods, water and moon came into being since the middle of the 8th century in combination with the forming of the Chinese painting of landscape..³³⁵

The extant images of early representation of Water and Moon Guanyin are mostly found in Dunhuang as wall painting or painted on silk dated after late Tang Dynasties. Among them the earliest dated one of 943 is a three-fourth profile representation of the bodhisattva sittings on a rock seat and steps on a lotus with a round full moon on his backside and bamboos grove but without Sudhana and Dragon Daughter (Fig. 4.42). From the inscription it is clear that this Guanyin had the same function as the Guanyin of Great Merciness. The pattern of the Guanyin with Water and Moon was not fixed until the 10th century, with

³³² See Chongqing Dazu, *Dazu shike mingwenlu*, 327 and 329.

³³³ *Jiaotan* refers to Daoist ritual sanctuary, but they might mean the place as a Buddhist altar of ritual. See Li Xiaoqiang, “Dazu shike zhaji,” 337.

³³⁴ In the niche of Jade Emperor of Shuchennyuan it is clearly said in a stele that in the year 1143 they were “by the niches practicing the rite and showing the celebrations”. See Chongqing, *Dazu shike mingwenlu*, 290.

³³⁵ For the origin and the relation of this pattern of painting with the traditional Chinese painting see Yamamoto Yōko, “Mizuki kannon zu no seiritsu,” 28-38 and Pan Liangwen, “Mizuki kannon ni zuite.”

variable appearance, gesture and the representation of water and moon, as seen in the paintings from Dunhuang.³³⁶

The earliest record about the Guanyin with Water and Land in Sichuan is found in *Yizhou minhua lu* by Huang Xiufu (10th to 11th century), who recorded that the famous painter Zuo Quan (8th to 9th century) and Fan Qiong (8th to 9th century) had once painted that type of Guanyin in the Temple Dashengcisi and Temple Shenghousi near Chengdu in the first half of 9th century. The great amount of Guanyin of this type reserved in rock carvings in the Sichuan region attest the popularity of the bodhisattva in the Song time.³³⁷

Among the extant representations of the Water and Moon Guanyin in the rock carvings in Sichuan the so-called Guanyin of Purple Bamboos at Bilidong niche no. 19 in Anyue County (Fig. 4.37) is the renown one. He is actually the main figure of the representation of the *Sutra of Guanyin*, and on his either side the eight adversities saved by Guanyin were carved in high relief. The sitting gesture of this Guanyin looks similar to the one in Miaogaoshan. Behind the bodhisattva are the bamboos grove, aureole with flame pattern, but no round full moon. His body, compared with the one in Miaogaoshan, appears pretty stiff, and his head looks not so naturally like the one in Miaogaoshan. Nonetheless his body and limbs are all well proportioned and belongs to one of the finest sculptures in Sichuan.

At Beishan in Dazu in niche no. 113 the Water Moon Guanyin looks similar to the one in Miaogaoshan concerning the appearance and clothes, especially the smiling facial expression and inclining head, only it is heavily weathered (Fig. 4.38). Another cave at Beishan niche no. 133 (Fig. 4.39) is dedicated to this type of Guanyin with chains of mountains and assisted by Sudhana and Dragon Daughter, whereas the composition and appearance differ from the one in Miaogaoshan. At sidewalls of the cave the four heavenly kings are presented, which reminds the arrangement in Shimenshan.³³⁸ Further there are still more examples of Water and Moon Guanyin in wood from the Song time reserved in museums which are comparable to those in the rock carvings in Sichuan. Such as the piece

³³⁶ For the images of this type of bodhisattva in Dunhuang see Wang Huimin, "Dunhuang shuiyue guanyin xiang," 31-38.

³³⁷ For an overview about the imaging of the type of Guanyin, see among others Pan Liangwen, "Shuiyue guanyin yu baiyi guanyin," 78-89.

³³⁸ For this kind of representation of Guanyin in Dazu, see Chen Jing, "Dazu shike shuiyue," 104-100.

in Nelson-Atkins Museum, which resembles his counterparts in stone regarding sitting gesture, composition, etc.³³⁹

The assisting figures of Guanyin, Sudhana and Dragon Daughter, are the most common attendants of the bodhisattva. Sudhana is narrated in Flower Garland Sutra wherein he visited Guanyin among the 53 “good spirit friends”. The story of Dragon Daughter comes from Lotus Sutra, in which she was the daughter of Dragon King Sāgara-nāgarāja, one of the guardians of Guanyin, accepted and understood Buddhist truth and offered Buddha with a precious pearl. In the rock carvings they are found together with Guanyin in Beishan no. 133 and Duobao Pagoda, and in Shimenshan cave no. 6 (Fig. 4.41) where they appear at the door as welcoming figures. Comparatively of the several groups from the Southern Song the both attendants of Guanyin at Beishan no. 133 appear most akin to those in Miaogaoshan. Both Dragon Daughters appear as young women, with oval faces and similar hairstyle, in long garments and holding offerings before the chests. Both Sudhana look like old men, with their hair folded on the head and similar wrinkle on their faces, holding the offerings and in long robes with broad sleeves as if they had been made after one pattern. Compared with the figures at Beishan and Shimenshan, the attendants of Guanyin at Miaogaoshan were made more delicate, regarding the head dress of Dragon Daughter or the flying ribbons and beard of Sudhana as well as their facial expression. All of those elements are more vivid and inspired, what is found in all the statues in the four caves at Miaogaoshan, either the main figures or the assistants.

Three small niches no. 6, 7 and 8:

The three niches are located right beneath the cave no. 5 and quite small in scale (Fig. 4.43). They are all small niches with arched roof and the width of about 60 cm, They were donated by the later donors, who have their images of cult chiselled, in order to gain merits, as seen in many other Buddhist cult sites. The style and clothes of the figures suggest that they were most likely executed in Song time, probably shortly after that the four caves were finished.

³³⁹ Howard, Angela et al., *Chinese Sculpture*, 385.

Niche no. 6 is directly on the right corner of the cave No. 5 and heavily damaged.³⁴⁰ Still recognisable is a seated Buddha in the middle on a lotus seat performing the hand gesture of preaching dharma. On either side of the Buddha stands each a disciple dressed in monk's robe. Though all the three figures are headless, they appear to be Buddha Śākyamuni with his two disciples. Niche no. 7 and no. 8 are carved on the right of the cave no. 5, on a surface facing to the northeast. The two niches are put so close together as if they were twin niches. The west part of the niche no. 7 is destroyed, and in the remained niche sits a bodhisattva wearing coronet and an unkomen figure seated with interlocked legs on lotus seat while holding an implement in his right hand (Ruyi?). On his lower right sits a monk-like figure (arhat?) on a rocky seat with his right hand before the chest. Lower between the two figures is a twined dragon, behind which is still a figure in praying gesture with both his hands folded before the chest.

The niche no. 8 is relatively well reserved. Inside are two seated figures side by side. The one on the left is a Buddha wearing in a robe with U-formed collar, putting hands on knees and sitting in the western style while stepping both feet on lotus pedestals. A Buddha sitting in such a pose is identified as the future Buddha Maitreya, On his right sits a figure resembling the main figure of cave no. 5, the Guanyin of Water-moon. In a similar way sit the crowned bodhisattva with the right leg on the seat and the left on a lotus pedestal, while the left arm supporting the body and the right hand holding the clothes with elbow on the knee. The figure might have been fashioned after the model of the Guanyin of Water-moon in cave no. 5 which apparently were carved for the sake of bringing merits.

4.1.3. Evaluation

The donor Feng Ji

Different from Shizhuanshan, no historical stele or inscriptions by donor is left in the rock carvings in Miaogaoshan. Nevertheless a detailed study of relevant historical materials reveals that the carvings, especially the four caves in Miaogaoshan were closely related with an official and lay Buddhist in Song time with the name of Feng Ji.³⁴¹ Also in the

³⁴⁰ Direct below cave no. 5 there is still a small weathered niche (unnumbered) in which there is only a form of a sitting figure visible.

³⁴¹ Feng Ji seems to live from 1074 to 1153 according to the study by Zhao Huizhi, "Fengji yu dazhu," 540.

carvings there are several indications. In the cave no. 3 an inscription “Da mu wang, (Great King of Wash),³⁴² written by Feng Ji in the second year of Chenghua Era (1466)”. Feng Ji as an official of the Song Dynasty (960-1279) can never write in 1466, but it may have been written and carved in his name in the Ming time as Feng was still influential in the place. Furthermore according to a stele of 1576 in the temple it is mentioned that Feng Ji initiated Buddhist activities there. Also according to local chronicles there has been a stele about Feng Ji in Miaogaoshan which was re-carved in 1371 (the same happens to the stele of Yan Xun in Shizhuanshan). In the postscript it is recorded that the text was carved in *Zhongchengtang*, the Hall of Honest, in his tomb in Changzhou (Dazu). This text was again re-carved in *Weituodian*, the Hall of Veda, in near the Temple Miaogaosi. Those materials in stone and historical records reveal that Feng Ji was the initiator and main donor of the caves and temple in Miaogaoshan.

Feng Ji, with another name Feng Jichuan, came from Xiaoxi of Suining Prefecture, and was active from 1074 to June 1153. At the age of 44 he passed the national exam and became *Jinshi*. He was a high official in the royal court of the Song Dynasty, and at the same time he was a renown lay Buddhist he was also listed as “Inheritor of Dharma” of Chan Buddhist School. He was also a practitioner and advocator of the unification of Confucianism and Buddhism. His life was summarized in a poem by himself: “After the official matters I enjoy sitting in meditation, and for that I seldom sleep on the bed; Though I show the appearance of official, my name as a senior Buddhist monk is spread all over the world.”³⁴³

From 1127 he worked as a local official and thirty years later he was promoted from the eighth grade to the third grade. Because he had supported the royal family by one incident he was then promoted to the royal court. During the war between the Song and Jin Dynasty he stood for fighting at beginning and negotiated peace with the Jin Dynasty under the influence and sheltering of the traitor Qin Hui (1190-1155). From 1143 to 1152 he was appointed as the magistrate of Luzhou in the province of Sichuan and since then he lived and was active there until his death.

As a Buddhist many activities of Feng Ji are also recorded in historical documents. After the royal court of Song moved Hangzhou around 1127 he donated his salary to print the

³⁴² The meaning of “Da mu wang” is unclear.

³⁴³ About the study of the historical figure Feng Ji and his religious activities see Hu Zhaoxi, “Fengji shizong chutan.” 282-313, “Fengji yu luzhou,” 65-69.

Buddhist canon in a great amount.³⁴⁴ He donated gold for the decoration of the great Buddha in Tongnan and wrote a text about the Temple of Nanchansi there. Because of his excellent capability of writing and advanced Buddhist knowledge he wrote many texts for renown monks and temples. During he was magistrate of the Luzhou where he among others reinforced the rampart and relieved the people in disaster. He had a pagoda built that was named as *Baoenta*, “Pagoda of Rewarding the Kindness. Also he organized *Jingtuhui*, the “Assembly of Pure Land”, leading the monks and lay Buddhist to chant Buddha names and practise rituals. In the last year of his life he donated the statues of Buddha and bodhisattvas on the fourth layer of the Duobao Pagoda at Beishan in Dazu County. In Duobaota pagoda at Beishan there is a layer donated by him for the fortune of his whole family (Fig. 4.45 to Fig. 4.48).³⁴⁵ There together with the Buddhist deities his “portrait” was carved (Fig. 4.44) with his long official title. It is recorded that he was buried in the Temple of Miaogao in Dazu. Due to his excellent achievements to the Chan Buddhism he was honoured as *faci*, the “Inheritor of Dharma” of the Chan Master Longmenyuan, the fifteenth of the Nanyue Branch of the Chan School, which is quite extraordinary for a lay Buddhist.

Feng's Buddhist activities show that he was both a strong believer of Pure Land Buddhism and a Chan lay Buddhist. In the delivered texts he expressed his wish to be reborn in the Western Paradise and denoted the importance of worshipping Guanyin.³⁴⁶ According to *Fozu tongji* Feng in his later years concentrated himself on the Pure Land, wrote three scrolls texts of confession and organized actively the Assemblage of Pure Land.³⁴⁷ The statues in Miaogaoshan were consistent with the historical recordings about him, and they were strongly related with his belief of the Pure Land.³⁴⁸

Compared to Yan Xun in Shizhuanshan as a local squire, Feng Ji was a royally appointed officer who was influential and powerful in the region. He initiated the Buddhist temple and

³⁴⁴ *Wudeng huiyuan*, X., vol. 80, no. 1565, 418.

³⁴⁵ For the study of the pagoda see Li Fangyin, “Dazu beishan duobaota,” Chen Mingguang, “Dazu duobaota,” Li Xiaoqiang, “Shilun jingtu xinyang,” 247-248. For the fourth floor where Feng Ji was carved with the other deities see Deng Can, “Dazu duobaota,” 370-372.

³⁴⁶ The texts are including “Text of Donating Printing of Sutras and Vowing to be reborn in the Pure Land”, “Note of Bell Tower at Miyinsi Temple”, “Note for the Pavilion and the image of the Great Merciness at Shengshousi Temple” etc. See Hu Zhaoxi, 295-298. Also see the text written by Feng Ji, *Dabeixiang bing ge ji*, 174-175.

³⁴⁷ *Jiaohuji*, X., vol. 62, no. 1177, 191. For the historical background of combination of the thoughts of pure land and huayan schools in the Song time, what could be also seen in the statue donated by Feng Ji. See Wei Daoru, “Zongjiao ronghe yu jiaohua,” 299-305.

³⁴⁸ For the close relation of the belief of Pure Land and the rock carvings in Dazu see Li Xiaoqiang, “Shilun jingtu xinyang,” 244-251.

caves including the images of the three teachings in which Buddhism took the first place as manifested in cave no. 2. Feng's attitude to the three teachings interestingly contradicts to the attitude of the main stream of literati that they praised highly Confucianism and despised Buddhism, what was certainly related with the identification of Feng as a Buddhist.

Programme of the four caves

Of the deities in Miaogaoshan several appear again in Duobaota Pagoda at Beishan which Feng donated. On the fourth story there are also three Buddha made: Buddha Śākyamuni with two disciples (niche no. 47) was placed at the north side, who reminds the one in cave no. 2 in Miaogaoshan. The Amitābha triad (niche no. 39) was on the south side, who is the counterpart of the one in cave no. 4. Between them at the east side is a Buddha (niche no. 43) with the bodhisattvas Mañjuśrī (niche no. 45) and Samanthabhadra (niche no. 41) flanking him on northeast and southeast side. This Buddha could be regarded as the counterpart of the Vairocana Buddha in cave no. 3 in Miaogaoshan. Only the Water-Moon Guanyin disappeared here and instead the west side was notably given to the donor Fengji (niche no. 50). Definitely it was not incidental that his statue was placed at the west side, the cardinal direction of Amitābha Buddha.³⁴⁹

The four caves are uniform in terms of form, style, dating etc. Although there is no inscription telling about the programme of the statues in Miaogaoshan, it is possible to trace the thought behind them in combination with the donor Feng Ji. Although all the masters of the three teachings were made, doubtlessly in Miaogaoshan the Buddhist statues are dominating deities. Confucius or Laozi are only subordinate with their status comparable to that of the sixteen Luohans or the ten Guanyin. The main figures of the four caves are Buddha Śākyamuni, Vairocana, Amitābha in and Guanyin in. Apparently the first three are the Three Bodies of Buddha with Vairocana in the centre. For the well educated Buddhist Feng Ji such an arrangement was not accidental but rather a representation of his belief. The four caves were dedicated to the most important Three Buddhas and bodhisattva Guanyin in whom he believed - That was the programme of the four caves. The other deities like the ten manifestations of Guanyin and arhats as well as Kongzi, Laozi are all "good spirit friends" who they belonged to associates or subordinates of Buddhas.

³⁴⁹ About the statues on the fourth story of the pagoda see Liu Changjiu et al., *Dazu shike yanjiu*, 441-443.

As a devout believer of the Pure Land he was alleged to have chosen this place as his tomb. If so he must have thoughtfully considered about the statues he donated. If one takes the welcoming Amitābha Buddha (no. 1) and the Amitābha triads into consideration with the historical documents about Feng, one would easily understand the images in Miaogaohan as a manifestation of his belief in the Pure Land, since worshipping the Amitābha triads and calling the names of Amitābha and Guanyin were the most important methods for Buddhists to be reborn in the western paradise. It is reasonable to argue that Feng donated the statues for the sake of being reborn in the pure land.

Since the site was called as “altar of rite” by a contemporaneous inscription, the statues of deities might have been worshipped in the context of certain ritual in the Song time, especially the four caves with the standing Buddha. It is mentioned several times in the historical documents that Feng believed in the Pure Land in his later years and made texts of confession ritual of Amitābha. It is possible that Feng with the monks in Miaogaosi temple might have practised rituals of confession before the statues. Although it is not clear about the details, chanting the names of Amitābha and Guanyin and revering their images are the key content of the ritual. If the four other caves had been a place of ritual, it might have been a place for confession ritual with the aim to be reborn in the Pure Land. The contemporaneous appellation of this place is consistent with what is recorded in the historical documents about the donor.

The inscribed praise for Luohan by Su Shi on the cloud in caves no. 3 is quite noticeable. Since its original context is *shuilu* rite, it leads the attention again to the spectacular rite. As shown, arhats or holy monks played a crucial role in *shuilu* but here the text was more likely recited as a praise for the arhats, rather than suggested the rite itself in this place. The site with four caves was more suitable for certain ritual of several persons in smaller scale, while the ritual in large scale like *shuilu* demands more Buddha halls and places in a temple.

As an important official Feng had given his best for the project. The carvers led by Wen Zhongzhang could have been the best artisans representing the high artistic level in the area at that time. The rock carvings in both Miaogaoshan and Shizhuanshan had been carved by the Wen family, while most statues in Miaogaoshan were imbued with more exquisite and dexterousness and inspired with liveliness.

Relation of the three teachings

Concerning the relation of the three teachings the three teachers in Miaogaoshan coexist within one cave, what is different from Shizhanshan. The form of one cave with three walls are mostly seen in Buddhist caves with three Buddhas, either three bodies or three worlds, in which the main Buddha takes the centre place and the other two flank him. In the other cave in Miaogaoshan the main wall is dominated by a Buddha triad of one Buddha with two assisting bodhisattvas, while the sidewalls, the place for attendants or dharma guardians, are occupied by associated bodhisattvas or arhats. The cave no. 2 seem to have combined the two forms with Buddha in the main wall, Kongzi at his right side and Laozi at his left. Here the manner in Shizhuanshan was followed that the Laozi was at the left of Buddha and Kongzi at his right, which indicates that Laozi is still superior to Kongzi to certain extent. Seen from the spatial relation the three teachers here in one cave came much closer than in Shizhuanshan where they remain independent. Taking the places of the other two Buddhas or attendants of Buddha, Laozi and Kongzi share one cave with Buddha. Such form of three triads of three teachings in one cave is rather rare, and the site at Miaogaoshan is the earliest known one as well as the single one of the Song time.

As stated above the context of the caves and statues at Miaogaoshan were possibly closely related with the “assembly of the Pure Land “ held by the donor Feng Ji. Since the assembly is aimed to be reborn in the western Pure Land by means of practising rituals and chanting Buddha names, the context in Miaogaoshan is quite clear that Buddhism is dominating, as also revealed by the statues in other caves or niches. Although the two masters Laozi and Kongzi are present here, the status of their teachings is almost insignificant. As attendants appear the two masters and their status is akin to that of the bodhisattvas or arhats. The definite hierarchy of the three teachings are also manifested by the details, such as gesture, attributes, seats or halo of the statues of the three masters in the cave as analysed above. On the one hand the three masters coexisting within cave seems as if they came closer, on the other hand Kongzi and Laozi lost more independence and became two roles in the Buddhist cave and subordinates of Buddha.

The order of the three teachings in Miaogaoshan is a reflection of the beliefs of the donor Feng Ji. On the one hand Feng was a Confucian official for over thirty years, on the other hand he was proud of being a senior monk of Chan Buddhism and a great lay Buddhist with the fame of the “Inheritor of Dharma”. He was an example par excellence for the

combination of Confucianism and Buddhism in Song time. The two teachings offered him the ethics in the secular world and supramundane spiritual caring. He might share the expression made by Zhang Shangying (1043-1122) about the three teachings, that Confucianism heals the diseases in skin, Daoism heals that in blood and Buddhism heals the disease in marrow.³⁵⁰ For him in the end and on the highest level it was Buddhism as the statues themselves have shown.

Among the official literati of the Song Dynasty some stood for Confucianism against Buddhism and some advocated the merging of the three teachings. Feng's belief in Buddhism was influenced by the contemporary background more or less related to the local belief where he originated. Besides Chan Buddhism, the belief in the Pure Land fulfilled his spiritual need since the ups and downs in the official circles brought him less sense of security. To Daoism Feng seems to be less interested. Probably because of the tragedy that the Daoism accelerated the fall of the Northern Song Dynasty, which made the Daoism in the court quite limited, while it was tolerated being a Confucian official and a lay Buddhist at same time.

4.2. Fo'anqiao

4.2.1. Overview

The rock carvings in Fo'anqiao are located about 30 kilometers southwest of the Dazu county town and approximately 10 kilometres southeast from Shizhuanshan (Fig. 1.1). In an easily accessible place all the niches are distributed along the southwestern cliffside of 38 meters long at foot of a small hill behind a small reservoir. Now the niches are covered with later built rooms, and unfortunately all the statues in the niches have been repainted, thus stylistically it is almost impossible to judge when they were carved. Only in the light of the inscriptions it can be confirmed that the statues were carved in the Southern Song Dynasty (1127-1280). Altogether are 13 numbered niches with at least two niches (no. 10 and 11) added in the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911) which will not be discussed here.³⁵¹

³⁵⁰ Kubota Ryōon. *Shina ju dō butsu kōshōshi*, 257.

³⁵¹ Since the appearance of the niches have been changed dramatically, it is difficult to clarify their original form and appearance and therefore by the description the documentation made in 1984 will be referred here. See Liu Changjiu et al., *Dazu shike yanjiu*, 565-569.

4.2. Fo'anqiao

The main content of the carvings in Fo'anqiao are two small caves with numerous figures and one large niche, while in others are small niches near or around them. Thus all the carvings in Fo'anqiao are arranged into three groups from west to the east: the first group is the cave of the Vairocana Triad with ten Guanyins and two niches on its either side (correspondingly no. 1 - 3); the second group is a niche of the Three Buddhas (no. 7) in centre with guardians (no. 4 and 9) and small niches around (no. 5, 6 and 8); the third group is the cave of the three teachers with arhats and a niche of the Heavenly Kings nearby.

No stele here is found concerning the history of the niches and caves, but numerous short inscriptions of donors show that the statues were carved by the local Buddhist layers. It is also not clear if there has been Buddhist temple nearby since the geographical situation has been dramatically changed by the reservoir and no any relevant historical documents reserved. Even repainted the statues in Fo'anqiao are valuable due to the rich content of the statues which are mostly seen in other places and thus consistent with the tradition of rock carvings in Dazu.

4.2.2. Caves and niches

Group 1 (niche no. 1, 2 and 3)

The niche no. 1 is about one metre high and 1,5 metre wide with fire pattern carved outside the niche. The main figure in the niche is a bodhisattva sitting cross-legged on a lotus seat (Fig. 4.50). Backed with halo and aureole behind his head and body, the bodhisattva wears a jewelled crown with two ribbons flying upwards behind his head. Clad in a monk's robe with broad sleeves falling alongside the lotus seat he puts his left hand on his knee. Although the statue might have been repainted, the form should be original. The carrying animal for the bodhisattva is a buffalo which carrying a cushion beneath the lotus seat and falling from its back to the ground. The buffalo turns its head to his left and faces the audience like the other figures. In front of it a small calf lies prone on the ground turning its head to the audience. Flanking the main figure in the niche are two guardians with sword or a spear in their hands. At the left wall of the niche stands a statue of donor with two hands before his breast.

The identity of the bodhisattva is not clear. A deity with monk's robe and riding on a buffalo is not usual in Buddhist iconography. However, the bodhisattva riding on a buffalo seems to have been prevalent in the Sichuan region, such as niche no. 209 in Beishan (Fig. 4.51) and in Shibisi (Fig. 4.75). In the Ming time in Guangmingdian a bodhisattva on a buffalo appeared together with the three teachers (Fig. 4.52). The bodhisattva is recently identified as the bodhisattva of "Unloosing the Knots of Injustice".³⁵² The identification of the bodhisattva is feasible, in regarding the inscription of the bodhisattva in Beishan, the belief represented by the stele text in Shibisi and the purpose of statues in Fo'anqiao.

The niche no. 3 is similarly high but much narrower and deeper. In the niche an old man in a robe with broad sleeves sits in the western style attended by two figures on his either side (Fig. 4.55). His two disciples have official headdresses and join their hand showing their reverence to their master. On the rear wall it is written in red, Kong fu zi, which indicate the figure as Kongzi. They seem to have been changed recently and the original content of the niche is unclear and will be not discussed in detail here.

The cave no. 2 is the centre of the group 1, with an arched ceiling of about 1,80 m high, 2,38 m wide and 3,31 m deep (Fig. 4.53). At the rear wall a sitting Buddha is assisted by his two bodhisattvas. Backed by two overlapping flaming halo and aureole, the Buddha wears a high flower crown with a sitting Buddha on the top. Sitting on a lotus seat on a Sumeru pedestal decorated with a twined dragon, he performs the meditation hand gesture. The statue seem to have been changed after it was finished, since the crown and face of Buddha with small mouth appears by no means from the Song time. A comparable representation of Buddha Amitābha can be found in Shizhuanshan no. 7 (Fig. 3.25), Miaogaoshan no. 4 (Fig. 4.26) and Shimenshan no. 6 (Fig. 4.4). Both backed with halo and aureole the Bodhisattva Samanthabhadra and Mañjuśrī on lotus seats are carried by their animals, an elephant and a lion respectively, on Buddha's either side. The statues including Mañjuśrī and Samanthabhadra are also inscriptions of various donors to read. Most of the donors are from the family Gu and they usually had the statues carved for their late parents. Along the both sidewalls stand the ten manifestations of Guanyin on lotus pedestal, holding various attributes like rosary or lotus and backed by round halos. On the both ends of the east sidewall stand each a donor in smaller proportion. Same as the three main figures at the

³⁵² Li Xiaoqiang, "Jieyuanjie guannian" 237-256.

4.2. Fo'anqiao

rear wall the ten statues of Guanyin are accompanied with the names of the donors (most of them from Gu family), of which six inscriptions are remaining.

In Miaogaoshan it has been seen a cave of Vairocana triad with ten arhats (no. 3) and a cave if Amitabha triad with ten manifestations of Guanyin (no.4). The cave no. 2 in Fo'anqiao seems to be a mixture of the content of cave no. 3 and 4 at Miaogaoshan with the Vairocana triad and the ten manifestations of Guanyin. Although the Buddha is flanked by the attendants of Vairocana and he shows an appearance of Buddha Vairocana, the inscription by the donors tells that the Buddha is Amitābha curiously.³⁵³

Group 2 (niche no. 4 to no. 9)

Of the second group there are altogether six niches with the no. 7 in the centre, three niches above it and niche no. 4 and no. 9 on its either side (Fig. 4.57). The niche no. 7 has an almost rectangular groundplan of 1,77 m high, 2,55 m wide and 1,3 m deep. Outside the niche the surface was rough chiselled in shape of rocks without architectural decorations visible (Fig. 4.56).

Inside the niche three Buddhas are seated cross-legged on their own lotus seat above pedestals and backed with flaming halos and aureoles. Two disciples flank the three Buddhas and beside them are two statues of donors on propitious clouds. Outside the niche are guardians in niche no. 4 and 9, each holding a weapon. Since all the figure are totally repainted, the original form is not discernible any more.

On the ceiling of the niche no. 7 one reads the names of donors. On the left is *Jinshi* Yang Shao, and on the right the village leader Gu Guoshi.³⁵⁴ Since the niche no. 6 ws carved in 1140 (see below) the niche of the three Buddhas must have been carved rather earlier in the site.

³⁵³ Not Vairocana Triad as published in Liu Changjiu, et al., *Dazu shike yanjiu*, 565 and Hu Wenhe, *Sichuan Daojiao*, 103. About the main Buddha at the bottom of the aureole is the inscription by the donors to read: *The disciples of serving the good, the couple Gu Guanzhi aroused their minds and have donated the Buddha Amitābha in wishing that the late dead mother Ren obtained earlier ... remained and the parents both being safe and pleasant. Inscribed on the wall after holding a ritual on the day of Zhongyuan (15th day of the 7th month according to the lunar calendar) in the year of heavenly primary Jiazi of the Great Song Dynasty.* See Chongqing, *Dazu shike mingwenlu*, 320. The two bodhisattvas can also be the assistants of Buddha Śākyamuni, for example in Zizhong Beiyuan no. 93 and Qionglai Shisunshan no. 32. See Hu Wenhe, *Sichuan daojiao*, 24, 48.

³⁵⁴ Both of them had also donated a statue of Guanyin in the cave of no. 2. See Chongqing, *Dazu shike mingwenlu*, 320.

Three Buddhas as a subject is common in the rock carvings, either as Three Buddhas of the three worlds, or as those of the three bodies, as seen in many sites in the region. The identity of the three Buddhas here cannot be figured out since no reliable information such as inscription, attributes or assistants are known.³⁵⁵

Above the niche no. 7 are three small niches which might have been added later.

Niche No. 5 on the west is dedicated to the bodhisattva Ksitigarbha (Fig. 4.58). It is a simple niche with almost squarish elevation, wherein the bodhisattva sits on a lotus seat. While two attendants flank their master, the bodhisattva supports himself with his left hand and holds a pearl in the right hand from which a circling light irradiate upwards to the ceiling.³⁵⁶ In the middle is niche no. 6 of the Water-Moon Guanyin (Fig. 4.59). Similar to the one in Miaogaoshan the bodhisattva supports himself with the left arm on his lotus seat, while the right one rest on the bended right leg. On either side of the bodhisattva stand each two donors, all of them are heavily weathered and have been repainted. In the niche one reads the inscriptions carved symmetrically on either sidewall. On the right is the inscription of the son of Gu Changming for the dead father on the 21st day of 12th month in 1140, and on the left side is the inscription of the carver Wen Jie.³⁵⁷

As mentioned in Shizhuanshan and Miaogaoshan Bodhisattva Ksitigarbha and Water-Moon Guanyin were quite popular in the region during the Song time. Obviously the two statues were carved under such historical and religious background.

Next to the niche no. 6 is the small niche no. 8 of 85 cm high, 75 cm wide and 39 cm deep, in which an Buddhist deity is housed, the Bodhisattva of King Guiding Way (Fig. 4.60). The bodhisattva stands in the middle, wearing a sumptuous coronet and bejewelled garment, while the ribbons are flying with the wind. Holding a flag with flying ribbons in both hands, the haloed bodhisattva guides a middle-aged woman following him. Facing to the bodhisattva, the woman is clothed in long robe with symmetrical collars, with the hair highly bund with a towel and joins her both hands before the belly full of respect to the leading bodhisattva.³⁵⁸ On the left wall of the niche is the inscription of 1140 from a woman

³⁵⁵ For the study of the Three Buddha in Dazu, see Qin Dazhong, "Dazu shike zhong 'sanshenfo'," 491-496.

³⁵⁶ The present appearance has changed even since the recent investigation, such as the hand gesture of the bodhsattva and the appearance of the donors. See Liu Changjiu et al., *Dazu shike yanjiu*, 566.

³⁵⁷ See Chongqing, *Dazu shike mingwenlu*, 319.

³⁵⁸ In Dunhuang the special Bodhisattva was often painten together with the ten kings of hell and the Bodhisattva Ksitigarbhra. See the study of Matsumoto Eiichi, "Jizō juōzu to intro bosatsu," 265-270.

telling the name of the deity as Bodhisattva of King Guiding Way and praying safty and happiness.³⁵⁹

The bodhisattva of guiding the souls of the dead is not seen in any Buddhist texts. Iconographically, the bodhisattva is related with the belief of the pure land that the souls of the dead will be led to the west paradise under his guidance. Most of the extant examples of the bodhisattva are reserved in Dunhuang, either on silk banner or as paper work. From the style and form of the reserved examples it is known that the image of the bodhisattva of guiding way has been prevalent in Dunhuang as early as in the 8th century.³⁶⁰ In Sichuan the bodhisattva is only found in the rock carvings in Dazu. Besides Fo'anqiao he was also carved at Guanyinpo near Beishan, where he was also together with the bodhisattva Ksitigarbha and statues of donors in the Song time.³⁶¹ It is notable that the bodhisattva of guiding way here resembles those in Dunhuang strongly concerning the gesture and the style (Fig. 4.61).

Group 3 (cave no. 12 and niche no. 13)

Cave No. 12 is a cave with rectangular groundplan of 3,22 m high, 3,83 m wide and 4,68 m deep. At the rear wall the haloed three teachers throne on their seats receiving their audience (Fig. 4.62). The three were fashioned in one row in same height and appear to be on an equal footing at the first glance. In the middle sits Buddha with halo and aureole decorated with fire pattern behind him (Fig. 4.65, middle). The Buddha joins his hands before the chest and this monk's robe falls over the lotus seat. With interlocked legs he sits on a lotus seat consisting of three layers of petals. Under the seat is a Sumeru basis decored with a twined dragon in the middle, as seen in Shizhuanshan (no. 7). Until the lower part of the basis the statue with the seat has been repainted and renewed.

Near the left shoulder of the Buddha is the inscription: the disciples of serving Buddha Gu Jizhi had aroused his mind and donated one statue of Buddha Vairocana.³⁶² The appellation

³⁵⁹ See Chongqing, *Dazu shike mingwenlu*, 321.

³⁶⁰ See Sha Wutian, "Dunhuang yinlu pusa xiang." The bodhisattva appeared also in the pantheon of shuilu in the later world, as seen in the wall painting of Bilusi from Ming time in the province of Hebei. See Li Xinmiao, "Bilusi bihua yinlu pusa yu shuiluhua de guanxi."

³⁶¹ The both both bodhisattvas are heavily weathered, but the inscription tells definitely the names and date (1154). See Liu Changjiu et al., *Dazu shike yanjiu*, 451, and Chongqing, *Dazu shike mingwenlu*, 35. Another statue of the bodhisattva of guiding way in Dazu is found outside the Duobao Pagoda in Beishan although due to no inscriptions the identity is not confirmed. See Chen Mingguang, "Dazu Duobaota," 4,6.

³⁶² For the entire inscription in Fo'anqiao see Chongqing, *Dazu shike mingwenlu*, 322.

seems not consistent with the appearance of the Buddha, since Buddha Vairocana has normally flower crown and special hand gesture as seen in the former two sites. The present strange hand gesture might have been made by the last reparation and repainting. Also the head appears proportionally large to the body and resemble the sculptures of the Qing time, not those from the Song time such as those in Shizhuanshan or Miaogaoshan.

On Buddha's right sits Laozi with a halo behind the head and appears as an old man (Fig. 4.65, left). Wearing a round headdress he has his hair bound and three bundles of moustache on his face. Also cross-legged he sits on a seat while holding both hands before the him like holding a fan (now missing), while his ample robe with broad sleeves falls covering the seat. Like in Miaogaoshan the Laozi here has no the Daoist typical furniture *shi*. His basis appears similar to the one of Buddha with a running animal (a deer or a horse?) turning its head back with a twig in its mouth.

Since located in the Buddhist setting the statue of Laozi in the last two site were not made according to the Daoist rule, and the one in Fo'anqiao has lost almost all the iconographical characters of Laozi. The Daoist attributes such as headdress, *shi* or fan are all missing, which make it difficult to judge the statue as Laozi from the image only. On the seat one reads an inscription that a disciple of "serving the True", *fengzhen*, donated this statue.³⁶³ Parallel to the inscription of Buddha, disciple of "serving the Buddha", *fengfo*, the True refers to the Immortals in Daoism.³⁶⁴ The statue fashioned by the disciple serving the True is the main cult figure of Daoism. In Daoism beside Laozi is the "Premondial Heavenly Worthy", *yuanshi tianzun*, -- the counterpart of Buddha Vairocana in Daoism, is a important cult figure which was often made since the Sui time in the region. Therefore the possibility of the statue as *yuanshi tianzun* cannot be excluded, especially since the Buddha was identified as Vairocana by the inscription. However, since the statue has been heavily renewed and repainted it cannot be discerned in detail either iconographically or stylistically.

On Buddha's left is Kongzi (Fig. 4.65, right), who appears smaller than the other two. With only halo behind the head like Laozi, Kongzi was fashioned in a similar manner of Laozi with also three bundles of moustache. He sits also cross-legged on a seat, clothed in an ample robe and wearing a crown. Only his moustaches are in black colour showing his younger age.

³⁶³ A niche of Laozi accompanied with Lingbao tianzun and bodhisattva of Sichuan was carved by the same carver Wen Jie 19 years later in Shifosi where Laozi even holds a pagoda in his hand as attribute. See Deng Zhijin, "Xinfaxian songdai," 142.

³⁶⁴ In Buddhism *zhenren* refers also to arhats.

Here the headdress of Kongzi differs from the ones in the last two sites. Instead of a soft towel of a teacher or a majestic crown of an emperor he wears an official headdress, *chaotianguan*, which was not clearly fashioned and possibly renewed in the later time. His hand gesture resembles also that of Laozi with the left one on the legs and the right held higher slightly. Only he has a book in the right hand as his attribute. Also his robe hangs over the seat and before the lower hem a jade ring is hung over the seat on the basis which was seemingly decorated with a lion playing with a ball in the centre.

The identity of the statue is actually not definite. His seat bears the heavily weathered inscription that tells a person donated the statue in 1172, of which the name of Kongzi cannot be totally recognized.³⁶⁵ Judging from the repainted statue and the other two statues of Buddhism and Daoism, it is mostly possible that the statue has been made as Kongzi. Also it is notable that the Kongzi here does not fall into any present category of fashioning, rather, he was made after the manner of Laozi. Such result might be caused by the renewing which drastically changed the original status of the figure, and thus a detailed analysis of the statue cannot be made further.

Together with the three teachers are the arhats. It seems as if this cave was a mixture from the content of the cave no. 2 and that of the cave no. 3 in Miaogoshan. Such situation has been seen in the cave no. 2 of the Vairocana triad and the ten guanyins where the deities seen in Miaogaoshan were also arbitrarily rearranged and mixed. The statue making in this site is characterized by such “free” combination of subjects, which was a characteristic seen in the Buddhist practice of common people. At both sidewalls there are each ten arhats symmetrically arranged with various pose and gestures in two layers (Fig. 4.63 and Fig. 4.64), who were all ugly renewed and repainted. Originally they could have been the sixteen arhats with eight ones on the both sidewalls. Similar to the cave no. 2 the arhats were donated by a group of believers, each for one. All of them are carved with inscriptions by the donors, and now only 13 are legible (Fig. 4.66). They are called as “Worthies”, *zunzhe*, the honourable appellation of arhats. Again, most of donors have the family name *Gu* with the dating in the 3rd month of 1172.

