

Mandalas in the Making

The Visual Culture of Esoteric Buddhism at Dunhuang

Michelle C. Wang



BRILL

Maṇḍalas in the Making

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Cover illustration: Detail of Mahāvairocana, *Maṇḍala of Eight Great Bodhisattvas* (fig. 73). Guiyijun period (848–1036), second half of 9th century. Mural painting. South wall, Mogao Cave 14, Dunhuang, Gansu Province. COURTESY OF THE DUNHUANG ACADEMY.

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This book is printed on acid-free paper and produced in a sustainable manner.

To Ernest

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Contents

Acknowledgments	IX
List of Illustrations	XII
Abbreviations and Conventions	XVIII

Introduction 1

Recentring Buddhism at Dunhuang	7
The Shingon Impact	9
Maṇḍalas in the Making	16
Overview of Chapters	20

1 From *Dhāraṇī* to Maṇḍala 23

<i>Dhāraṇī</i> Pillars in Medieval China	25
Maṇḍalas and Altars	31
Visualizing the Maṇḍala	42

2 The Crowned Buddha and Narratives of Enlightenment 51

The Cult of Vairocana in Early Tibet	52
The Crowned Buddha	60
Networks of Transmission	74
Stylistic Bilingualism in Images of Vairocana	83
The Eight Bodhisattvas	111

3 Maṇḍalas and Historical Memory 122

Mogao Cave 156 and the Victory of Zhang Yichao	123
The Cult of Avalokiteśvara at Dunhuang	138
The Maṇḍala of Eight Great Bodhisattvas in the Guiyijun Period	156
Amoghavajra and the Vajradhātu Maṇḍala	168
Maṇḍalas and Ritual Space	174

4 Maṇḍalas, Repentance, and Vision 195

The Vajra Realm in Ritual Manuals from Dunhuang	196
The Five Buddhas and Repentance Altars	217

5 Beyond the Maṇḍala 234

Bodhisattvas and Repentance	235
The <i>Kalyāṇamitras</i> as Embodied Experience	243
The Vows of Samantabhadra	254

The Ascent to the Dharma Realm 260

Epilogue 271

Bibliography 275

Index 314

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List of Illustrations

- 1 Map of the Silk Routes 2
- 2 *Maṇḍala of Eight Great Bodhisattvas*, from Dunhuang, British Museum 4
- 3 *Garbhadhātu Maṇḍala* (*Taizōkai Mandara*), from Japan, Brooklyn Museum 10
- 4 *Vajradhātu Maṇḍala* (*Kongōkai Mandara*), from Japan, Brooklyn Museum 10
- 5 Eight-reliquary set (minus outermost sandalwood reliquary), Famensi 12
- 6 Five-reliquary set (minus third sandalwood reliquary), Famensi 12
- 7 Kneeling bodhisattva, Famensi 13
- 8 Ratnasambhava Buddha, from Anguosi, Beilin Museum 14
- 9 Eight-armed, three-headed Hayagrīva bodhisattva, from Anguosi, Beilin Museum 14
- 10 *Dhāraṇī* pillar, Foguangsi, Mount Wutai, Shanxi Province 28
- 11 *Bodhi* image, Leigutai South Grotto, Longmen Caves, Luoyang, Henan Province 38
- 12 Relief carving depicting the *bodhi* tree shrine and *vajrāsana* at Bodhgayā, from Bhārhut, Indian Museum 40
- 13 *Vajrāsana* at Bodhgayā, Bihār 41
- 14 Altar diagram for *Revered and Victorious Dhāraṇī*, from Dunhuang, British Museum 45
- 15 Samye Monastery, Tibet Autonomous Region 53
- 16 *Maṇḍala of Eight Great Bodhisattvas*, Denma Drak, Tibet Autonomous Region 55
- 17a, b *Maṇḍala of Eight Great Bodhisattvas*, Bimda, Qinghai Province 58
- 18 *Defeat of Māra*, from Pakistan or Afghanistan, Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery 62
- 19 Model of the Cosmos (according to the Kalachakra tradition) 64
- 20 Five Buddhas crown, from Dunhuang, Musée des arts Asiatiques–Guimet 67
- 21 Traveling Shrine with Vairocana and Eight Bodhisattvas, from Kashmir or Central Asia, Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art 71
- 22 Detail of Traveling Shrine with Vairocana and Eight Bodhisattvas (fig. 21) 72
- 23 Traveling Shrine of Buddha with Radiating Halo and Mandorla, from Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, Metropolitan Museum of Art 75
- 24 Standing Buddha, from Kashmir, Cleveland Museum of Art 77
- 25 Crowned Buddha, from Kashmir or northern Pakistan, Asia Society Museum 80
- 26 Crowned Buddha and attendants, from Kashmir, Pritzker Collection 81

- 27 *Vaiśravaṇa*, from Dunhuang, Musée des arts Asiatiques–Guimet 82
- 28 *Maṇḍala of Eight Great Bodhisattvas*, south side of east wall, Yulin Cave 20, Anxi, Gansu Province 84
- 29 *Maṇḍala of Eight Great Bodhisattvas*, north side of east wall, Yulin Cave 20, Anxi, Gansu Province 85
- 30 Locana Buddha, Fengxian Temple, Longmen Caves, Luoyang, Henan Province 87
- 31 Great Buddha, Tōdaiji, Nara 87
- 32 *Cosmological Buddha*, south wall, Mogao Cave 428, Dunhuang, Gansu Province 88
- 33 *Cosmological Buddha from the Sūtra of Repaying Kindness*, north wall, Mogao Cave 154, Dunhuang, Gansu Province 88
- 34 Iconographic program of the main chamber of Yulin Cave 25 90
- 35 *Maṇḍala of Eight Great Bodhisattvas*, east wall, Yulin Cave 25, Anxi, Gansu Province 92
- 36 *Maitreya tableau*, north wall, Yulin Cave 25, Anxi, Gansu Province 93
- 37 *Amitābha tableau*, south wall, Yulin Cave 25, Anxi, Gansu Province 94
- 38 Standing bodhisattva, from Central Tibet, private collection 96
- 39 Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara, from Nepal, Asia Society Museum 96
- 40 *Avalokiteśvara*, from Dunhuang, British Museum 98
- 41 *Ākāśagarbha*(?), from Dunhuang, British Museum 99
- 42 *Pure Land of Bhaiṣajyaguru*, from Dunhuang, British Museum 100
- 43 *Buddha Preaching the Law*, from Dunhuang, British Museum 101
- 44 Detail of bilingual inscription in Chinese and Tibetan, *Pure Land of Bhaiṣajyaguru* (fig. 42) 102
- 45 Detail of T-shaped cartouche next to Locana Buddha, *Maṇḍala of Eight Great Bodhisattvas* (fig. 35) 109
- 46 Detail of foreground, *Maṇḍala of Eight Great Bodhisattvas* (fig. 2) 113
- 47 Vairocana stele, Lalitagiri, Orissa 116
- 48a-c Vairocana flanked by Avalokiteśvara and Vajrapāṇi, Drag Lhamo, Tibet Autonomous Region 117
- 49 Vairocana flanked by Avalokiteśvara and Vajrapāṇi, Lepkhog, Qinghai Province 119
- 50 *Procession of Zhang Yichao*, south wall, Mogao Cave 156, Dunhuang, Gansu Province 124
- 51 *Procession of Lady Song*, north wall, Mogao Cave 156, Dunhuang, Gansu Province 125
- 52 West wall niche with Buddha icon and donor images, Mogao Cave 156, Dunhuang, Gansu Province 128