On the sidewall besides the arhats there are still several strange figures. Such as at the left side of Kongzi a figure with the appearance of an official was made, while the one beside

³⁶⁵ Chongqing, *Dazu shike mingwenlu*, 322-323.

Laozi appears just as an arhat. By the entrance on either upper layer sits a monk with interlocked legs on an equipment resembling the Daoist furniture *shi*. (Fig. 4.63). In the lower layer stand each two donors with their names. The two on the left wall are the “master monk of exhorting believers to give alms”, *Sidan* and the village leader *Gu Jizhi*; on the right wall is the one called, “the Saint of Ten Virtues”. On the right lower corner of the main wall one reads the inscription of the carver *Wen Mengzhou*. Since those figures were all badly changed they cannot be studied here.

Beside the cave is still a niche no. 13 of 1,57 m high and 2,62 m wide. In the niche are two sitting Heavenly Kings in armor, with heads and bodies heavily weathered and repainted. While the left one lifts his one leg high, the right one hold a sword in the hand (Fig. 4.67). At the both corners stand the statues of donors. The left one is a man with an appearance of an official with a hat, clothed in court garment, wearing ostentious decorations on his waist. His pendant seems to be his wife in attire with symmetrical collars. The other figures on the sidewalls and at the corner of the niche are all heavily weathered and repainted.

4.2.3. Evaluation

Different from in Shizhuanshan or Miaogaoshan the statues in Fo'anqiao were not donated by one person or family but donated by many persons from a village. On the basis of those short inscriptions many details of the donors could be revealed to certain extend.

Most Of the donors have the family name of “Gu”, altogether twelve persons, and some of them donated more than one statue. Excerpt for those “Gu” there are still about ten other persons. The persons with the name “Gu” seem to come from three families, four persons with the end word “Zhi”, and two persons with “Shi”, and two persons with the middle word “Yan”. Those who have common family name and one word in common are most likely brothers. Under the leadership of the village head of the group, Gu Guoshi, the most influential one here, the villagers had the statues made and have their names inscribed. Obviously Gu Guoshi as village head is financially incomparable with the rich squire Yan Xun in Shizhuanshan or high ranked official Feng Ji in Miaogaoshan. But above mentioned both Yan and Feng are not local persons, and the villagers with their leader Gu were definitely local common people. The jointly donated statues of the three masters in Fo'anqiao show the localization of the three teachings in the area.

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In addition the names of carvers Wen Jie and Wen Mengzhou appeared in the inscriptions with a temporal distance of at least thirty years. It is known, Wen Jie was the fourth generation of the carver family Wen, and the same generation as Wen Zhongzhang in Miaogaoshan, but from not one family.³⁶⁶ It is discussed in the last part that the fourth generation of the carver family Wen was artistically mature and dexterous, but it is pity that the statues in Fo'anqiao are not comparable with those in Miaogaoshan any more since they all have been repainted.

The statues were made chronologically. It took more than thirty years by many donors to make those statues. Apparently all the statues are not planned together, but carved one after another. That is similar to the situation as seen in many Buddhist caves in north China, where Buddha niches were added inside or outside the caves. Therefore the statues cannot be studied as a whole, and there is definitely no general programme for them.

The statues and inscriptions in Fo'anqiao show a noticeable belief of Pure Land, the Buddha Amitābha and the ten Holy Guanyin in the cave no. 2 where and bodhisattva of King Leading Way in the niche no. 8 the are representations of the belief in the Pure Land. Furthermore the devotion for the parents in the inscriptions clarified the function of the statues in the site. Since the niches and caves here were finished shortly after those in Shizhuanshan and Miaogaoshan were made, it is possible that the villagers were under the influence and followed activities related with the Pura Land.

In the inscription of cave no. 2 it is said that the couple Gu Guanzhi had the statues carved for the sake of their past mother and they held a feast on the 15th day of the 7th month according the Chinese lunar calendar in 1144. The 15th day of the 7th month is the traditional Chinese Festival of Ghost originated from the Buddhist Festival of Ullambana. On the day people hold ceremonies for the later parents and relatives. The couple Gu Guanzhi held a ceremony saving transcendently the late parents and worshipping the Buddhist deities, though without mentioning what a ceremony it was. Unquestionably, the deities of other niches and caves including those of the three teachings would be also worshipped during the ritual.

Compared with the above-discussed two sites of Shizhuanshan and Miaogaoshan, the statues of Fo'anqiao are accompanied with many inscriptions from numerous donors and

³⁶⁶ Hu Wenhe, "Dazu shizhuanshan" 77. Zhang Hua, "Dazu songdai," 41-46.

were finished within a relatively long time. Seemingly they were finished by the manner of the organisation of a group of lay Buddhists.³⁶⁷ Correspondingly, the statues in Fo'anqiao show a different appearance in comparison with those in the above two sites concerning the belief and iconography.³⁶⁸ It is noticeable that there are some iconographical problems which can not be satisfactorily explained in the statues of Fo'anqiao. The combination of statues in the cave no. 2, Amitahba Buddha, bodhisattva of Mañjuśrī and Samanthabhadra and the ten holy Guanyins, and also the three masters of the three teachings and the arhats in the cave no. 12, seem to be a rearrangement of the statues in the three caves in Miaogaoshan. Regardless of the repainting and repairing in the later time the original statues here were not made strictly in accordance with the traditional Buddhist iconography, which are the characteristics of Buddhism of common people. Different from those of land squire or official literati in Shizhuanshan and Miaogaoshan the donors here were mostly peasants, and they understand Buddhism as an instrument to gain merits or pray fortune for themselves or their late relatives, for which they were not necessarily clear about the relation between the Buddhist deities. That each donor donated one statue and had their names and prayers carved together with the statues shows a quite utilitarian characteristic. By donating the statues of Buddhist deities common people care more about the fulfilment of their prayers and the function of worship rather than the correctness of iconography.

The manner of the unification of the three teachers differs from those in the last two sites. Buddha here is not Śākyamuni, but Buddha Vairocana, the Dhama body of Buddha and the dominator of the world of flower garland.³⁶⁹ The most representation of the three teachers are Buddha Śākyamuni with Kongzi and Laozi, the three historical figures. But here the appearance of the Buddha here is not like the normal representation of Vairocana with a flower crown. Again similar as the situation in the cave no. 2 the “mistakes” here betray the discrepancy and divergence from standard.

It is also extraordinary that the three masters are all without assistants. In Shizhuanshan each master has over ten disciples and in Miaogaoshan each is accompanied by two, but in Fo'anqiao no attendants at all. Notably it is the arhats who coexist together with the three

³⁶⁷ Zhang Hua, "Dazu songdai shike juanjiang," 41-46.

³⁶⁸ Hou Chong, "Songdai de xinyangxing fojiao jiqi," 197-212.

³⁶⁹ There is no inscription clarifying the identity of the Buddha in the cave no. 2 in Miaogaoshan, but the arrangement of the three Buddhas and iconographical attributes the Buddha with Kongzi and Laozi must be Śākyamuni.

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masters. Interestingly the cave no. 12 reminds the cave no. 3 in Miaogaoshan but the two masters instead of the two bodhisattvas. The form and combination of the three teachers keep variable, as seen here in the last three sites. Guanyin, arhats or the three masters were changeable like modules from a repertoire, and can be combined after different demands. Since Fo'anqiao together with Shizhuanshan and Miaogaoshan were all carved by the carver family Wen, concerning the subjects and combination of the deities there are many in common.

The three masters were made in the year of 1172 and were possibly donated by the generation of "Shi" of the Gu Family, such as Gu Wenshi, Gu Guoshi etc. Compared with Shizhuanshan and Miaogaoshan the relation and status of the three masters there are also slight changes. Here the three master are seated in a row at the rear wall of the cave in the same height and size. Though they seem to be equivalent, Buddha still took the central place and Kongzi and Laozi have the assisting roles. Again, the "coexistence" of the three teachings happened within the Buddhist cave, and Kongzi and Laozi came closer to Buddha in comparison with those in Miaogaoshan. It is also notable that the attendants of the three masters are all dropped and solely the three masters are arrayed in a row, which makes almost a triad of the three teachings and can be often seen in the representation of the three teachers in the later time. For such the representation of the three teachers in Fo'anqiao are the earliest known one.

Doubtlessly Buddhism was still dominating in the site since all other statues were Buddhist deities with only one exception of the cave. Compared with those in the last two sites, although the three masters in Fo'anqiao did not come into being under certain ritual, the purposes of the donors both Buddhist and Daoist were practical, either for the saving of the late parents, or the goodness of children, or even the healing of illness. That unification of the statues of the three teaching was realized under the condition that the activities of the three teachings exist at the same time. The common people seemed not to be bothered by the coexistence and if they all can help the late relatives saved from suffering and bring fortune to the living. Such characteristic is almost the same to the unified three teachings in the Ming and Qing time.

4.3. Shibisi

4.3.1. Overview

The carvings in Shibisi are located 22 kilometers north from the county town of Dazu (Fig. 1.1). Facing west, the cliff sculptures were carved on a huge block of about 30 meter long on top of a hill (Fig. 4.68). There are four niches carved on the block, of which only two long ones can be ascribed to the Song Dynasty and will be named as upper and lower niche here. The upper one is the assemblance of the three teachers with the Jade Emperor; the lower appears to be a scene of hell.

The original setting in the Song time is not clear. It might have been a hall built over the rock carvings, and it is quite different from the situation in the above-mentioned sites. Besides the cliff sculptures a dozen of broken freestanding statues are also found in situ, and they bear inscriptions indicating that the once temple was founded during the time of the Northern Song Dynasty.³⁷⁰ The temple together with the freestanding statues were mostly destroyed during the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) and only fragmentary pieces left together with the cliff carvings. The temple has not been archaeologically researched and the figures have been repainted and re-fashioned in the history, and it is difficult to retrieve the original status of the figures.

In addition to the carvings a historical stele of 1210 (Fig. 4.76) was found there. It was carved in 1210 as a notice text of the rite *shuilu*, which was once carried out there. It is a valuable historical text inscribed by the local people who directly connected the ritual with the statues of the three teachings. Compared with those statues of three teachings in other sites Shibisi shows a further development of the unified beliefs of the three teachings. In the stele it is narrated definitely that the *shuilu* rite was held by many families, and the inner altar was the place of the Hall of the Three Teachings. Shibisi is the only case in which the statues of the three teachings can be directly related with *shuilu* rite in Sichuan.

4.3.2. Niches

Upper niche:

³⁷⁰ One inscription of 1013 was found on the fragmentary statue of Vaisramana in situ. It shows that in that year certain ritual was held in the place. See Chongqing, *Dazu shike mingwenlu*, 315.

4.3. Shibisi

The niche is one about 1,45 m high, 3,64 m wide and 0,66 m deep. The niche of the three teachers without the Jade Emperor measures 2,30 m wide with the figures of about 1,32 m high (Fig. 4.69).

The figures have been repainted and changed. The niche consists actually of two parts: one part is the three teachers; the other is an addition of the Jade Emperor in the same size. Seemingly the niche has been amended after the three teachers were sculpted. All the three teachers are seated on similar thrones in the shape of a hour-glass, their clothes fall on the upper part of the seats and the middle and lower parts are decorated with floral pattern. The three masters are flanked by assisting figures in smaller size on their either sides of the throne.

In the middle thrones the Buddha with the hand gesture of preaching dharma (Fig. 4.70). The whole body looks now brown due to the oxidisation of the painted colours. He is backed with the aureole in the shape of heart originally but it was repainted by a round colourful one. Above the Buddha on the ceiling two stripes of light are emitted from the aureole and circle on the ceiling with small standing figure in the formed circles, as seen in the cave no. 4 at Miaogaoshan. The both attendants are repainted with mustache and holding their hands high.

On the right of Buddha sits Laozi holding a fan in the right hand before his chest (Fig. 4.71). His head appears strange and must have been newly added. He has a round aureole behind him and a squarish baldachin embedded on the ceiling. While the attendant on his left is broken, the assisting figure on his right wears Daoist robe with a hat and holds a tablet. Next to him stands a male figure (probably the donor) holding both hands showing reverence.

The statue of Konzi seems less changed in contrast to the other two figures, even though his both hands with attributes were destroyed (Fig. 4.72). Originally he might hold a tablet in both hands. In the appearance of an emperor he wears a regal crown with both ribbons falling down. Notable is the back of his throne with two dragonheads stretching out in the middle. The original shape of squarish back with gitters is covered under a repainted round aureole. His attendants wear ample robes and hold tablets in both hands with the left one pushed into the niche of the Jade Emperor.

Since the light irradiated from Buddha, the dragonhead of the chair and the attending figure of Kongzi are all not broken by the the niche of Jade Emperor (Fig. 4.73), the niche have been added might be an addition before the niche of the three teachers had been finished. Receiving his audience he is seated regally in monarch dress with amply sleeves with both hand holding a jade tablet. Above him is a baldachin in the shape of a flower, and on his either side the attendants in court clothes hold great fans by their ruler. Next to the left attendant stands the wife of the donor with great respect.

The statues at Shibisi continued the manner at Fo'anqiao where the three teacher arrayed in a row and Laozi on Buddha's right and Kongzi on the left. However, attendants were added here and most notably the Jade Emperor was also attached. The change of the combination of subjects shows the diversity by making the statues by the common believers. In contrast to the scene of hell in the lower niche the four figures of the three teachings seem to resemble the deities in the paradise.

Lower niche:

The niche below is longer than the upper one. It is so badly damaged and all the figures are almost headless and the content is not completely clear (Fig. 4.74).

In the niche there are generally two main figures in two groups. In one group sit two figures almost side by side, and above them there are two sitting figures and flying blessed beings. One has vacant left sleeve and is likely the local saint Liu Benzun; the other is backed by a chair with dragon head on either side. Besides the revering figures around them on the right of the presumable Liu drives on a twined dragon and looks like a Daoist immortal. On either outer side stand donors facing to the two revering figures.

The other group is rather rough carved with one figure left unfinished. There are two main figures sitting on their thrones assisted by their attendants or donors. Though their heads have been destroyed, the traces of the long sticks on their hats are still remaining, which were worn by the court officials especially in the Song time. Only one figure of donor remains almost intact, who holds offerings in both hand and bents before the figure. At foot of the seat of another main figure a small figure with exposed belly is represented, which might be seen in the scene of hell.

4.3. Shibisi

Though the content is heavily damaged, it still can be seen that the figures are related with scenes of hell, which are consistent with the assembled three teachers in the niche above and also coherent with the content on the *shuilu* stele.³⁷¹

Niche of bodhisattva on a buffalo

An unnumbered niche in Shibisi is hosted by a bodhisattva on a buffalo (Fig. 4.75). The niche is quite small in comparison to the other numbered two and carved at the right lower corner of the main representations. Clad in a robe with broad sleeves, the bodhisattva wearing a crown with a Buddha figure in the centre is sitting on a lotus seat carried by a buffalo in the centre of the niche. He holds his hands before his chest and seems to either hold an object in hands or make certain hand gesture. Flanking the bodhisattva stand two attendants in monk's robe with the one on the left holding a long stick and the right joining his hands before the chest. The buffalo, which carries his master, looks similar to the one in Fo'anqiao no. 1. Different from Fo'anqiao the buffalo faces the audience directly and on his either side are each four calves which are either walking or resting or turning the head or sucking milk actively. As seen in Fo'anqiao, the bodhisattva might be the "Bodhisattva of Loosing Knots of Injustice". It was somewhat related to the "true words of solving the knots of hatred of the many beings" in the text related to *shuilu* on a stele of 1210 found in situ.

4.3.3. Evaluation

The stele of *shuilu*

The stele (Fig. 4.76) was found originally near the niches.³⁷² On one side is an inscription from the Qing time (1770) on the other side is the text of 1210, as the *shuilu* rite was carried out there.³⁷³ The inscription reveals plenty of information about the rite in the place during the 13th century and thus is a valuable historical material.

In fact the text is called *bangwen*, a notice text of the rite. By the rite a text will be pasted outside the entrance of the hall after the inner altar is ready prepared. The names in the

³⁷¹ Deng Zhijin, "Xin faxian songke," 146.

³⁷² For the inscription and photo see Chongqing, *Dazu shike mingwenlu*, 329-332.

³⁷³ Chongqing, *Dazu shike mingwenlu*, 335-336.

text are the donors who are going to take part in the rite in the inner altar. Besides, the text includes detailed information about the rite, such as the Buddhist sutras to be read aloud, the details of the rite, rite for the “flaming mouth”, days of the rite and other activities like freeing the captured animals etc. Those who are not listed in the text may not enter the inner altar. The text of notice would be normally peeled down at the day when the rite is finished and will be burnt in the activity of sending the saints.³⁷⁴

The text of Shibisi is quite similar to those model texts regarding the content and structure of the rite. The function of the notice is that it is the text of dedication in the rite, or the invitation letter to all the deities and ghosts to come to the inner altar of the rite. Such a text records the rough information about the rite which address both to the people of the human world and the spirits in the universe (water or land). Instead of written on paper as usually in Shibisi the text was carved on a stele, thus it has been kept to today. It is earliest and single known text of notice from the rite *shuilu*.³⁷⁵

In the beginning of the text the address and names of the leading figures, the brothers of Liang Yuanqing and Liang Yuanchang, together with other donors in the rite are stated. Then it is the cause and reason of the rite. It seems that they were harassed by the spirit of a late relative, *Zhangshi qiniang*, “the 7th daughter of family Zhang”. They hoped by means of holding the rite to appease the spirit of the death and send them to be reborn in the Pure Land. Most likely *Zhangshi qiniang* was a relative of the family Liang. The rite was held by many families including many other members from the family Liang. The concrete activities in the rite were proceeding of the *shuilu* rite with the help of monks in the “Hall of the Three Teachings”. It is also mentioned that the text was carved on stone stele, since it differs from the normal practice of writing it on paper. Probably by such means they might hope to appease the spirit of the death permanently. It was also said that the rite *shuilu* was carried out “nearby the rock carvings”, which might refer to the place with the statues of the three masters where seems to have functioned as the inner altar of the rite. Also many Daoist deities were invited and prayed, which shows the strong influence of the local Daoism. In the latter part of the text five mantras and one dharani were chanted with the wish to send the spirits to be reborn in the Pure Land. They are: 1. Mantra of Solving the Vows of the Ghosts; 2. Mantra of Rebirth in the Pure Land; 3. Mantra of Dismissing the

³⁷⁴ In the ritual texts compiled by Yirun several such texts of notice are included. About the text of notice in the rite *shuilu* see Yirun et al., *Shuilu yigui*, 34-65.

³⁷⁵ For the punctuated text in Chinese and English translation see appendix I.

4.3. Shibisi

Ghosts and Deities; 4. Mantra of Rebirth in the Heavenly Hall (Paradise); 5. Mantra of Solving Hundred of Grown Hatred and Enmity; Dharani of Generally Confession of Karma. As important components in the *shuilu* ritual the chanted spell words, mantra and dharani today come mostly from *Sutra of Infallible Lasso's Mantra and Supernatural Transformations*,³⁷⁶ what however differs from those found in text of Shibisi. Notably the spell words from Shibisi are found in the historical text from Yunnan, which testified that the preserved documents from Yunnan reflects the history of Sichuan in the Song time.³⁷⁷ In the end is names of the donors and time of the rite, and notably the ritual of throwing a text reminds a Daoist rite, *tonglongyi*.³⁷⁸

As claimed by themselves the leaders of the site are local peasants who engaged themselves in farming to make a living. The rite was definitely carried out under the guidance of Buddhist monks, but the text reveals many influence from Daoism regarding the wording, names of deities and certain rituals. Different from the sites mentioned above here in Shibishi a trend of combination of Buddhism and Daoism was shown in the practice.

The original situation of the statues and icons is much more complicated than today, which might have been a mixture of rock carvings and the freestanding sculptures, but after the destruction and repainting and recarving the original status can not be retrieved any longer, and a discussion of the original programme is thus impossible. Nevertheless the remaining representation of the three masters and the representation of the hell is consistent with the contents and purposes of the *shuilu* rite.

Although in Shibisi there are not many reliable historical materials remaining, it is clear according to the stele that the rock carvings were the “Hall of Three Teachings” and it was once used as the sanctuary of the rite *shuilu*. The two niches seem to resemble the heaven and hell, as said by Yan Xun that the heaven and hell is only as far as one idea.³⁷⁹

Although there is no inscription for the statues, in viewing of the *shuilu* by many families it seems feasible that the statues were made by the local villagers. Concerning the relation of the three teachings here it is similar to the situation in Fo'anqiao that the three masters

³⁷⁶ *Bukong juansuo shenbian zhenyan jing*, T., vol., 20, no. 1092, 227.

³⁷⁷ Zujue et al., *Chongguang shuilu fashi wuzhe dazhai yiwen*.

³⁷⁸ The practice of throwing a written text from a mountain for the praying of gods has a rather long history. The new archaeological research shows that at latest in the Qin time (221-206 BCE) such ritual was practised. See Liu Zhaorui, “qin daobing yujian.”

³⁷⁹ Chongqing, *Dazu shike mingwenlu*, 327.

were arrayed in a row with Buddha in the centre. But here the three masters associated with attendants.

The most notable thing is that the later addition of the Jade Emperor, who did not completely change the status of juxtaposition of the three teachers. The influence of Daoism was quite strong, which was shown in both in the stele and the additional statue of the Jade Emperor.³⁸⁰ The Jade Emperor is also seen in Shimenshan niche no. 2 (Fig. 4.77). The strong Daoist influence might come from the local Daoist temple. For instance there is a site with Daoist rock carvings called Shuchengyan nearby, which testified the activities of Daoism in the area in the Song time.³⁸¹

Like in Shizhuanshan here the statues of the three teachers are related with the rite *shuilu*. In Shizhuanshan the statues come from *shuilu*, while in Shibisi the statues was used for the rite, which must have been prevalent in Song time. Although the statues of three teachings in Shibisi are small in scale and repainted, the stele and statues reflect the religious background in the Song time, which gives them a special historical value different from other sites.

4.4. Daboruodong

4.4.1. Overview

Daboruodong, the Cave of Great Prajñā, is located 56 kilometers southeast from the county town in Anyue county, on the top of a hill in the town Shiyang. Together with a larger and more splendid cave, Huanyandong, which gives the name to the site, there are altogether about 159 statues found in the site (Fig. 4.78). In front of the caves a Buddhist temple has once stand, but now it is not extant. Though the two caves are close to each other with only 15 meter distance, they are different concerning of scale, content, form and dating. While the inscription for the Daboruodong by a local official confirms the *terminus ante quam* by 1240, the date of Huayandong cannot be testified by any historical materials. Compared with the other caves with the similar style and iconography in the area, it is believed that

³⁸⁰ In Dazu there are altogether five sites with the statues of the Jade Emperor, all from the Southern Song time, Nanshan no. 5, Shuchengyan no. 5, Shimenshan no. 2, Yuhuangmiao and Shibisi here. For the study of the Jade Emperor carved in the region in the Southern Song, see Li Xiaoqiang, "Qianxi dazu nansong," 549-557.

³⁸¹ For the Daoist carvings in Shuchengyan, see Liu Changjiu et al., *Dazu shike yanjiu*, 560-564.

the Huayandong was opened in the late Five Dynasties or earlier Northern Song (960-1127).³⁸²

The Cave Huayandong is 6,2 m high, 10,1 m wide and 11,3 m deep and rectangular groundplan. The Vairocana Triad throne regally at the rear wall, and the bodhisattvas of the Ten Places were arrayed along the sidewalls symmetrically with five ones at either wall. The cave represents the pantheon depicted in the Flower Garland Sutra, and the excellent artistic quality and status of reservation makes it the crown of the rock carvings in Anyue County. Daboruodong is a small cave with a similar rectangular groundplan as Huayandong, but it is richer in content. Together with various and numerous Buddhist deities Laozi and Kongzi are included beside the dominant Buddha Śākyamuni on the rear wall. The cave was carved later than Huayandong and probably under different Buddhist context. Therefore the two should not be together regarded and studied and in this paper only the cave Daboruodong will be examined in detail.

Although there are many steles and inscriptions found inside the cave, the original inscription of the both caves by donor or carver is not delivered. The title is of great importance, for it combines a historical local figure with the cave. According to the inscription the cave has been changed and many sculptures were added in the Ming time (1586), especially those on the both sidewalls. The statues seen today seem to be mostly carved in the Ming Dynasty, although in a cave carved in the Southern Song Dynasty.

4.4.2. The Cave

The cave has almost a squarish groundplan of 4,2 m high, 4,2 m wide and 4,8 m deep. Outside the cave a wood frontal structure is built and through its steps one can reach to the cave (Fig. 4.79). On the even ceiling an extraordinary symbol of character is carved in a circle (Fig. 4.85). On the lintel are four large inscribed characters: *Da Bo Ruo Dong*, Great Cave of Prajñā (60 cm diameter), in the Year of Genzi of Era Jaixi (1240), written by Zhao Yin with another name Cunshu.

The figures in the cave are symmetrically arranged. At rear wall in the centre dominates the massive Buddha, who is seated on a lotus seat with interlocked legs and performing the

³⁸² Li Guanzhi, "Anyue huayandong," 42; Liu Changjiu, *Anyue shiku*, 8.

pensive hand gesture (Fig. 4.80). The modelling of the Buddha appears somewhat misproportioned, for his head with usnisha and tuft hair is fashioned proportionally much bigger than his body while the sense organs like eyes and mouth etc, are all relatively concentrated and smaller. His body is also executed in a simplified way with the robe and pleats briefly represented. His both legs are also proportionally smaller and almost invisible with only three strips in the middle. His halo and aureole are so small and separated from each other that they are almost not noticeable. The whole 2,3 meters high statue renders a squarish, dominant but bulky impression, which is overwhelming over all other figures in the cave. Stilistically this Buddha statue appears quite different from those of the Song time, but comes close to those from the Ming and Qing time.

The ten great disciples of Buddha behind him on the rear wall are arranged symmetrically into three layers from ceiling to the ground. On the higher layer close to Buddha stand on either side five disciples with jointed hands before the chest (with two in the middle layer). On either outside of the higher layer are two small seated figures in pensive pose, of which the one on Buddha's left seems hold something in his hand (now broken).

In the middle layer two small figures flank the main Buddha, namely Kongzi (Fig. 4.83) and Laozi (Fig. 4.84). Both of them are seated with interlocked legs on simple seats with clothes hanging over. Their faces are repainted and weathered, whereby Laozi on Buddha's right appears as an old man. In a smiling and pensive appearance he has his hair banded up and has long moustache divided into three parts. Housed in a small niche he has no halo or assistant, and his hands are broken and too weathered to recognize. The one on the left is Kongzi, who is fashioned in a similar way as Laozi. Only his hair is banded up with a soft towel and two ribbon fall onto the shoulder, which resembles the hair of Kongzi in Shizhuanshan (see Fig. 3.20). He puts the right hand before the chest with left resting on the leg.

In the lower layer behind Buddha is another small Buddha niche on the right, in which a Buddha figure sits in the pensive pose. On the left under the niche of Kongzi is a quite small round niche, in which a small Water-Moon Guanyin sits in his typical relaxing pose.

Both sidewalls are fulfilled with blessed worthies. Symmetrically arranged, the deities as on the rear wall are also divided into three layers with clouds pattern.

On the right wall (Fig. 4.81) a bodhisattva sitting on a lotus seat in pensive pose with his right leg down on a cloud takes the leading place of the above two layers. Though dressed with bejewelled crown and garments his bulky body and round face is akin to that of the main Buddha. Behind him on the upper layer are five standing boys who are separated by flame-like floral patterns from the ground. Wearing only skirts, they are all bare head and footed, with upper body exposed and decorated with flying ribbons. Only their hand gestures differentiate them: from inside outwards the first seems to hold certain object with both hands before the chest; the second joins both hands piously before him; the third grasps the ribbons before him; the fourth again joins his two hands and the fifth holds the left arm before the chest and put the right on his waist.

In the middle layer are the heavenly deities. With one on the upper layer they are twelve on each sidewall. The first one on the upper layer has three heads and six arms. Wearing a crown he holds various weapons such as swords etc. in his hands. His colleague on the middle layer from inside outwards: the first appears as an official wearing head dress and lang robe with amply sleeves with two hands joint before the chest; the second looks like a general in armor and holding a sword in his right hand; the next is Vaisravana, the Heavenly king of the North, with a pagoda in his left hand, the next three are officials with different head dresses, clothes, hand gestures and attributes; the one next to them has again three heads and six arms with two highly held with sun and moon (asura); the next two deities look like almost twin officials in squarish coronet and lang robe with both hands highly held before the chest; the next one wears the similar clothe and has the same hand gesture, albeit with a crown which indicate him as an emperor; the last one appears as a guardian with his left hand highly holding certain implement.

In the lower layer stands the guardian deity Veda. Wearing in armor with flying ribbons the deity holds a sword (destroyed) down to the earth and tilts his head toward the Buddha with a pensive expression. Behind him are nine arhats. They are all dressed in monastic robe and mostly sitting on seats covered with clothes. From inside outwards: the first with head covered sits with crossed legs in meditation (Bodhidharma); the second holds something in the left arm and put the right leg down; the third is similar to the first but with hand on knees; the fourth sit in a relaxed pose of meditation; the fifth is in the pose of fighting with the animal at his left foot; the sixth and seventh share a table between them and seemingly playing games; the eighth has a beard and is meditating in pensive pose; the

ninth one is an old monk with long eyebrows, putting his right leg down and holds a stick in his right hand.

The left sidewall (Fig. 4.82) is strictly arranged in symmetry to the right. A same-sized bodhisattva as the pendant to the right one takes the leading place of the first and second layer. Also dressed in the bejewelled coronet and garments in the pensive pose he steps his left leg on the lotus pedestal. Behind him are again one array of five boys in similar dress on the higher layer and twelve deities in the middle layer (also with a single one on the higher layer).

The ten boys are not seen in the canonical Buddhist texts. Boys, *tongzi*, in Buddhism refer to those who serve and follow the Buddhas, bodhisattvas or various deities, such as the eight boys of Mañjuśrī or Acala King of Wisdom. Also in sutras boys appear as the friendly followers of Buddha or bodhisattva.³⁸³ In Sichuan the boys do not appear in group generally, only in Shizhuanshan niche no. 5 there are two boys before the niche of the bodhisattva Mañjuśrī and Samanthabhadra.

While the five boys are almost same as their counterparts, the twelve deities are slightly different. The single one on the higher layer looks like an official with both hands joint before him. The first one on the middle layer the first and third one are also official, the second one is a general with three traces of moustache; the fourth one is a demon with three heads and six arms; the one next to him wears a head dress with both hands joint before him, the sixth and seventh one are officials holding a lotus flower and offerings respectively; the eighth is another asura-like demon, the ninth and eleventh worthy are officials with squarish and round head dress, and between them stand a deity with angry expression.

The twenty-four devas in the both middle layers belong to the best of the Six Paths in Buddhism, indras. The path was described as the best place for the sentient beings but they are lower than bodhisattvas even most of them with supernatural power. Actually they are all taken from the Indian mythology or other religions and absorbed into Buddhism as the guarding deities. In Sutras they often appear as the audience of in the assembling of Buddha preaching the dharma.³⁸⁴ In Buddhist art their images appeared as early as the

³⁸³ See *Dafangdeng dajijing*, T., vol., 13, no. 397, 172 and *Dafangguang huayanjing*, T., vol., 10, no. 279, 332.

³⁸⁴ See *Fanmoyu jing*, scroll 1, T., vol., 01, no. 76, 884.

representations of the Jataka stories, as seen in the wall paintings in Central Asia or in the Caves in Central China.

The twenty-four devas were made up from the twenty devas and four additional ones in the Ming time. All the twenty devas were deities from Hinduism (Brahma). In *Jin guanming jing* Sutra of Golden Light, translated by Zhiyi in the Sui Dynasty, twenty devas were taken out and they built the main part of the twenty-four devas.³⁸⁵ In the Ming time four deities were added: Kimnara, the musicians and dancers, here as one single deity; Great Emperor of Ziwei, the second one of the second highest Daoist deities, Great Emperor of Eastern Mountain, and God of Thunder, whereas the laster three were obviously Daoist deities, which show the trend of mutual borrowing of Buddhism and Daoism since the Ming time.

The twenty devas are often depicted in the processions in the Buddhist temples as sculptures, in wall paintings or the hanging scrolls in *shuilu* rite, as seen in Upper Huayan temple in Datong or in the wall painting in Fahai Temple near Beijing. There are also instances that the twenty-four devas are worshipped, such as in Jinge temple in Wutaishan, Shanhua temple in Datong, Yuantongbao dian in Kunming etc. The devas here in the cave have no inscriptions left and can not be identified by their appearances. Doubtlessly they build the guardian deities together with the boys above and the arhats below.

Before the nine arhats in the lower layer stand a young monk in monastic robe as pendant of Veda with both hands joined before him as reverence. The first one after him, Maitreya, has an extrodinary appearance with thick big belly and smiling expression. He sits in a relaxed way and put his hand on the knee. The one next to him sits with left leg stepping on the ground while holding an object in the right hand (broken); the next two are seated in pensive pose while holding offerings or in the meditative hand gesture; the fifth one also shows a fighting pose with right arm high, albeit the animal is absent; the one next to him holds a rope loop in his hands and sits with both legs crossed down; the seventh seated with interlocked legs holds a book in the right hand while the left resting on legs; the eighth one steps his right leg on the seat and holds it with both hands; the last sits with interlocked legs and hold his attribute in the left hand before the seat.

³⁸⁵ In the offering ceremony of heaven in Buddhist temple twenty deities are chosen from the Sutra of Jinguangming jing. They are: Mahābrahman, Śakra devānām Indra, Vaiśravaṇa, Dhṛtarāṣṭra, Virūḍhaka, Virūpākṣa, Guṇyapati, Maheśvara, Pañcika, Sarasvatī, Lakṣmī, Skanda, Pṛthivī, Bodhidruma, Hāritī, Marīci, Sūrya, Candra, Sāgara, Yamarāja.

The sixteen arhats have been seen in Miaogaoshan, where they also serve as the protectors of Buddha's dharma. In Ming time two Luohans were added to the group: the one was the monk of Budai, Qici (?-916), who was believed to be the incarnation of Maitreya after his death; the other was the Indian monk Bodhidharma who was revered as the first patriarch of Chinese Chan Buddhism. Both sixteen and eighteen are the protectors of Buddha's dharma.

4.4.3. Evaluation

There are several inscriptions found inside the cave. From the Song time and the most important are first the one on the lintel of the cave. Zhao Yin was a local person in the Anyue County of the Southern Song time, who was probably a lay Buddhist, but no detailed information about him was known. The name of the cave seems to be a counterpart of the neighbouring cave of Huayandong.³⁸⁶ In the cave the bodhisattva Mañjuśrī, together with Samanthabhadra as assistants to Buddha Vairocana or Śākyamuni, is sculpted in the cave and represents the Buddhist wisdom, *prajñā* in Sanskrit.

Another inscription is from Ming time on the left wall in the cave. The "inscription of merits of carving and painting" was written in 1586 and brings direct information about the statues on the flanking walls in the cave. According to it the cave was opened in the Song time but it was not finished then. In the Ming time the Chan Buddhist monk dwelled on the hill and found donors and had the statues of arhats and boys carved and painted. Thus it is clear that though the cave was opened in the Song time (1240) but more than 300 years later (1586) the cave was carved with the present appearance. Doubtlessly, if the Luohans and boys were "carved and painted" in the Ming time, the middle layer with the twenty-four heavenly beings were also made then. With the help of that inscription the dating to the whole flanking walls are clarified, which is crucially important to understand the relation of the statues in the cave.

The numerous statues of deities from the three teachings make the cave almost a pantheon. From the inscriptions it is known that the images in the cave are made in various periods of time. Of the Song time, the "original" status of the cave is unclear except for the

³⁸⁶ Prajna, Avatamsaka, Nirvana und Ratnakūṭa are the Four Great Parts of the Buddhist canon.

inscription on the lintel. It might have been the triads of Śākyamuni with two assisting bodhisattvas. At the rear wall all the subjects like the three Buddhas, the Ten Disciples, Kongzi and Laozi and the Water-Moon Guanyin are also found in other sites of the Song time, though the small niches might have been added by various donors one after another. However the style of the present triad, either the main Buddha or the flanking bodhisattvas, appears quite different from the sculptures in the local area in the Southern Song time. The statues at the rear wall, including the ten disciples and the Kongzi and Laozi etc., appear more “archaic” and might have been shaped in the Song time. Judged from the smaller scale of the cave it has possibly been used for the common believer to worship as seen in the above-mentioned sites.

The figures on the both sidewalls, the ten boys, twenty-four Heavenly Beings and eighteen arhats, enriched the content of the cave. But in general the programme of the cave will not be changed by those figure on the sidewalls, since they all serve as the *dharmapāla*, the protectors of Buddha’s dharma. As mentioned together with the disciples, or various kinds of heavenly beings they are certain kinds of protectors of Buddhist dharma.

In the Ming time the cave was expanded, especially both flanking walls. The subjects like the ten boys, twenty-four Heavenly Beings and the eighteen arhats are not seen in the rock carvings of the Song time. Interestingly the three layers were added later on but also a mixture of Buddhism and Daoism, especially the middle layer of the twenty-four Heavenly Beings which is itself the mixture of the Buddhism and Daoism. Such kind of mixed programme in one cave is quite noteworthy in the Sichuan region.

Both the statues of the Song time and the additions from the Ming show the merging of the three teachings on the basis of the all-encompassing Buddhism. Doubtless the dominating figure in the cave is the Buddha and the name of the cave “Great Prajna” indicates the Buddhist nature of the cave. The cave is fulfilled with dozens of deities, wherein Kongzi and Laozi take one niche respectively. They were incorporated into the Buddhist pantheon and their status is something between the great Buddha and other deities. Concerning the relation of the three teachings here, it is obvious that Buddhism is dominating and overwhelming, which is shown by the size of Buddha statue and the madeup of the deities in the cave.³⁸⁷ The Daoist diagram in the cave is quite remarkable, which shows the strong

³⁸⁷ Since extent statues in the cave were carved mostly in the Ming time, not Song time, therefore the statues of three teachings reflect more the situation in the Ming time. In the area there is also a site called Guangmingdian,

influence of Daoism in the place again, as seen in Shibisi and other places.³⁸⁸ Concerning the function the above-discussed cases are more or less related with certain Buddhist ritual, such as the *shuilu*, but in Daboruodong no inscription about ritual is found and the statues were likely carved for the sake of worshipping and making merits by common people. The statues of the three teachings are here free from any context of certain ritual and served only as the objects of worship. The cave of Great Prajna should be regarded as the early stage of this trend.

from Ming time with statues of the three teachings. There the making of the three teachers differs those in Daboruo cave with two additional bodhisattvas.