- 53 Plan of truncated pyramid ceiling, west wall niche, main chamber of Mogao Cave 156 129
- 54 *Thousand-Armed Avalokiteśvara*, ceiling of west wall niche, Mogao Cave 156, Dunhuang, Gansu Province 130
- 55 *Cintāmaṇicakra*, north slope of west wall niche, Mogao Cave 156, Dunhuang, Gansu Province 131
- 56 *Amoghapāśa*, south slope of west wall niche, Mogao Cave 156, Dunhuang, Gansu Province 132
- 57 *Eight-Armed Avalokiteśvara and Hayagrīva*, west slope of west wall niche, Mogao Cave 156, Dunhuang, Gansu Province 133
- 58 *Vajrasattva and Ākāśagarbha*, east slope of west wall niche, Mogao Cave 156, Dunhuang, Gansu Province 134
- 59 *Two Avalokiteśvaras*, from Dunhuang, British Museum 140
- 60 *Two Aspects of Avalokiteśvara*, from Dunhuang, Musée des Arts Asiatiques–Guimet 141
- 61 Mogao Cave 161, Dunhuang, Gansu Province 143
- 62 *Thousand-Armed Avalokiteśvara*, ceiling, Mogao Cave 161, Dunhuang, Gansu Province 144
- 63 *Avalokiteśvara*, east slope of ceiling, Mogao Cave 161, Dunhuang, Gansu Province 146
- 64 *Avalokiteśvara*, west slope of ceiling, Mogao Cave 161, Dunhuang, Gansu Province 146
- 65 *Avalokiteśvara*, south slope of ceiling, Mogao Cave 161, Dunhuang, Gansu Province 147
- 66 *Avalokiteśvara*, north slope of ceiling, Mogao Cave 161, Dunhuang, Gansu Province 147
- 67 *Avalokiteśvara*, west wall, Mogao Cave 161, Dunhuang, Gansu Province 148
- 68 *Avalokiteśvara on Mount Potalaka*, east wall, Mogao Cave 161, Dunhuang, Gansu Province 149
- 69 East-facing wall and niche of central pillar, Mogao Cave 14, Dunhuang, Gansu Province 151
- 70 Plan of main chamber of Mogao Cave 14 152
- 71 North wall, main chamber of Mogao Cave 14, Dunhuang, Gansu Province 153
- 72 South wall, main chamber of Mogao Cave 14, Dunhuang, Gansu Province 154
- 73 *Maṇḍala of Eight Great Bodhisattvas*, south wall, Mogao Cave 14, Dunhuang, Gansu Province 157
- 74 *Maṇḍala of Eight Great Bodhisattvas*, south wall, Mogao Cave 14, Dunhuang, Gansu Province, with positions of eight bodhisattvas and four offering goddesses indicated 160
- 75 *Vajrasattva*, north wall, Mogao Cave 14, Dunhuang, Gansu Province 161

- 76 *Ghaṇṭā* bell and *vajra*, from Tibet, Los Angeles County Museum of Art 163
- 77 *Vajrasattva Maṇḍala*, from Dunhuang, Musée des Arts Asiatiques–Guimet 163
- 78 Plan of east wall, main chamber of Yulin Cave 20 165
- 79 Plan of north and south walls, main chamber of Yulin Cave 38 166
- 80 *Maṇḍala of Eight Great Bodhisattvas*, south wall, Yulin Cave 38, Anxi, Gansu Province 167
- 81 *Maṇḍala of Eight Great Bodhisattvas*, north wall, Yulin Cave 38, Anxi, Gansu Province 167
- 82 Diagram of the core thirty-seven deities of the Vajradhātu Maṇḍala 170
- 83 Iconographic program of Jin'gesi, Mount Wutai, Shanxi Province 173
- 84 Diagram of the altar in the Lecture Hall of Tōji, Kyoto 174
- 85 *Maṇḍala of the Forty-two Peaceful Deities*, from Dunhuang, Musée des Arts Asiatiques–Guimet 175
- 86 Diagram of *Vajra Realm Maṇḍala*, from Dunhuang, Bibliothèque nationale de France 177
- 87 Diagram of *Maṇḍala of Five Jina Buddhas*, from Dunhuang, British Museum 179
- 88 *Maṇḍala of the Five Buddhas*, from Dunhuang, Musée des Arts Asiatiques–Guimet 181
- 89 Detail of donor figures, *Maṇḍala of the Five Buddhas* (fig. 88) 183
- 90 Detail of altar, *Maṇḍala of the Five Buddhas* (fig. 88) 183
- 91 *Maṇḍala of Amoghapāśa*, from Dunhuang, Musée des Arts Asiatiques–Guimet 185
- 92 Detail of Five Buddhas, *Maṇḍala of Amoghapāśa* (fig. 91) 186
- 93 Detail of maṇḍala, *Maṇḍala of Amoghapāśa* (fig. 91) 188
- 94 Detail of donor figures, *Maṇḍala of Amoghapāśa* (fig. 91) 189
- 95 Diagram of *Sarvadurgatipariśodhana tantra* maṇḍala, from Dunhuang, National Museum of India 190
- 96 *Crossed Vajras (viśvavajra) and the Buddhas of the Four Directions*, ceiling, Mogao Cave 14, Dunhuang, Gansu Province 192
- 97 P.3920d, 162v, from Dunhuang, Bibliothèque nationale de France 206
- 98 P.3920d, 165r, from Dunhuang, Bibliothèque nationale de France 207
- 99 P.3920d, 173v, from Dunhuang, Bibliothèque nationale de France 208
- 100 P.3920e, 179v, from Dunhuang, Bibliothèque nationale de France 209
- 101 P.3920e, 200r, from Dunhuang, Bibliothèque nationale de France 210
- 102 *Jeweled pavilion and deity assemblies on trailing clouds*, west slope of ceiling, Mogao Cave 14, Dunhuang, Gansu Province 212
- 103 Detail of Trailokyavijaya(?), *Jeweled pavilion and deity assemblies on trailing clouds* (fig. 102) 213

- 104 *Viśvavajra* impressions, P.3920, 176v–177r, from Dunhuang, Bibliothèque nationale de France 215
- 105 P.3913, 24-25, from Dunhuang, Bibliothèque nationale de France 219
- 106 Seal, Beilin Museum 221
- 107 First maṇḍala, P.2012, recto, from Dunhuang, Bibliothèque nationale de France 226
- 108 Second maṇḍala, P.2012, recto, from Dunhuang, Bibliothèque nationale de France 229
- 109 Third maṇḍala, P.2012, recto, from Dunhuang, Bibliothèque nationale de France 230
- 110 Fourth maṇḍala, P.2012, recto, from Dunhuang, Bibliothèque nationale de France 231
- 111 Detail of patch with offering goddess, diagram of *Maṇḍala of Five Jina Buddhas* (fig. 87) 232
- 112 South wall, Mogao Cave 159, Dunhuang, Gansu Province 236
- 113 Bodhisattva names contained in inscriptions in Mogao Cave 14 238
- 114 Thousand Buddhas motif, west wall, Mogao Cave 427, Dunhuang, Gansu Province 240
- 115 Eight from a group of fifty-one bodhisattvas, north wall, Mogao Cave 14, Dunhuang, Gansu Province 241
- 116 *Mahāsthāmaprāpta bodhisattva and donor figure*, south wall, Mogao Cave 196, Dunhuang, Gansu Province 242
- 117 *Mañjuśrī and Samantabhadra*, east wall, Mogao Cave 14, Dunhuang, Gansu Province 248
- 118 *Seven Locations and Nine Assemblies tableau*, north ceiling slope, Mogao Cave 85, Dunhuang, Gansu Province 251
- 119 Detail of Sudhana's meeting with Mañjuśrī, *Seven Locations and Nine Assemblies tableau* (fig. 118) 252
- 120 Sudhana's meeting with Mañjuśrī, Many Treasures Pagoda, Dazu, Sichuan Province 253
- 121 Borobudur, Yogyakarta, Java 262
- 122 Borobudur cross-section 262
- 123 Sudhana's meeting with Mañjuśrī, fourth level, Borobudur, Yogyakarta, Java 263
- 124 Openwork stupas, circular terraces, Borobudur, Yogyakarta, Java 263
- 125 Ceiling slopes, Mogao Cave 14, Dunhuang, Gansu Province 265
- 126 Plan of Tabo Temple grounds, Himachal Pradesh 266
- 127 Plan of Tabo Main Temple showing the Entry Hall, Assembly Hall, Cella, and Ambulatory 267

- 128 Sculptures of the Vajradhātu Maṇḍala and mural paintings of Sudhana's journey, east and south walls, Assembly Hall, Tabo Main Temple, Himachal Pradesh 268
- 129 Iconographic program of the Assembly Hall, Tabo Main Temple, Himachal Pradesh 269
- 130 Sudhana's meeting with Mañjuśrī, Tabo Main Temple, Himachal Pradesh 270

Abbreviations and Conventions

B	Chinese manuscripts from Dunhuang held in the National Library, Beijing
Ch.	Objects from Dunhuang held in the Stein Collection at the National Museum, New Delhi, and British Museum, London
EO	Objects from Central Asia held in the Pelliot Collection at the Musée des Arts Asiatiques–Guimet, Paris, transferred from the Musée du Louvre, Paris
IOl Tib J	Tibetan manuscripts from Dunhuang held in the Stein Collection at the British Library, London
MG	Objects from Central Asia held in the Pelliot Collection at the Musée des Arts Asiatiques–Guimet, Paris
P.	Chinese manuscripts from Dunhuang held in the Pelliot Collection at the Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris
Pelliot tibétain	Tibetan manuscripts from Dunhuang held in the Pelliot Collection at the Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris
T	Canonical Sino-Japanese Buddhist texts in Takakusu Junjirō and Watanabe Kaigyoku, eds., <i>Taishō shinshū Daizōkyō</i> . 85 vols. Tokyo: Taishō Issaikyō Kankōkai, 1924-32.
S.	Chinese manuscripts from Dunhuang held in the Stein Collection at the British Library, London

Note to the Reader

Chinese terms and names are transliterated in pinyin, and Japanese terms and names according to the modified Hepburn system. Tibetan terms and names are transliterated phonetically; at first appearance, the Wylie transliteration also is given in parentheses. Due to variations in the Chinese names for Buddhist deities, the Sanskrit is used, with the Chinese equivalent provided at first appearance. For historical figures, Chinese and Japanese names are given in traditional order (surname first), and life or reign dates are provided when known. Characters for Sino-Japanese names and terms are provided on first appearance, and more than once if referencing forms specific to texts or inscriptions. Unless otherwise indicated, all translations from Chinese and Japanese are the author's own.