³⁸⁸ The mysterious symbol on the ceiling comes from the Daoist diagram of Taichi ☯, indicating the origin of the universe. About the character diagram on the ceiling see Wang Yi, "Cong anyue daboruodong," 401-402, Zhang Hua, "Anyue daboruodong," 692-703, Zhao Huizhi, "Anyue huayandong," 704-706.

5. Ideological Instead of Iconic – Baodingshan

5.1. Overview

The complex of rock carvings at Baodingshan as the greatest Buddhist art of rock carvings after those of Yungang and Longmen has aroused scholars' interests since the middle of the 20th century.³⁸⁹ Since recent years it has been focus of art historians and archaeologists, whereby the dating, initiator as well as the function of the huge complex are the mostly concerned.³⁹⁰ From the viewpoint of the unification of the three teachings, it is noticeable that the making of the complex falls into the last period of such kind in Sichuan. The unification of the three teachings in Baodingshan is “maturer” than other preceders, namely one would not find the unification of the three teachers, but the unifications of the three teachings. With the abundant and elaborated sculptures the rock carvings at Baodingshan are an epitomization of Buddhism absorbing Chinese cultural elements and adapting itself to the local belief, which is unique in the Chinese Buddhist caves.

Located in about 15 kilometers north from the Dazu County town (Fig. 1.1), the rock carvings at Baodingshan include two main groups, *Dafowan* in Chinese, the great Buddha valley, and *Xiaofowan*, the small Buddha valley, and the dozen of sites in the surrounding of several kilometres either on the rocks or alongside the road. The rock carvings of the Great Buddha Valley, with another name “Broad and Great Treasure Pavilions”, is in a U-formed valley of about 500 meters facing to the west (Fig. 5.1). Thousands of sculptures and reliefs are arranged one after another on the surface of the cliffs or in caves on the east, south and north sides measuring from 8 to 20 meters in height. Together with the carved figures and scenes there are also inscriptions with over 13,000 characters. In the 1950's the group was numbered as 31 niches including four small Daoist niches carved in the Qing time, from which the sculptures of the Song time are mostly huge niches of five to thirteen meters high and four to thirty-two meters wide. With no repeated contents the rock carvings resemble a huge series of Buddhist illustrations alongside the path in the valley.³⁹¹ The

³⁸⁹ The judgement was firstly made by the studying group of the rock carvings in Dazu led by Yang Jialuo and Ma Heng etc. in 1945. See Song Langqiu, “Changshi jiedu,” 1.

³⁹⁰ For the study of the rock carvings at Baodingshan in Dazu, see the part of scholarship on the rock carvings of the first chapter.

³⁹¹ For the general description and survey, see Liu Changjiu, et al., *Dazu shike yanjiu*, 468-517, Hu Wenhe, *Sichuan daojiao*, 91-99, etc. For the transcription of all the inscriptions, see Chongqiong dazu, *Dazu shike mingwenlu*, 77-270. The translation of the names in the niche is based on translation by Howard, Angela, *Summit of Treasures*, 4.

contents of the niches according to the original order from the entrance on the south side to east and to the north side are as following:

1. Prowling Tiger	2. Nine Protectors of the Law
3. Wheel of Reincarnation in Six Gatis	4. Broad Great Treasure Pavilion
5. Vairocana Triad	6. Precious Relic Stupa
7. Vairocana Pavilion	8. Thousand-handed, Thousand-eyed Guanyin
9. Manifested Wall City	10. Stories of Prince Siddhārtha
11. Parinirvana	12. Nine Nagas Bathing the Prince
13. Mahamayuri Vidyaraja	14. Sacred Gound of Vairocana
15. Parents Bestowing Kindness on their Children	16. Punishments from heaven
17. Buddha Śākyamuni Repays His Parent's Kindness	18. The Land of Bliss of Buddha Amitayus
19. Six Roots of Sensations	20. Tribunals and Punishments in Hell
21. Ten Austerities of Liu Benzun	22. Ten Great Vidyarajas
27. Apotheose of Liu Benzun	28. Roaring Lion
29. Cave of Complete Enlightenment	30. Oxherding Parable
31. Two Licchavi Women	

Table 5.1 Rock carvings in the Great Buddha Valley (Dafowan)

The dating of the whole group is disputable since no inscriptions about the dating and the donors have been carved. It is generally believed that the great complex was accomplished mostly under the organisation of a Buddhist monk Zhao Zhifeng with more than 50 years from 12th to 13th century.³⁹²

The sculptures in the Great Buddha Valley are predominantly subjects of the Esoteric Buddhism mixed with other Buddhist schools and the local beliefs and deities of Daoism and Confucianism. The purpose or the function of the complex is also debatable and far from concluded. The proposed opinions for the function of the whole complex are among others including: the sanctuary of Esoteric Buddhism, place for the preaching of Buddhism to the laymen, place for the repaying of parent's kindness or place for the ritual of *shuilu*.³⁹³

³⁹² The dating and execution of the complex in Dafowan is one of the most disputable subjects. It is generally accepted that the complex was executed from 1178 to about 1236. For the relating studies see among others, Chen Mingguang, "Dazu baodingshan shiku," 326-354. Chen Xishan, "Baoding diaoxiang niandai," 51-55, and the summarizing study of Liu Changjiu, "Dazu shiku yanjiu," 12-48. Zhong Shan, "Shike xinian," 217-222, etc.

³⁹³ The programme of the gigantic complex is the key problem of the research on it. Some scholars claim, especially those who in Sichuan, the complex to be a sanctuary of esoteric Buddhism or even a Mandala, a geometric figure representing the universe. See Guo Xiangying, "Lüetan baodingshan," 161-195 and "Baodingshan moya zaixiang". The opinion has even influenced the oversea scholar of art history such as Angela Howard who accepted this idea in her book. See Howard, Angela, *Summit of Treasures*, Howard, Angela et al., *Chinese Sculpture*. The opposite opinion reveals the historical facts that Liu was a lay Buddhist and that

5.1. Overview

The Small Buddha Valley, with another name Great Treasure Pavilion, is located on the right side of the Temple Holy Longevity (Fig. 5.2). The remaining main building is a north-facing hall made of stone on the hill with the walls of the hall and the smaller chambers inside fulfilled with numerous carved Buddha statues. All the niches including a pagoda in the Small Buddha Valley are numbered up to nine:

No. 1 Pagoda of Patriarch	No. 2 Wall of the Past Seven Buddhas
No. 3 Cave of Rewarding the Parents' Kindness	No. 4 The main Hall of Ritual
No. 5 Cave of Biluan	No. 6 Cave of Huayan Triad
No. 7 Chamber of Meditation	No. 8 Cave of Vajra Deities
No. 9 Cave of Well for Abhiṣecana	

Table 5.2 Rock carvings in the Small Buddha Valley (Xiaofowan)

There are also no inscriptions in Xiaofowan concerning the donors or carvers. However, in view of the similarity of the contents in Dafowan the carvings in Xiaofowan must have been made by the same school of the Esoteric Buddhism of Zhao Zhifeng. It is commonly believed that it was a sanctuary place that Zhao Zhifeng and his followers used for meditating or practising certain rituals. It seems that Xiaofowan was made before Dafowan when Zhao became influential and managed to make the gigantic project of Dafowan. Since many contents of two complexes are similar or even identical, they might have originated from a same master copy. As the sanctuary for Esoteric Buddhists practicing or holding rituals, together its own high value of art and religion, the carvings in Xiaofowan are therefore valuable, especially as references to those of Dafowan.³⁹⁴

Viewed in general the carvings from the Song time in Baodingshan the Buddhist contents are undoubtedly dominant. However in the niche no. 15-17 in Dafowan and cave no. 3 in Xiaofowan (Fig. 5.3 and Fig. 5.4), the Confucian virtue of filial piety was detoned through vivid representations. Those non-Buddhist contents make them quite special in the complex of Baodingshan, and they are definitely related to the historical background of the unification of the three teachings in the Song time.

Zhao applied the strategy by relating himself with the influential figure two hundred years before him to enhance his own status and legitimate his sect of Buddhism. Luo Zhao, "Shilun liubenzun - zhaozhifeng," 282-293. Also many scholars do not agree with the assertion and believe that the complex of Dafowan cannot be designed and finished only by Zhao Zhifeng. See He Wenhe, "Anyue dazu shiku," 234. For the retrospect of the studies about Liu Benzun and Zhao Zhifeng as well as the discussion on the function of the complex in Dafowan, see Liu Changjiu, "Dazu shike yanjiu," 29-48.

³⁹⁴ For the study of Xiaofowan, see Liu Changjiu et al., *Dazu shike yanjiu*, 500-505, Deng Zhijin, "Dazu baodingshan xiaofowan," 200-223, etc.

The contents of the niches no. 15 to 17 seem to be the enlarged representations from those in the cave no. 3 in Xiaofowan (Fig. 5.5 and Fig. 5.6).³⁹⁵ Thus many scholars are inclined to regard the three as an entirety, independent from the other neighboring niches, though they were built under an overwhelming Buddhist context in the whole complex of Dafowan. Compared with other niches nearby the contents of the three niches of no. 15-17, both the inscriptions and the related carvings are closely related with the virtue of filial piety. The kindness of the parent for their children (no. 15), the punishment from the heaven to those without filial piety (no. 16) and the Buddha's virtues relating with the filial piety (no. 17) are closely related. The interaction of the three teachings is best represented in the three niches in Baodingshan. Compared with the above mentioned sites the most special thing here is that of the three teachers only Buddha is visible. Both Laozi and Kongzi disappeared; instead they were either embodied by the key value of filial piety and the typical deities.³⁹⁶ In Xiaofowan there are no Daoist elements, and the contents in the cave no. 3 will only be studied in comparison with those from Dafowan.

Although the three niches at Dafowan should be understood under the context of the whole complex, the other niches in Dafowan will not be studied in detail in this paper due to the overwhelming amount and complexity. In the following texts the three niches at Dafowan will be studied in detail with reference to their correspondings in the cave no. 3 at Xiaofowan, through which the programme of the group and the interaction of the three teachings will be discussed.

³⁹⁵ The form of the three is generally named as "niche", as used in the paper, while its shape appears far from the common niches according to the original definition of the "niche". The three ones, carved on the surface of cliffs, taking large area, therein the figures and deities are arranged horizontal or perpendicular. The form and construction resemble more those of wall painting only but actualized in stone in great scale. The elements of traditional niche, like the form of a niche, the lintels etc. are all missing. Therefore "niche" as the nomination is quite vague and unexact. Viewing the images in Dafowan are generally made up of numerous independent and correlated scenes without the shape of a niche, one would rather call them as „scenes“ as a more accurate name. For the study of the origin and form of the niches in Dazu, especially in Beishan, see Dong Guangqiang, "Dazu shike beishan," 318-322.

³⁹⁶ Some scholars have pointed out the transformation of the unified three teachings from outside (form) into inside (spirit) see Li Xiaoqiang, "Dazu shike zhaji," 335-339, Zhao Huizhi, "Fengji yu dazu shike," 46.

5.2. Three Niches concerning the Filial Piety

5.2.1. No. 15 Sutra of the Greatness of Parent's Kindness

The niche no. 15 is located in the middle place of the north part of the valley, about 6,9 meters high and 14,5 meters wide (Fig. 5.7). From the top to the ground the niche consist of three registers. In the first register are the half statues of the Seven Buddhas of the Past, in the middle the representations of the ten kindnesses of parent and in the lowest one sees a scene representing the Avīci hell and plates with Buddhist sutra texts.³⁹⁷ The corresponding contents in the cave no. 3 at Xiaofowan are carved on the sidewalls near the entrance with three registers. There the hell of Avīci and the sutra texts do not appear and one sees only with the seven Buddhas and the ten kindnesses of parent.

The Seven Buddhas

Surrounded by the clouds the Seven Buddhas of the Past are arranged in a row looking down at the scenes in front of them. They all are represented with tuft hair, round halo behind the heads, round face and with their eyes half opened. Similarly they are clothed with chest exposed and in U-formed monk's robe with broad sleeves. The most apparent difference is their different hand gestures (Fig. 5.9 and Fig. 5.10). From the east to the west the first Buddha³⁹⁸ has a meditating hand gesture before the chest with an eradiating ray of light from his right hand running alongside the chest and shoulder to the left side of his head.³⁹⁹ The Buddha next to him has a hand gesture of meditation of and with his right shoulder covered by his robe. The next Buddha has his joined hand covered by a towel before the chest with a piece of pattra palm leaf in his right hand. From the Buddhas in the middle (Fig. 5.8) a ray of light eradiates from his forehead and the Kaṣāya is fastened by a hanging ring. He puts his left hand before the chest and shows his right hand in the gesture of preaching dharma. The three Buddhas appear similar to the left three correspondingly. The one next to the central Buddha hides his hands in the towel and holds a piece of palm leaf. The next one has a similar appearance as the second with similar hand gesture and a piece of Kaṣāya on the right shoulder. The last Buddha hides also his hand with a towel and holds a pearl above.

³⁹⁷ For the English translations of the inscriptions, see appendix I.

³⁹⁸ Since no inscription for the Seven Buddhas and their sequence and appearance differs from the common representation they cannot be identified with their names. Normally the names of the Seven Buddhas of the Past are: Vipaśyin, Śikhin, Viśvabhū, Krakucchanda, Kanakamuni, Kāśyapa, and Śākyamuni.

³⁹⁹ For the study of the half figures in the carvings in Dafowan, see Wang Yudong, "Banshenxiang," 326-373.

In the cave no. 3 at Xiaofowan, Buddha Śākyamuni is carved with a round mandola as the main cult figure at the rear wall, six Buddhas of the Seven Buddhas of the Past appear (Fig. 5.11) together with the representation of the kindness. On the upper register of the either side are three half heavily weathered figures of Buddhas. On the right sidewall only the outer one is relatively well preserved (Fig. 5.12). He has curled hair and holds the right arm before the chest while the left one is weathered. In the niche no. 15 in Dafowan only the central Buddha Śākyamuni holds the right arm before the chest with the hand gesture of Preaching Dharma, and all other six Buddhas have all the same hand gesture of holding certain things with both hands before the chest. Thus this one in Xiaofowan is somewhat extraordinary.⁴⁰⁰ The other two Buddha statues are either without heads or with later added heads and their arms are also heavily weathered but seemingly to hold things before their chest as their counterparts in Dafowan. The three Buddhas on the left wall are better preserved (Fig. 5.13). They are all half figure with curled hair and two arms before the chests. The outer one hides his arms in the sleeves before the chest and the middle one holds an alms bowl while the inner one with his face weawthered holds a large scroll of sutra before the chest. In niche no. 15 at Dafowan the Buddhas on Śākyamuni's either side hold palm leaves, but not scroll of sutra.

The upper layer of the niche 15 is dedicated to the Seven Buddhas of the Past, who refer to Śākyamuni and his six forerunners, Vipaśyin, Śikhin, Viśvabhū in the past kalpa; and Krakucchanda, Kanakamuni, Kāśyapa, and Śākyamuni in the present kalpa. All the seven Buddha are gone into nirvana and thus they are called the Seven Buddhas of the Past. As a common subject of the Buddhist art since the Six Dynasties the Seven Buddha were widely believed and made together with the future Buddha Maitreya as the three Worlds of Buddha of the last, present and future, which demonstrates the continuity of Buddhism to the eternity. In the Song time there was still new sutras about the Seven Buddhas translated such as the *Qi fo fan zan* by Fatian (?-1001), which showed their longlasting influence. In the rock carvings in the Sichuan region the Seven Buddhas are mostly made in the Tang time such as in Puiang Feixiang no. 68 and Jiajiang Qianfoya no. 162. In Baodingshan one could see them twice more in Xiaofowan, once in the cave no. 3 with the same theme as the no. 15 of Dafowan and no. 2 the wall niche of the Seven Buddhas (Fig. 5.14). It seems that the group of the Seven Buddha had played an important role in the school of Zhao Zhifeng, since in the Song time that the Seven Buddhas and further 28 Buddhas were revered by the Chan

⁴⁰⁰ It is might be also caused by the restoration in the later time.

5.2. Three Niches concerning the Filial Piety

Buddhism as the patriarchs as well as their names were always chanted in the monks' practice in the morning.

The seven statues of Buddha are not associated with their names, but compared with the cave no. 3 in Xiaofowan where Buddha Śākyamuni is placed in the centre of the cave, it is proper to judge the Buddha in the middle with the hand gesture of preaching dharma as Buddha Śākyamuni, which differs from the traditional representation. The other six Buddhas are hard to identify with their similar appearance and symmetrical arrangement. Though the Seven Buddhas are neither mentioned in the Sutra nor related with the ten kindness of parents, in viewing the central theme of the filial piety represented in the niche the continuity of the Seven Buddhas relaying the dharma coincides the parents' carrying on the ancestral line.⁴⁰¹ Thus it implies that the succession of the Seven Buddhas is in accordance with the virtue of filial piety, since carrying on the ancestral line belongs to the most important thing in the Chinese culture of filial piety. "Of the non-filial-piety there are three: the worst is having no offspring."⁴⁰² Here representing the succession of the Buddhas is also to stress the consistency of Buddhism with the Chinese culture. At the same time the examples of succession in Buddhism emphasized the prominent meaning of the ancestral line in the virtue of filial piety.⁴⁰³ The succession of Buddhas is tallied with the carrying on the ancestral line, what by the Confucian as the most important thing concerning the virtue of the filial piety.

The Avīci Hell

The lower layer of the niche 15 at Dafowan is the representation of the Avīci hell in a relative simple manner (Fig. 5.9 and Fig. 5.15). The scene of Avīci hell here is indicated with a group of four figures at the left lower part of the whole scene. The lower layer is quite simple with only a scene of those without filial piety suffering in the hell of Avīci. In the

⁴⁰¹ The seven Buddhas of the past were combined with the ancestor of seven generations in the virtue of filial piety. See Wei Wenbin and Li Xiaohong, "Maijishan mingdai," 51.

⁴⁰² *Menzi*, lilou zhangju I.

⁴⁰³ The combination of the Seven Buddhas and the Ten Kindness of Parents is not only seen here. Besides in Xiaofowan the illustration of the Sutra of the Parent's Kindness in wood cut from the temple Ryongjusa in Korea draws much attention recently. For the study of the sutra in Korea, see Piao Daenam, "Chaoxian shidai 'fumu enzhong jingbian'," 149-155 and Piao Sanggug, "Gaoli shidai fumu enzhong jing," 228-241. Though the Korean woodcut is of later time, it shows that the combination of the Seven Buddhas and the Ten Kindness appeared not only in the Sichuan region but quite widely spread. For the study of the niche no. 15, see among others Chen Mingguang, "Nansong dazu baodingshan," 236-253, Hu Wenhe, "Dazu baoding 'fumu'," 291-303, Sun Xiushen, "Dazu baoding yu dunhuang," 268-288, in which he compared the wall paintings in Dunhuang with the carvings in Dazu.

middle is the judger of hell who is pouring the fluid copper into the mouth of a naked prisoner beneath him. Under the prisoner is a twined snake with flames out of its mouth. Behind him is another prisoner in shackles waiting for the torture and under him is also a snake gushing poisonous flame to him. On the right side of the judger is the more formidable torture waiting for the prisoners: beside the boiler emerges a head with indescribable pain on his face. Further in his right a hound opens its mouth with flames. The depiction comes from the text itself “those of non-filial, after their body corrupt and lives came to the end, they would fall into the hell of Avīci where vast copper and burning iron, flow into the [mouth of] sinner.” The detailed depiction of the hell is left for the niche no. 20 and saves the place for the excerpted texts from the sutra.

On the right side of the scene a row of altogether seven plates with sutra texts are carved in the surrounding of clouds and rocks.⁴⁰⁴ Altogether five plates of texts related with the ten kindnesses above describe the concrete practices to support one’s parent and the punishments for those who treat their parents unkindly. The texts are the demanded rewards to the kindness of parents. Especially notably that the rewardings here are mostly various “offering of dharma”, such as writing the Buddhist texts for parents, offering the Three Treasures for the parents, donating, holding precepts and confessioning etc. Here the practices advocated by Confucianists and the Buddhist practices of Buddhism were perfectly united. The unification of the two teachings is actualized that filial piety of Confucianism would be carried out in the frame of Buddhism.

The Ten Kindnesses

In the middle layer is the central content of the niche. With the scene of praying for child before the Buddha of a couple in the centre, altogether ten scenes of the kindness of the parents to their children which are accompanied with the inscriptions and praises. The ten kindnesses depict the efforts of parents raising their children growing up chronologically. The original order is chronological, but here in stone they were carved one after another alternatively on the either wing of the niche 15. In cave 3 at Xiaofowan the heavily weathered representations of the ten kindnesses are placed on the both sides under the Buddhas. The contents are just reversedly arranged in comparison to those at Dafowan. In

⁴⁰⁴ Between the third plate and the representation of second kindness a statue sits now in meditation that is however not originally here but moved from other place.

5.2. Three Niches concerning the Filial Piety

the following the scenes of the kindnesses at Dafowan will be described in comparison with those in Xiaofowan.

In the niche 15 direct under Buddha Śākyamuni is the scene of throwing oneself to Buddha and praying for descendants. A couple stands face to face with their feet hidden in the clouds (Fig. 5.16). Clothed with a square-formed headdress and in a long robe with round collar and broad sleeves, the husband seriously and piously holds an incense burner with a long handle before his chest. The woman has her hair bundled with the flower headdress with her ears mostly covered by the hair. Clad in the elegant long robe with broad sleeves the woman is adding incense to the burner with her left hand while the right holds a pearl before the chest. Underneath them is the inscription of “Throwing oneself to Buddha and praying for progeny”. Beneath them is an engraved verse to read: “If the scorching iron wheel, would turn above the top of my head; never because of that suffering, I would lose the mind for the Bodhi.” On its either side one reads further: “Those who know the kindness [of parents] are few; [but] those who forget the kindness [of parents] are many.” At cave 3 this scene is to be found on the left sidewall in the middle layer at the inner place (Fig. 5.18). By a table with curtain one (male?) figure on the right turns his face to the table with his left hand reaching to the incense burner and right arm bended before the chest. On the left of the table stand a (female?) figure in a clothe with broad sleeves turns to her right with the left hand touching the incense burner and the right adding incense to it. Above them there is seemingly also a sitting figure that might be the Buddha Śākyamuni.

The first kindness of conceiving the baby is represented on the right wing direct behind the praying father in the centre (Fig. 5.17). The pregnant mother in blue long robe has her hair bundled on her head and hides her left arm in the long sleeve and receives the bowl from the maid with the right hand. The maid stands near her with an appearance of young girl. Clothed in the garments of waitress, she has her hair in the shape of two topknots and holding the bowl with both hands she serves her mistress amenably. Above them one reads the praising verse. At Xiaofowan the kindness is placed on the outer part of the middle register, in which a female sitting figure with weathered head put her hand before the belly (Fig. 5.18). On her left stands a figure pointing the pregnant woman with the right hand. On her right stands a maid holding the hand of the pregnant. Above them are four half figures gazing the pregnant woman with their hand either joined or put before the belly. Comparatively, the representation at Dafowan it is rather simpler than the one at

Xiaofowan where only a maid serves the pregnant woman. The main difference between the two is the four figures above the pregnant woman at Xiaofowan. In viewing of the scene next to it they are probably the statues of Buddhas who are not repeatedly carved at Dafowan.

The second kindness of suffering while giving birth at Dafowan is placed on the left wing behind the praying mother. In this scene there are four figures (Fig. 5.19). The mother who is giving birth is supported by a maid behind her. With her right hand put on her swelled belly she shows her pain through her wried facial expression. the midwife kneels on her right leg and pulls the sleeve with her left hand preparing for the birth of the child. Behind the midwife stands the father holding a book in his left hand and gazes the scene anxiously. A praising verse of this kindness is carved in stone and placed direct above the midwife. The scene of giving-birth is placed on the outer side with altogether six figures on the right wall (Fig. 5.21). Striding on clouds on the utmost right the lying-in woman touches her belly enduring the pain of birth. After her is a maid showing half of her body and supporting the woman with one hand. At the lower right of the lying-in woman kneels the midwife who stretches out her both hands to receive the newborn. Behind the maid stands a figure pointing the woman with the right hand. Above the woman a table is placed around which two figures are burning the incense and seemly praying. Obviously, the scene at Dafowan is presented rather in a briefer way with only four figures, with the lying-in woman and the widwife in the central and the husband as well as the maid are behind.

At the Dafowan the third scene, the kindness of forgetting the worry after the birth of the son, is placed again alternatively on the right wing behind the first one (Fig. 5.22). The joyfulness of the birth of the child is expressed in the happy scene. The mother carries her child on her left shoulder and touches the child's hand with her right hand. The child hugs the mother's neck with his right arm and smiles at the father who also smiles satisfactorily to them and reaches his left arm to the mother tenderly. Behind the smiling father one reads the praising verse. At Xiaofowan the scene is fashioned in a different manner. A female figure is facing to the right side and holding a baby high (Fig. 5.25). The baby reaches to the right shoulder of his father with the right hand who stands facing him and holding something with his right arm before the belly.

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The fourth kindness of swallowing the bitter and biving out the sweet is to be seen on the left wing behind the second one (Fig. 5.20) at Dafowan. In this scene the seated mother holds her child on her lap with her both arms who holds a round cake in his right hand to the mother. The praising verse is carved on the plate above the mother's head and tells that the mother has the coarse food for herself and leaves the fine to her child. At Xiaofowan the scene appears similar to the one at Dafowan. In the centre of the middle register is the mother sitting on a stool and holding the baby on her lap (Fig. 5.21). She holds an object in her right hand to which the baby is eager to grasp.

The fifth kindness of bedwetting on the right wing at Dafowan is represented through a scene of sleeping in which the mother raises slightly on the bed and holds with both hands the almost naked child by piddling (Fig. 5.23). The praising verse above tells the kindness of mother who takes the wet part on the bed and pushes the child to the dry after bedwetting. At Xiaofowan the scene is placed in the inner part of the lower register on the left wall, in which the mother and son sleep on a wooden bed with four feet (Fig. 5.25). The mother under badclothes sleeps on her side, facing to the outside and having her sleeping baby on her right arm. At Dafowan the mother supports herself by helping the boy urinating, which differs concerning the size of the baby and the pose of the mother seen at Xiaofowan.

In the sixth kindness of breast-feeding and nurturing at Dafowan the child in open-seat pants inclines to his mother and sucks one breast while holding the other of the seated mother (Fig. 5.20). The mother looks older than before and is seated with her chest opened to her child while holding an oval object in her right hand. The corresponding praising verse is carved together with the fourth kindness above them. At Xiaofowan the scene of breast-feeding shares the stool of former scene (Fig. 5.21). The mother supports herself with her left hand on the ground while the baby seems to fall in sleep in his mother's hug. A standing figure before them is too weathered to identify. At Dafowan the scene seems different, in which mother opens her breast and lets her son suck her milk.

The seventh kindness of washing is heavily weathered and placed on the right wing after the fifth one with altogether four figures (Fig. 5.24). On the lower part is the mother washing clothes with a basin before her. She turns her head looking backwards to her son held by a maid. The little son steps one foot on his mothers shoulder and is amused by his sister with a cluster of grapes in her hand. Above the girl is the plate of the praising verse. At Xiaofowan the is placed the scene of washing beneath the scene of the third kindness

(Fig. 5.25). Here the mother sits on the ground with two basins before her and washes with two hands in one basin. At Dafowan the scene is much enriched represented, in which in addition to the scene of washing there are still the maid who holding the child and the the little sister who playing with the boy.

The eighth kindness of making of evil karma on the left wing depicts that for the wedding of their son the parents kill the livestock and thus accumulate thus the bad karma (Fig. 5.26). In the representation five figures are shown: on the right end are the parent of whom the father holds a stick with both hands and a knife inserted at his waist and a pig at his feet. The mother helps him with a basin beside her husband. On their right side is the guests of various appearance sitting before a table, of which one reads of praising verse on the drape. At Xiaofowan the wedding scene is in the inner position of the lower register. Three half figures of guesstes sit behind a table. Behind the table is the parent with a servant busy killing a pig violently. The scene is similar to that at Dafowan but only represented in a more dramatically manner.

The ninth kindness depicts that the parent worries about their son who travels afar (Fig. 5.24). In the scene the son wearing a hut is grown up and looks ambitious and confident carrying an umbrella on his way to afar. Behind him the old mother looks backwards unsatisfied and the old father supports himself with a long bamboo stick. Under the feet of the mother is the plate carved with the corresponding prasing verse. At Xiaofowan in this scene four figures are carved (Fig. 5.25). On the left is the son who is facing to the outside and carries an umbrelle on his shoulder. He strides ahead and appears eager to leave. After him follows a smaller figure of attendant. Above and beside them are the broken figures of the old parent. Behind the father there is still a tree that separates the scene from the former one. At Dafowan the moving direction of the figures are reversed and only three figures without attendant are seen.

The last scene of kindness of ultimately forgiving is placed in the corner of the left wing. The son knees before the parent and listens their instructions (Fig. 5.27), which the old father raises his right hand and talks to him. This scene depicts that the parents still care and worry and forgive their son even if he is grown up and for their faults they will forgive in the end. The corresponding verse is carved on the plate near the mother's shoulder. At Xiaofowan the last scene is placed at the outer side of the lower register on the right wall, in which the old parents sit face to face with the son who kneeling between them and

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receiving their instruction. At Dafowan it is similar fashioned but with the son kneeling at the left side of the father who raising the right hand with the facial expression of scolding.

Text for the ten kindnesses

In the niche 15 at Dafowan the representations of the ten kindness in the middle layer are doubtlessly the main contents of the whole niche. To answer the question of the iconography of the image one has to find the source of the inscription, especially the ten kindnesses which are prominent but not found in any Buddhist canon. About the iconography of the contents and representations of the ten kindnesses there are various opinions, which can be summarized as following. 1. Based on the characters “[Sutra] of Rewarding the Parents’ Kindness” in the inscriptions, searching the Buddhist text with the same name directly in Taisho canon or Dunhuang texts, especially one found a text with the same name in Dunhuang and related it to the rock carvings. There are many paintings on silk or wall found in Dunhuang based on this apocryph Sutra. Though the Sutra from Dunhuang is in accordance with the rock carvings in Dazu concerning the contents with even certain similar words and sentences, one cannot find out all the ten kindnesses in the text.⁴⁰⁵ 2. Since the ten kindnesses are not found in the sutra with the same name from Dunhuang, some tried to find them in the texts for the lay Buddhists or texts of Buddhist plays. Indeed the ten kindnesses are found in the text of S.3919 and it was assumed that S.3919 might have been somewhat related with the rock carvings in Dazu. Soon the opinion was rejected since the geographical distance and the difference concerning the content (such as the Seven Buddhas and the depiction of the hell etc.) cannot be satisfactorily related with the images.⁴⁰⁶ 3. Hou Chong brought out a valuable opinion that the three niches no. 15-17 should be studied as an entirety that brought the study a great step forward (His study about the three niches will be evaluated in the evaluation part.) His reasoning is based on the newly discovered historical texts *Xiaoxing lu* by Zongze partly included in a later ritual text by Cijue. But the original *Xiaoxing lu* by Zongze does not exist, the texts from the later ritual text can not be totally same as the those on the stone. Thus judging the three niches based on *Xiaoxing lu* by Zongze is merely a presumption.⁴⁰⁷ 4. With the focus on the ten kindnesses scholar came to realize that possibly more than one

⁴⁰⁵ Yan Wenru, *Zhongguo shiku yishu*, 370-373.

⁴⁰⁶ Hu Wenhe, “Dazu baoding ‘fumu’,” 291-303, *Sichuan daoqiao foqiao*, 284-292, Sun Xiushen, “Dazu baoding yu dunhuang,” 268-288.

⁴⁰⁷ Hou Chong, “Zongze ‘xiaoxinglu’,” 306-327.

apocryph have the name of Sutra of Rewarding the Parent's Kindness which are partly in common but mostly different from each other. In fact the images of the niche no. 15 are made based on an apocryph sutra with the same name with the ten kindnesses which are different from the same named one in Dunhuang.⁴⁰⁸

The above sketched review of study shows definitely that there are two sets sutras with concerning the parent's kindness. The one is the Dunhuang version (with a complete one and an abridged one) which is seen in the silk and wall paintings there,⁴⁰⁹ the other is a apocryph one, in Dunhuang only seen in the text of S.3919, but actually widely prevalent from Tang to the Song time.⁴¹⁰ Focused on the ten kindnesses the representations at both Daofowan and Xiaofowan were made based on that apocryph sutra, although in Xiaofowan both sutra texts and the praising verses were dropped.

Since the representations in the both places have many in common, it is possible that those in Dafowan might be finished under the influence of those at Xiaofowan. Or, in viewing of the similar constructions of the representations reserved in woodcut, the rock carvings at the both places might have been made a master copy with illustrations and texts (including the Seven Buddhas and the Ten Kindnesses, hell), instead of directly from the sutra text.⁴¹¹ Such woodcut might be prevalent at the time when Zhao was active in Baoding, and it might be changed to certain extent according to the needs by the monks or the donors.

Verses by Zongze

Although the illustrations of the ten kindnesses were made after the long lost apocryph Sutra of Rewarding, the praising verses of the Zongze were not in the text of the sutra. The praising verses were possibly added additionally by the initiator Zhao Zhifeng by choosing the popular praise of Zongze. On that basis Zhao had made certain adjustments and brought the niche to the form, what is also in accordance with the situations seen in other representations in Dafowan.

⁴⁰⁸ For the study of the sutra see Chen Mingguang, "Dazu shike *bao fumu*," 177-205 and the most comprehensive and detailed study Ma Shichang, "*Bao fumu enzhong jing*," 521-595.

⁴⁰⁹ This version of the sutra was also found carved in the cave no. 59 at Wofoyuan in Anyue county from the Tang time (735). See Hu Wenhe, "Dui dazu baoding," 130-131, *Sichuan dao jiao*, 67-69.

⁴¹⁰ About the text S.3919 see Hu Wenhe, "Dui dazu baoding," 124-126.

⁴¹¹ Ma Shichang, "*Bao fumu enzhong jing*," 561-571.

5.2. Three Niches concerning the Filial Piety

Zongze, active from 1153 to 1113, originated from the province of Hebei and officially became Buddhist monk 1082 in Changlu, thus called in the later world as the Master of Meditation of Changlu. He was entitled by the royal court as “Master of Meditation of Mercifulness and Enlightenment (Cijue) with royally granted Purple Robe” and a quite influential Buddhist in the Northern Song Dynasty. He advocated to pay equal attention to both Chan and Jingtu (Pure Land) Buddhism and left many writings and anthologies to the afterworld of which the lost *Xiaoxinglu* seems to have exerted influence to the rock carvings in Dafowan. As a son of filial piety he convinced his mother to practice Buddhist precepts and finally made her believe in Buddhism. Believing in that his mother was reborn in the western Pure Land Zongze was motivated to write the *Xiaoxinglu* made of 120 chapters persuade the believers to practice the filial piety to their parents.⁴¹² As an influential monk Zongze had exerted influence to Zhao and therefore many texts are found in Dafowan, through which the connection of Zhao with the belief of the time can be felt in an indirect manner.

The advocacy of Zongze coincided with the historical background, that bringing Confucianism to Buddhism, especially the virtue of filial piety and loyal to the emperor (two aspects of one spirit) into Buddhism, to make Buddhism adaptable to Confucianism, namely the sinicization of Buddhism. Though Zongze might not have done those intentionally, his activities were quite consistent with what the contemporaneous Buddhist masters such as Qihao, Zonggao strived for.

5.2.2. No. 16 Punishments from the Heaven

The deities of this niche are carved alongside the surface of the rock with the measurement of about 7 meters high and 6,8 meter wide. In the south facing niche the deities of wind, thunder, lightning, clouds, raining etc are represented vividly in the pattern of clouds (Fig. 5.29). Here in the niche there are altogether five gods of weather, the god of wind, thunder, lightning, clouds and rain from the right to the left. Those gods of weather are original Chinese deities and originated mostly quite early and were absorbed into Daoism as popular

⁴¹² For the life and works of Cijue Zongze see Liu Xiangao, “Baoding dafowan”, 301-308, Feng Guodong and Li Hui, “Cijue Zongze shengping,” 235-248 and Hou Chong, “Songseng cijue zongze,” 262. The book *Xiaoxinglu* is not extant but only partly reserved in *Xiaoshunyi* where one could grasp its general idea. The book should have harmoniously combined the practice of filial piety at home and the Buddhist practice which demands one to leave his family.

deities at latest in the Southern Song Dynasty.⁴¹³ Generally the origination and function of those deities are related with worship to the phenomenon of weather of the people in the ancient time.

From the east to the west one sees first the god of wind blowing the wind (Fig. 5.30). The god is clothed in an ample robe and stands in a wide stride with a large bag of wind on his left leg. The god with beard looks right upwards with his eyes widely opened and the wind from his bag is denoted by the upward flying ornaments of the hut, ribbon of the clothe and the broad right sleeve.

As one of the main factors of the weather wind is the promotor and faciliator of other phenomenen of weather. According to the historical documents such as *Shanhaijing*, *Zhouli*, *Lisao* etc., the worship of the god of wind originated quite early. Associated with one of the 28 groups of stars, *qi*, the god of wind became one of the deities on heaven and received the national sacrifice as early as in the Qin and Han time. After being absorbed into Daoism the god has a anthromorphical form who was normally not worshipped alone but together with other Daoist deities in the rituals of large scale. The god had at beginning an appearance of beast, such as a head of a bird with the body of a dear, or a tail of a snake with wings etc., but since Tang and Song time he appeared mostly as a middle-aged man though the god was shown as a femal sometimes. Such believes of the god of the wind were absorbed into Daoism, in which the god was worshipped as either a old man or legendary immortals such as Fang Tianjiun or Mengpo holding a wheel in the left hand and a fan in the right.

The second is the god of thunder (Fig. 5.31). Almost facing the god of wind he turns his head to his left side and stands also in a wide stride with his right leg on a rock. The god in a robe beats the seven drums around his body with two hammers in his hands, the right one highly held and his left on the waist. Most noticeably is that the head of the god which is not like others with a head of human but a head of a beast, a swine, more exactly, with the mouth widely opened.

The worship of the god of thunder began at lastest in the periods of the Struggling Kingdoms and is found in many historical documents like *Shanhaijing* or *Chuci*. It seems that the dreadful god of thunder was not included in the national sacrifice, but worshipped in Daoist temples together with the goddess of lightning. The images of the god are various.

⁴¹³ See Hu Wenhe, *Sichuan daojiao*, 199.

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According to Shanhaijing he has a head of human and body of a dragon and he makes thunder by beating his belly. Otherwise he is also described as a black hornless ox with one foot, or with an appearance of half human half animal with a head of a swine or ape. Since the Eastern Han time the image of the god was changed into a powerful warrior with a set of drums around him.⁴¹⁴ By beating the drum he makes the thunder. The god was especially worshipped by Daoists. While being worshipped together with other gods of weather for the sake of praying for rain in the Tang time, the god of thunder was much more beloved in the Song time as the dominating god of rain.⁴¹⁵ The god was also popular in the common people since he was believed to punish the evil with his thunder. Such belief began as early as in the Qin and Han time and became quite popular since the Tang and Song time with many such kind of legendary stories. That the god of thunder beats those who have no filial piety or evil persons during the tempest, is a reflection of the wish of common people for the justice and the fearness before the god. Here the function of the gods of weather in the niche no. 16 is to warn and punish those who have no filial piety to their parents. In Daoist text it is also recorded that those who are not loyal to the ruler, have no filial piety to their parents, or have no respect to the elder and teachers their spirit and body will be splited by the god of thunder.⁴¹⁶ In some temples the god of thunder is worshipped as the dominating god and there are also certain derivations of the god such as a leading one with ten or twelve derivations.⁴¹⁷

Next to the god of thunder stands the god of lightning with the appearance of a middle-aged woman (Fig. 5.32). As the wife of the god of thunder she is clothed in a jacket and long skirt with her breast widely open and ribbon back around her head. Holding mirrors in her both hands she holds her left arm high and the right lower to emit lightning that comes from the centre of the mirrors.

In the ancient time the function of lightning was taken also by the god of thunder, and later in the Han time the thunder and lightning were separated and controlled by different gods. The goddess of lightning originated in the Tang and Song time as the spouse of the god of thunder. Probably out the habit of matching up of yin and yang, or male and female. Such

⁴¹⁴ For the comprehensive study of the images of the god of thunder, see Zhong Zongxian, *Xianqin lianghan wenhua*, 377-404.

⁴¹⁵ Du Guangting, *Daomen kefang daquanji*, scroll 12 and 18, D., vol. 31, 786 and 798. *Jiutian yingyuan leisheng puhua tianzun yushu baojing*, D., vol., 1, 758-761.

⁴¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 761.

⁴¹⁷ Such as seen in the Daoist temple Jintianguan in Lanzhou.

saging was mostly seen in the novels of the Ming and Qing time. The image of the goddess of lightning was rare from the Tang and Song. In literal works she was described as a female, and here in Dafowan the goddess appears as a middle-aged woman with two mirrors in her hands and helps the god of thunder by illuminating with the mirror from which the lightning flows out. This statue of the goddess belongs to the earlier ones and the image of the goddess were fashioned in a similar appearance of a kind woman with two mirrors in hands. In the military of the Yuan time there has been flags with the image of the goddess.

The next one is the god of clouds who is made smaller compared to other deities (Fig. 5.33). Having a quite soft body with the pattern of clouds and almost the shape of clouds he emerges half of his body and blowing the clouds upwards with his right hand before his upfacing head.

The god of clouds is a personfication of clouds and he was not seen in the ancient documents with the exception of the work Yunzhongjun, the Lord in the Clouds, by Qu Yuan. It seems that the fuction of the god of the clouds is identical with that of the rain and therefore he was seldomly worshipped. His image in Daoism is also quite rare. The statue of the god of the clouds here was made resembling the clouds or steam without fixed form and in the action of looking upwards and helping the god of rain. Such representation is not seen in other places.

The last god of weather, the god of rain, is depicted as an old man riding on a flying dragon (Fig. 5.34). Clad in a long robe with broad sleeves and having his hair bundled over the head he has almost an appearance of a Daoist. While looking in the afar he uses a twig in his right hand to scatter rain drops from the water in the vessel held in his left hand. The dragon bends its body showing a status of flying in the sky.

The god in charge of the rain was worshipped as early as the god of wind and together was seen in the above mentioned historical documents. Associated with the group of star in the west, *bi*, the god received also the natinal sacrifice and had a similar function and status like the god of wind after becoming a Daoist deity. His appearance is also variable with an frm of a bird with one foot at the beginning. In *Liexianzhuan* the god of rain was described as a wild man who could transform himself to a red dragon and flying down together with wind and rain. Here the god of rain rides a dragon, which comes close to the legendary. In addition he was described also as a strong man called Chen Tianjun with a beard with a dragon bowl in

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the left hand and scattering water drops with the right hand. Definitely in the images of the god dragon is a quite notably attribute. Beside the other forms of the god include also the legend of the Immortal Chisongzi and Li Jing in the Tang time etc.

The last figure of the group stands a figure with an official hat and a fierce facial appearance (Fig. 5.34). He opens his eyes and mouth wide and gaze the happenings on the ground. With both hands he holds an edict before him, on which one reads the characters: According to the imperial commands burn and kill those who commit the five heinous crimes.

On the lower part of the niche two figures of human being are carved (Fig. 5.35). One lies on the ground facing to the sky and the other lies prone. Both are hit by the thunder and surrounded by flaming and show a horrified and suffered facial expression. Beneath the niche there are still some characters describing the horror of the god of thunder and the warning from the heaven that are heavily weathered.⁴¹⁸

About the niche no. 16 though no article specifically handles the niche there are many various ideas about it from all the three teachings, Buddhism, Daoism and Confucianism.⁴¹⁹ In fact the images of the scene are still based on the Sutra of Rewarding of which the passage “Those who treat their parents unkindly ... would be **hit by the thunder** in the world and drunk by force the vast copper in the hell.” can be understood as the source. Thus the scene is actually the continuance or addition of the last scene, only as a single scene. The scene no. 16 is a good transit with the lessons from the heaven to the negative examples between the no. 15 the kindness of parents and no. 16 the rewarding of Buddha to his parents. The meaning and function of the scene are clearly manifested by the image of the hit by lightning and the inscription of mandate decree held in the deity’s hands. Thus the understanding as an altar of praying for rain or the nomination of representation of

⁴¹⁸ For the translation of the characters see appendix.

⁴¹⁹ Chen Xishan asserted that the deities originated from the Buddhist Sutra “Dayunlun qingyu jing” and regarded the niche with the five deities of weather as the altar of praying for rain of the Esoteric Sect, Chen Xishan, *Dazu*, 280. Nevertheless one can hardly relate the Buddhist text with the contents on the stone. In general many scholars regard the niche as Daoist, for instance Hu Wenhe listed them as the best preserved ones of the vulgar deities of Daoism in his book, Hu Wenhe, *Sichuan Daojiao*, 198. He also related the deities of weather to the Daoist texts like *Shangqing lingbao dafa* and *Taishang dongyuan shuo qing yulongwang jing*. See D., vols., 30, 649 and D., vol., 6, 245. Hou Chong judged the niche as the continue of the niche no. 15 according to the inscriptions there that the scene is the representation of the person without filial piety being beaten by thunder and lightning, Hou Chong, “Zongze”, 325-326. Li Zhengxin regarded the niche as Confucianist and named it as the “niche of heavenly punishment”, Li Zhengxin, *Rujiao*, 109-120. Though it is not necessarily Confucianist, the paper follows the nomination by Li and agrees with the third idea generally.

Sound from Clouds and Thunder are all incorrect due to failed to recognize the three scenes as an entirety or lack of detailed examination of the carvings itself.

Interestingly here the Daoist deities of weather are well absorbed in the scenes of advocating the filial piety.⁴²⁰ It is seldom to see in other Buddhist contexts that the deities of thunder, lightning, rain and wind appear altogether either in form of sculpture or painting.⁴²¹ However in the area of counties of Dazu and Anyue there are more than one. In the region the group of the gods of weather are carved in Kongqudong and Sanyuandong, but they are either heavily damaged or badly repainted.⁴²² The good preserved one is in a small cave called “Cave of Thunder God”, about 60 kilometers northwest from Baodingshan in the neighboring Anyue County, where the complete group of deities of weather from the Song time well reserved.

The single niche is located on top of a small hill called “Hill of Heavenly Palace”.⁴²³ In the small cave one sees the Huayan triad as the main figures, between which stand each five and six small figures on clouds (probably the Eleven Stars) showing reverence to the Buddha (Fig. 5.36). Under the niche are inscriptions carved in contour: on the left: “The light and brilliance of the Buddha country, the constant turning of the dharma wheel”; on the right: “May the wind be tempered and rain timely, the nation prosperous and the people safe”, in the same style as seen in Baodingshan. Flanking the main figures on the side walls of the niche each five figures on clouds are carved (Fig. 5.37): on the left side are Gods of Thunder and Lightning with three standing male figures; and on the right the Gods of Wind and Rain with three female figures. Though the images are repainted, the figures appear less damaged. Comparing the subject, style with the rock carvings in the region it is reasonable to believe that the cave was made in the Song time and not long from the time when the project in Baodingshan was done.

Compared with the counterpart in Dafowan the God of Thunder here has a similar pose (Fig. 5.38). Both turn the head to the left, holding the hammer high with a cycle of drums around

⁴²⁰ The virtue of filial piety was also highly valued by Daoism especially under the influence of Confucianism. See Hu Zhaoxi, “Dazu baoding shike yu ‘xiao’,” 89-90.

⁴²¹ In the wood cut reserved in Dunhuang from Song and late Western Xia time the gods of weather appear together in the illustration of the sutra of guanyin, but most of them has heads of animals combined with human bodies. See Li Sisheng, “‘Fanxiangjuan’ yu baodingshan,” 259.

⁴²² For Sanyuandong see Liu Changjiu et al., *Dazu shike yanjiu*, 507-508. Also in Laojunmiao there is a niche of the god of thunder with inscriptions of the Song time. See Deng Zhijin, “Xin faxian songke,” 143.

⁴²³ The ruin of a temple from Song time is visited in the nearby and several broken statue are found with inscriptions.

him. What different is that in Dafowan he has seven drums and here only five (more common) and in Dafowan he has a swine head and here the head of a monkey. Besides the gesture of left arm and leg are slight different. Like in Dafowan beside the Thunder is the Lightning (Fig. 5.39). The appearances of the Lightning seem to be more different, though both are female holding mirrors in their hands. In Dafowan the God of Lightning holds her mirrors with rays of lightning out of the mirror and her body and clothes are completely carved. Here only the upper part of the Lightning is visible and she holds the mirrors together with the Thunder to the same direction.

The gods of Wind and Rain were placed on the right side wall with appearance of Daoists while the two in Dazu are separately placed (Fig. 5.42). Holding the sack of wind with opening to the audience the heavily weathered god of wind stands on clouds what differs from the dynamic one in Dafowan (Fig. 5.43). The god of rain sits on clouds holding a bowl in his left hand and scattering rain with a twig in his right (Fig. 5.44). While making the same action the gods of rain riding a dragon in Dafowan was totally different depicted.

The god of Clouds was not carved, but under the gods of weather stand each three figures. The one under the Lightning hold a bundle of crops, which might imply the close relation between the weather and agriculture (Fig. 5.40). It is unclear whether the three male and three female figures on clouds are deities or donors.

In the cave of Thunder God the main figures are the Buddha triad, and the gods of weather carved on the either side of the niche with the status similar to the traditional guardians or vajras. The Daoist deities took the places of Buddhist guardians, showing the belief in Daoism in the region at the Song time was quite prevalent. Definitely the deities of weather, shoots of crops, and the inscription *fengtiao yushun*, “tempered wind and timely rain” imply the close relation between the Daoist deities and agriculture. The small cave is a good example for the local combination of Buddhism and Daoism in the Song time. Though the gods appear in group, their context and function are different from those in Dafowan: here they are guardians probably in charge of good weathering; but in Dazu they are the heavenly *Justitia* who punish those who illy treat their parents. The change of function is closely related with the central theme of advocating filial piety in the three scenes in Dafowan. The group of gods of weather was the available repertoire and in Dafowan their function of punishing the evil was stressed. Nevertheless the making of the whole group in Dafowan was still closely related with the deep influence of Daoism in the region and they were

generally worshipped in group, or the gods of clouds, wind and rain would not have been carved.⁴²⁴

Furthermore the examples that the gods of weather appearing in group are found in the painting of *shuilu* in later time, among which the set of Shuilu painting from Baoningsi Temple is a comparable one with that in Dafowan (Fig. 5.46). Constructionally the arrangement of the deities of Baoningsi is more suitable for a hanging scroll in accordance with other ones of the set.⁴²⁵

In the foreground stand the gods of thunder and rain. The god of thunder has a head of swine with the mouth widely opened and teeth stretching out. He has four arms and nine drums of thunder that are combined through threads and surrounded by pattern of clouds. In short patterned shirt and red skirt the god of thunder has a tail of dragon and stand with three-toed eagle feet on the ground. Beside him stand the god of rain with an appearance of Daoist with slim eyes and eyebrows and three threads of long whiskers. In deep blue long robe with red rim the god of rain seems to scattering raindrops with a pillow twig from a green bowl while walking slowly in boots with cloud-patterned heads. In the middle stand the gods of lightning and wind. The goddess of lightning clad in pink long robe and green shirt and a red turban holds a mirror reflecting her facial appearance as an old ugly woman. Beside her is the god of wind who differs from what is seen in Sichuan with widely opened mouth like a crocodile. His scraggly hair, scalelike skin and the protruding muscle make him resembling a warrior. On the highest is a ghost waving a flag and in the cartouche on the upper right corner the characters were written: “On the right the 24th those who are in charge of wind, rain, thunder, lightning, the group of gods of wind and rain, etc.” clarifying the identity of the deities and their place in the inner altar of the rite.⁴²⁶

Though the dating of the *shuilu* painting from Baoningsi is much later than the rock carving in Dazu, the image of the deities are still comparable, such as the appearance of the gods of thunder, lightning and rain and their attributes. It shows that the belief in certain type of the deities of weather has been long and widely spread from Song to Ming Dynasty and

⁴²⁴ There was also a Daoist version of the Sutra of the Greatness of Parent’s Kindness. See Okabe Kazuo, “*Fumu enzhongjing* zhong,” 23, Hu Henhe, “Dui dazu baoding,” 127-128.

⁴²⁵ In the entry about Zhang Nanben it is also mentioned that the Gods of Thunder and Lightning were painted in the *shuilu* wall paintings. See Huang Xiufu, *Yizhou minghua lu*, 14.

⁴²⁶ Shanxi bowuguan ed., *Baoningsi mingdai shuiluhua*, plate 114.

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from Sichuan to Shanxi. In the shuilu painting since Ming time the group of the gods of weather are indispensable deities in the lower hall of the inner altar.

The Daoist deities of weather in Anyue and Dazu were absorbed into the Buddhist world, while their functions keep different in various places as guardians for Buddhism or executors of the law. Because of the popularity of the deities in the region and the numerous supernatural stories of god of thunder lightning the persons of no filial piety as the background of the time, they play their roles harmoniously in the Buddhist world and are absorbed in the Buddhist pantheon. It is again a step for the sinisization of Buddhism.

5.2.3. No. 17 Great Expedient Sutra of Buddha Requiring the Kindness

The gigantic niche is about 7,3 meters high and 15,6 meters wide with abundant contents. In the middle is the half statue of Buddha with heavenly palace and the representations of the five Gatis over his head and shoulders, below him is the stele of the praise of Buddha's teeth; the scenes of the stories relating with Buddha's practising the filial piety and the sutra texts expanded in three layers on his either side.⁴²⁷

In comparison with the lavish representations of niche no. 17 at Dafowan those in the cave no. 3 at Xiaofowan appear quite brief and simple. Buddha Śākyamuni as the main figure of the cave is carved in the round mandola at the rear wall and the illustrations of the sutras are arranged on the either side of the Buddha figure next to the Ten Kindnesses without obvious boundary. Similarly the heavily weathered scenes are also placed into three registers.

The Buddha in centre

Taking the height of about the first two layers the huge half statue of the standing Buddha dominates in the centre (Fig. 5.47). Clad in monk's robe decorated with dragon and clouds patterns and a jade ring hanging over his left shoulder the south-facing Buddha holds an alms-bowl with his left hand decorated with a bangle and makes the hand gesture of preaching the Dharma with the right before the chest. From the middle tuft of hair a ray of light radiates upwards in the mid of which the Palace of Trāyastriṃśa is carved. The palace

⁴²⁷ Such kind of story was spread to Japan as early as before the Tang Dynasty see Zhao Chao, "Ribei liuchuan de liangzhong xiaozizhuan." About the related material reserved in Dunhuang see Fang Guangchang, "Guanyu foshuo xiaoshunzi," 69-77.

is circa 60cm high and 90 cm wide with four half standing indras with mandorla inside who either hold Ruyi or sutra scroll or make certain hand gestures. On the lintel of the small palace four characters of “Dao li tian gong”, Palace of Trāyastriṃśā, is carved.⁴²⁸

Furthermore, on the both sides above the shoulders of Buddha the Five Gatis are carved (Fig. 5.50). On Buddha’s left are the Gati of Human Being, Asura and Hell: above the Gati of Human Being there is still a round niche in which a figure is seated with crossed legs. The Gati is represented by three standing persons in various clothes. Underneath is the Asura with three heads and eight arms. He holds the sun and moon with both his upper arms and with the other the various weapons in hand. The Gati of Hell is divided with the border of the light from the Gati of Human Being. In the scene the jailer with horse head is just thrusting a ghost in its chest with a spear and putting it into a boiler full of oil burnt with flames. Beside and above the boiler stands also two figures, and inside and outside the boiler there also the heads of ghosts carved. On Buddha’s right are the Gati of Animals and Hungry Ghosts: in the Gati of Animal there is a human being and four animals of which a bull can be identified while others are heavily weathered. For the Gati of Hungry Ghosts there are three figures, with one on the above and the other holding a spoon feeding the hungry ghost which has a horrible appearance and prays for foods with both hands joint before the chest. On the utmost of the both wings are the frequently appeared phrase “If the scorching iron wheel would turn above the top of my head; never because of that suffering I would lose the mind for the Bodhi.”

Under the Buddha statue is the inscription “Praises of Buddha Teeth written royally by the three holy emperors” on a plate in front of Buddha with the two gata on the either side “Only do the golden bone of my master still exist, which after experiencing hundred burning keep always fresh colour” (Fig. 5.47). Another important content in the scene no. 17 is the stele with the praises to the Buddha’s teeth, what is also irrelevant with the filial piety and taking the central place by the eyes of the visitors.⁴²⁹ The quoted text by three emperors praising the Buddha’s teeth is used here to emphasize the supreme status of Buddha and enhance the sacredness of the place. The contents of the stele express the idea of the unification of the three teachings. The stele is not seen in Xiaofowan and seems to be added by the developer who added the praises by Zongze in the scene no. 15. So the composition of the scene is made from the stories mainly from the Sutra of Buddha’s Repaying and the

⁴²⁸ On the wall near the palace there is still character carved but not completely legible anymore except for a character “Da”, Great.

⁴²⁹ For the study of the stele, see Hu Zhaoxi, “Dazu shike songbei,” 213-221.

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King S with stories from other sutras and the stele of the three emperors' praises to Buddha's teeth, in order to display Buddha's practices of filial piety. Such combination was definitely under the influence of the historical background including the advocations of the eminent monks like Zongze. But in viewing that most the scenes in Dafowan have textual basis, though with sometimes modifications or add-ons, it is unlikely for the developer to make huge scenes on the basis of a monk's work.

At Xiaofowan Buddha Śākyamuni as the main cult figure is seated with crossed legs within the mandala behind him. His head is weathered and the face is fallen off (Fig. 5.11). Clad in a monk's robe he holds an alms bowl with his left hand before the belly. The hand gesture is unclear since the hands have already gone. Around the mandala behind the Buddha pattern of flames are carved and inside are the halo and aureole behind the Buddha. Above him there is a row of figures, in the middle of which seems to be a building above the head of Buddha resembling the heavenly palace. The figures on the either side of the palace are heavily blurred and they might be the figures from the Five Paths. Below the Buddha are the pattern resembling the hanging curtains. The Stele of Praising the Buddha Teeth do not appear here.

The representations of sutras

On the left wing

At Dafowan on Buddha's either side are generally the scenes related with Buddha's rewarding to the parents in his past and present lives. On the lower layer of Buddha's left side is the representation of the beginning episode from the Sutra, the six heterodox masters slandering Buddha as non-filial: As Ananda entered into the town for begging food, there he saw a man filially supporting his parents carrying his parents in two baskets hung over a shoulder-pole and praised the man for supporting his parents. Then the six heterodox masters and disciples said to Ananda that Buddha was not filial, since he gave up his parents and went out of the town without knowing the kindness of parents and committing his responsibility. Having heard that Ananda felt to be shamed and went to Buddha and asked about the filialty in the Buddhist dharma. Thus Buddha radiated five coloured light to the ten directions and showed in his body the Five Gatis, and preached the Sutra telling about the filial practices in Buddha's past lives. It was pointed out in the Sutra that Buddha obtained the supreme enlightenment just because of his filial virtue.

Here the episode is carved on a plate underneath the left side of Buddha's body and shown through a row of standing figures (Fig. 5.51): on the left end is Ananda in monk's robe with clouds pattern behind his head having a puzzled expression on his face; next to him is the filial son carrying his parents with the shoulder-pole and the baskets who are seated with crossed legs and smiles and hold each a round cake in the hands; behind them are the six heterodox teachers: Pūraṇa-Kāśyapa, Maskari-Gośālīputra, Sañjaya-Vairāṭīputra, Ajita-Keśakambala, Kakuda-Kātyāyana, and Nirgrantha-Jñātrputra.⁴³⁰ They were actually the six main streams of philosophy contemporary to Buddhism in India. Here they are sculpted as the vicious enemies of Buddha. The first clothed in long robe one has a dick chin and points at the filial son with forefinger while turning back his head to the opposite direction. The second one with a short hair stands next to him with his left hand before the chest and seems to be absentminded. The next one wears a big hut and holds a set of six clappers on his right side and seems to dance with the rhythm. Above between him and the next one a half statue of the fluting woman is made, who blows the transverse flute on one end and hold the flute with both hands on the other end (Fig. 5.52). The fifth one with beard and a small hut has his mouth wide opened and seem to dance after the rhythm and music. The lower part of the last one is heavily weathered but it is still visible that he wears a big round hut and might dance together with his companions to mock at Buddhism.

The same representations are to be found in the cave no. 3 at Xiaofowan in the inner place of the sidewalls. On the left wall at the lower register are Ananda, the son of filial piety carrying his parents in baskets and the six heretics (Fig. 5.53). Most of their head are fallen down, however the figures of playing drum or dancing are still visible. The difference between the two places are that here are two figures above four not like at Dafowan one figure above five.

At Dafowan above the six heterodox teachers in the middle layer are two stories not all from the same sutra: near the Buddha statue is a scene from the Jataka story of Jāti (Fig. 5.54). In the past there was a king who had a son born named Jāti, the former life of Buddha Śākyamuni in his causal stage. Because the enemy Rāhu evilly rebelled, the king held the prince and escaped to the neighbouring country. It was still far away after the food was exhausted. The Prince offered flesh every day from his own body to support the parents alongside the their way of escape, and in the end his body recovered as usual according to

⁴³⁰ For the heretic figures appeared in the rock carvings, see Hu Tongqing, "Dazu 'shijia xingxiao'," 179-196, especially 184-185 about the six figures.

5.2. Three Niches concerning the Filial Piety

his great vow. The whole story is represented here only by the royal family (Fig. 5.55). The king in long robe supports himself with a sword on the ground and holds the little prince on his left arm. The little prince has holes on his both arms indicating that he offered his own flesh. The queen wearing a crown faces to the two and receives the flesh of her son with both hands.

At Xiaofowan the story of cutting own flesh to support the parents (Fig. 5.57) is also placed in the middle register. Also here the father holds the young son on his left arm and supports himself with a sword on the ground facing to the mother with followed maid. Above them are the Indras in kneeling pose. At Dafowan the maid and Indra do not appear, while the other three are similarly arranged.

The story next to it is also related with the offer of the body, but not to the parents but to the tigress. It is the renowned Jataka story of Sattva donating his own body to the hungry tigress and the seven tigers. In the illustration in the niche 17 at Dafowan the remains of Prince Sattva's body is placed on a table behind which the parents stand (Fig. 5.56). The father in official hat and long robe holds the heads of his son and the mother with appearance of a dignified lady touches her son's feet mournfully. Between them above the body on the rear wall a figure with halo is represented on a cloud descending from the heaven. Behind the father half of a tigress stretches out with her mouth widely opened. On the front side of the table the narrative text of the story is carved. Notably the text does not tell much about the story, but concentrates the content how the in Tuṣita reborned Prince Sattva consoles his extremely grief-stricken parents.

In the cave no. 3 at Xiaofowan the Jataka story of Feeding Tigress is also to be found at the outer position and fashioned in similar manner with the body of the prince laid on a table (Fig. 5.57). The king and queen touch the head and feet of the prince while a tigress carved under the table with half body emerged. Behind him there is still a tree. Above them there seem to be three figures. Although the construction of the main scene is similar, at Dafowan the trees are indivisible and only one Indra stand behind the table.

In the niche 17 another story about the filial piety of Buddha's previous life is seen on the right of the landlord and parrot: Śākyamuni in his causal stage practising filial piety by gouging out eyes and taking out marrow as medicine. Prince Kṣānti knew his father the king suffering heavy disease and his life on the verge of death and in seeking of medicine to treat and cure. As the Prince knew that the eyes of a non-anger person and his marrow could

save the life of the king, he called Caṇḍāla to gouge both his eyes and break bones to take out marrow for his father. On the stone there are altogether five figures carved (Fig. 5.58). On the left sits the ill king on a stool and stretches out his left hand to the doctor before him. The doctor holds the king's hand with his left arm and feels the pulse with his right hand. Behind the doctor is a group of three persons. The Prince with his back to the doctor is seated with crossed legs and joins his hands before his chest. Before him is the Caṇḍāla with beard who is gouging out the eye of the prince with a knife. Beside them kneels a maid who holds a round plate to keep the prince's eyes. The plate of inscription explaining the story is placed directly under the king and the doctor.

Almost similarly constructed as at Dafowan the story of digging flesh is placed at the outer position of the upper layer at Xiaofowan. Between the scene and the Buddha a tree is carved with the twigs stretched into the ceiling of the cave (Fig. 5.60).

The next scene of the left wing is actually no story but the claim of Buddha that he obtains the thirty-two and eighty good marks due to the virtue of filial piety in the Sutra of Great Expedient Buddha Rewarding the Kindness. The representation is somewhat puzzling. There are altogether four figures (Fig. 5.58): on the left is sitting one with the appearance of a bodhisattva (or a lady?) with splendid flower crown and clad in long robe with broad sleeves. At his feet kneels a young-looking person with both hands joined before the chest piously to a sitting figure before him. Between them is a person with the appearance of the layman with official hat and long robe, pointing the sitting figure next to him with the forefinger. The sitting figure, who should be Buddha according to the story, has surprisingly an extraordinary appearance from the traditional Buddha. He has curled hair over his ears and is clad in a long robe with broad sleeves and joins his hand leisurely before his belly. Below the last figure is the plate with the narrative inscriptions about the scene.

At Xiaofowan on the upper register at inner place is the representation of thirty-two marks with three figures (Fig. 5.60): the Buddha on the left sits with crossed legs and the other two are seated with their hands before their bellies. At Dafowan is a figure more that kneels before the Buddha.

At Dafowan on the upper layer of the niche three stories are represented. On the right corner is the Jataka story of a parrot who filially supports his parents (Fig. 5.59): there was a parrot whose parents were both blind. He usually picked and gathered vegetables and fruits

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to nurture his parents. Then there was a landlord who made the vow at the beginning when he planted the grains that all the planted would be shared with the sentient beings. Then the parrot picked and took the heads of the rice to support his parents. At that time the landlord walked along the field of rice seeing the heads of rice cut and suddenly he became angry and caught the parrot with net. As the landlord learned that the parrot supports his blind parents with rice he was pleased and then let the parrot go. And he promised to donate with the rice to make him to support and nurture his parents. The story is quite briefly represented here with only the landlord and the parrot on his left hand. With the right hand before the chest, the landlord in a long robe seems to be just talking with the parrot. Below them is the relevant plate of inscription.

At Xiaofowan a tree is represented at the right corner of the upper layer, however it can not be confirmed if the figures from the story were carved or not (Fig. 5.60).

On the right wing

At Dafowan the representations on Buddha's right is almost symmetrically arranged with three stories on the upper layer, two in the middle and a scene with a sequence of persons at the lowest place (Fig. 5.61). The two stories close to the Buddha statue on the upper layer are the only two from the Sutra of Rewarding. The one on the right is the Jataka story of Śākyamuni in his causal stage as the prince with a delivering-letter wild goose. Prince Good Friend sailed in the sea to seek the treasure and stayed in another country. Then the queen wrote a letter and tied on the neck of the wild goose raised by the prince. After reading the letter brought by the wild goose the prince knew that his parents missed him and their eyes went blind. At once he returned to his country and healed the eyes of the blind parents with the maṇi pearl. Here the story is illustrated mainly through three figures (Fig. 5.62): on the right kneels the prince with both hands holding the plate with maṇi pearl. Before him sits the blind king and queen while the queen is heavily weathered. Above between them is a flying goose with a scroll of letter in its mouth. The narrative inscription is carved on the plate before the half statue of the queen.

At Xiaofowan the story of the wild goose with two figures is seen in the middle register (Fig. 5.65). In the central is the flying wild goose with a letter in its mouth. Before it the prince kneels with the luminous pearl together with a weathered figure (the king?). Though it is heavily weathered, it is still visible that the composition here is as same as that at Dafowan.

The story next to it is Śākyamuni in causal stage gouging his own flesh to learn the Buddhist dharma. As Buddha was in his causal stage as the king Cakravarti he issued decrees everywhere for the sake of seeking. There was a Brahmana claiming to know about the dharma. Then the king gouged one thousand holes on your body of the king and burn lamps as the offerings in order to learn the dharma. The story is represented by three figures (Fig. 5.63). On the right is the sitting Brahman who seems to tell the Gata while showing two fingers with the right hand and putting the left on his left knee. Facing to him is the king Cakravarti who has taken off his clothe and hung on the ast of large tree beside him. He joins his both hand before the chest to receive the Gata from the Brahman piously and is prepared to endure the promised agony that will be carried out by the Caṇḍāla behind him. At Xiaofowan one finds the story on the upper register (Fig. 5.65), which is similarly constructed as at Dafowan.

The story on the upper left corner of niche 17 at Dafowan is Śākyamuni in causal stage as Syama practising filial piety. In the last there was an old blind man who has a son with the name Syama. As Syama ten years old, he followed his parents into the mountain to gather fruits and take water. Then the king was hunting and shooted Syama in the chest with arrow by mistake und killed him by poison. The Indra was moved by the filial piety of Syama and they gave medicine to renew [Syama's] life as usual and made the parents' eyes opened. The scene on the stone depicts the moment when Syama was hit by the King and the Indra came down with medicine to heal him (Fig. 5.64). Syama lies on a platform of a rock while his blind parents hold his head and body and look upwards into the sky mournfully. Behind the father stands the Indra in long robe holding the calabash filled with medicine. The king was carved with a bit distance from the four. In the clothes of hunting with the archer's quiver and a treasured sword hung on his waist he joins his both hands before the chest and gazes the hurted Syama frighteningly. The relavent inscription is carved on a plate before the rock on which Syama lies.⁴³¹

At Xiaofowan although the outer position of the upper layer is almost totally weathered, but in the light of the remained profiles of the figures it can still be found the figures from the story of Syama (Fig. 5.65), which is made in the same manner like that at Dafowan.

⁴³¹ The story of Syama was represented in many Buddhist caves in the Central Asia and north China, since in the sutra many virtues like filial piety or loyalty etc. cherished by Chinese are included, what is not common in Buddhist sutras. It shows clearly that the virtue of filial piety exists originally in Buddhism, which is just not stressed as in Chinese Confucianism. For study of the subject, see Xie Shengbao, "Cong 'shanzi jingbian'," 254-272.

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Like the right wing there is also a story carved on the left which is actually irrelevant with the filial piety. The Jataka story of Śākyamuni in causal stage practising abandoning his body for seeking the dharma is placed in the middle layer near the main statue of Buddha. As the bodhisattva practised the ascetics, the indras and other heavenly beings had frightenness in their minds and assembled and test him if he could be capable of carrying the heavy burdens of bodhisattva. Then he showed in an appearance of a rākṣasa and descended to the snow mountain and said the half of a verse: whatever is phenomenal is impermanent, that is the dharma of birth and extinguish. For the sake of hearing the second half of the whole verse: After the birth and extinguish are extinguished, the nirvana is the joyfulness. The bodhisattva offered his body to the rākṣasa by throwing himself from the cliff but before he reached to the ground the rākṣasa restored his form to Indra and saved him. Here the story is shown through three figures (Fig. 5.66). On the right falls the boy in long robe downwards and his right leg is hung by an arm of a tree while he joins both hands before his chest. In the middle kneels the Indra clothed in long robe and official hat stretching out his left hand to receive the falling boy. Behind him stands the rākṣasa – the form the Indra has transformed – with monstrous facial appearance and flaming hair. Clothed like a jailer he stretches out his right hand indicating the scene before him. It is notably that the two forms of the Indra are rendered on the scene that appears in different time in the story. The plate with the inscription is put between the falling boy and the Buddha statue.⁴³²

At Xiaofowan the Jataka story of the snow mountain boy is carved near to the Buddha statue, but the corresponding place here is too small for any narrative scenes. Curiously, in the central place of the middle register there is a scene with two layers and six or seven figures which can not be related to any of the scenes at Dafowan or identified (Fig. 5.67).

The scene on the left part of the middle layer at Daofowan depicts the moment when Buddha visited his dying father. Before Buddha's father the king Śuddhodana died he wished to see his son Siddhārtha once. Knowing this the World Honoured One radiated great brightness that shined on the king's body and his illness and sufferings were appeased. Buddha came and put his hand on the forehead of his father and appeased him. The king on his lying place revered Buddha with his joined palms and his life was exhausted. Buddha

⁴³² This Brāhmaṇa jātika was beloved since early. Of the famous representation of this jātika from the 6th century are those in Middle Cave at Xiaonanzhai, Cave 285 at Dunhuang and the Tamamushi shrine from Horyūji etc. See Hsu, Eileen Hsiang-ling, *The Xiaonanzhai cave-chapel*, 46-52.

said the assembling: King Śuddhodana has abandoned this body and was reborn in the heaven of purity dwelling. Here we see the dying King Śuddhodana on a bed. Buddha inclines to his father with his right hand on his father's forehead and the left touching his father's hand (Fig. 5.68). A ray of light radiates from the gipfel of Buddha shrouding the body of his father. Behind Buddha stand Ananda in monk's robe and prays with the joint hand before his chest. At the feet of the King Śuddhodana also stands a man in official clothes and hut with accessories while touching the king's feet with both his hands.

The two stories from the Sutra of Suddhodana at Xiaofowan are represented in a more enriched manner than those at Dafowan. The story of Buddha visits the ill father has the similar composition as at Dafowan, but behind the bed and Buddha and Ananda about nine or ten figures are added (Fig. 5.69).

The last scene of Buddha's filial piety of niche 17 at Dafowan is Buddha carrying personally the coffin of his Father. Symmetrically to the right the figures on the lower layer of the left wing are also arranged almost in a procession (Fig. 5.70). It is the scene that Buddha personally carries the coffin of his father by the funeral for the sake of setting up instruction for the sentient beings in the end of the world (Fig. 5.71). On the left is the pagoda for the King Śuddhodana of which two eaves are visible with the inscription "The Treasure Pagoda for the Śārīra of the Great King Śuddhodana". Leading the procession is the half brother of Buddha called Nanda in soft hut and cloak who holds a long incense burner while turning his head backwards slightly. Behind him Buddha carries the coffin of his father by supporting the thick stick on his shoulder with both hands. Behind Buddha two carriers support the stick with their shoulders strenuously. From the summit of Buddha two rays of light radiate upward and between them one reads the inscription: The great filial son Buddha Śākyamuni carrying personally the coffin of the father the king. The coffin of the King Śuddhodana is carved as a large double-layered one of which the eaves of the two layer and the inscription "Imperial carriage of King's coffin". Behind the coffin stands Ananda, the nephew of the dead king, and Rāhula, the grandson. Both wear soft hut over their head and long robe, join both hand before the chests and show the mournful facial expression. Behind Rāhula is the plate with the corresponding inscription of the story.⁴³³

⁴³³ For the research of the niche no. 15 of Dafowan see among others, Yan Wenru, "Dazu Baoding shiku." Hu Wenhe, "Dazu baoding he Dunhuang." Hou Chong, "Zongze 'xiaoxinglu'."

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The scene of Buddha carrying his father's coffin is made with much more figures than that at Dafowan. Up to almost twenty figures are around the three-layered coffin of the king (Fig. 5.72). The form of the coffin with flying corners and four fold wheels here is quite different from that at Dafowan, which is more sinicized comparatively. The funeral parade at Xiaofowan is placed around the King's coffin. Similar to that at Dafowan Buddha in a monk's robe is placed in the front of coffin. With the numerous heavenly kings carrying the coffin, the flags carrier, leaders and followers a magnificent royal funeral is depicted while the scene at Dafowan with only six figures is made rather in a brief and symbolic manner. But the reliquary pagoda of the Suddhodana at Dafowan is not shown here, which is the main difference between the two versions of representations.