Introduction

The phrase “Silk Route” offers a vivid metaphor for cultural diversity, cross-cultural transmission, and religious pluralism. At Dunhuang 敦煌 in present-day Gansu Province of northwest China, an oasis city situated at the meeting point of the northern and southern Silk Routes at the eastern end of the Taklamakan Desert, mural paintings, manuscripts, portable paintings, and diagrams form an important corpus of material for studying early Buddhist maṇḍalas in China. Established as a garrison town at China’s gateway to the Silk Routes during the second century BCE, Dunhuang grew over the centuries into an important center for trade and religious activity. Given the multiethnic and multilingual character of the Hexi Corridor, the portion of the Silk Route that formed the most significant passage between northern China and Central Asia, the materials from Dunhuang and nearby regions reflect a complex series of cultural negotiations and religious transformations that resulted in uniquely localized and hybridized visual forms and practices. For this reason, these objects comprise an important case study for the impact of transcultural transmission in religion and art through successive historical periods.

This book focuses principally on a number of mural and portable paintings, manuscripts, and diagrams from two sites in Gansu Province: the Mogao cave shrines 莫高石窟 located twenty-five kilometers southeast of Dunhuang; and the Yulin cave shrines 榆林石窟 located more than one hundred kilometers from Dunhuang, or seventy kilometers south of Anxi County 安西縣 (fig. 1).¹ These paintings and diagrams pertain to the Maṇḍala of Eight Great Bodhisattvas (*Bada pusa mantuluo* 八大菩薩曼荼羅), an iconographic template in which a central deity, typically the cosmic Buddha Vairocana (Piluzhena fo 毘盧舍那佛) or Mahāvairocana (Dari rulai 大日如來), is attended by eight bodhisattvas (fig. 2). A detailed study of eighth- to tenth-century images at Dunhuang and Anxi, and their immediate antecedents in eastern Tibet, reveals transcultural networks between China, Tibet, and Central Asia that came to bear upon art and religion at Dunhuang, and that resulted in the distinctive characteristics of Buddhist maṇḍalas in this time and place.

1 For the long-range transmission of the Maṇḍala of Eight Great Bodhisattvas from India, see Claudine Bautze-Picron, “Le groupe des huit grandes bodhisatva en Inde: genèse et développement,” in Natasha Eilenberg et al., eds., *Living a Life in Accord with the Dhamma: Papers in Honor of Professor Jean Boisselier on his Eightieth Birthday* (Bangkok: Silpakorn University, 1997), 1–55. See also Yoritomi Motohiro 頼富本宏, “Mandara to hachidaibosatsu” マンダラと八大菩薩, *Nihon bukkyō gakkai nenpō* 日本佛教學會年報 57 (1991): 251–67.



FIGURE 1 *Map of the Silk Routes.* © MAPS IN MINUTES™ 2017. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.





FIGURE 2 Maṇḍala of Eight Great Bodhisattvas. *Tibetan period (786-848), early 9th century. Ink and color on silk. 95 × 63.5 cm. From Dunhuang. BRITISH MUSEUM, LONDON, 1919,0101,0.50 (CH.0074). © THE TRUSTEES OF THE BRITISH MUSEUM.*

The Maṇḍala of Eight Great Bodhisattvas served as a highly visible symbol of the Tibetan imperium during the late years of the Tibetan empire (600-850) and the Tibetan occupation of Dunhuang (786-848).² Importantly, this maṇḍala endured during the post-Tibetan era in which Dunhuang was ruled by the Guiyijun 歸義軍, or Return to Allegiance Army (848-1036), which expelled the Tibetan rulers and pledged loyalty to the Chinese court in the capital city of Chang'an 長安 (present-day Xi'an, Shaanxi Province). This book examines the changing historical, cultural, and religious contexts for the Maṇḍala of Eight Great Bodhisattvas in the multiethnic and multilingual environment of Dunhuang during the Tibetan and Guiyijun eras.

According to Chinese dynastic chronology, the works presented in this study date from the Tang dynasty (618-907) and Five Dynasties period (907-60). It is important to note, however, that Dunhuang is characterized by an alternate chronology that reflects the particular historical circumstances of this region. From 786 to 848, Dunhuang was ruled by the Tibetans, who were subsequently ousted by the Chinese general Zhang Yichao 張議潮 (799-872), the first ruler during the era of the Guiyijun. Dunhuang became fairly autonomous from the Chinese imperial center at Chang'an during this period. Simultaneously, the death of the Tibetan King Relpachen (Ral pa can, r. 815-38) and the ascension of his brother, Lang Darma (Glang dar ma, r. 838-42), to the throne initiated what traditional Tibetan histories term an "age of fragmentation."³ The assassination of Lang Darma in 842 led to a succession crisis that marked the end of the Tibetan empire around 850. After this time, no centralized religious or political authority was in place until the later transmission of Buddhism to Tibet, which began in the late tenth century during the reign of King Yeshe O (Ye shes 'od, r. 967-ca. 975).

Despite the "return" of Dunhuang to Tang Chinese rule during the Guiyijun era, in reality, the Tibetan presence in Dunhuang and Central Asia lingered. One example of this presence is the appointment of the monk Wu Hongbian 吳洪辯 (d. 862) in 851 as the superintendent of monks (*dusengtong* 都僧統) under the Guiyijun, despite his prior service under the Tibetan rulers.⁴ Another

2 Brandon Dotson distinguishes between the Yarlung Kingdom (also known more recently as the Pugyal [Spu rgyal] dynasty), which was confined to the Yarlung Valley and Chonggye ('Phyogs rgyas), and the Tibetan empire, which actively sought to conquer other territories and peoples. See Brandon Dotson, *The Old Tibetan Annals: An Annotated Translation of Tibet's First History with an Annotated Cartographical Documentation by Guntram Hazod* (Wien: Verlag der österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2009), 16-17 n. 16.