Sutras for the representations

The contents of the scene no. 17 is quite enriched. Viewed in general the scene is mainly made of the contents from the Sutra of Buddha's Rewarding, which includes the Buddha radiating light and showing the Five Gatis, about half of the scened stories and the huge gata above the scenes. The Sutra is including in the third band, belonging to the category of "Original Causes" together with other sutras relating with the Buddha's stories. With seven scrolls or nine chapters the sutra of medium length seems to be a compilation of various shorter texts, which are possibly originated from India or central Asia rather than China. The translator of the sutra is unclear with only a note meaning that the sutra might be translated during the Eastern Han (27-221), but the scholars are more inclined to date the text to the time of the Wei and Jing time from the characters of its language.⁴³⁴

The contents of the Sutra is consistent with what the rock carvings show, but with more stories what are not depicted in the rock carvings. The presented stories are only some selected from the sutras, the six heretics slandering Buddha, the story of cutting flesh for the parents, Cakravati King (the story has actually nothing to do with filial piety and that shows the original sutra was not absolutely centralize as a compiled one), the story of Prince Good Friend, the story of Patient Prince, the Buddha obtaining thirty-two and eighty good marks because of filial piety. Many stories in the sutra, such as the story of setting up mind to Bodhi heart, the story of deer daughter etc., are not seen in the rock carvings. Besides the representation of the stories are considerably simplified with mostly only one

⁴³⁴ Fang Yixin, "Fanyi fojing yuliao niandai de yuyanxue kaocha".

scene or several figures of the whole story. If without the inscription explaining the story they would be hard to identify and even those texts are abridged and not excerpts from the original and the order of the stories are not made after the sutra text. Therefore even the stories from the sutra are not the illustration of the sutra “Jingbian”, let alone there are still many scenes not in the sutra but selected from other sutras.

The last two stories on the right part of the scene, Buddha visiting his ill father and Buddha carrying his father’s coffin, are taken from the Sutra of King Śuddhodana’s Parinirvana. The sutra is including in Taisho volume 14, translated by Ququ Jingsheng, quite short and in a archaic style. The sutra tells the story that Buddha and his disciples visited his ill father and held the funeral for him preaching the filial piety in Buddhism. The depicted scenes and inscriptions in the rock carving are undoubtedly made according to that sutra.

Still two other stories relating Buddha practising filial piety to his parents in the former lives are depicted here, the story of a parrot and the story of Syama, on the upper corners of either side, which come not from the Sutra of Buddha’s Rewarding. The story of the parrot comes from the Sutra of Mixed Treasure with ten scrolls and more than 130 Jataka stories. Among them the story of parrot is the third by which Buddha taught the monks to sustain and make good deeds to their parents (T203). The story of Syama comes from the sutra with the same name, also a Jataka story with two translations: the one by anonyne dated to the Western Jin time, and the other by Shengjia in the Western Qin Dynasty. But the stories was also included in the much earlier compiled sutra the Compiled Sutra of the Six Paramithas (Kang Senghui, ? -280) as one of the earliest Jataka stories.

Besides the stories relating Buddha practising the filial piety in his former and present lives in the scene there are still two stories irrelevant with the filial piety: the story of Prince Sattva donating his body to the tigress on the left side and the story of boy of Snow Mountain on the right, both are well known jataka stories. The story of Sattva is seen in many Buddhist sutras and in Central Asia, China and Japan there are many art works depicting this story reserved, such as the wall painting and sculptures in Kizil, Dunhuang and Longmen etc.⁴³⁵ A quite famous is the Tamamushi shrine from Horyoji in Nara, on which the story together with the story of Snow Mountain boy are painted, showing the popularity of the two stories in Eastern Asia. The story of the Boy of the Snow Mountain is

⁴³⁵ For the comparison of the representation of the Sutra of Buddha rewarding the Kindness, see Hu Wenhe, “Dazu baoding he Dunhuang,”

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seen in the Nirvana Sutra and the Gata of four verses is a highly summarization of the Nirvana Sutra. The story is seen with many caves since the Northern Dynasties, such as in Baoshan Dazhushengku where the four verses were developed up to twelve, and in the middle cave of Xiaonanhai as relief, all that show its importance cherished by the influential monks and its popularity.

It is notably that all the twelve stories in the scene no. 17 are all based on sutras, though they might be of various sources. They are all dated before the Tang time and none of them are apocryphal, what is quite different from the case of no. 15 with definite apocryphal text as the source. That shows that the sutras, stories and the thoughts behind did not originate from China but imported from India or Central Asia. It is noteworthy here since the filial piety was originally contained in Buddhism, and it would be thus not proper to just stress the elements of Chinese culture.⁴³⁶ Nevertheless the inherent elements of filial piety in Buddhism had been emphasized and enlarged and made as sculptures to the public.

The gigantic scene with Buddha as centre concentrates on the filial piety of Buddha. The selected stories from the Sutra of Rewarding as well as the scenes from the Sutra of King S Nirvana both represent Buddha's virtue of kindly offering and sustaining of to his parents. The other two stories irrelevant with the filial piety is also not inconsistent with the main theme of the whole scene since the two well known Buddhist stories emphasized the virtues of Buddha of enduring and donating together with his virtue of filial piety. In viewing the advocacy of the contemporaneous influential monks such as Zongze about filial piety for the Buddhist monks, it is also proper to understand that rock carvings in Dafowan in accordance with the ethic of the time that the practices of Buddha offering his parents directly as the filial piety at home, and the other two stories related with Buddhist practising as the filial piety after leaving home.⁴³⁷ Only it lacks here the direct textual connection between the niche no. 17 and the texts by Zongze.

Compared the contents in the both sites, the illustrations from the Sutra of Buddha Rewarding Parent's Kindness in the both Dafowan and Xiaofowan are the most similar. It might be caused that one same model had been used for the two places while for the other contents were different model had been applied. It is not incidental since the both in Dafowan are also put in the corners and presumably added without charging the "original

⁴³⁶ See Thorpe, V.L., "Filial Piety and the Monk," 56-71.

⁴³⁷ Hou Chong, "Zongze Xiaoxinglu," 312-319

composition” of the sutra representation. In viewing of the similar composition and the common composing elements in the scene no. 17 and in the cave no. 3 the both seem to be made after a same master copy, which does not exist anymore.

5.3. Evaluation

Zhao Zhifeng (1159-1249)⁴³⁸

In the above discussed carvings of the three teachings there are mostly inscriptions about the relating donor or carver. But it is puzzling that no single original inscription or stele from the donor or carver, dating or function of the huge complex of rock carvings at Baodingshan have ever been found. Such situation might be caused by the extraordinary manner of accomplishing and its religious function, that the complex was not donated by a single family, but financed by innumerable believers, and it was not carved for the sake of accumulation merits but served as a sanctuary to preach Buddhism. Many traces in stone and historical documents show that it was a lay Buddhist Zhao Zhifeng who might have developed the rock carvings in the both sites of Xiaofowan and Dafowan.⁴³⁹

About Zhao there is no records in the conventional biographies of Buddhist monks.⁴⁴⁰ The information related with him comes mostly from the inscriptions on rocks and steles made long after his death. From the Song time the earliest one is the inscription by Yuwen Qi on the basement of the niche no. 5 at Dafowan (1223), the inscription below the wall of seven Buddhas in Xiaofowan and the narration in *Yudi jisheng* by Wang Xiangzhi.⁴⁴¹ From those indirect descriptions it is known that Zhao was a local person in Dazu, who became a monk as early as at the age five years old and travelled to Mimo (nearby Chengdu) for the sake of studying Buddhism when he was sixteen. After coming back he spread the doctrine found by a local lay Buddhist Liu Benzun during the time between late Tang and the Five Dynasties. In order to better propagate the advocations of Liu and his own Zhao initiated the rock carvings at first in Xiaofowan and later in Dafowan where he led the disciples

⁴³⁸ Zhao Zhifeng is presumed to live from 1159 to 1249. See Cao Lai (pseudonym of Chen Mingguang), “Zhao zhifeng zunian,” 196-199.

⁴³⁹ Concerning the study about Zhao Zhifeng and the rock carvings in Dafowan see among others Hu Zhaoxi, “Dazu baodingshan shike qinalun.” 65-67. Sørensen, Henrik H., “Zhao Zhifeng and Esoteric,” 242-250. For the discussion of Zhao Zhifeng and the virtue of filial piety, and its relation with the complex, see Chen Mingguang, “Baoding shiku,” 191-193.

⁴⁴⁰ For the proofs about Zhao Zhifeng reserved in rock carvings and historical documents see Yang Xiong, “Zhaozhifeng shengping zaikao.”

⁴⁴¹ See Chongqing, *Dazu shike mingwenlu*, 233.

meditating, practising and carrying out Buddhist rituals as well as preaching Buddhism to the public. Under his efforts during the Southern Song time the temple and the complexes of Baodingshan became renown and a centre of Buddhism in the region.

The facts that Zhao studied in Mimo and made images of Liu show that Zhao was strongly influenced by Liu. About Liu, although also no biographies in the historical documents, there is a stele about him carved shortly after his death. He was active during the time between late Tang and the Five Dynasties in the Sichuan region as a lay Buddhist practising Esoteric Buddhism and asceticism. He was alleged to have practised “ten cultivations”, ten kinds of self-mutilation of the body and after his death he was apotheosized and worshipped as the Liu Benzun, a transformation of Buddha Vairocana.⁴⁴² It was more than 250 years later when Zhao propagated Liu in Dazu and claimed himself as a follower. Actually Zhao used the fame and the local influence of Liu to legitimate his status and enlarge his influence. Zhao had also practised certain self-mutilations like cutting ear and putting burning incense on top of head etc., in order to connect his doctrine with that of Liu. However the social and religious difference between the Southern Song and the Five Dynasties is vast and the doctrine of Zhao must have been unavoidably marked by the advocations of the contemporary monks of various schools. The complex at Baodingshan appears as a mixture of the various schools including Esoteric Buddhism, Huayan, Chan and Pure Land etc. Besides, elements of Buddhist rituals such as *shuilu* are also visible as well as the unification of the three teachings as seen in the niches no. 15-17. Such elements were contemporary to Zhao and must be done under his influence rather than under that of Liu. Also many extraordinary Chinese characters carved in the two sites and the Daoist deities show the Daoist influence in the local area.

In the rock carvings Zhao made great efforts to advocate the virtue of filial piety what made deep impression to the contemporary persons.⁴⁴³ About Zhao himself it was recorded in a stele of Ming time (1504) that he treated his mother kindly and devoted himself to Buddhist

⁴⁴² The historical figure Liu Benzun is one of the crucial problems of the study relating to the carvings in Dazu. For the study see among others Chen Mingguang, “Chongxi jiaobu songke,” 156, Wang Jiayou, “Liu Benzun yu Mijiao.” 168-174, Luo Zhao, “Shilun liu benzun,” 286-291, Huang Jinzhen, “Shilun dazu baodingshan”. About Liu’s “ten cultivation” and his image represented in rock carvings in Dazu and Anyue, see Chen Mingguang, “Sichuan moyan zaoxiang,” 242-255, Chen Mingguang and Hu Liangxue, “Sichuan moyan zaoxiang,” 624-657 and Hu Wenhe, “Anyue dazu ‘liu benzun’,” 256-267, Li Jingjie and Li Fangyin, “Dazu anyue songdai,” 49-88. For the classification of the representation of Liu Benzun in Dazu and Anyue, see He Wenhe, “Anyue dazu shiku,” 228-235.

⁴⁴³ The local official Yuwen Qi praised Zhao as “admirable for Zhao to make rock carvings to advocate the virtue of filial piety.”

monastery to make his ill mother healed.⁴⁴⁴ In viewing of the three niches in Dafowan and the cave no. 3 in Xiaofowan it is clear that the virtue of filial piety was highly valued by the teaching of Zhao and took an important place by the practice. As shown in the second chapter that the appreciation of the filial piety was closely related with the advocations of the great Buddhist monks in the Song time like Zongze, Zujue etc. Under such historical background and the influence of the prominent monks Zhao made rock carvings to advocate the virtue of filial piety and consciously laid stress on the status of emperors in the Buddhist context were all in accordance with the trend of the time when the Confucianist value filial piety and loyalty to the emperor was brought into Buddhism, which legitimated his doctrines and the rock carvings.⁴⁴⁵

Programme of the three niches 15 - 17

Since no scene in Dafowan had been repeated and the style of the sculptures appear consistent it is generally presumed that the complex might have been planed and finished within a short period of time for certain Buddhist ritual. Until now no study can satisfactorily explain all the problems and it would be beyond the subject of this paper to evaluate all the scenes to discuss the programme of the whole complex. It is undisputable that the scenes and deities in Dafowan were made under the influence of local Esoteric Buddhism, namely through the teachings by Liu and Zhao, and the groups of holy representations could have been worshipped during more than one certain Buddhist rituals, including the above-mentioned *shuilu*. For the three niches of filial piety, niche no. 15 to 17, the three are placed one next to another and relatively independent from the scenes next to them. Since the same contents of no. 15 and 17 were seen in the cave no. 3 of Xiaofowan, the three scenes in Dafowan can be regarded as being belonged to one cave, and expanded and enlarged in a much larger setting. Nevertheless, the setting does not change the fact that there has been a general programme for the three niches that might be relatively independent from the whole group at Dafowan.

As to the programme of the three scenes the one suggested by Hou Chong is the most feasible.⁴⁴⁶ He suggested that all the three scenes were made on the basis of *Xiaoxinglu* by Zongze. It is apparent that the three scenes advocated, represented the filial piety, which is

⁴⁴⁴ It is unlikely since he became Buddhist monk at the age of five according to the inscriptions from the Song time.

⁴⁴⁵ Wang Tianxiang and Li Qi, "Jiangou, Zhuanshu yu Chongshi," 115-117.

⁴⁴⁶ Hou Chong, "Zongze *Xiaoxinglu*," 306-327.

in accordance with the spirit of *Xiaoxinglu*. But for the rock carving it is lack of sufficient materials to combine the two. By comparing the rock carvings and the texts of *Xiaoxinglu* reserved in *Xiaoshunyi* Hou tried to find out the sentences and stories in common to support his opinion. However, since the original *Xiaoxinglu* is not extant it cannot be clarified about the detail and remains as a presumption. For the difference between the contents in the rock carvings and *Xiaoxinglu* Hou presumes that it was caused by the different inclination of the both authors by the selection of *Xiaoxinglu*, which sounds feasible but cannot be proved. Logically we cannot deduce A (rock carvings) and C (*Xiaoxinglu*) to be identical, if A and B (*Xiaoshunyi*), B and C are partly in common respectively. In my opinion, as almost all the niches and deities in Dafowan have forerunners in local area, the three niches of no. 15-17 and the cave no. 3 at Xiaofowan would also likely have been made after certain master copy either of 2-dimensional (picture) or even of 3-dimensional (rock carvings). In fact, of the three niches the no. 15 has at least a woodcut which has the similar elements as in rock carvings, and for the niche no. 16 has more than one forerunners as rock carvings in the nearby area. Only in Dafowan certain modification and add-ons were made. The same situation is also applicable to the niche no. 17, although such material may not exist any more. The *Xiaoxinglu* by Zongze can be rather seen as a good example which shows that those stories from Buddhist texts could be collected by certain monk in order to represent his certain thoughts. Since no full text of *Xiaoxinglu* is delivered, the text reserved in *Xiaoshunyi* is incomplete, and in scene no. 17 no any text by Zongze and short of any historical recordings about the relation between them, it is hard to connect the lost book with the rock carvings directly, though it is possible that the representations of this kind might be influenced by books like *Xiaoxinglu*.⁴⁴⁷

For the programme of the three huge scenes the direct material is the cave no. 3 in Xiaofowan. Up till now all the scholars skip the cave while discuss this subject since they believe that the content of the small cave is totally identical with that of the three niches at Daofowan. As shown in the analysis above in fact though the contents are similar there are many notable difference concerning the setting, function and the composition of the representations as well as many details between the two, which betray us important historical information about the three scenes in Dafowan.

⁴⁴⁷ The wording of texts in *Xiaoxinglu* differs also noticeably from those in all the three scenes which will not be discussed in detail here.

The setting of the cave no. 3 in Xiaofowan is something comparable to an altar, and the artificial cave is rather like a cave for meditation. The small cave with images on the three walls can only contain one person. In meditation, the indispensable means of practice, the monks need images of Buddha or bodhisattva before him to help them to envision them. Sitting in the small cave one faces directly before the central image of Buddha Śākyamuni and his virtue of filial piety. The content for meditation is especially notable, for filial piety has never been seen in any other Buddhist caves. In viewing of the historical background of the three teachings in the Song time and the content in the sutra that Buddha obtained the 32 and 80 good marks through the virtue of filial piety, it is reasonable for filial piety to become the content in the Buddhist meditation. The filial piety took the place of precepts and the actual mundane virtue was emphasized here as important as the Six Paramitas and became the content of meditation, which was first seen in the Buddhism of Song time. Besides, the composition of cave no. 3 is also noticeable: in the centre dominates the Buddha in the round mandorla and the contents from both sutras are spread on his either side while the Sutra of Buddha's Requiting the Kindness in inner place and the Sutra of the Kindness of Parents in outer place. The composition of the images in cave no. 3 reminds that of a mandala in which Buddha takes the centre and the deities around him hierarchically. In the stone cave the arrangement was accordingly changed with the ten kindnesses at the outer space and the filial piety of Buddha in the inner space so that the practitioner could meditate the virtue of filial piety as the means to acquire the highest enlightenment. That could be the main content of the meditation of filial piety in the cave.⁴⁴⁸

From Xiaofowan to Dafowan the meditation of filial piety has both connection and change. For the connection the idea of "filial piety as precepts" has not been changed, the main contents and stories from the both sutras not change, and even the manner and arrangement of the representations, which might be caused by the similar master copies. Walking from the scene no. 15 to no. 17 the visitor would see the similar contents as the monks meditated in the small cave. But the changes are also obvious: long explanatory inscriptions were added including the related sutra text and praises; the imaging of the stories became more evident. Most notably the addition of punishment from the heaven was added as the negative examples in contrast to the good deeds of Buddha. The changes were made because of the change of the function: the small cave at Xiaofowan was for the

⁴⁴⁸ In the sutra text carved for the niche no. 18 it is carved that the filial piety is the most important cause for all the Buddhas of the last, present and future accomplishing the highest enlightenment. See Chen Mingguang, "Baodingshan shiku," 192, and "Dazu baodingshan," 236, 237 and 240.

meditation of monks who only needed to meditate the good, while the representations of the three scenes in Dafowan were to teach the public and therefore the negative examples were required to enforce the effect of preaching. The group of the scenes was thus changed from the objects for the meditation of monks to the teaching materials to the public, and for that purpose the inscribed Buddhist texts were also helpful.⁴⁴⁹

Relation of the three teachings

Concerning the form of the three teachers in the former sites Kongzi and Laozi have appeared as flanking figures of Buddha. As the sinicization of Buddhism such form of combination is rather superficial and it shows that the worshippers of Buddhism or the three teachings were still unable to represent the unified spirit of the three teachings in the rock carvings. In Dafowan the three teaching are merged naturally with Buddhist appearance and Confucianist spirit with the Daoist deities as a kind of power, which was consciously stressed and decided by the strong tradition of Daoism in the region.

The assembling of the three teaching in the three scenes is quite different from the situations of the aforementioned sites. In other sites there are always the definite representations of the assemblage of the three teachers with varied the form and size, but that cannot be seen in the three scenes in Dafowan. Notably, the images in the three niches at Dafowan were based on sutra texts, among which there are also apocryphal Buddhist text or an assemblage of various ones. The images have always textual reference, which means that the assemblage of the three teachings had been finished in the texts.⁴⁵⁰ The rock carvings are just the materialization of the available ideology and contents from texts, which is the greatest difference from the other sites of three teachings. That the above-mentioned sites have various forms of the assemblage of the three teaching is among others because they were not built on basis of a certain text but out of the belief or need of the donors and just have a rather arbitrary arrangement.

Of the priority of the three teachings Buddhism dominated the scenes in all the former sites. The rituals reflected by the statues, or the size, placement and status of the statues show

⁴⁴⁹ For the study of the carvings in Dafowan from the viewpoints of texts, space of meaning and audience, see Wang Tianxiang, "YiYi xitong," 49-55.

⁴⁵⁰ The three teachings reflected in the Sutra of the Greatness of Parent's Kindness see Okabe Kazuo, "*Fumu enzhongjing* zhong de rujiao, fojiao, daojiao." For the relation of filial piety and the three niches concerning their historical background, the mutual influence between the three teachings and the social function of the filial piety, see Hu Zhaoxi, "Dazu baoding shike yu 'xiao'," 83-100, Hu Liangxue, "Dazu shike 'xiao' wenhua," 156-191.

obviously the dominating status of Buddhism. In Dafowan the order of the three teachings is not so apparent any more. At first glance Dafowan may appear to be a Buddhist world in which the three niches are embedded, and Kongzi and Laozi disappeared here. But actually the spirit of the three niches is the Confucian virtue of filial piety what is never seen in other Buddhist context. It seems that in Dafowan Confucianism dominates the three niches with the assistance of other two teachings. While to Buddhists, they would not regard themselves totally subjected to Confucianism, since there is also the virtue of filial piety within Buddhism. For them the greatest filial piety is to make their parents become Buddhist, what did not contradict the Buddhist doctrine at all.

Viewed from the perspective of the three teachings, the unification of the three teaching at Baodingshan was actualized more on the level of ideology and belief, which reflected the social background of the three teachings more obviously. The former five sites were more or less related with individuals or Buddhist societies, such as Yan Xun, Feng Ji or a group of believers from a village. What the three niches in Dafowan reflected was a social trend, and the merging of the three teachings or the sinicization of Buddhism have been forged in the texts and widely spread. Under such social background Zhao Zhifeng formed a sanctuary by combining successfully the available representations or deities for propagating Buddhism, the virtue of filial piety and the power of Daoist deities. Only under the condition of a mature social supports could he make the combination and would be accepted by the believers.

6. Conclusion: Who is the Winner?

In the above chapters both the statues of the three teachings and those from other niches of the same group in the six sites have been studied and analyzed in detail. By exploring the related historical figures and the programme or ritual function of the carvings, the significance of the three teachings and the correlation between them and the other statues in the whole group as well as the relation between them three are evaluated. Concerning the form of the unification the carvings of the three teachings in this paper can be summarized in the following table:

Site	Form	Placement of the three teachings		
Shizhuanshan	Independent niches	Kongzi	Buddha	Laozi
Miaogaoshan	In one cave.	Kongzi	Buddha	Laozi
Fo'anqiao	On a row	Laozi	Buddha	Kongzi
Shibisi	On a row	Laozi	Buddha	Kongzi
Daboruodong	On a row	Laozi	Buddha	Kongzi
Dafowan	Ideologically unified	Illustrations from Buddhist sutras and gods of weather		

Table 6.1 Form and arrangement of the three teachings in the six sites

From the table it can be seen that the form of the representation of the three teachings in the carvings of the six places has experienced great changes. From the earliest in Shizhuanshan (at the end of 11th century) to the huge niches in Dafowan (in the first half of the 13th century) they were coming more and more closer. That is, from independent niches (Shizhuanshan), to coexisting in one cave while each dominates one wall (Miaogaoshan), to being arranged on one row (Fo'anqiao, Shibisi and Daboruodong), at last to Dafowan where the three teachings flawlessly unified without the appearance of Kongzi and Laozi.

Concerning the relation of the three teachings in the various sites their relation and status are not always the same, but constantly keeping changing. The three niches in Shizhuanshan appear to be independent with less interaction, but the comprehensive observation has shown that the Three Buddhas still dominate the whole group in the central place, while Laozi and Kongzi subordinate the Buddhas either in special arrangement or in the hierarchy of the original ritual. In Miaogaoshan although the three masters gathered in one cave, their hierarchy is definitely exposed through their

placements, decorations of seats, halos and gestures etc. In those both places Laozi is placed on Buddha's left and superior to Kongzi on the right. Such arrangement might reflect the historical situation that Daoism was highly valued by the royal court of the Northern Song Dynasty. The situation was changed in the Southern Song Dynasty as seen in Fo'anqiao, Shibisi and Daboruodong: Kongzi was promoted to the left of Buddha and Laozi was downgraded to his right. This rearrangement could reflect the historical fact that the fanatic cult of Daoism by Huizong (1082-1135) accelerated the ending of the Northern Song Dynasty. In Dafowan the three teachings were perfectly unified. While the gigantic power of Buddhism in the whole complex is by no means invisible, the Confucian virtue of filial piety was praised as the highest virtue within the three niches, and the Daoist deities punished those who did not practice the detoned value. The obvious difference of the status between Confucianism and Daoism continued the trend after the end of the Northern Song that Daoism was hierarchally lower than Confucianism. From Shizhuanshan to Daofowan the unification developed from the juxtaposition of three teachers to the unification of the three teachings, what more or less witnessed the historical process of the ideological unification of the three teachings from the Tang to the Song Dynasties.

The form of the representations and the mutual relation between the three teachings in the rock carvings embodied the recognition and the understanding of the unification of the three teachings by the donors – the common people from various layers of the society, in relation to the corresponding rituals and the order of the three teachings.

Concerning the ritual and religious significance, Confucianism has its own tradition and rituals of ancestral cult, and the image of Kongzi was established since long in the Confucian temple in city. However, in the rock carvings of the Sichuan region Confucian carvings have never appeared independently but were only made in the carvings of three teachings. As the analyse above showed, the master of Confucianism was taken into the Buddhist rite and became a role in the pantheon, although with a considerable status, it was in fact that Kongzi was assimilated into Buddhism. As to the relation of the three teachings reflected in those rock carvings, Kongzi always flanked Buddha placed in the central place together with Laozi, which shows definitely the hierarchy of the three masters in the viewpoints of common people. Even in Dafowan although the three niches were unified under the Confucian ideology, the whole complex is a Buddhist world in the end.

With regard to the rituals and imaging, Daoism has a long history in the Sichuan region with great amount of believers. As Buddhism was spread forcefully, Daoism still was

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influential in Sichuan. As mentioned in the second chapter, Daoists were skilled in the rituals and the Buddhists have even borrowed from Daoist rituals. The rituals reflected in the rock carvings in *shuilu* show that Buddhists absorbed the essence and strong points from Daoism to enrich their own rituals. If the advantages of Daoism were taken over by Buddhism and the Daoist master Laozi was also included into Buddhist pantheon, it might also cause the conversion of the believers. As the Buddhism won more and more influence in Sichuan, the native region of Daoism, Daoism saw its delination, as echoed in the carvings of the three teachings.⁴⁵¹

Buddhist rituals were originally constrained within the monasteries and practised mainly by monks, such as chanting the Buddha names and confession. In the Song time Buddhist ritual has exerted a great influence on the spiritual life of common people. Combining the rites of funeral and the propagating of Mahayana Buddhism, the Buddhist rituals like *shuilu* were successful and influential. In this way Buddhism experienced a process of secularisation and served to fulfill the needs of common people. After hundreds of years of changing Buddhism came nearer to the common Chinese by absorbing the cult of ancestors from Confucianism and Daoist rituals. Praying for the fortune and expelling the evil became an important part of Buddhism. By all those means Buddhism succeeded in attracting more believers. Although the secularized Buddhism in the Song time lost plenty of its original essence as an ethical philosophy, it was successful in its transmission and enlargement of influence.⁴⁵² Buddhism was introduced into China together with its making of icons, which belonged to the key contents of Buddhism and have never been stopped by persecutions of Buddhism. In the carvings of the three teachings Buddha have always been represented in dominating place and thus the decisive status of Buddhism in the three teachings is apparent. Although ritual and worshipping of icons attracted mainly the lower layer in the society and was despised by the Confucianist officials, undoubtedly Buddhist image making won the majority of the society. Buddhism in China experienced from the acceptance of upper class to the worship of common people. The process of conquest and being conquered at the same time can be seen as the origination and development of a new religion. Compared with the other two teachings, Buddhism has won more and lost less in the unification.

⁴⁵¹ About the development of Daoism in relation with Confucianism and Buddhism see Hong Xiuping, “Lun daoia sixiang,” 37-42.

⁴⁵² For an overview of the distribution of Buddhism in Song see Cheng Minshen, “Lun songdai fojiao.”

As seen all the carvings of the three teachers in the six places are not isolated, but always accompanied by other deities within certain programme. The three teachers also came more and more closer to other deities, such as in Fo'anqiao with Arhat, in Shibisi with the Jade Emperor and in Daboruodong with the numerous guarding deities in one one cave. Thus the making of the three teachings were also not closed but an open combination of statues, not excluding new combination with other deities. In addition, the form and combination was mostly closely associated with the background from which the statues originated. As pointed out in the analysis of each site, Shizhuanshan and Shibisi was related with *shuilu* rite; Miaogaoshan was associated with the influential lay Buddhist Feng Ji and his assemblance of Pure Land; in Fo'anqiao and Daboruodong many historical remains and inscriptions were left from the common believers who donated statues and carried out rituals for the sake of fortune; the three niches in Dafowan were the most imposing representations in which Buddhism with virtue of filial piety was preached to the visitors. The context and function of the carvings have often decided and influenced the form of the three teachers and their combination with other deities.

Thus the unification of the carvings of the three teachings happened all within the frame of Buddhism. The unification can be regarded as the process that Confucianism and Daoism were absorbed into Buddhism. The extended Buddhism took the other two into its own system. Therefore Buddhism dominated the carvings of the three teachings definitely, or in other words, the unification of the carvings of the three teachings was accomplished by Buddhism, while during that process and many changes happened relating the various aspects of the unification from the Northern to Southern Song Dynasty. The unification of the three teachings by common people coincided with the unification of the three teaching concerning their rituals, and this process happened in accordance with the sinicization of Buddhism.

In contrast to the ideological unification of the three teachings by which the Confucianism was placed in centre by the elites since the Northern Song Dynasty, the common people responded the historical trend with the carvings of the three teachings with Buddhism in the centre, which a noteworthy historical phenomenon and has been detoned more times in this paper. Buddhism since Huiyuan was believed by the common Chinese, and until the

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Song Dynasties its unshakable status was confirmed, what made a contrast to the efforts of elite class who exalting native Chinese teachings.⁴⁵³

As a foreign culture in China both the philosophy and religion of Buddhism came from India. The advocacy of leaving the family and society to seek for the self-emancipation in Buddhism originated from the rebellion against the Brahmanism. But in China Buddhist philosophy and religion contradicted with the traditional Chinese ethic and value. Retrospecting Buddhism was introduced into China from the Eastern Han, through the Six Dynasties, Sui and Tang Dynasties until the Song Dynasties, it experienced the periods of initiating, developing, prospering and declining, as many civilisations experienced.⁴⁵⁴ Until the Song time Buddhism had been intensively sinicized and Buddhist philosophy had to compromise with Chinese ethic. The recognition of family and society, filial piety and loyalty to the emperor etc., which were originally incompatible with Buddhism, were all included overtly in the sinicized Buddhism. Buddhism in China was revisioned and in some aspects it might even contradict to what Buddha had taught. Buddhism made the compromise with the result that Buddhism was established and developed in China. It was deeply rooted in the beliefs of Chinese and became a national wisdom. The process of the sinicization of Buddhism is the unification or incorporation of Buddhism with the other two Chinese teachings.⁴⁵⁵

In comparison of the “pure” Buddhism until the Tang time, Buddhism in the Song time might not be original or orthodox, since Buddhism incorporated native Chinese culture and became the more sinicized and popular Buddhism.⁴⁵⁶ Judged from the original intention of Buddhism, which was aimed to save sentient beings, especially the people of lower class, Buddhism had won great success just because it indeed adapted itself to the Chinese culture and ethics. The extant rock carvings of the three teachings from the Song time in Chongqing and Sichuan witnessed the unification of Buddhism with the other two teachings

⁴⁵³ See Zürcher, Erik, *The Buddhist conquest of China*. Lu Xun believed that the merging of the three teachings reflected the general viewpoints and attitudes of Chinese to religions and it was a reflection of the character of Chinese. For his attitude to the merging of the three teachings, see Zheng Xinmiao, “Lu Xun lun ‘sanjiao heliu’”, 4-11.

⁴⁵⁴ Toynbee, Arnold, *A Study of History*.

⁴⁵⁵ About the relation of the three teachings and the sinicization of Buddhism see Hong Xiuping, “Ru fo dao sanjiao guanxi,” 81-93.

⁴⁵⁶ For a general study of the sinicization of Buddhism concerning of four aspects of religious system, philosophy, literature and art see Li Zhifu, “Fojiao zhongguohua,” 80-94. Also relating the sinicization of Buddhism from the viewpoint of theory see Hong Xiuping, “Lun handi fojiao,” 304-314.

and saw the last period of prosperity of Buddhism in China with vivid and abundant artistic works.

Appendix I

INSCRIPTIONS

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Translation:

A text warning people from damaging and moving the statues of the deities as well as breaking and hacking the pines and cypresses planted around the niches and the pagoda

Since the nirvana of Tathāgata Śākya[muni] it has been 2039 years until now, [and] his teaching has been prevailing in China for several thousand years. In those years for the sake of securing heirs and establishing schools there have been many of pretending to be original with repetitive incurrence,⁴⁵⁸ but what they pointed out were specious, and hence [Buddhism] has experienced persecutions and flourishments. However, that [Buddhism] has never died out in the end [is because] the teaching can make ignorant people avoiding the evil, tending to the good and appeasing the greediness; and can make virtuous persons comprehending the nature, realizing the truth and not being oblivious about the causes and results. Therefore to the regulations and laws assisting the former kings on governing, [Buddhism] has generally been supplementary and may not be absent even for one day.

It has been days since I read Buddhist sutras, yearly applied myself to practice and kept the fast. Born in the period of the last and decadent Law of Buddha, I neither came close to the Buddhist assamblence, nor participated in [the activities of] persuading and imploring [the appearance of Buddha]. Being far away from the Buddhist time, I wanted to hold Buddhist ceremonies but I was not able to do it. Therefore in order to revive that [Buddhist ceremonies] according to my ability, I bought the wonderfull place called Shizhuanshan in my living countryside with 500,000 units of money, have the cliffside chiselled and the statues sculpted with altogether fourteen ones. They are called: niche of Buddha Vairocana, Śākyamuni and Maitreya; niche of Buddha Prajvala with Eleven Stars; niche of Bodhisattava Avalokiteśvara; niche of Long Life King; niche of Bodhisattavas Mañjuśrī and Samantabhadra; niche of Bodhisattva King Kṣitigarbha; niche of Supreme Lord Lao; niche of King Propagator of Culture; niche of Monk Zhigong; niche of Medicine King the Perfect Man Sun; niche of Holy Mother; niche of the Spirit of the Earth; the Text of the Spirit of the Mount⁴⁵⁹ abiding in the pagoda of [the temple of] Fohui eternally.⁴⁶⁰ Around the niches,

⁴⁵⁸ The meaning of the four characters “多古復引” is unclear here.

⁴⁵⁹ In the newly discovered original inscription it is “山神” instead of “山王”. See Chen Zhuo, “Dazu shike shizhuanshan,” 354.

⁴⁶⁰ Different punctuation makes the meaning different here. Based on the following punctuation it is claimed by Chen Zhuo that all the fourteen can be found: 曰山神常住佛會塔記龕。 [曰] 堂塔。前後左右並植松柏及花果雜木等。 [Niche of Text of the Spirit of the Mount abiding in the pagoda of [the temple of] Fohui

[Buddha] halls and pagoda, pines and cypresses together with various flowers and fruit trees etc. were planted completely. In the fifth year of the reign period *Yuanyou* all the statues have been finished and the planted have also all grown flourishing. In the days of the spring [the site] became the place for the local people adoring [the statues of the deities] and visiting.

I am growing old and cannot live to see if the offspring after my death are wise or not, if there is someone who can accomplish my will⁴⁶¹ and often keenly protect and think about them. Thus I write my will to tell the world: first, all those of the niches, [Buddha] hall, pagoda and statues were done with the calculation of money and materials, by metriculously selected skilful artisans, for innumerable days, and they were decorated with gold and painted in colour,⁴⁶² from which I often wiped off the dust myself. [It is object to my will] if someone does not think of that, imprudently destroy and break them, and do not tell and instruct foolish children from playing there. Second, that within area of ten *zhang*⁴⁶³ in front of and behind the niches, [Buddha] hall and pagoda no house should be built but only be planted with pines and cypresses and flower and fruit trees, [is because] that the protection of houses would be ruined and shabby after a long time lack of maintainance, but the shadow from the thriveness of pines and cypresses is getting thicker as the time is longer. [It is object to my will] if someone does not think of that, but imprudently break and hack them. Third, the visitors and admirers are all good friends. [It is object to my will] if there come some not good persons who being wilfully ruthless and relying on power attack and humiliate others, or excessively drink and gamble or even fight with each other. All those three are really not my will of building the statues. If careless and not knowing to forbidden them, the root of misfortune would probably grow in the ground planted with fortune. In addition, the distance of hell and paradise is only as far as a thought, while the rewards and punishments are separated and clear as body and shadow, sound and echo, of which one should be aware and know. If the untill now built niches, [Buddha] hall, pagoda

eternally, [Buddha] halls and pagoda. Around pines and cypresses together with various flowers and fruit trees etc.] However it breaks the often used combination of *kan tang ta*, (龕堂塔, niches, [Buddha] hall and pagoda), which is not consistent with the whole text. There are altogether five times of *kan tang ta* appearing together in the text. Thus it is unlikely, as presumed that one character “曰” before “堂塔” was dropped during the copy. And the “堂塔” cannot be regarded as one *xiang* (statue) at any rate. See Chen Zhuo, “Dazu shike shizhuanshan,” 354.

⁴⁶¹ The character “智” here should be understood as “志”.

⁴⁶² The character “褫” (chǐ, strip, take away from) has no suitable meaning here and seems to be either wrongly copied here.

⁴⁶³ Unit of length (=3.3 meters).

and statues are together cherished and protected, the pines and cypresses as well as other flowers in the ten *zhang* area around the niches, [Buddha] hall and pagoda will not be broken and hacked, and the visitors and admirers bring forth the minds of happiness respectively, jointly arise the merciful and benevolent practices and together accomplish the Buddhist ceremony, they would fulfil my will and I will be happy.

I came originally from Runguo of Suizhou [County]. My father undertook the service in Xiaoxi and thus we have our home in the northern corner of the county. In the reign of Tiansheng as I was nine years old, my father moved to Changyuan to escape from the service. Now he lived in the house in Laichuan and became ill, while the neighbor's houses were just bought to enlarge the officials' house. After selling the house and knowing that father becomes ill, I then moved and thus settled down here and in the village Gucun, Tonggu and Shizhuan, I have planted pines and cypresses over hundred thousand. In the year of Xinyou (1081) I allocated then the manors in the three villages equally to my three sons, and yearly stored two thousand *hu*⁴⁶⁴ [of grains] to use as the expense for the feast of porridge and medicine etc., from the remains of which were the expense for the statues. The offspring should not regard the divided fields and forests as unequal and regard the green pines and cypresses within the ten *zhang* area around the niches, [Buddha] hall and pagoda as not divided, and thus break and have them to take misfortunes to themselves.

In recent years an old iron pagoda was found in Zhenzhou, on which the names of donors were all those of the present persons. Further I learned that the senior Fu Fengyi of the Lingquan County searched Buddha statue following his dream in Changsong Hill, and after digging off the earth the stone [statue] came out with an inscription on a stele of making Buddha statues in the reign Dali of the Tang Dynasty, also with official titles and names. Therefore I recorded the origins and details [of my deeds], since how it is known that in hundred thousand years [the afterworld] would not see it.