3 Relpachen was also known as Tri Tsugdetsen (Khri gtsug lde btsan).

4 Imaeda Yoshiro, "The Provenance and Character of the Dunhuang Documents," *The Memoirs of the Toyo Bunko* 66 (2008): 81-102; 86.

example is the existence of bilingual manuscripts as evidence for the continued use of Tibetan as a common language among Chinese and Central Asians.⁵ The fragmentation of the Tibetan empire and lack of central authority, in turn, led to a broad range of religious innovations that were dictated by local rather than state or monastic concerns. The impact of these innovations was felt even in those developments considered characteristic of the later transmission of Buddhism to Tibet.⁶

The parallel fates of the Chinese and Tibetan Buddhist communities at Dunhuang are key to our understanding of the Maṇḍala of Eight Great Bodhisattvas. This work was produced in a cultural and political environment that was shaped by visual expressions of the Tibetan cult of Vairocana, and subsequently by the continued presence, within a multicultural society, of Tibetan artistic, linguistic, and religious norms mingled with the received legacy of one of the most important imperially sponsored monk-translators of the Tang imperial capital, Amoghavajra (Bukong Jin'gang 不空金剛, 705-774).⁷ It has been argued that, during the tenth century, Chinese and Tibetan Buddhist

5 Géza Uray, "L'emploi du tibétain dans les chancelleries des états du Kan-sou et se Khotan postérieurs à la domination tibétaine," *Journal Asiatique* 269 (1981): 81-90; Géza Uray, "New Contributions to Tibetan Documents from the Post-Tibetan Tunhuang," in Helga Uebach and Jampa Losang Panglung, eds., *Tibetan Studies: Proceedings of the 4th Seminar of the International Association for Tibetan Studies* (Munich: Kommission für Zentralasiatische Studien Bayerische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1988), 515-28; Takata Tokio, "Multilingualism in Tun-huang," *Acta Orientalia* 78 (2000): 1-15; Tsuguhito Takeuchi, "Sociolinguistic Implications of the Use of Tibetan in East Turkestan from the End of Tibetan Domination through the Tangut Period (9th-12th c.)," in Desmond Durkin-Meisterernst, Simone-Christiane Raschmann, Jens Wilkens, Marianne Yaldiz, and Peter Zieme, eds., *Turfan Revisited – The First Century of Research into the Arts and Cultures of the Silk Road* (Berlin: Dietrich Reimer Verlag GmbH, 2004), 341-48.

6 Cathy Cantwell and Robert Mayer, *Early Tibetan Documents on Phur pa from Dunhuang* (Wien: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2008); Jacob P. Dalton, *The Taming of the Demons: Violence and Liberation in Tibetan Buddhism* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2011), 48-49.

7 According to the Shingon lineage of esoteric Buddhism in Japan, Huiguo 惠果 (746-805), the Chinese teacher of Kūkai 空海 (774-835), was the main disciple of Amoghavajra. In fact, it was a different monk, named Huilang 慧朗, who was the main dharma heir to Amoghavajra. Charles D. Orzech, "Seeing Chen-yen Buddhism: Traditional Scholarship and the Vajrayāna in China," *History of Religions* 29.2 (1989): 87-114; 90-91. Geoffrey Goble offers convincing arguments regarding the prominent position occupied by Amoghavajra in the establishment of esoteric Buddhism during the Tang dynasty, as well as the similarities between esoteric Buddhist and indigenous Chinese rites; see Geoffrey C. Goble, "Chinese Esoteric Buddhism: Amoghavajra and the Ruling Elite" (Ph.D. diss., Indiana University, 2012).

practices were each clearly distinguished from the other.⁸ Yet in certain contexts, the opposite was true. With the center of gravity shifted away from the Tang and Tibetan empires, specific Chinese and Tibetan modes of Buddhist praxis came to mutually reinforce and reflect one another.⁹

Recentering Buddhism at Dunhuang

The status of Dunhuang as a Buddhist center during the eighth to tenth centuries is highlighted by the wealth of material that survives from this period, attesting to Chinese and Tibetan Buddhist praxis. The four monks – Śubhakarasiṃha (Shanwuwei 善無畏, 637-735), Vajrabodhi (Jin'gangzhi 金剛智, 671-741), Yixing 一行 (683-727), and Amoghavajra – who were involved in the translation of the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra* (*Darījīng* 大日經) and *Vajraśekhara Sūtra* (*Jin'gangding jīng* 金剛頂經), important scriptural bases for East Asian maṇḍalas, were established in Chang'an under imperial patronage.¹⁰ Nevertheless, material traces of their presence in the Central Plains region, including objects and architectural sites, are elusive.¹¹ The cumulative effects of the suppression of Buddhism under Emperor Wuzong 武宗 (r. 840-46) between 842 and 845 and the Huang Chao 黃巢 rebellion, a widespread uprising dating to the years 875-84, inflicted severe damage to Buddhist institutions throughout China. Because of their geographic distance from the metropolitan centers of Chang'an and Luoyang 洛陽, the most coherent repository of early Buddhist maṇḍalas in China lies today in the cave sites of Dunhuang and Anxi, and in the materials recovered from the so-called library cave, Mogao Cave 17.

The contents of the library cave, in turn, have proven to be indispensable to reconstructing Tibetan Buddhism during the age of fragmentation. Despite

8 The gap between Chinese and Tibetan Buddhism at Dunhuang is particularly evident in certain tantric practices that are present in Tibetan-language manuscripts but absent from their Chinese-language counterparts. See Dalton, *Taming of the Demons*, 9.

9 Take, for example, the Chinese- and Tibetan-language manuscripts that demonstrate, as Sam van Schaik argues, “Tibetan and Chinese Zen not as two different traditions but simply as Zen practices presented in two different languages.” See Sam van Schaik, *Tibetan Zen: Discovering a Lost Tradition* (Boston and London: Snow Lion, 2015), 18-19.

10 For a biographical account of these monks, see Chou Yi-liang, “Tantrism in China,” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 8.3, 4 (1945): 241-332.

11 This is not to assume, however, that esoteric Buddhism died out completely after the Tang dynasty; for a rebuttal to this line of reasoning, see Charles Orzech, “The ‘Great Teaching of Yoga,’ the Chinese Appropriation of the Tantras, and the Question of Esoteric Buddhism,” *Journal of Chinese Religions* 34 (2006): 29-78; 31.

the traditional characterization of this period as a “dark age” of Buddhism, Tibetan manuscripts from Dunhuang instead reveal a great deal of innovation and activity, fostered by the lack of monastic authority.¹² Much of the collection, in particular Tibetan manuscripts addressing esoteric or tantric Buddhist rituals, dates to the age of fragmentation, especially the tenth century, demonstrating the interest among Tibetan devotees during this period in such practices.¹³ Prior to this time, the body of ritual literature known as the tantras had been strictly controlled by a religious council, possibly due to the authority that their practice conferred upon the Tibetan kings. This may have been the case especially for those rituals that incorporated themes of violence and conquest. But during the age of fragmentation, freed of imperial constraints, Buddhism took hold among a broader cross-section of society.¹⁴ The overlap between the Guiyijun era and the age of fragmentation thus contributed to an extraordinarily rich religious environment, in which Chinese and Tibetan devotees turned inward, rather than toward a distant imperial center, as well as to one another.¹⁵

Due to these circumstances, the Dunhuang maṇḍalas analyzed in this book were produced in a primarily lay context that looked beyond the normative ritual use of maṇḍalas within the monastic environment. Paintings of maṇḍalas from sites in and near Dunhuang are located within man-made cave shrines carved in mountainsides that were constructed through the patronage of laypeople, including those from prominent local clans such as the post-Tibetan Guiyijun rulers. Cave shrines and portable paintings alike prominently featured images of lay donors. For these reasons, it becomes apparent that maṇḍalas not only were important elements of the religious life of Buddhist institutions at Dunhuang, but that they were firmly embedded in the broader cultural milieu as well.

Previously, research on maṇḍalas from Dunhuang, and on those in the better-studied Japanese and Tibetan contexts, has consisted of specialized iconographic studies, referring to the enumeration of extant images followed

¹² David L. Snellgrove, *Indo-Tibetan Buddhism: Indian Buddhists and their Tibetan Successors* (Boston: Shambhala Publications, Inc., 1987; reprint, 2002), 463-70; Dalton, *Taming of the Demons*, 46.

¹³ Dalton, *Taming of the Demons*, 8.

¹⁴ Dalton, *Taming of the Demons*, 57-59.

¹⁵ It should be noted that, while Lhasa was an important center for the Tibetan empire, it was only one of such sites. Brandon Dotson notes that the “ritual and political center of the empire was the emperor himself,” who moved with his court and monks at least twice a year. Nevertheless, the imperial cities generally were located in central Tibet. See Dotson, *Old Tibetan Annals*, 43.

by the identification of individual Buddhist deities and their probable textual sources. This book, on the other hand, seeks to restore an understanding of discrete images as interconnected elements of broader cultural and religious ecosystems that were contingent upon localized circumstances. By emphasizing the visual, material, and spatial properties of maṇḍalas, it becomes possible to decode not only issues of artistic and religious transmission, but also of spectatorship in order to understand the reception of the Maṇḍala of Eight Great Bodhisattvas in successive historical periods. By situating the images in their localized religious, cultural, and social contexts, this study seeks to reassess the impact of earlier scholarship on Buddhist maṇḍalas.

The Shingon Impact

The question of whether or not the paired Japanese maṇḍalas known as the Two Realms Maṇḍala (figs. 3, 4) were conceptualized in China or Japan is a contested issue. Kūkai 空海 (774-835), the founder of the Japanese sect of esoteric Buddhism known as Shingon 真言, or “true word,” studied in Chang’an between 804 and 806 in order to learn the tenets of esoteric Buddhism from the Chinese master Huiguo 惠果 (746-805), a disciple of Amoghavajra, at Qinglongsi 青龍寺. He subsequently was credited with bringing paintings of the Two Realms Maṇḍala back to Japan, although whether the paintings originally were conceptualized as a pair is unclear.¹⁶ As recorded in his *Catalogue of Newly Imported Sūtras and Other Items* (*Shōrai mokuroku* 請來目錄), presented to Emperor Heizei (Heizei tennō 平城天皇, r. 806-9) shortly after his return to Japan in 806, paintings of the Garbhadhātu Maṇḍala and Vajradhātu Maṇḍala accompanied Kūkai on his return journey, in addition to portraits of the Shingon patriarchs and items inherited from the masters who preceded him.¹⁷

¹⁶ Cynthia Bogel observes that, while the *Catalogue* does not indicate whether the Garbhadhātu and Vajradhātu Maṇḍalas were conceptualized as a pair in their doctrinal basis and ritual use, the term “both parts” (*ryōbu* 兩部) appears several times throughout the text, indicating that the “Two Worlds” concept was important for Kūkai. The term may have referred simply to emphasis placed upon both maṇḍalas, rather than upon one or the other, in the teachings that Huiguo was said to have received from Amoghavajra. Cynthia Bogel, *With a Single Glance: Buddhist Icon and Early Mikkyō Vision* (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 2009), 233-34. Of the Two Realms Maṇḍala, Bogel also states emphatically that “there is no proof that the concept was formulated in China.” Bogel, *With a Single Glance*, 233.

¹⁷ In the “Buddhist Icons, Etc.” section of the *Catalogue*, Kūkai lists three Garbhadhātu Maṇḍala paintings and two Vajradhātu Maṇḍala paintings of different sizes. In the “Items



FIGURE 3
Garbhadhātu Maṇḍala
(Taizōkai Mandara).
Nanbokuchō period
(1336-92), 14th century.
*Hanging scroll; opaque
watercolor, ink, and gold
on silk. 214.6 × 127.3 cm.*
BROOKLYN MUSEUM,
NEW YORK, MUSEUM
COLLECTION FUND,
21.240.2. PHOTO:
BROOKLYN MUSEUM,
21.240.2_SL1.JPG.



FIGURE 4
Vajradhātu Maṇḍala
(Kongōkai Mandara).
Nanbokuchō period
(1336-92), 14th century.
*Hanging scroll; opaque
watercolor, ink, and gold
on silk. 214.7 × 127.3 cm.*
BROOKLYN MUSEUM,
NEW YORK, MUSEUM
COLLECTION FUND,
21.240.1. PHOTO: BROOK-
LYN MUSEUM, 21.240.1_
EDITED_SL1.JPG.