Written by Yan Xun on the 15th day of the 2nd month of the year Genwu of the reign Yuanyou (1090), engraved on the stone by sons Jiayu and Chengji, copied by the nephew Xizhou the monk of explaining Buddhism from Suizhou.

⁴⁶⁴ Unit of capacity (=180,39 liters).

Translation:

Stele of the rite of water and land by the rock, erected by families⁴⁶⁸ to solve and release the previous ghosts and later curses, to transcendently save and promote the old departed and young diseased, and to separate from the evil demons of the last generations.

1. Once I have heard: the Righteous Awakened⁴⁶⁹ came out and prospered, and Tathāgata showed his appearance. Dharma bodhisattva ... of saving from misery ... heartedly implore surely be allowed ... appearance ... registered. There is

2. in the realm of Śākya[muni] the Righteous Awakened and the country governed by the sage ruler, at the time ... under the magistration of the Tongchuan Prefecture, the Dazu County of Chang District, in the field of the Shibi Township, ... living near the house of Family Liu

3. the heading disciples of Buddha Liang Yuanqing and Liang Yuanchan sincerely exhaust their faithfulness, earnestly for those who were previously born and came in the past until the recent years the families unconstantly new moving and following ancestor, ... deceased not instructed old and young people ... separating over ... also has often been damaged⁴⁷⁰

4. as Qiniang of family Zhang was alive, she said that she repented and demanded them back after leaving grand daughter things of gold and silver, and every time by ... of offering the mind served the deities and made the curse. Thereafter it was already rendered with the word bound ... solving not ... thought original to eliminate, that is because the ways of humans and ghosts are different, difficult

5. begging the Great Awakened for the solving of earlier thoughts. Further seeing that there is less peace in the realm, no ... no gain, ... prosper ... good, and short of power it was hard to do. If one wants to achieve it, one should rely on the power of everybody. Sincerely leading the disciples of following good from this area and the same town, Liang Yuanrun, Liang Yuanmei, Lian Yuangang

6. Liang Caijun, Liang Caiya, Liang Caihou, Liang Caijie, ... Liang Caizuo ... Liang Cai... Liang Cai... Liang Caizao, Liang Caihui, Liang Caifu, Liang Caihui, Liang Caide, Liang Cai... ..

7. etc., together donated money and wealth to have the spirited stele from the rock engraved and erected in the hall of the three teachings, relying on the monks near the rock

⁴⁶⁸ The transcribed character “尸” is understandable here. Likely it was the two characters “眾尸” here which appear at the end of the text.

⁴⁶⁹ *sambodhi*, the supreme enlightenment.

⁴⁷⁰ The meaning of the sentence is unclear since several words are illegible.

[statues] opened and established the sanctuary, and practised and set up the great feast of three steles water and land giving dharma teachings. The sutras were read [aloud] and the lamps were lighted up; the standard to the dharma rites were set, and the spirited [stele] was erected and praised

8. the Great Awakened from the Eight Heavens, the Jade Emperor and the three Origins, the Emperor of the Eastern Peak, the Real Rulers of the three Offices. Respectfully we hope that Buddha is compassionate and thoroughly insightful [of our request], the indras merciful and sympathetic. We address down to those who are in charge of deities and ghosts in the dark or sunny world, if there are really

9. to enable the late Qiniang of family Zhang to reach to the pure land quickly, to be transcendently saved and reborn in the wonderful realm, and [to make] her trace and trail eliminated from spiritual appearance and removed from registration books of ghosts. If she has curse out of hatred, may that be repented and not harm [the human being].

Furthermore we desire that the persons and fortune of every family are safe and happy, the streets and lanes peaceful and harmonized, the country secure and the people sound, the wind harmonious

10. conditions, transcendently save the long-ago dead and recent transformed, the numerous spirits of old and young. The late Liang Chenjian and Lady Zhang, the late Liang Xianda and the Qiniang of family Xie and the little fifth [daughter] of family Wang, Liang Xianzheng and the Qiniang of family Zhang, Liang Shiqing and Daniang of family Li, Liang Shiwen and Lady Li

11. the late Liang Shicong, Liang Shilong, Liang Shizhou, the late Liang Yuanshou and Jiuqi of family Zhang, Liang Yuanling and Xiaoqi of family Li and Qisan of family He, the late Liang Yuanji, Liang Yuanju and Daosi of family Du, Liang Yuanli and Jiuer of family Yang, Liang

12. died young, the daughter of Liang Zeng, Siniang of family Luo, the daughter of the senior Liangsi, the daughter of the junior Liangsi, the daughter of Liang Zuqing, the daughter of Liang Shunü. Of the good followers family of Yang Chengguang transcendently save the late father Yang Renshun, the late mother Wuniang of family Liang, the late

13. Of the good followers brothers of Wang Zongmei, Wang Zongguang in the same sanctuary transcendently save their late great grandfather and great grandmother Wang Dingyan, the Daniang of family Yang, the late grandfather and grandmother Wang Chengyi,

the Baniang of family Zhang, the late father and mother Wang Jizu, Qingshao of family Liang

14. the earlier died or later transformed will obtain together the transcendentally salvation, no matter if they might be called consequently as grandfather, grandmother, father, mother, elder or younger uncle, elder or younger brother, the late elder or younger sister from mother's family and so on, either woman or man. Those who grow old and reach the end of life are few, but those who die at an early age while young and strong are many. There are also from

15. the nature of sins will be eliminated immediately, the origin free from sinking into the dim and gloom. [They will be] reborn in the pure land together, and arrive in the paradise early. The true words of universally solving curses of ghosts by Buddha: ong mu tuo mu tuo piao tuo piao tuo mao di a hui ning mao di hui ning... ..

16. The true words of rebirth in the pure land by Buddha: ong yi di lü ni po mo ... he. Respectfully we wish that the previous ghost and previous curses would be together eliminated and appeased as requested, the later spells and later hatred will be all obliterated and cleansed as hoped. Further depending on the huge goodness again [we] make the benefits and happiness from the realm above

17. escaping from ominous and demonic. [All] those which follow human or chase things, cause misfortunes or adversities occultly, should all be abandoned and cut off from absurd conditions by means of the power of dharma. [May they] together set up the mind of enlightenment, and respectively approving the results of the ever-lasting happiness.

18. The true words of dismissing ghosts and spirits by Buddha: ong suo [mo] pi li duo ... ji ... ji suo [mo] he.

19. The true words of rebirth in paradise by Buddha: ong duo [mo] luo li ni suo [mo] he. The good follower disciples the brothers Wang Zongmei and Zongguang came because of this and donated money to make the huge goodness in order to solve and eliminate the [sins of their] ancestors, which reaches into the hands of grandfather and father or

20. things already offered. [Those who] either lose fields because of robbery and theft, devise plots and swallow the common fortune, benefit oneself and bring deficit to the others; or [those who] are intruded by others, and seeing the unfairness get angry and furious. [For those who] Being afraid of saying and noting to have hatred and faulty, worrying about throwing oneself to

21. Buddha's dharma to prosper the ghosts, or banished because of witchness. Once we strived to dispel and appease [the curses and ghosts] by the power of goodness. [But] it is still to see up till now that the old are diseased and the young die variously; it is probably that for those hatred and disasters the root and origin of solving and releasing are not eliminated. Today depending the power of everyone, throwing the merits and virtues
22. Buddha from the roots to obliterate and chop. The true words of solving the knots of hatred of the many beings by Buddha: ong nuo he nuo he suo ... ne se zha ... luo ne se zha dan luo nan suo ... he. Then with respect:
23. the heads of the Buddhist rite Liang Yuanqing, Yuanchan and other families, who live depending on their occupations of farming and planting. Having the sky above their heads and stepping on the earth, having the honour to be human being, their behavior would rather be without mistakes and faults, greedy as Taotie
24. hurting things and lives, before drunk and after awakened, trifling speech and nonsense words, betraying the right and believing the evil, [aparting from] the truth and coming close to the false, threatening by force and depending on power, ... and framing up common people, smudging and abusing the Three Lights, despising and contemning the Two Heroes, one hair of
25. the heavenly net is not ... the rewards of the good and evil without any selfishness. If the guiltiness would not be calculated in this world, how can the causes and results of the future life be balanced? Now solving and releasing the real conditions, before
26. the golden face [of Buddha] we confess and repent voluntarily, in order to wash and cleanse the crimes of thousand mistakes, and to eliminate and appease the hatred of hundred evils. The dhāraṇī of universal confessing karma by Buddha: ong suo ... ba bo suo pu zha nuo he
27. together wish that every family may enjoy the good fortune for ever, and every family may reject and eliminate the calamities and anger. The families may be glorified and the career boasted, and happiness and benefits may be brought to every door and court; ghosts, thieves, fire and war may die out and run to other worlds; the water monster and drought demon may leave for the wild [area] without stop, the propitious fortune
28. eliminated like clouds and scattered like fog. For the above we wish that the base of sovereign may be steady and fest, the way of emperor long and far; heaven and earth may be moderate and the four seasons ... , the Yin and Yang may be harmonious and the ten

thousand things orderly. In the eight directions it may be peaceful and quiet, and the four seas serene, father

29. Heads of Buddhist rite Yuanqing Yuanchang with the families of thirty persons of sentient beings rushly wrote the plain bold [praying]

30. the sage intelligence notice our beseech and request mercifully, and immediately report them heartedly to the above.

31. [Our requests are] thrown to the door of the heavenly officies, [and will be] solved and released by the two departments of earth and water. May [our] origins and reasons are begged for being judged or pardoned, for which we are fearful and dreadful to the extreme. [We] salute again and present respectfully.

32. In the year circle of Genwu of ... day of the tenth [month] of the third year of the reign Jiading.⁴⁷¹ Constructed and set up by the heads of [Buddhist] rite Liang Yuanqing Liang Yuanchang and many families etc.

⁴⁷¹ The character 嘉 is quite blurred and hard to recognize. For the character 定 is only the upper part partly visible. The character 三 is presumed by the year mark of “Gengwu”.

Dafowan

Translation:⁴⁷²

Niche No. 15

12.1 Throwing oneself to Buddha and praying for descendants

The Great Master of Cijue with royally bestowed purple [kaṣāya] Zongze praised: Before the ancient Buddha was born, dubiously it was one complete form. Śākya[muni] still ... meet, how could Kāśyapa deliver? The parent burned the incense together, for the sake of having a son with filial piety. It was taking precautions against the days of being old, when support and aid were necessary for the living. After the parent became Buddhas, in such endless dharma realm. Then the cherished desire was fulfilled, and one could attain the [nirvana] without remainder. What was gained was not counted as gain, but what was not achieved was just the achievement. Outside the one wheel of thousand saints, it was originally the old tradition of the family.

12.2

Those who know the kindness [of parents] are few; [but] those who forget the kindness are many.

If the scorching iron wheel, turns above the top of my head; never because of that suffering, I will lose my mind for the Enlightenment.

12.3 No. 1 The Kindness of Conceiving and Protecting. The master of meditation praised: In the days when the loving mother was pregnant, it made her body so heavy as ...; The mother looked yellow as if she was ill, and it made her body difficult by moving or turning.

12.4 No. 2 The Kindness of Suffering while Giving Birth. Cijue praised: loving parent suffering, ... persons eye tears ..., ... knowing the heaviness of the power of kindness, to the time when the baby could be taken out. When the loving father knew the news of birth, he could not help being anxious and uneasy; ... or birth not yet informed, he folded both eyebrows and ears on his head.

⁴⁷² The translation of the texts in Dafowan are made according to the transcriptions in Chongqing, *Dazu shike mingwenlu*.

12.5 No. 3 The Kindness of Forgetting the Worry after the Birth of the Son. Cijue praised: Firstly seeing the face of the baby, the parent smilingly nodded to him. The worry and bitter things in the past, came to the end at the time.

12.6 No. 4 The Kindness of Swallowing the Bitter and Giving out the Sweet. Cijue praised: to the son to eat, as the meal of herself; Not ... knowing the kindness few, it was difficult requiting the kindness at other time.

12.7 No. 5 The Kindness of Pushing [the Child] to the dry place and Moving [herself] to the Bedwetting. Cijue praised: [The mother] left the dry place for the son to sleep, and the son slepts soundly ... While lying with the face upward the son was pushed by the kind mother, why were the Buddhas on one side?⁴⁷³

12.8 No. 6 The Kindness of Breast-feeding and Nurturing. The meditation master of Cijue Zongze praised: Breast-feeding had no season and time, did the baby just stay in the bosoms [of mother] for short? [The mother] did not worry about the loss of her fat and flesh, but only worried about the hunger of her child.

12.9 No. 7 The Kindness of Washing the Unclean. The great master Cijue praised: The child, the swaddles were ... (no) time dry. Holding the son in her bosoms no ... child, the kind heart was not, the son's body was much of dirtiness, washing clean On the days when the old parent were in need, who could offer one spoon of hot water?

12.10 No. 8 The Kindness of Making of evil karma for [the son]. The old [master of] virtue praised: When the son was brought up to adult, the marriage was the normal matter. For the wedding feast many livestocks were killed, and who would take the karma of the sins?

12.11 No. 9 The Kindness of Missing and Worrying [the son] on a Long Journey. Cijue praised: As [the son] was a child under the breast, had he ever moved from his place for three years? How far more than thousand *li*, ... home not back ...,, out must Perhaps [the parent] were looking into the distance by the door of the hut, did not come back too late.

12. 12 No. 10 The Kindness of Ultimately Forgiving. The praise was: The hundred years old [parent] still worried about their son of eighty years old. [The parent] would never give up their children so that even when they [were dead and] became ghosts they still worried

⁴⁷³ The meaning of the last sentence is unclear.

about them. Observing the pleasure and the anger of the parents, [the son] should constantly keep the kind faces [of parent] from offending. It was not easy and had been always difficult to keep kind expression [to the parent].

12.13 [Sutra of] Requiring the Kindness and Virtue of Parents from the Tripiṭaka⁴⁷⁴
Buddha told Ananda: If there were good men and good women willing to requite the kindness of the parent, [they should] for the sake of the parent copy [the texts of] Mahayana [Buddhism], for the sake of the parent read aloud [the texts of] Mahayana [Buddhism], for the sake of the parent hear and accept [the texts of] Mahayana [Buddhism]. The praise was: (destroyed)

12.14 In the Tripiṭaka Buddha said, for the sake of parent [they should] offer and sustain the three Treasures, for the sake of parent give alms and cultivate the fortune. The praise was: the Three Treasures of Buddha, Dharma and Sangha, wonderful fields of fortune. rewards with no extreme, must be boundless. really worriable, still miserable. as the saints, was revering the field of fortune.

12.15 In the Tripiṭaka Buddha said, for the sake of parent [they should] confess and repent one's sin and fault, for the sake of parent keep fast and precepts. If you could be so, you were called the filial son. If those who did not keep this practice, they were in the end the person doomed down to the hell as the non-filial son. The praise was: If one would like to carry out the endless filial piety, one should search for the supramundane cause. For the place where the sun did not reach, one should ask Śākyamuni.

12.18⁴⁷⁵ In the Tripiṭaka it is said: Buddha told Ananda: The non-filial sons, after their body became corrupt and lives came to the end, they would fall into the hell of Avīci. The hell was eight thousand *yojanas* long and wide. It was surrounded by the iron walls in the four directions. The ground was also made of iron. Iron was used as net and the fervour fire were brilliant. Fierce fire from fireplace, with running thunder and shining lightning, the flowing copper and burning iron, flowed into the [mouth of] the sinner. Copper dogs and iron snake, constantly with gushing smoke and fire would roast, burn, boil and broil [the sinner]. The joints of the sinner's body were scorched, and they experienced the disaster and suffered

⁴⁷⁴ The translation is made according to the text in with the correlation of the texts by Ma Shichang and Chen Mingguang.

⁴⁷⁵ According to the original sutra text the order of the inscription in *Dazu shike mingwenlu* should be 12.15, 12.18, 12.16, 12.17, 12.19.

the torture, with no temporarily stop. Further he would fall into the small hells, where he would carry the fire basin on the head; his body would be corrupted; his intestine would be in turmoil; his bones and flesh would be scattered for thousand births and ten thousand deaths. The praise was: if [the son made] the parent worried, it was tolerated in the universe. He would be hit by thunder in the world and drunk with flowing copper in the hell.

12.16 In the Tripiṭaka Buddha said: If afterwards the son grew up, and became non-filial. When he spoke with the respectable parents, he answered rudely with twisted and turned eyes. He bullied and humiliated the uncles, beat and cursed the brothers. He destroyed and shamed the affection of the relatives, had no rules of conducts. He had no respect before the teachers, gave up all the good friends. He followed and became friend of the evil, and he was accustomed to those and they became his nature, and he made the crazy plots. He had no respect for the knowledge and skill, but followed and became friend of the heretics. He was shameless and crude, interested in practising the useless, struggling and stealing. He offended the neighbours, drank alcohol and gambled, violated the laws by involving the brothers and annoying the parents. He left in the morning and returned in the evening, and made the respectable parents worrying. The praise is: Of the three thousand precepts, the first one is the sin of being non-filial; Under the net of heaven there was no place to escape, one should constantly confess the sin before oneself; The wrong actions hindered the filial piety and nurturing to the parent, the gamble ruined the fortune of the family; One should not suffer the misery and hardship, because the kind parents were also worried and concerned.

12.17 Punishment and Law. Those who curse the great parent, parent will be punished with hanging; those who beat them will be beheaded.

12.19 Under the influence of the evil friends, one cause and make irrational [troubles]; He will be punished by the royal laws during the life and fall down to the hell of Avīci.

Niche No. 16

13.1 According to the imperial commands burn and kill those who commit the five heinous crimes.

13.2 The Poem of Ancient Holy Thunderbolt. Since the beginning of the forming of the heaven and earth, there were thousands of ghosts. Among the evils there was *Hulei*,⁴⁷⁶ which hid himself in the caves in Mount Emei. It was said that *Hulei* was seldom to meet. He had a *yuli* mouth and *sanquan* face.⁴⁷⁷ His face and hair was black red as cinnabar, his body so black as indigo. Around the waist of the great king were the pants of lion pelt, and his teeth looked like the sharp swords and mouth like basin. turned back and many... broken, tatto as trampling on black clouds, claws like ..., sun shine, eyes snow white, dusts, return armor like stars the non-filial daughter the son of the five feinous crimesteachingopen mouth... .. utmost white high fault

13.3 The shake of one thunderbolt alarms the heaven and earth; the sprouting of the ten thousand things is another spring.

13.4 The deep blue sky cannot be cheated, and one's intention will be known before any action; In the end the good and evil will finally rewarded, the difference is only coming earlier or later.

⁴⁷⁶ Hulei is another name for dragon. According to several historical literatures such as *Shanhaijing*, *Shijing* etc., the God of Thunder has the head of dragon and body of human and he beats his belly to make thunder. That may explain why the God of Thunder in Dafowan has a head of swine. See Wang Dayou. *Longfeng wenhua*.

⁴⁷⁷ According to the transcription in Dazu shike mingwenlu the insription are 寓离口事三拳面. The exact meaning is unclear.

Niche No. 17

14.1 If the scorching iron wheel turns above the top of my head; never because of that suffering I will lose my mind for the Enlightenment.

14.2 The Six Masters of Heterodox slandering Buddha as non-filial

Sutra of Great Expedient Buddha Requiring the Kindness [of Parents] said by Buddha in the Tripiṭaka. So have I heard: Once Buddha was in the Mountain of Gṛdhrakūṭa, surrounded by the great assembling. Then Ananda entered into the town for begging food. In the town there was a man filially supporting his parent. Since all the properties at home were exhausted, he carried his parents in two baskets hung over a shoulder-pole and begging. The good food he offered to their parents, while the bad he ate himself. With verses Ananda praised the man for supporting his parents. Then came the six heterodox masters and disciples who stuck to the evil theories and wanted to damage and destroyed the Right Law. Having a jealous and envious feeling they said to Ananda: “Your master, the one of clan Śākya, claims himself to be filial and good with a great meritorious virtue. It is just an empty reputation, without any real practices. Giving up his parents and going out of the town, not knowing the kindness [of parents] and his responsibility, he is a non-filial man.” Having heard that Ananda felt shamed and went to Buddha and said: “Is there filially supporting the parent in the Buddhist dharma or not?” Buddha said: “Who made you ask?” Ananda said that as begging he met the six masters and disciples, and was cursed and humiliated as stated above. The World-Honored One smiled and radiated five coloured light to the places of the Tathāgatha of the ten directions. The bodhisattvas of the countries said together: “For what reason is there such light there?” The Buddhas in those countries said: “There is a Buddha in the realm of Sahā named Śākya[muni] speaking for the great assembling the Sutra of Great Expedient Buddha Requiring the Kindness [of Parents]. He will make the sentient beings filially supporting their parent, therefore the light is radiated.” Then in his body Tathāgatha showed the Five Gatis, which were shown one by one in the body. A number of endless tiny dust unthinkable forms and kinds all sentient beings were completely reborn into a new body. Because of being reborn into the new body all sentient beings had been parents of Tathāgatha, and Tathāgatha had been parent of all sentient beings. Therefore he constantly practised the hard practices and the bitter practices, and he could abandon those that were difficult to abandon. He diligently practised and made efforts, provided completement of all practices, with no rest, no stop,

no tiredness in his mind for the sake of filially supporting the parents. Now he quickly obtained the supreme enlightenment. It was because of the virtue filial piety.

14.3 In the Causal Stage Buddha Practised Abandoning his Body to Help the Tigress. In the Tripiṭaka Buddha said: Prince Sattva abandoned his body to help the tigress. After the parent had already heard of that, they hurried to the place where the body was abandoned. Then the tigress had already eaten the flesh, and only the bones were scattered about on the ground. The parent held the head and wailed with grief and fell in a faint. Then the life of the prince came to the end and was reborn in the Heaven of Tuṣita. With the heavenly eyes he saw before him that his parent grieved and cried over his death so exceedingly that he might lose their lives. [He thought:] I should go and console them. Immediately he left from heaven and stayed in the air and explained and consoled his parents with various kinds of words. The parents asked with face up to the sky: “Which god is there?” It was answered in the heaven: “I am the Prince Sattva. Through helping the tigress I am reborn in the Heaven of Tuṣita. Parent should know that being would return to non-being according to the dharma, and the living must have its end. Why do not you realize that yourself?” The parent said: “You practice the great mercifulness and kindness to everything.” Then the heavenly beings again replied and thanked the parent with verses, to make them awake and enlightened. Those were all insightful unbelievably by the supernatural wisdom of Tathāgata. Then the Prince Sattva was just me.

14.4 In the causal stage Śākyamuni Cut his own Flesh to Support his Parent. According to the Tripiṭaka Buddha said to Ananda: In the past there was a king who had born a son with golden body named Jāti. Then Rāhu evilly rebelled, and the king frightenedly held the prince and escaped to the neighbouring country. It was still far away after the food was exhausted. In view of that hungry and thirsty was compelling the prince said: “From the body of your son cut off three *jin* flesh each day, and divide them into three parts, two for the parents and one for myself.” The parents followed the suggestion of their son, cut the flesh off and ate them alongside the their way of escape. The prince vowed: “If the scorching iron wheel turns above the top of my head; never because of that suffering I will retreat from the Supreme Way. If I cheat or lie, the sore of the body will not heal; if not, they will be recovered as usual.” At that time his body became proper and right more times than ever. Buddha said to Ananda: “The parent was the present parent, and the prince of that time was my body.”

14.5 In the Causal Stage Śākyamuni Practised Filial Piety as a Parrot. In the Sutra of Mixed Treasure Store (Saṃyukta-ratna-piṭaka-sūtra) of the Tripiṭaka it was said: there was a parrot whose parents were both blind. He usually picked and gathered vegetables and fruits to nurture his parents. Then there was a landlord who made the vow that all the planted would be shared with the sentient beings while he began with planting the grains. Then the parrot picked and took the rice to support his parents. At that time the landlord walked along the field of rice. At seeing the heads of rice cut, he suddenly became angry and caught the parrot with net. The parrot told him: “At first you have kind mind and donated your properties without any miserliness. Why do you now catch me with the net?” The landlord answered: “For what purpose do you take the grains?” The parrot answered: “I have blind parent and I will support them with that.” The landlord was thus pleased and then let him go. At that time the World Honoured One said with verses: Well done, the parrot had wisdom, that he could support and nurture his parent full of filial piety. From now on I donate with the rice, to make you support and nurture your parent. As such in the past there were immeasurable things, of which no ascetic practices have not been made. Never did he have the feeling of tiredness and disgust, so that he sought the Supreme Way of Pure and Clean.

14.6 In the Causal Stage Śākyamuni Practised Filial Piety by Gouging out Eyes and Taking out Marrow as Medicine. It was said in the Tripiṭaka: Prince Kṣānti knew that his father the king suffered heavy disease and his life was on the verge of death and he was in seeking of medicine to treat and cure. The prince asked: “What is the medicine?” One minister answered: “It is the eyes of a non-anger person and his marrow. If the medicine is obtained, the life of the king will be saved.” The prince said: “To make the disease of my father the king to be healed, it would be not difficult to abandon hundreds of bodies, let along this dirty body.” Then he called Caṇḍāla to gouge both his eyes and break bones to take out the marrow. At that time the minister mixed the medicine and brought to the king whose disease was dismissed after taking the medicine. The life of the prince came to the end, and his body and bones were cremated with woods of Candana and [the rest] was kept and worshipped in a pagoda. Thus you know that Tathāgata practiced the filial piety and requited the kindness [of parent] for so many calpas as the unthinkable number of the dust and sand.

14.7 Buddha Śākyamuni Realised the Thirty-two Marks because of Practicing Filial Piety. It is said in the Tripiṭaka: Mañjuśrī said to Buddha: “The bodhisattvas in the audience see Buddha’s thirty-two marks and eighty signs incomparable proper and right. What causes and conditions do you have to obtain that?” Buddha said: “I have been fond of burning lamps in Buddhist temples and before the masters and parents life after life. Because of that reason the Buddha body is bright and incomparable wonderful. Life after life I have served the masters and parents with foods and beds in the four respect-inspiring forms of demeanour.⁴⁷⁸ Because of that reason the heavenly beings and the ghosts generally hold all the jewelleries of the world and used them to offer to the Buddha. The thirty-two marks and eighty signs, all those marks and signs are caused that I make firm and sure of the Enlightenment, know and requite the kindness since I first set up the mind. Therefore I obtain the supreme enlightenment and see the sentient beings as parents. By means of such causes and conditions I obtain the sort and marks which make me to obtain quickly the anuttara-samyak-saṃbodhi. It is because of the virtue of filial piety.”

14.8 Sutra of Great Expedient Buddha Requiting the Kindness [of Parents] said by Buddha in the Tripiṭaka. In the causal stage Śākyamuni as the prince with a delivering-letter wild goose. It is said in the Tripiṭaka: Prince Good Friend sailed into the sea to seek the treasure and stayed in another country. Before he left he raised a white wild goose. Then his mother the queen went to the wild goose and said: “In the past the prince was usually together with you. Now he has gone into the sea and we do not know if he is alive or dead. Why do not you miss the prince?” The wild goose answered: “I will look for the prince without daring disobeying your demand.” Then the queen wrote a letter and tied it on the neck of the wild goose. The wild goose flew to the sea and saw the prince from afar and flew down by restraining his body. The prince took the letter and opened and read it. Then he knew that his parent missed him and their eyes went blind. At once he returned to his country and the parents were joyful. The king and his wife were blind and not able to see the body and face of the prince. They touched and felt him and said the following words: “Father and mother miss you and suffer as such.” After the prince asked them about their daily life, he held a pearl and made a vow: “This is the maṇi treasure and may both eyes of parent be bright and clear as they were.” After making that vow [the eyes] were at once healed. The parents saw

⁴⁷⁸ They are walking, standing, sitting, lying.

their son and they were immeasurably joyful. Then the prince of Good Friend was just Tathāgata.

14.9 In the Causal Stage Śākyamuni Gouged his Flesh. In the Tripiṭaka Buddha said: At that time the king Cakravarti for the sake of seeking the Buddhadharma issued decrees everywhere demanding the one who knew the Buddhadharma. All said no. There was a Brāhmaṇa knowing about the Buddhadharma. Then the king came out to receive and welcome him into the main hall. The king had a seat prepared before the throne and invited the great virtue to take the seat. As the king saw that the master was already seated, he jointed his hands and said: “Great master you know the Buddhadharma?” The master said: “I know the Buddhadharma.” The king said: “Please explain it for me.” The master said: “King you are great foolish. I learned the dharma and accomplished it after experiencing long time of efforts and suffering. King, how can you just hear it? If you can gouge one thousand holes on your body and burn lamps as the offerings, I will explain to you. If not, I will go.” Then the great king thought to himself and answered the great master: “The needed offerings should be quickly settled.” Then the king entered the palace and told the wives and the five hundred princes: “Now I shall leave from you. Now I invited the master and promised the offerings that cannot be broken. You are filial sons and should not disobey the will of your father.” The king went to the place of the master, seated himself uprightly and said to the ministers: “Who can gouge one thousand holes on me?” Then there was a Candala who went forth and said to the king: “If you want your body gouged, I can do it for you.” After hearing this the king was happy: “You are now really my companion to the Supreme Way.” After then the Candala had gouged the king’s body with a knife, he ran quickly away. Then the king had the holes on his body filled with oil and took fine felts as wick. Then the great master saw the thing done, and said to the king: “You make efforts as such and can do the hard to do and practise the ascetic practices. Now I should explain half verse for the king: ‘The life comes always to death; when it extinguishes it is the joyfulness.’” After the king heard the dharma, he told his people: “You should remember and hold the dharma for me. Those who have heard it will quickly set up his mind of Supreme Enlightenment.” Then the king burned the lamps as offering and its brightness enlightened into the distance. All the assembled made up their minds of the Way and went joyfully. Therefore the King Cakravati was Tathāgata.

14.10 In the Causal Stage Śākyamuni as Syama Practised the Filial Piety. The Sutra of Syama said by Buddha in the Tripiṭaka said: In the last there was a bodhisattva called Cihui who supported parent and masters filially. Then in the country Kapilavastu there was an old man who was alone without son and both his eyes were blind. He set up his mind to enter into the mountain and sought for the supreme wisdom. The bodhisattva thought of that and said: “That man enters into the mountain to learn the Way. If my life comes to the end, I will be his son.” The life of the bodhisattva came to the end and then he was reborn in the family of the blind parent with the name Syama. As Syama ten years old, he followed his parents into the mountain to gather fruits and take water. Then the king was hunting and shot Syama in the chest with an arrow by mistake and he was killed through poison. The king was frightened and went to the place of the blind parent and told them about the accident. The parent asked the king to bring them both to the place of the son. They touched and felt the arrow on the body of Syama and cried out facing to the sky: “Syama is extremely filial, which is known by the heaven and earth, and the arrow should be taken out.” After saying that the devas were moved and they gave medicine and [Syama’s] life was renewed as before. After the parent had known that, both their eyes were opened. The king was greatly joyful. Syama said to the king: “If you want to have the complete fortune, you may pacify the people by ordering them to follow the precepts [of Buddha].” Buddha said to Ananda: “That Syama was [incarnation of] my body.”

14.11 In the Causal Stage Buddha Śākyamuni Practised Abandoning his Body to Seek the Dharma. In the Tripiṭaka Buddha said: In the past worlds as I cultivated the practice of bodhisattva I could comprehend all the scripts and theories of heretics. I cultivated the practice of calmness and extinction, was not broken and destroyed by the heretics, and accepted and held the eternity, bliss, personality and purity. For the sake of seeking the Mahayana Buddhism I meditated in the snow mountain for endless years, but I had not heard the Tathāgata coming out to the world and the names of the Mahayana sutras. As I practised those ascetics, the indras and other heavenly beings had frightenness in their minds and assembled and said the verse: “The Mahasatta of snow mountain seeks only for the Enlightenment. That person will be the Well Gone in the coming world, extinguishing the immeasurable burning defilements, which is hard to believe. Now I shall test him if he is capable of carrying the heavy burdens of Enlightenment.” Then he showed in the appearance of a rākṣasa and descended to the snow mountain and said the half of a verse: “Whatever is phenomenal is impermanent, that is the dharma of birth and extinguish.” I

heard the half of the verse and was joyful in my mind [and asked]: “Who can say the half verse that enlightens my mind? The meaning of such half verse is the right way of the Buddhas of the last, future and the present.” The rākṣasa answered: “Do you ask me about the meaning? Having not eaten for days I am hungry and annoyed and mindly disordered. It was not what my own mind knew; because of seeking for food in vain I said the words.” I asked the rākṣasa: “What do you eat?” The rākṣasa answered: “I eat the warm flesh and hot blood of human beings.” [I said:] “Just say all the verse for me. I will offer you with my body. If my life comes to the end, the body will be useless. For the sake of the Enlightenment I abandon the non-firm body and gain the body of diamond. Please say it for me to make me obtain the completment.” The rākṣasa then said: “After the birth and extinguishment are extinguished, the nirvana is the eternal joyfulness.” I wrote the verse either on stone or on tree, wall and way and then climbed onto a high tree and abandoned my body to reward the price of the verse. Before I reached to the ground the rākṣasa restored his form to Indra and saved the bodhisattva. The indras and devas and other heavenly beings bowed their heads on the ground and praised: “Really, the bodhisattva benefits the sentient beings! He burns the great torch of dharma in the unenlightened darkness. Because I love the great dharma of Tathāgata therefore I came to harass and agitated you. I hope that you accept my confession [about that]. You will surely accomplish anuttara-samyak-saṃbodhi. I hope to be helped and save [by you then].” Then the Indra and other heavenly beings worshipped the feet of the bodhisattva and left.

The one who meditated in snow mountain abandoned his whole body to seek for the half verse: After the birth and extinguishment are extinguished, the nirvana is the eternal joyfulness.

14.12 Buddha Śākyamuni Visited the Place of his Illed Father the King. Buddha in the Gṛdhrakūṭa Mountain of Town Rājagṛha was as bright as the sun. Then the King Śuddhodana was faint of the four great elements, which damaged and destroyed his body. His breath was not stable and various kinds of treatments could not heal it. He said to the other kings: “Though I am to die now, I do not suffer from it. But it is a pity not to see my son Siddhārtha.” Having known that his father the king would die und wanted to see his sons, Tathagata said to Ananda: “The King Śuddhodana is our father who could give birth of a holy son benefiting the world. Now we should go and visit him to requite his kindness of breeding and nurturing.” The World Honoured One radiated great brightness, which

shined on the king's body and his illness and sufferings were appeased. The king said: "What is the light? Perhaps my son Siddhārtha comes?" The king saw Buddha came [and said]: "I just hope that you touch my body with your hand, to make me appeased. Now I see the World Honoured One, and the pain and bitterness are resolved." Then Buddha put his hand on the forehead of his father the king and said: "My king you should be joyful and not be worried, and constantly understand and think of the dharma meaning of the sutras." After the king heard that, he could help to be joyful and caught Buddha's hand with his hand and put it on his heart. The king on his lying place revered with his palms joined and his life was exhausted. Buddha said to the assembled: "Our father the king Śuddhodana has abandoned this body and was already reborn in the Heaven of Purity Dwelling." After the mass had heard this they gave up their worry and pain, which was unthinkable.

14.13

The Great Filial Son Buddha Śākyamuni Carrying personally the Coffin of his Father the King

Śarīra Treasure Pagoda of the Great King Śuddhodana

Buddha Śākyamuni Carried the Coffin of his Father the King for the Sake of Setting up Instruction for the Sentient Beings of the Latter World. In the Tripiṭaka Buddha said: After our father the king died until the time of cremation, Buddha together with Nanda etc. stood before the head of the dead gravely and respectfully. Ananda und Rāhula stood behind the feet of the dead. Ananda said to Buddha: "I just hope that you let me carry the coffin of uncle." Rāhula said again: "I just hope that you let me carry the coffin of grandfather the king." Tathāgata consoled them and said: "In the future world the people are evil and brutal and not to requite the kindness of breeding and nurturing by their parents. For the sake of setting up instructions for those non-filial sentient beings Tathagata will personally carry the coffin of my father the king." Then there were six kinds of shake in the world. All the heavenly beings, dragons and gods came to the funeral. The four heavenly kings all together joined the funeral and said to Buddha: "For those who are not filial to their parents in the future, Buddha carries himself the coffin of his father the king. We are Buddha's disciples and learn dharma from Buddha and obtain the result of srota-āpanna. Therefore we should carry the coffin of our father the king." And then they transformed into human beings. All the people cried. The World Honoured One held himself personally the incense

burner in the hand walking at the beginning of the procession. In the place of the tomb he ordered thousand arhats to take various kinds of aromatic woods and cremate the body. Then all the kings gathered the bones and put them into the urn of diamond and then built up a pagoda and offered and worshipped. The people of the mass made ritual and followed and held it.

14.14 Praises of Buddha Teeth Written royally by the three Holy Emperors

Taizong the extremely benevolent corresponding to the Way supernatural accomplishment holy virtuous civil military intelligent upright great bright widely filial emperor praised: The accomplished achievement after kalpas printed on the beginning of the text; It would be hard to obtain if it was not South Mountain; It was seen with eyes the multifold of the embellishing golden colour; It was held in hand shining the cold light of jade; While burning it was penetrated by the spirit of hundred fire; In the place of restoring the lustre colour was perfected for thousand years; The result of settlement permeated and practised the real secret; The righteous mind should not be regarded as normal.

Zhenzong receiving the omen and studying the ancient and accomplishing achievement modest virtuous cultural insightful valiant establishing remarkable holy original filial emperor versed: There was a saint called Śākyamuni in the west; Receiving things and giving mercifulness he was honoured by the world; Constantly I hope to make practice to increase the wonderful result, If only then the common people could be enriched.

Renzong taking the heaven as norm and following the Way as law with extreme achievement complete virtue supernatural cultural holy valiant intelligent sagacious enlightened filial emperor praised: The three Emperors covered their essence as all returned to earth; The Five Emperors made their forms as invisible as already transformed into dust; The Master [Kongzi] in the realm was boasted as the saint; The Lord Lao in the world was also said to be true; After their bodies buried there was only the empty left grave to see; Where would they show their bodies to the afterworld? Only the gold bones of my master exist, which after experiencing hundred burning keep always fresh colour.

Hymns and Praises of Buddha Teeth Written royally by the three Holy Emperors. The original carving is kept in Qianmingsi Temple of the West Woods in Mount Lu.

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1. Introduction

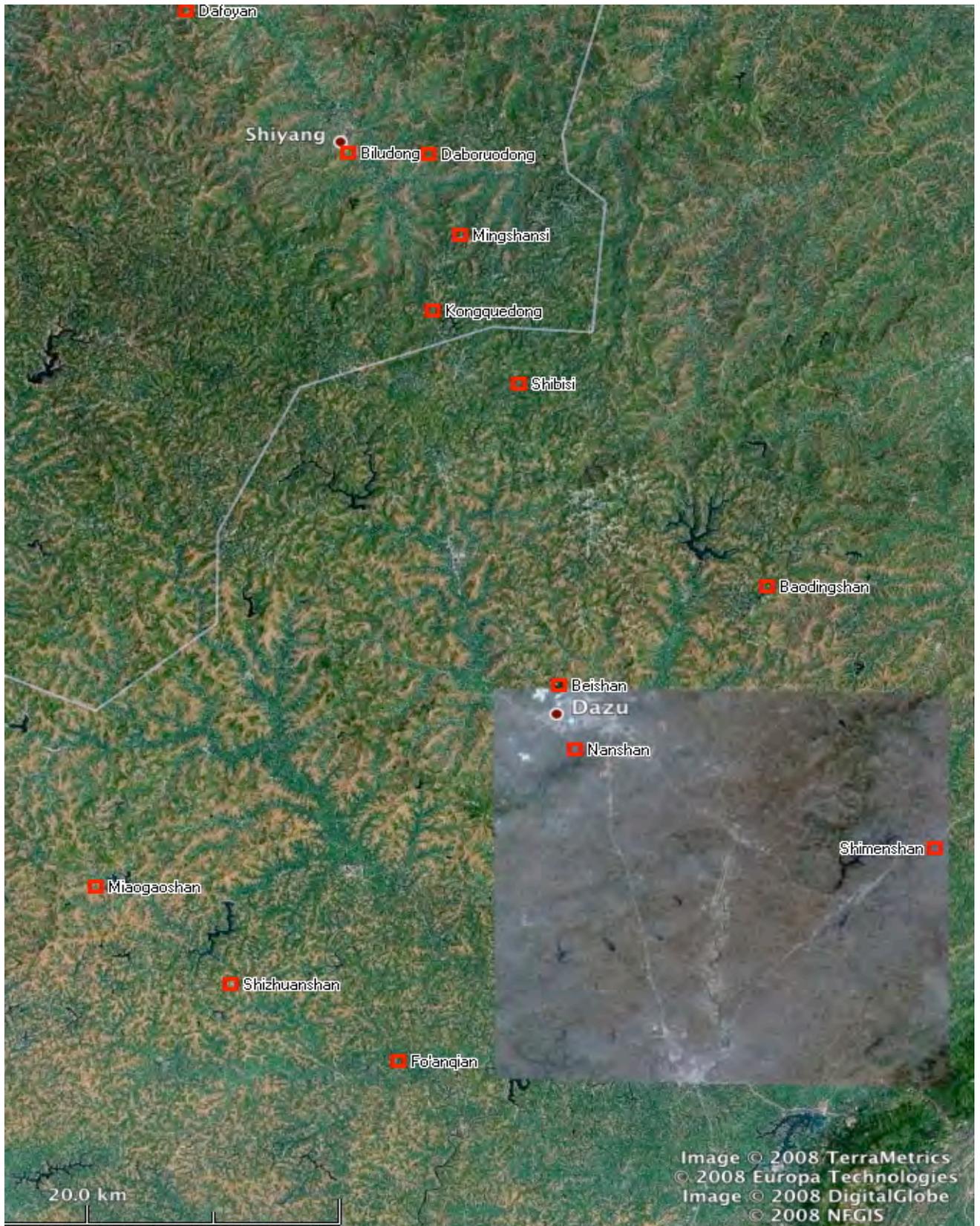


Fig. 1.1 Places with rock carvings of the Three Teachings



Fig. 1.2 Rubbing of the stele of the Three Teachings, Shaolinsi, Henan, 1209



Fig. 1.3 Anonymous, Three Laughters by the Tiger Brook, Palace Museum Tapei, Song Dynasty



Fig. 1.4 Niche of the Three Teachings, Silishan, Shandong, 1057

2. Historical Background

3. Neighboring Harmoniously - Shizhuanshan

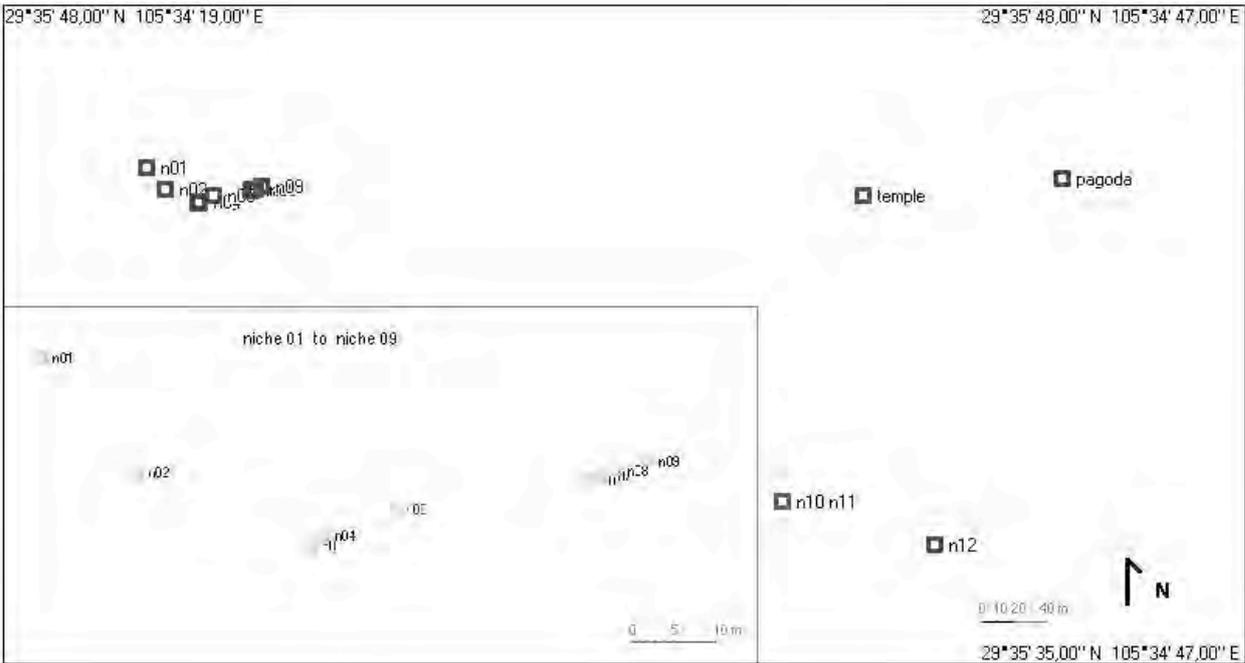


Fig. 3.1 Temple, pagoda and niches at Shizhuanshan



Fig. 3.2 Niche no. 1, Shizhuanshan, undated



Fig. 3.3 Niche no. 9, Shimenshan, undated



Fig. 3.4 Niche no. 122, Beishan, undated (left)



Fig. 3.5 Niche no. 289, Beishan, undated (right)



Fig. 3.6 Niche dedicated to Hariti, Mingshansi, undated



Fig. 3.7 Niche no. 2, Shizhuanshan, undated



Fig. 3.8 Detail of niche no. 177, Beishan, undated

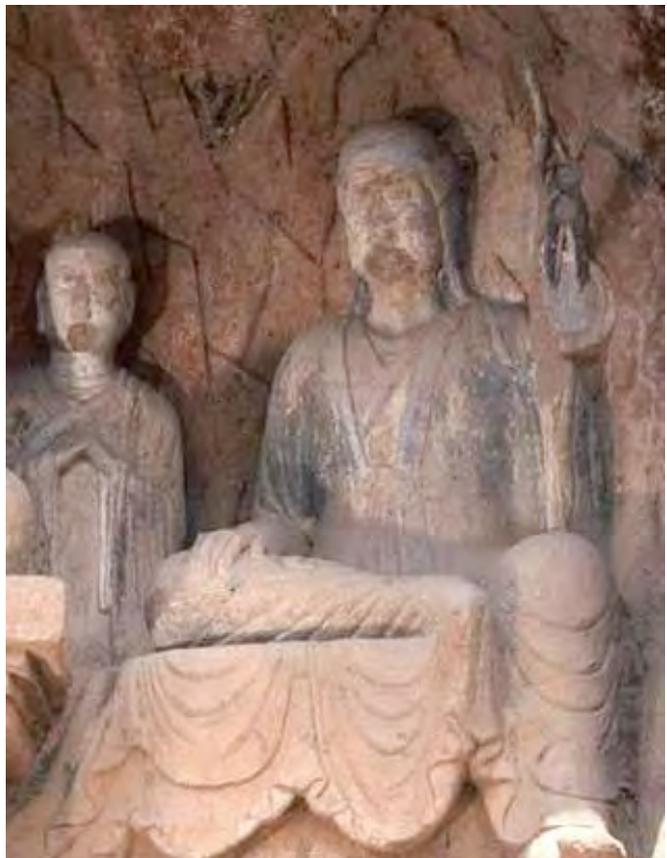


Fig. 3.9 Detail of niche no. 91, Qianfoya, Jiayang, undated



Fig. 3.10 Niche no. 3 (left), Shizhuanshan, undated



Fig. 3.11 Niche of the Three Holy Mothers, Nanshan, undated



Fig. 3.12 Niche no. 13, Shimenshan



Fig. 3.13 Niche no. 4, Shizhuanshan



Fig. 3.14 Detail of Fig. 3.13 (left)

Fig. 3.15 Guardian outside niche no. 7, Shizhuanshan (right)



Fig. 3.16 Niche no. 5, Shizhuanshan



Fig. 3.17 Detail of Fig. 3.16



Fig. 3.18 Detail of Fig. 3.16



Fig. 3.19 Niche no. 6, Shizhuanshan



Fig. 3.20 Detail of Fig. 3.19, Kongzi



Fig. 3.21 Disciples on the left of Kongzi



Fig. 3.22 Disciples on the right of Kongzi



Fig. 3.23 Guardians outside the niche no. 6, Shizhuanshan



Fig. 3.24 Niche no. 7, Shizhuanshan



Fig. 3.25 Three Buddhas in the niche no. 7



Fig. 3.26 Right part of the niche no. 7



Fig. 3.27 Left part of the niche no. 7



Fig. 3.28 Statues of donors in the niche no. 7



Fig. 3.29 Guardians outside the niche no. 7



Fig. 3.30 Niche no. 8, Shizhuanshan,



Fig. 3.31 Detail of Fig. 3.30, Laozi



Fig. 3.32 Right part of the niche no. 8



Fig. 3.33 Left part of the niche no. 8



Fig. 3.34 Guardians outside the niche no. 8



Fig. 3.35 Niche no. 9, Shizhuanshan



Fig. 3.36 Detail of the niche no. 9, Bodhisattva Ksitigarbha



Fig. 3.37 Right part of the niche no .9



Fig. 3.38 Left part of the niche no .9



Fig. 3.39 Guardians outside the niche no. 9



Fig. 3.40 Niche no. 10, Shizhuanshan, unrestored

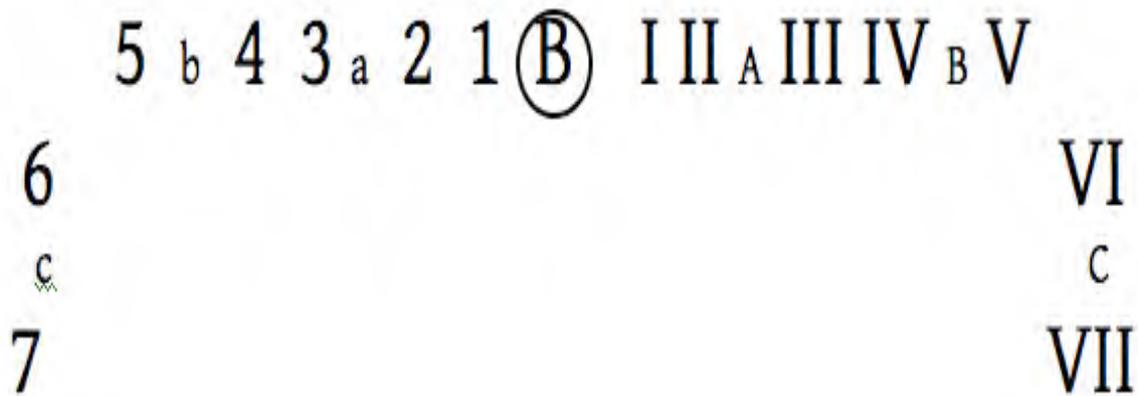


Fig. 3.41 a presumed arrangement of the figures in the Niche no. 10

Numbers and alphabets in the Figure stand for:

Centre: B in circle: Buddha Prajvala

Right part: 1. Disciple, 2. Sun, a. Ox, 3. Saturn with snake, 4. Mercury, b. Monkey, 5. Jupiter, 6. Rahu, c. Lion, 7. Donor

Left part: I. Disciple, II. Moon, A. animal, III. Mars with turtle, IV. Venus, B. Animal, V. Ketu, VI. Ziqi, C. Elephant, VII. Yuebei



Fig. 3.42 Part from right wing of the niche no. 10



Fig. 3.43 Right part of the niche no. 10



Fig. 3.44 Left part of the niche no. 10



Fig. 3.45 Statues on the left part of the niche no. 10, unrestored

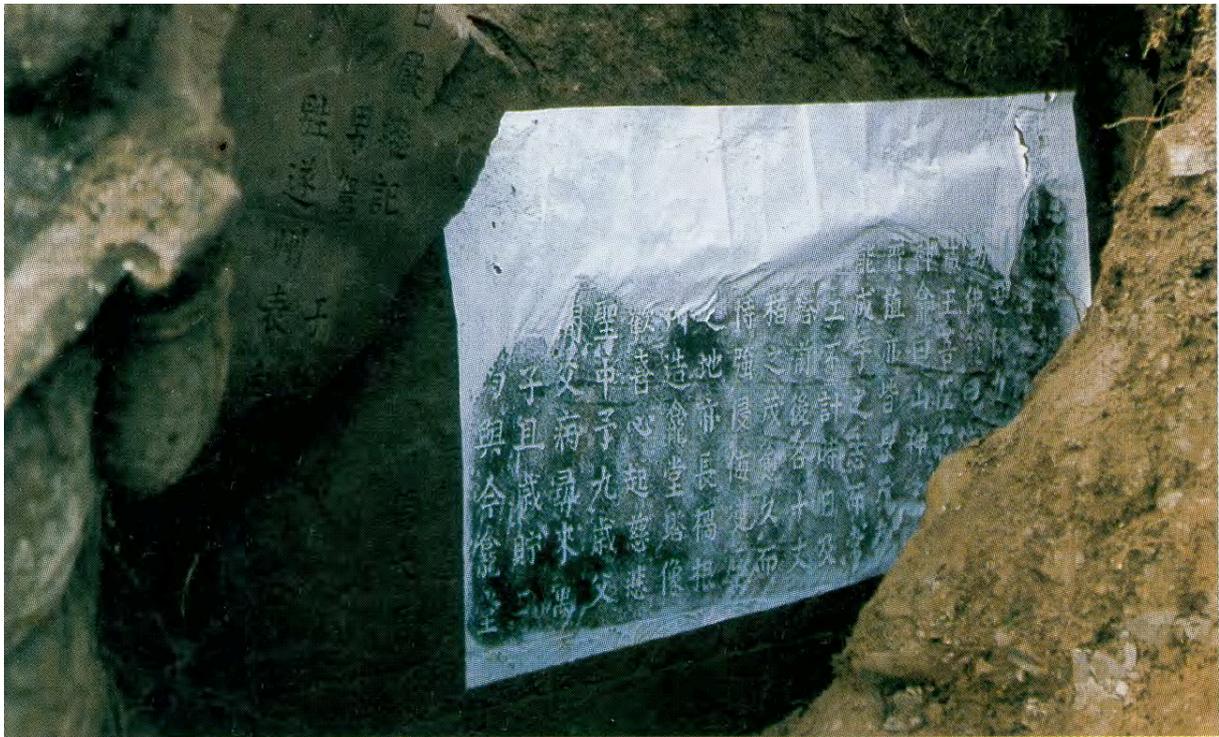


Fig. 3.46 Part the original inscription by donor with rubbing, Sizhuanshan



Fig. 3.47 Niche no. 39, Beishan (left)

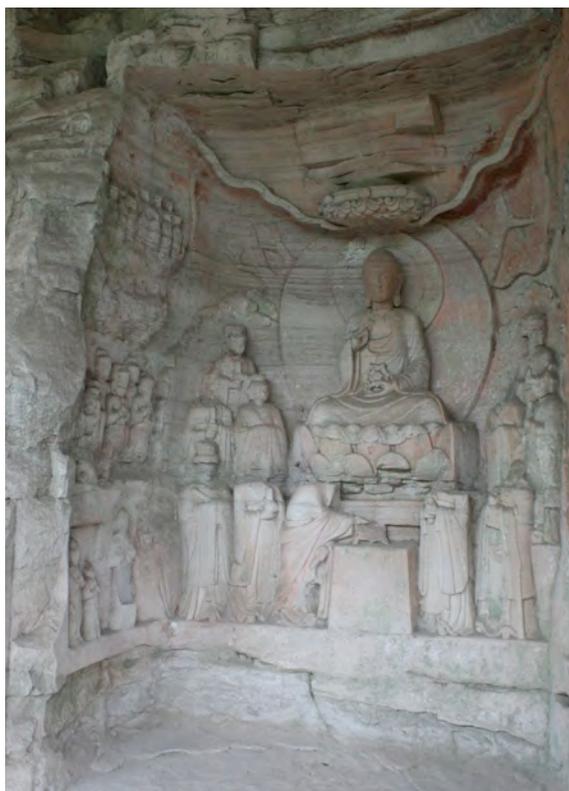


Fig. 3.48 Niche no. 169, Beishan (right)

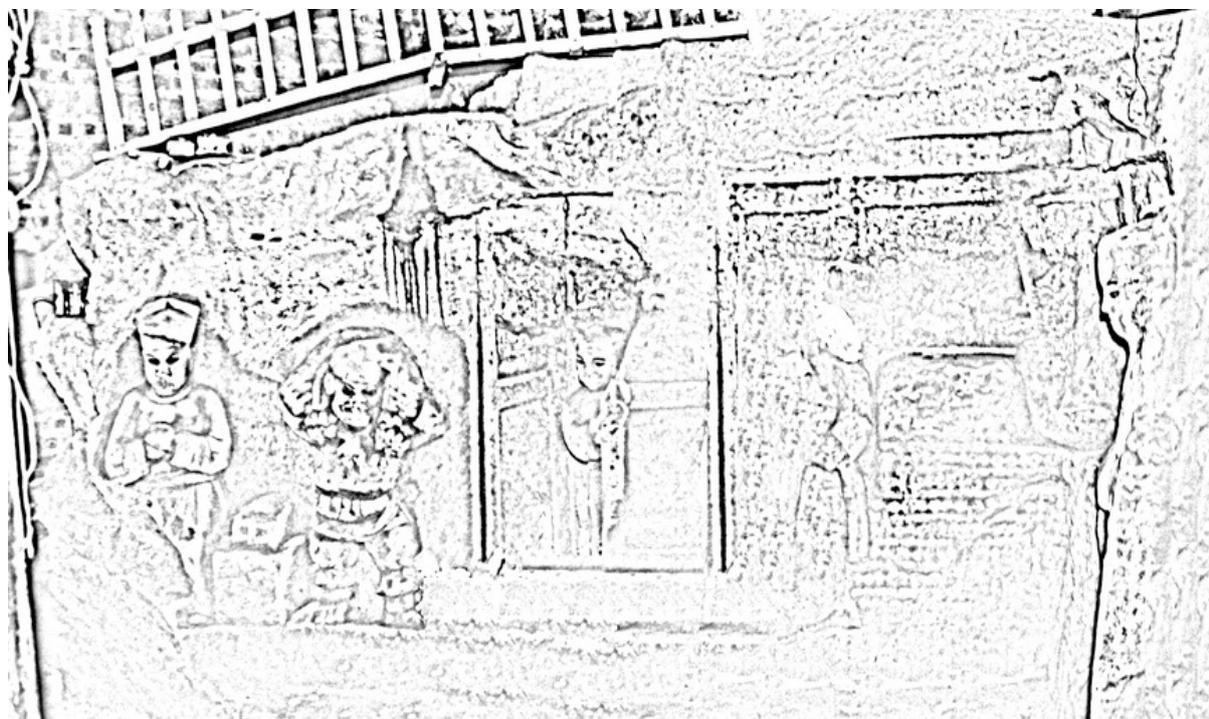


Fig. 3.49 Sketch of niche no. 11, Shizhuanshan



Fig. 3.50 Left part the niche no. 11



Fig. 3.51 Right part of the niche no. 11



Fig. 3.52 Detail of niche no. 11, unrestored



Fig. 3.53 Pagoda at Shizhuanshan, undated



Fig. 3.54 Detail of Fig. 3.53

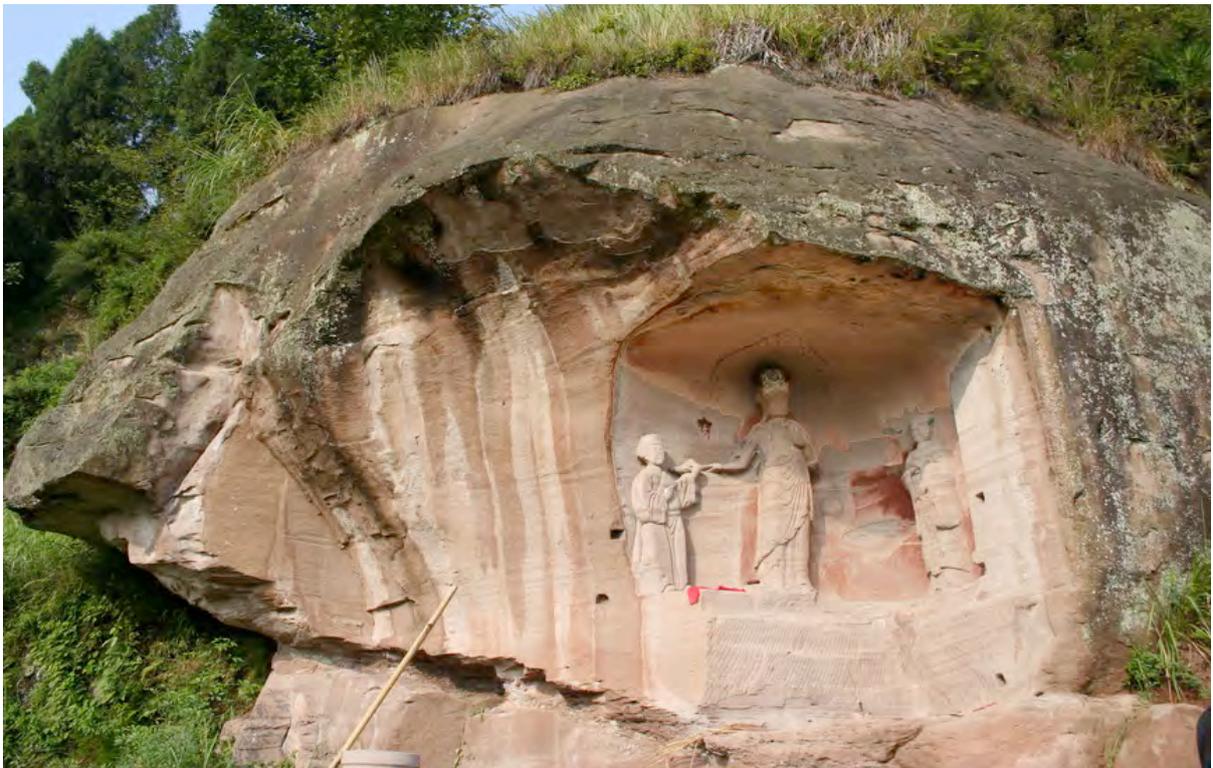


Fig. 3.55 Niche no. 12, Shizhuanshan



Fig. 3.56 Detail of Fig. 3.55



Fig. 3.57 Statues the donors in the niche no. 12

4. Under One Roof – Miaogaoshan, Fo'anqiao, Shibisi, Daboruodong

Miaogaoshan



Fig. 4.1 Overview of four main caves, Miaogaoshan

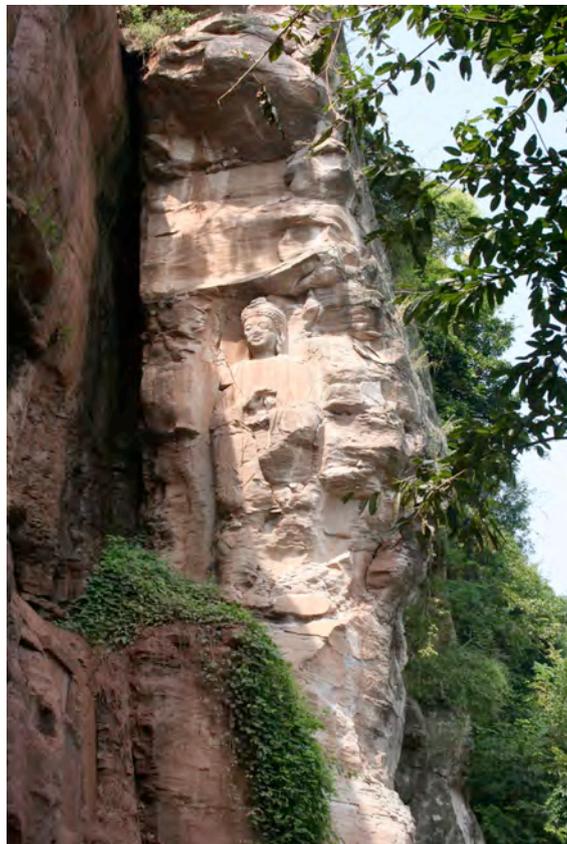


Fig. 4.2 Niche no. 1, Miaogaoshan

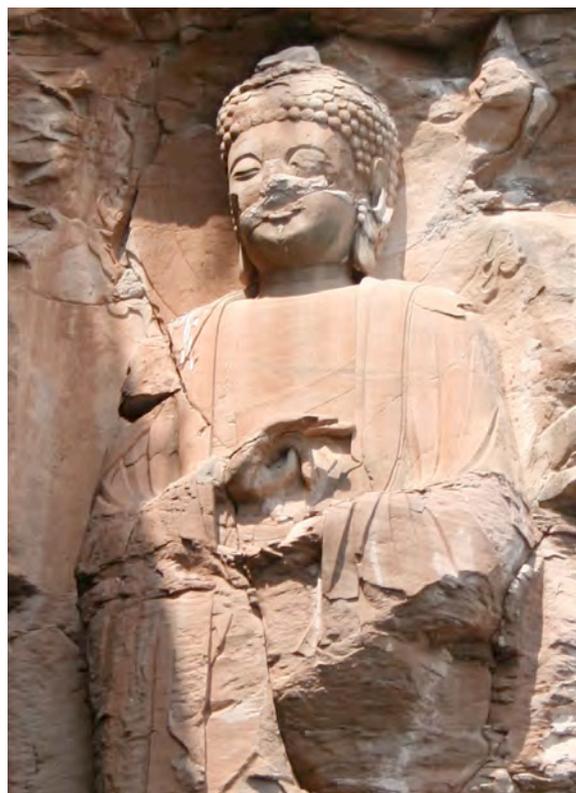


Fig. 4.3 Detail of Fig. 4.2



Fig. 4.4 Main Buddha in the cave no. 6, Shimenshan



Fig. 4.5 Cave no. 2, Miaogaoshan



Fig. 4.6 Rear wall of the cave no. 2, Buddha



Fig. 4.7 Head of Buddha in the cave no. 2



Fig. 4.8 Detail of Fig. 4.6, two disciples



Fig. 4.9 Left wall of the cave no. 2

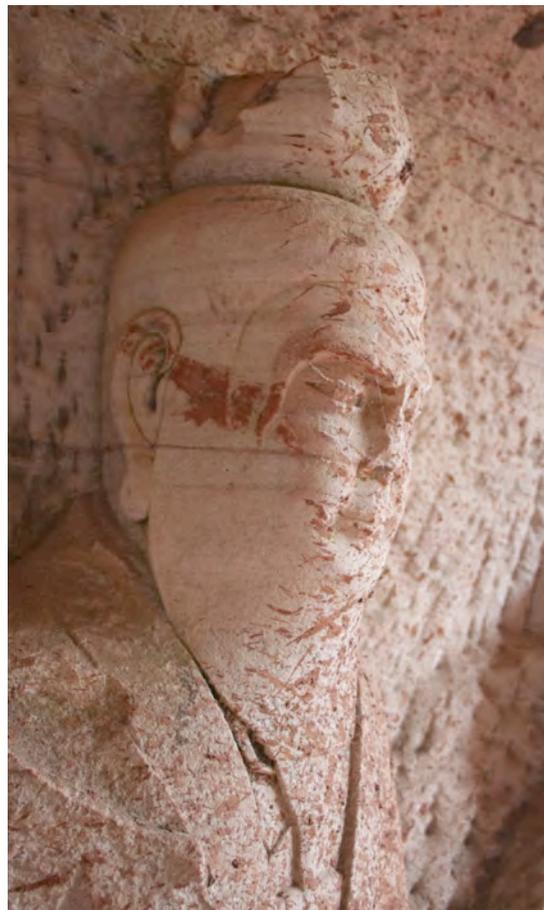


Fig. 4.10 Head of Laozi in the cave no. 2



Fig. 4.11 Right wall of the cave no. 2, Miaogaoshan



Fig. 4.12 Head of Kongzi in the cave no. 2



Fig. 4.13 Rear wall of the cave no. 3, Miaogaoshan



Fig. 4.14 Music instruments in clouds on the ceiling of the cave no. 3



Fig. 4.15 Luohans at the right wall of the cave no. 3 (inside)



Fig. 4.16 Luohans at the right wall of the cave no. 3 (outside)



Fig. 4.17 Detail of Fig. 4.15



Fig. 4.18 inscription on the right wall of the cave no. 3



Fig. 4.19 Pattern of tree on the left wall of the cave no. 3



Fig. 4.20 Luohans at left wall of the cave no. 3 (inside)



Fig. 4.21 Luohans at left wall of the cave no. 3 (outside)