The maṇḍala paintings were used for *abhiṣeka* rituals, or initiation ceremonies in which practitioners were inducted into the “secrets” of the maṇḍala. Kūkai himself was initiated first into the Garbhadhātu Maṇḍala, then the Vajradhātu Maṇḍala, by throwing a flower upon each painting; both times, the flower fell upon the image of the central deity Mahāvairocana Buddha, indicating that this Buddha would be considered as Kūkai’s tutelary deity.¹⁸

Although the iconography and format of the Two Realms Maṇḍala traditionally are believed to have materialized in Tang China before their transmission to Japan by Kūkai, no works in China that may be understood as clear-cut antecedents, or that exhibit close structural, material, or visual affinities with the Two Realms Maṇḍala of Japan, are extant.¹⁹ Despite all of this, the appeal of trying to locate historical traces of the Two Realms Maṇḍala in China has

Handed Down by the Masters” section, he lists one Vajradhātu Maṇḍala painting and one unspecified maṇḍala painting. Those two paintings were said to have been passed down to Kūkai from Vajrabodhi, Amoghavajra, and finally Huiguo. See Bogel, *With a Single Glance*, 117–20. For an analysis of the *Catalogue* and the role that visual and material culture played in Kūkai’s transmission, see Cynthia J. Bogel, “Situating Moving Objects: A Sino-Japanese Catalogue of Imported Items, 800 CE to the Present,” in Jan Mrázek and Morgan Pitelka, eds., *What’s the Use of Art?: Asian Visual and Material Culture in Context* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2008), 142–78.

- 18 Yoshito Hakeda, *Kūkai: Major Works* (New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1972), 147–48.
- 19 Cynthia Bogel cites several examples of maṇḍala-like imagery that date to the Tang dynasty in China, writing that they suggest “maṇḍalas in the making.” See Bogel, *With a Single Glance*, 97–98. While the images found in Tang China do not approximate the Two Realms Maṇḍala of Japan (as Bogel would agree), the present study views them not as precursors to the Two Realms Maṇḍala, but rather as a separate trajectory. In fact, much of the material that will be discussed here postdates the transmission of the Two Realms Maṇḍala by Kūkai. Certain scholars believe that elements of the Two Realms Maṇḍala may be found in pre-Buddhist Chinese cultural geography; see Elizabeth ten Grotenhuis, *Japanese Mandalas: Representations of Sacred Geography* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 1999), 53–57; Orzech, “Seeing Chen-yen Buddhism,” 111; and Pamela D. Winfield, “The Mandala as Metropolis,” in Charles D. Orzech, Henrik H. Sørensen, and Richard K. Payne, eds., *Esoteric Buddhism and the Tantras in East Asia* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2011), 719–43. In Japan, a pair of double-sided wooden plaques from Kongōbuji, a temple founded by Kūkai that served as the main temple of the Shingon sect, is carved with the imagery of the Two Realms Maṇḍala. Although their provenance is unclear, they have been attributed as eighth-century works from Tang China – in effect, dating them prior to the putative importation of the Two Realms Maṇḍala by Kūkai to Japan in the year 806. See Tōkyō kokuritsu hakubutsukan 東京國立博物館, *Kūkai to Mikkyō bijutsu ten* 空海と密教美術展 (Tokyo: Yomiuri Shinbunsha; NHK Puromōshon, 2011), cat. 34. Cynthia Bogel writes that these works postdate Kūkai’s time in Chang’an; see Bogel, *With a Single Glance*, 106.



FIGURE 5 *Eight-reliquary set (minus outermost sandalwood reliquary). Tang dynasty (618-907), 9th century. Sandalwood, gold, silver, stone, gilt silver, gemstones, and pearls. Largest intact reliquary: 23.5 × 20.2 × 20.2 cm. From third chamber of underground crypt at Famensi, Xi'an. FROM SHARF, "BUDDHA'S FINGER BONES," 41, FIG. 5.*



FIGURE 6 *Five-reliquary set (minus third sandalwood reliquary). Tang dynasty (618-907), 9th century. Iron, gilt silver, sandalwood, crystal, jade. Largest reliquary: 33 × 28 × 29 cm. From secret niche in underground crypt at Famensi, Xi'an. FROM SHARF, "BUDDHA'S FINGER BONES," 42, FIG. 6.*

been profound – its impact felt, for example, in the scholarship on the iconography of the late-ninth-century nesting reliquaries at the monastery Famensi 法門寺, located in present-day Fufeng County, Shaanxi Province. Scholars frequently have argued that these paired reliquaries represent the Two Realms Maṇḍala.²⁰ The eight-reliquary set was commonly interpreted as correspond-

²⁰ Of the voluminous scholarship on Famensi, for the Two Realms argument, see especially Wu Limin 吳立民 and Han Jinke 韓金科, *Famensi digong Tangmi mantuluo zhi yanjiu* 法



FIGURE 7
Kneeling bodhisattva. Tang dynasty (618-907), inscribed 871. Gilt silver, silver, and pearls. H. 38.5 cm. From second chamber of underground crypt at Famensi, Xi'an. FROM SHAANXI SHENG KAOGU YANJIUSUO, FAMENSI KAOGU FAJUE BAOGAO, VOL. 2, PLATE 90.

ing to the Garbhadhātu Maṇḍala (fig. 5), with the five-reliquary set representing the Vajradhātu Maṇḍala (fig. 6). Furthermore, the lotus-shaped base of an accompanying gilt silver statue of a kneeling bodhisattva (fig. 7) was thought to represent both maṇḍalas, the upper part corresponding to the Vajradhātu Maṇḍala and the lower part corresponding to the Garbhadhātu Maṇḍala. Nevertheless, the most recent studies argue that, while the iconography of the Vajradhātu Maṇḍala appears in the five-reliquary set and on the base of the

門寺地宮唐密曼荼羅之研究 (Hong Kong: Zhongguo Fojiao wenhua chuban gongsi, 1998). Cynthia Bogel and Eugene Wang both note the presence of Tang-era iconography relevant to the Garbha and/or Vajradhātu Maṇḍalas among the Famensi reliquary sets. See Bogel, *With a Single Glance*, 102-6; and Eugene Yuejin Wang, "Of the True Body: The Buddha's Relics and Corporeal Transformation in Sui-Tang China," in Wu Hung and Katherine Mino, eds., *Body and Face in Chinese Visual Culture* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005), 79-118; 108-11.



FIGURE 8
Ratnasambhava Buddha. Tang dynasty (618-907), ca. 775. White marble, traces of gold leaf and pigments. H. 67.5 cm. FROM ANGUOSI, XI'AN. BEILIN MUSEUM, XI'AN. COURTESY OF THE BEILIN MUSEUM, XI'AN.