Fig. 4.22 Detail of Fig. 4.20



Fig. 4.23 Statues of Luohans at Laitan, Hechuan



Fig. 4.24 Right wing of the niche no. 220, Beishan, Dazu, undated



Fig. 4.25 Left wing of the niche no. 220, Beishan



Fig. 4.26 Rear wall of the cave no. 4, Miaogaoshan



Fig. 4.27 Detail of Fig. 4.26



Fig. 4.28 Assisting bodhisattvas at rear wall of the cave no. 4



Fig. 4.29 Apsaras at right and left wall of the cave no. 4



Fig. 4.30 Statues of Guanyin at right wall of the cave no. 4



Fig. 4.31 Statues of Guanyin at left wall of the cave no. 4



Fig. 4.32 Two heads of Guanyin in Detail



Fig. 4.33 Statues of Guanzin at right wall of the cave no. 6, Shimenshan



Fig. 4.34 Statues of Guanzin at left wall of the cave no. 6, Shimenshan

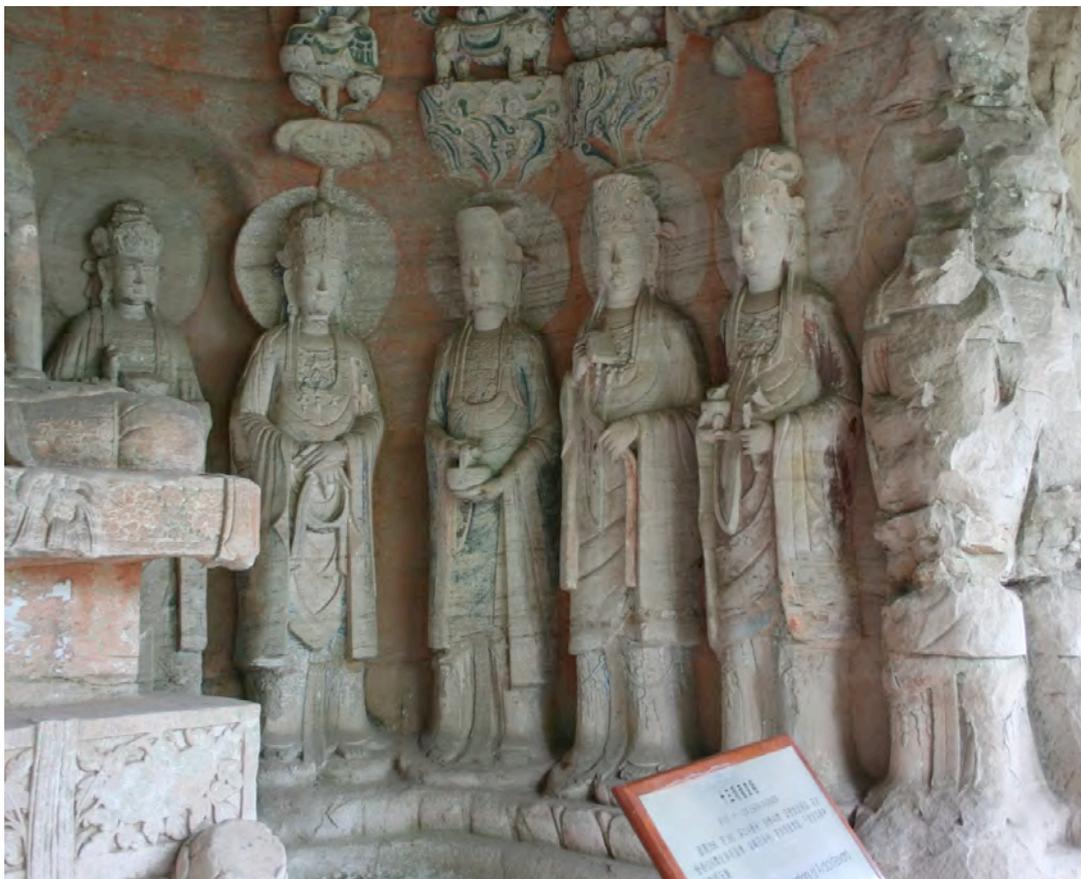


Fig. 4.35 Left part of the niche no. 180, Beishan



Fig. 4.36 Rear wall of the cave no. 5, Miaogaoshan



Fig. 4.37 Niche no. 19, Biludong, Anyue, undated

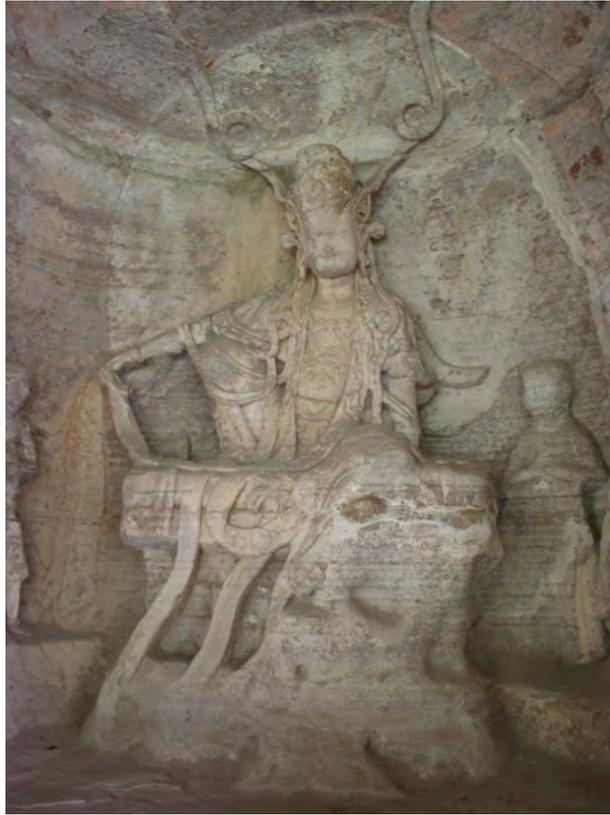


Fig. 4.38 Niche no. 113, Beishan, undated



Fig. 4.39 Cave no. 133, Beishan, undated



Fig. 4.40 Detail of Fig. 4.36



Fig. 4.41 Statues of Dragon daughter and Sudhana in the cave no. 6, Shimenshan



Fig. 4.42 Water and Moon Guanyin, from Dunhuang, 943

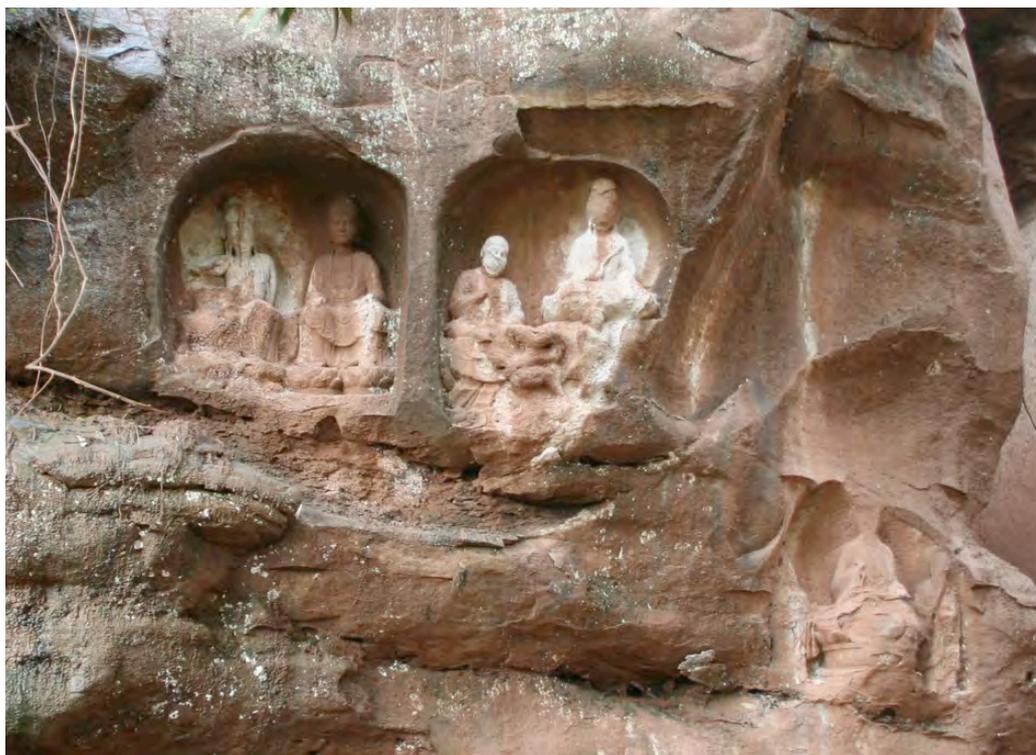


Fig. 4.43 Niche no. 6, 7 and 8, Miaogaoshan



Fig. 4.44 niche no. 50, rear wall, Duobaota Pagoda, Beishan



Fig. 4.45 Niche no. 39, rear wall, Duobaota Pagoda, Beishan



Fig. 4.46 Niche no. 41 and 43, rear wall, Duobaota Pagoda, Beishan



Fig. 4.47 Niche no. 43, rear wall, Duobaota Pagoda, Beishan

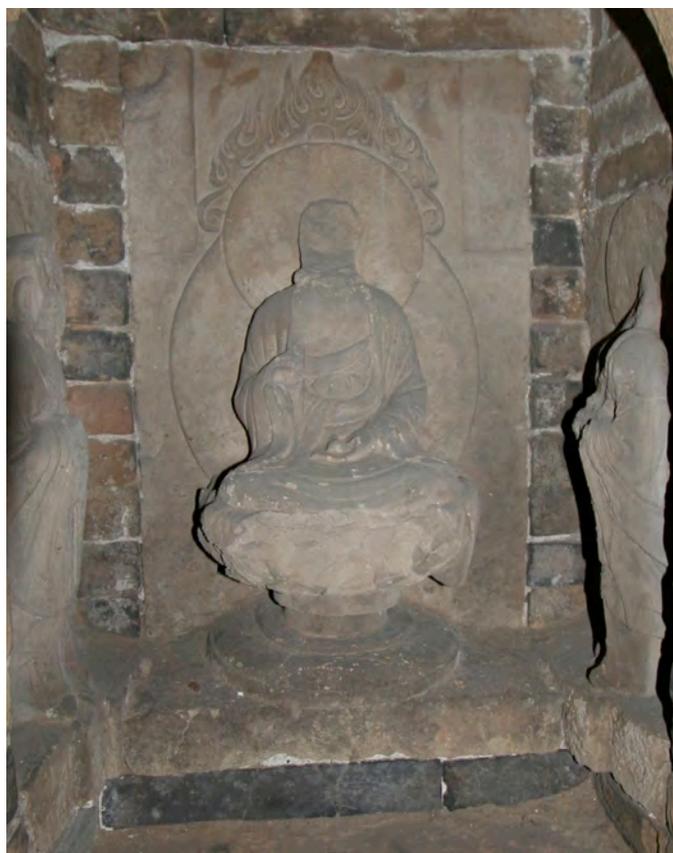


Fig. 4.48 Niche no. 47, rear wall, Duobaota Pagoda, Beishan

Fo'anqiao



Fig. 4.49 Overview, Fo'anqiao



Fig. 4.50 Niche no. 1, Fo'anqiao



Fig. 4.51 Niche no. 209, Beishan



Fig. 4.52 Bodhisattva riding on a buffalo, Guanmingdian



Fig. 4.53 Cave no. 2, Fo'anqiao



Fig. 4.54 Detail of Fig. 4.53



Fig. 4.55 Niche no. 3, Fo'anqiao



Fig. 4.56 Niche no. 7, Fo'anqiao



Fig. 4.57 Niche no. 4 and 9, Fo'anqiao



Fig. 4.58 Niche no. 5, Fo'anqiao



Fig. 4.59 Niche no. 6, Fo'anqiao

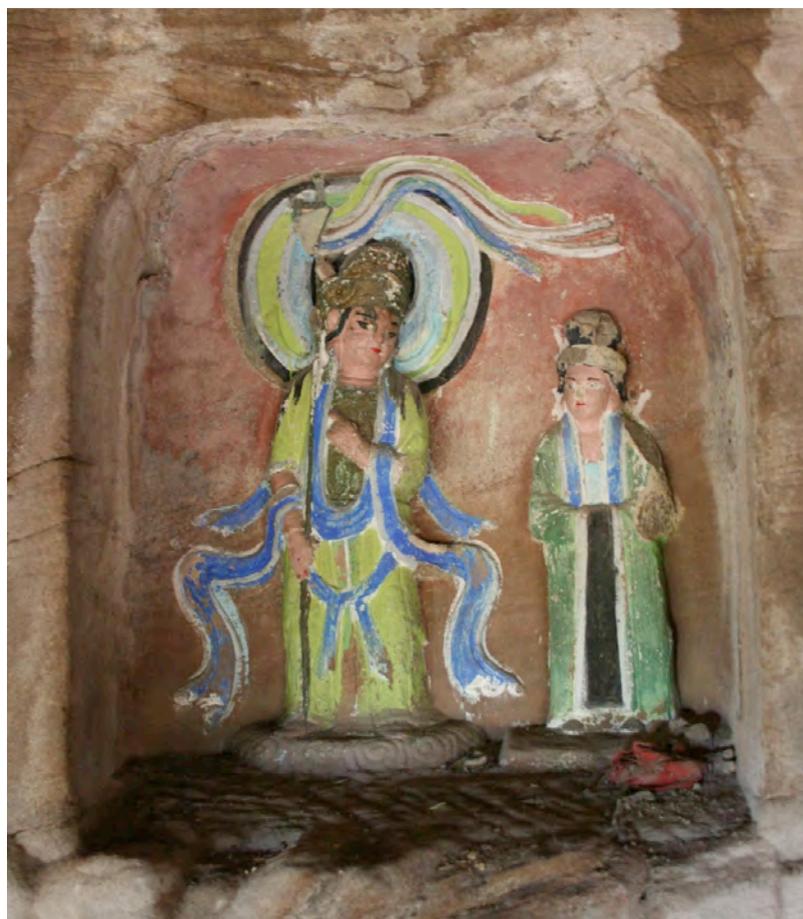


Fig. 4.60 Niche no. 8, Fo'anqiao



Fig. 4.61 Guiding Way bodhisattva, Painting from Dunhuang, 10th century



Fig. 4.62 Cave no. 12, Fo'anqiao



Fig. 4.63 Right wall of the cave no. 12



Fig. 4.64 Left wall of cave no. 12



Fig. 4.65 Details of Fig. 4.62, the Three Teachers



Fig. 4.66 Inscription on the seat of a Luohan Statue



Fig. 4.67 Niche no. 13, Fo'anqiao

Shibisi



Fig. 4.68 Overview, Shibisi



Fig. 4.69 Upper niche, Shibisi



Fig. 4.70 Detail of Fig. 4.69, Buddha

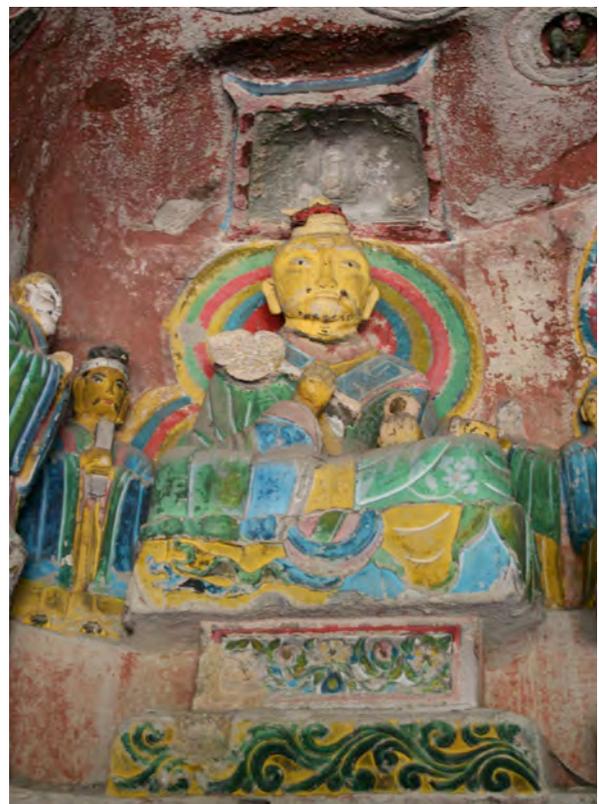


Fig. 4.71 Detail of Fig. 4.69. Laozi



Fig. 4.72 Detail of Fig. 4.69, Kongzi



Fig. 4.73 Detail of Fig. 4.69, Jade Emperor



Fig. 4.74 Lower niche, Shibisi



Fig. 4.75 Niche of a bodhisattva riding on a buffalo, Shibisi



Fig. 4.76 Rubbing of a stele from Shibisi, 1210

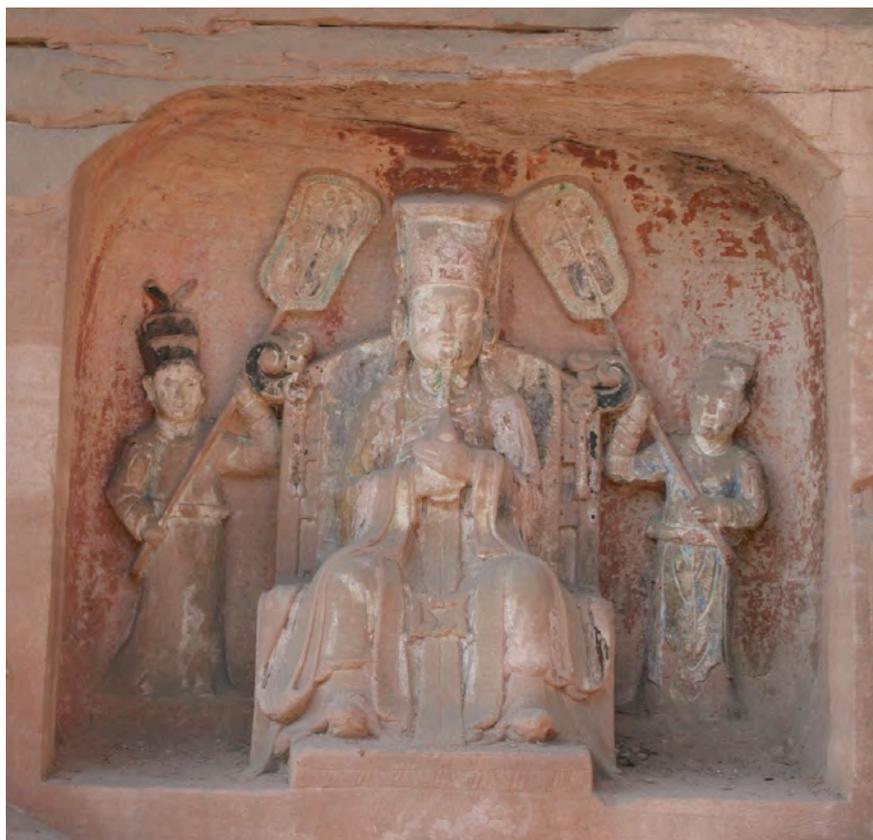


Fig. 4.77 Niche no. 2, Shimenshan

Daboruodong



Fig. 4.78 Frontal view of Daboruodong, Anyue



Fig. 4.79 Inner frontal view of Daboruodong, Anyue



Fig. 4.80 Rear wall, Daboruodong



Fig. 4.81 Right wall, Daboruodong



Fig. 4.82 Left wall, Daboruodong



Fig. 4.83 Niche of Kongzi and detail, Daboruodong



Fig. 4.84 Niche of Laozi and detail, Daboruodong



Fig. 4.85 Diagramm on the ceiling, Daboruodong

5. Ideological Instead of Iconic - Baodingshan

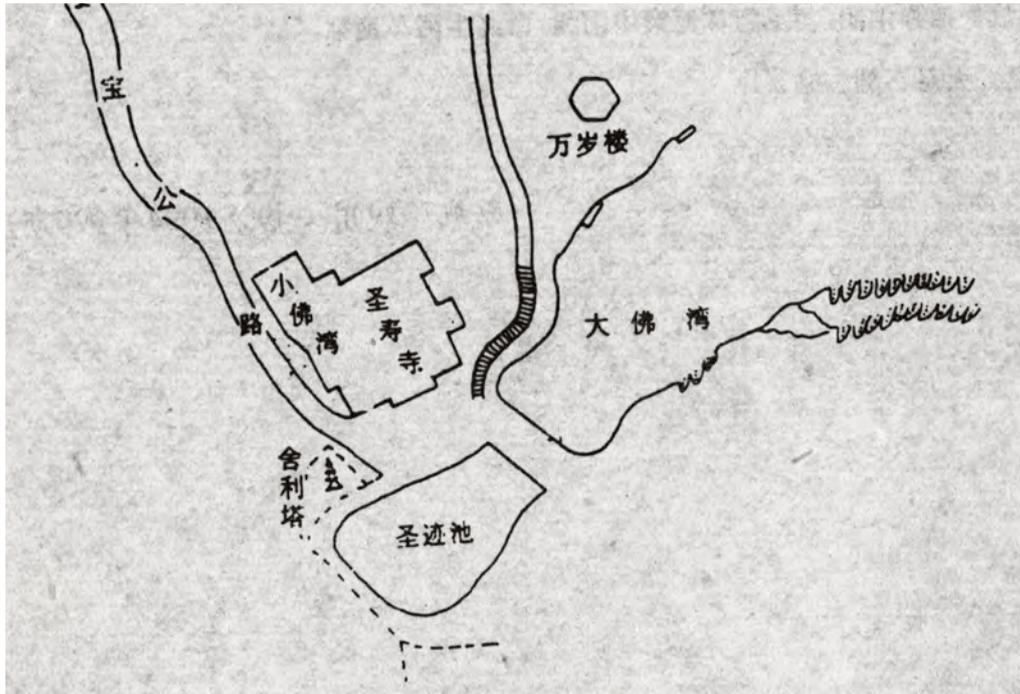


Fig. 5.1 Groundplan of Dafowan

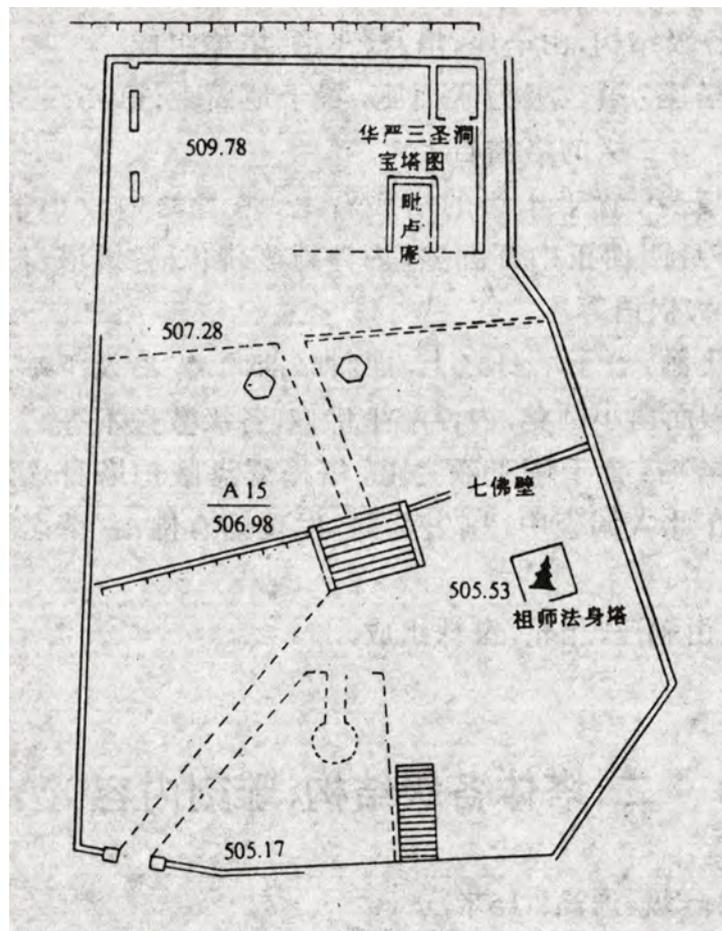


Fig. 5.2 Groundplan of Xiaofowan



Fig. 5.3 Cave no. 3, outside view, Xiaofowan



Fig. 5.4 Cave no. 3, inner view, Xiaofowan



Fig. 5.5 Cave no. 3, right wall, Xiaofowan,



Fig. 5.6 Cave no. 3, left wall, Xiaofowan

Niche no. 15



Fig. 5.7 Niche no. 15, Dafowan



Fig. 5.8 Middle part of niche no. 15, Dafowan



Fig. 5.9 Right part of niche no. 15, Dafowan



Fig. 5.10 Left part of niche no. 15, Dafowan



Fig. 5.11 Cave no. 3, rear wall, Xiaofowan



Fig. 5.12 Detail of Fig. 5.5, outer upper part



Fig. 5.13 Detail fo Fig. 5.6, outer upper part

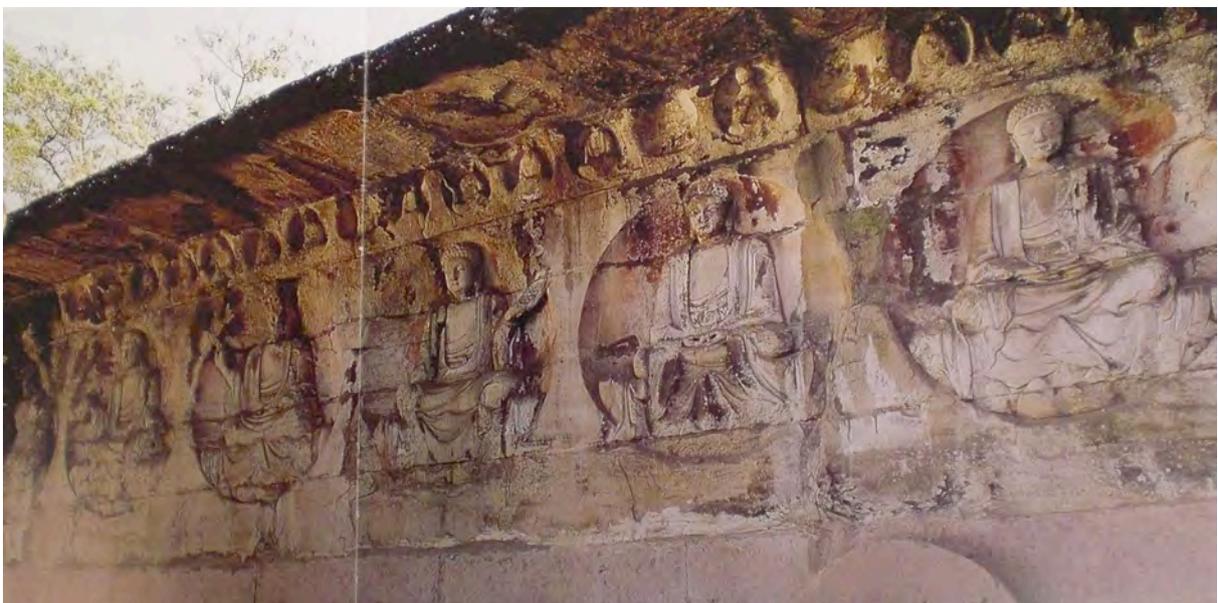


Fig. 5.14 No. 2, Wall with the Seven Buddhas, overview, Xiaofowan



Fig. 5.15 Scene of Avīci hell, niche no. 15, Dafowan



Fig. 5.16 Scene of Praying for Children, niche 15, Dafowan



Fig. 5.17 Scene 1, niche no. 15, Dafowan



Fig. 5.18 Detail of Fig. 5.5, outer middle part



Fig. 5.19 Scene 2, niche no. 15, Dafowan



Fig. 5.20 Scene 4 and 6, niche no. 15, Dafowan



Fig. 5.21 Detail of Fig. 5.6, outer middle part



Fig. 5.22 Scene 3, niche no. 15, Dafowan



Fig. 5.23 Scene 5, niche no. 15, Dafowan



Fig. 5.24 Scene 7 and 9, niche no. 15, Dafowan



Fig. 5.25 Detail of Fig. 5.5, outer lower part



Fig. 5.26 Scene 8, niche no. 15, Dafowan



Fig. 5.27 Scene 10, niche no. 15, Dafowan



Fig. 5.28 Detail fo Fig. 5.6, outer lower part

Niche no. 16



Fig. 5.29 Niche no. 16, overview, Dafowan



Fig. 5.30 God of Wind, niche no. 16



Fig. 5.31 God of Thunder, niche no. 16



Fig. 5.32 Goddess of Lightning, niche no. 16



Fig. 5.33 God of Clouds, niche no. 16

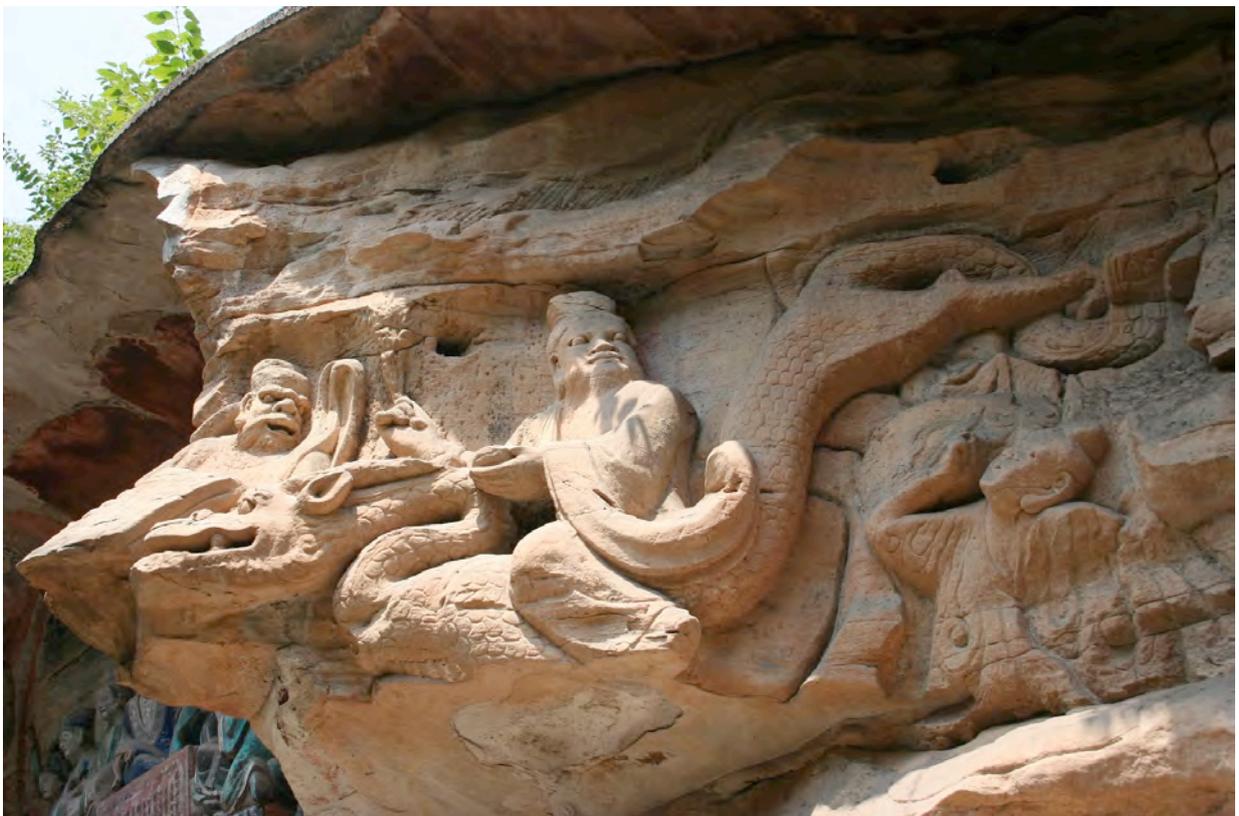


Fig. 5.34 God of Rain, niche no. 16



Fig. 5.35 Damned figure, niche no. 16



Fig. 5.36 Niche at Leishendong, frontal view, Anyue

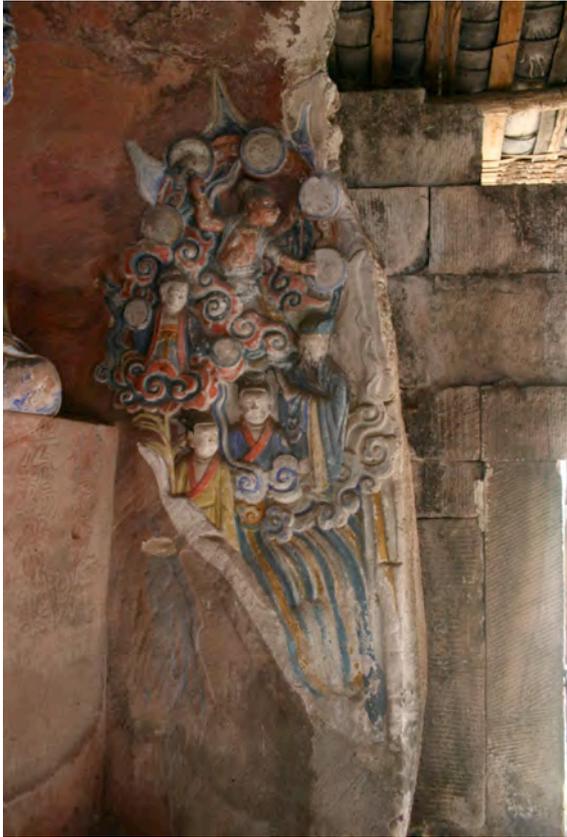


Fig. 5.37 Left sidewall, Leishendong

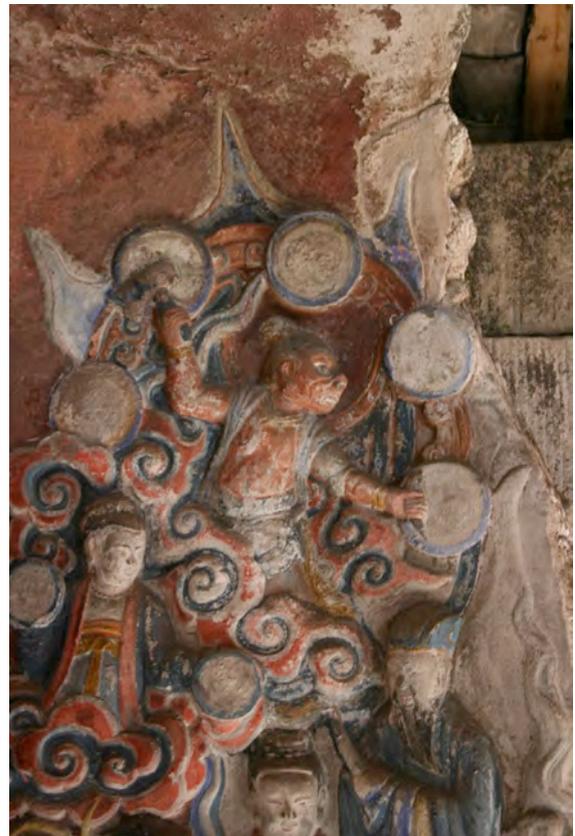


Fig. 5.38 Detail of Fig. 5.37, God of Thunder



Fig. 5.39 Detail of Fig. 5.37, Goddess of Lightning



Fig. 5.40 Detail of Fig. 5.37



Fig. 5.41 Detail of Fig. 5.37



Fig. 5.42 Right sidewall, Leishendong



Fig. 5.43 Detail of Fig. 5.42, God of Wind



Fig. 5.44 Detail of Fig. 5.42, God of Rain



Fig. 5.45 Detail of Fig. 5.42



Fig. 5.46 Gods of Weather, Hanging scroll no. 24 (left), from *shuilu* paintings, Baorningsi, Yuan to Ming dynasty

Niche no. 17



Fig. 5.47 Middle part, Niche no. 16, Dafowan

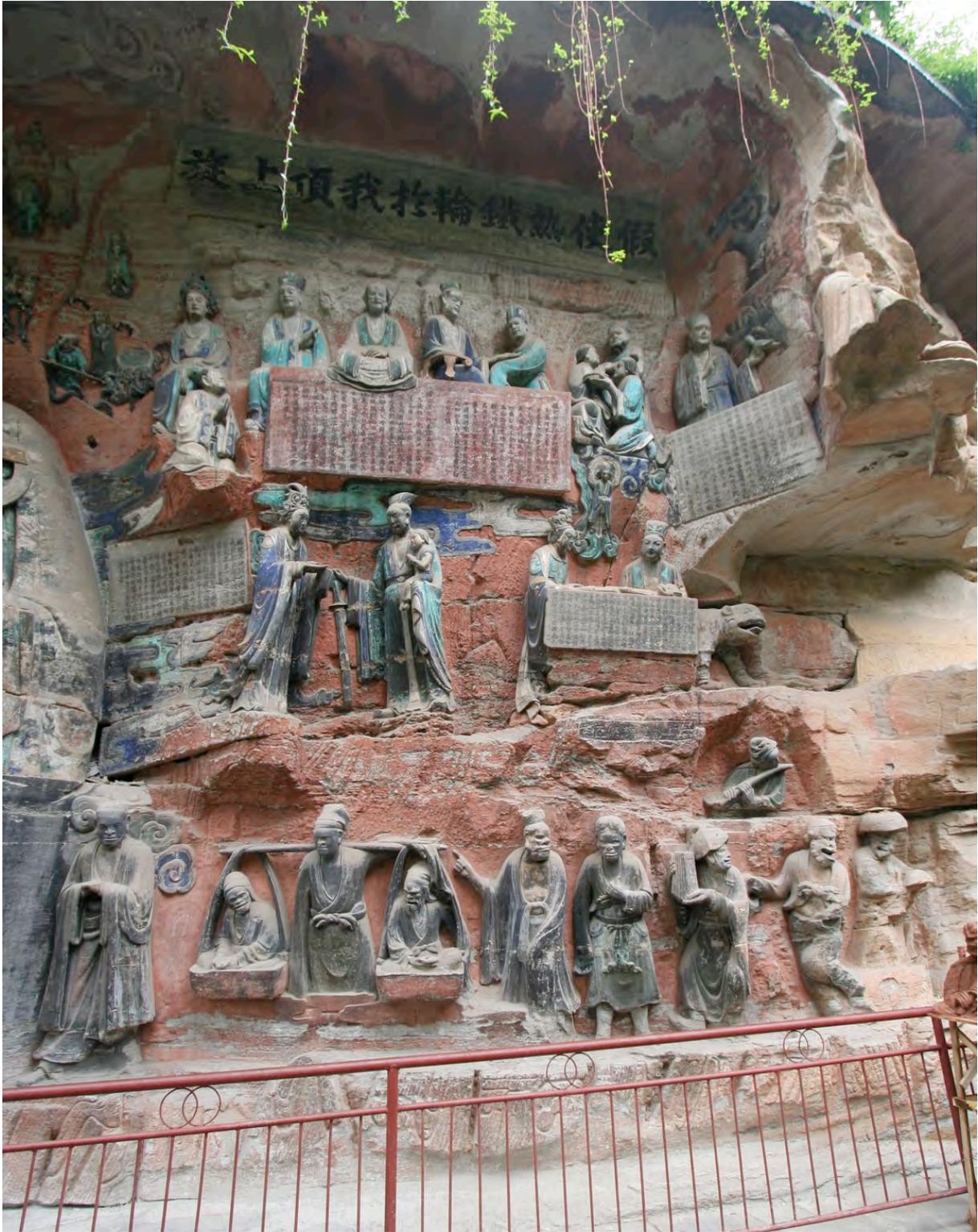


Fig. 5.48 Left part of niche no. 17, Dafowan

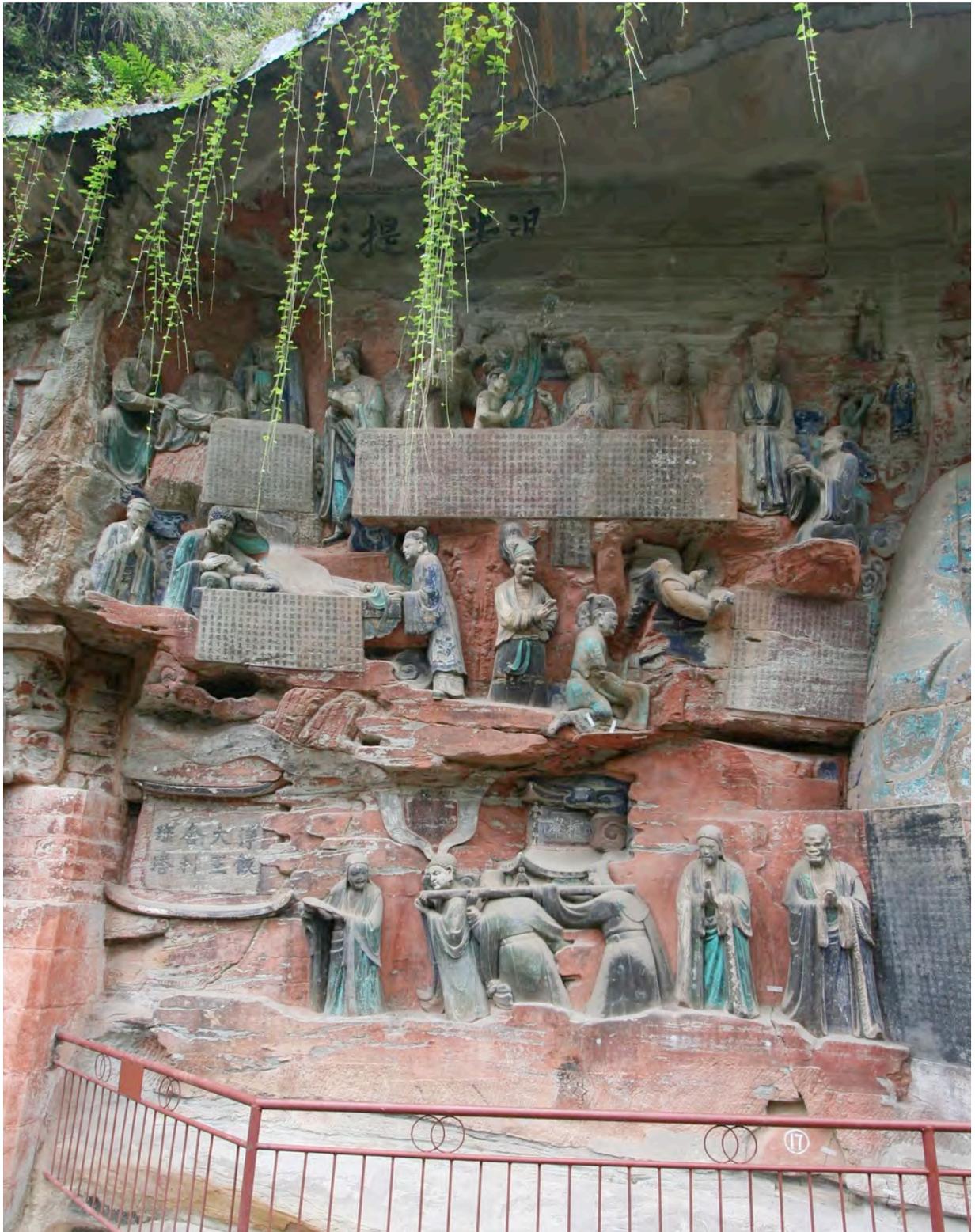


Fig. 5.49 Right part of niche no. 17, Dafowan



Fig. 5.50 Detail of Fig. 5.47



Fig. 5.51 Detail of Fig. 5.48, Scene 1



Fig. 5.52 Detail of Fig. 5.51, the flute player



Fig. 5.53 Detail fo Fig. 5.6, inner lower part



Fig. 5.54 Detail of Fig. 5.48, Scene 2 und 3



Fig. 5.55 Detail of Fig. 5.54, Scene 2



Fig. 5.56 Detail of Fig. 5.54, Scene 3



Fig. 5.57 Detail of Fig. 5.6, inner middle part



Fig. 5.58 Detail of Fig. 5.48, Scene 4 and 5

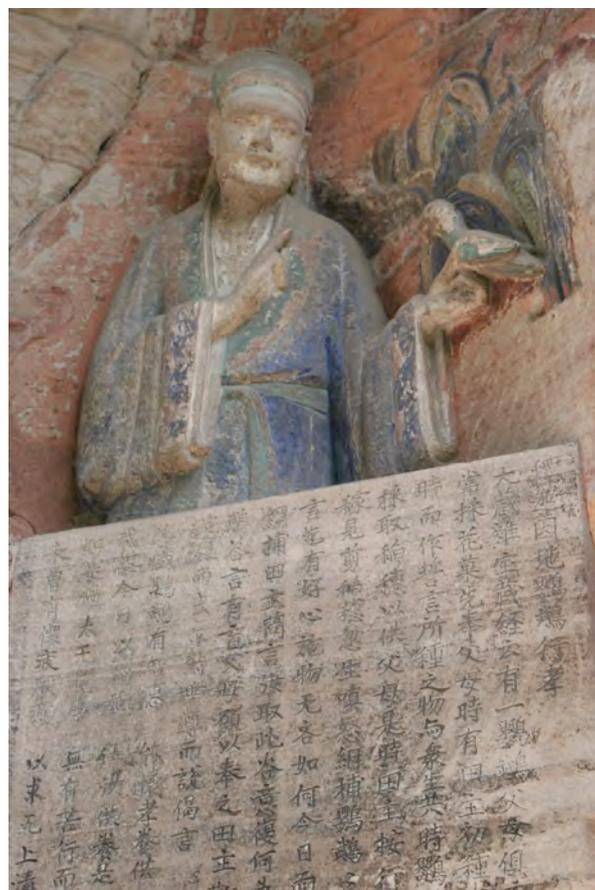


Fig. 5.59 Detail of Fig. 5.48, Scene 6



Fig. 5.60 Detail of Fig. 5.6, inner upper part



Fig. 5.61 Detail of Fig. 5.49, Scene 7 -11

5. Ideological Instead of Iconic - Baodingshan



Fig. 5.62 Detail of Fig. 5.61, Scene 7



Fig. 5.63 Detail of Fig. 5.61, Scene 8



Fig. 5.64 Detail of Fig. 5.61, Scene 9



Fig. 5.65 Detail of Fig. 5.5, inner upper part



Fig. 5.66 Detail of Fig. 5.61, Scene 10



Fig. 5.67 Detail of Fig. 5.5, outer middle part



Fig. 5.68 Detail of Fig. 5.61, Scene 11



Fig. 5.69 Detail of Fig. 5.5, inner middle part



Fig. 5.70 Detail of Fig. 5.49, Scene 10 - 12



Fig. 5.71 Detail of Fig. 5.70, Scene 12



Fig. 5.72 Detail of Fig. 5.5, inner middle and lower part