FIGURE 9
Eight-armed, three-headed Hayagrīva bodhisattva. Tang dynasty (618-907), ca. 775. White marble. H. 78 cm. FROM ANGUOSI, XI'AN. BEILIN MUSEUM, XI'AN. COURTESY OF THE BEILIN MUSEUM, XI'AN.

kneeling bodhisattva, no unambiguous evidence is found for the presence of the Garbhadhātu Maṇḍala or for a dual-maṇḍala system.²¹

An even earlier group of around eleven stone and marble sculptures originally from the monastery Anguosi 安國寺 in Chang'an, dating to the middle or

21 Luo Zhao 羅炤, "Lueshu Famensi ta digong zangpin de zongjiao neihan" 略述法門寺塔地宮藏品的宗教內涵, *Wenwu* 文物 1995.6:53-62; Robert H. Sharf, "The Buddha's Finger Bones at Famensi and the Art of Chinese Esoteric Buddhism," *Art Bulletin* 93.1 (2011): 38-59; 41-42.

third quarter of the eighth century, suggests the state of Buddhism in China just prior to the time of Kūkai's period of study in the Tang capital. The group consists of Ratnasambhava Buddha, representing the southern quadrant, and several attendant and guardian deities (figs. 8, 9); some of the deities appear in either the Garbhadhātu or Vajradhātu Maṇḍala. Nevertheless, the most obvious common denominator among these groups of deities may be the iconographic grouping that appears in a separate maṇḍala, that described in the *Sūtra for Humane Kings* (*Renwangjing* 仁王經), which was translated by Amoghavajra for Emperor Daizong 代宗 (r. 762-79) in 765, and its ritual commentaries.²² This maṇḍala was based upon the five-fold structure of the *Vajraśekhara Sūtra*.²³ The ultimate goal of the rituals based upon the *Sūtra for Humane Kings* was not initiation or enlightenment, but rather the legitimization of the emperor's rule and the protection of his realm. Indeed, the saving of the capital from invasion was attributed to recitations of the sūtra that were performed later in 765. It is possible that these recitations took place at Anguosi, and that the stone and marble sculptures were installed on an altar for that very purpose in a sculptural maṇḍala.²⁴ A similar group of sculptures was later erected by Kūkai on the altar of the lecture hall at Tōji in Kyoto.²⁵

What these two examples from Famensi and Anguosi highlight are cases of maṇḍalic imagery in the Tang capital that bookended Kūkai's period of study in China, neither of which drew upon a paired maṇḍala system.²⁶ Cynthia

22 The first translation of the sūtra (T245) is attributed to Kumārajīva (Jiūmoluoshi 鳩摩羅什, 334-413), and formed the basis for Amoghavajra's translation (T246).

23 Charles D. Orzech, *Politics and Transcendent Wisdom: The Scripture for Humane Kings in the Creation of Chinese Buddhism* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1998), 174-91.

24 Bogel, *With a Single Glance*, 78-88.

25 Bogel, *With a Single Glance*, 80.

26 Cynthia Bogel notes the presence of several wooden (possibly sandalwood) relief plaques bearing the iconography of the Garbhadhātu and Vajradhātu Maṇḍalas in the collection of Kongōbuji on Mount Kōya in Wakayama Prefecture, Japan. Illustrated as figures 4.27 and 4.28 in *With a Single Glance*, these objects are recognized by the temple as being Tang Chinese in date, specifically eighth to ninth century, although at least one such object bears no information about its provenance. See Bogel, *With a Single Glance*, 99-102. It should be noted that similar objects do not exist in China; therefore, questions remain regarding their relevance for the study of Buddhist maṇḍalas in China. Henrik Sørensen discusses the absence of iconographic forms pertaining to the Two Realms Maṇḍala at Dunhuang; see Henrik H. Sørensen, "Esoteric Buddhism at the Crossroads: Religious Dynamics at Dunhuang, 9th–10th Centuries," in Carmen Meinert, ed., *Transfer of Buddhism Across Central Asian Networks (7th to 13th Centuries)* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2016), 268-72.

Bogel has made important observations regarding the “[merely] casual acknowledgment in the field of the sectarian viewpoints in histories of Japanese Buddhist visual culture.”²⁷ The same “casual acknowledgment of sectarian viewpoints” may also be seen in the study of certain histories of Chinese Buddhist visual culture that have privileged the Two Realms Maṇḍala and viewed the Chinese material as merely a fleeting transit point for Shingon Buddhism. Until now, interpretations based upon the Two Realms Maṇḍala have loomed large in the standard scholarly treatments of Buddhist maṇḍalas. Indeed, such interpretations often have held sway not only with the treatment of maṇḍalas in China, but with maṇḍalas in South and Southeast Asia as well.²⁸ The Dunhuang materials provide a means by which to complicate these dominant narratives.

Maṇḍalas in the Making

In essence, the material from Dunhuang represents a different trajectory for the maṇḍala in East Asia, one that looked westward to India and Tibet rather than eastward to Japan.²⁹ This book takes images from Dunhuang as visual evidence of the processes underlying the development of Buddhist maṇḍalas in China, looking at maṇḍalas in the making.³⁰ As analyzed in Chapter One, maṇḍalas are often employed as ritual paraphernalia in esoteric Buddhist

²⁷ Bogel, *With a Single Glance*, 11.

²⁸ Among others, see Geri H. Malandra, *Unfolding a Maṇḍala: The Buddhist Cave Temples at Ellora* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1993); Nancy Tingley, “Avalokiteśvara in Javanese Context: Gaṇḍavyūha, Kūṭāgāra, and Amoghapāśa,” *The Journal of the Walters Art Museum* 64/65 (2006/2007): 65–80; and the rebuttal in Julie A. Gifford, *Buddhist Practice and Visual Culture: The Visual Rhetoric of Borobudur* (London and New York: Routledge, 2011).

²⁹ Nevertheless, it should be acknowledged that some scholars believe that the styles and techniques exhibited by paintings from Dunhuang influenced those of maṇḍalas that were produced in Chang’an and transmitted to Japan during the Heian period (794–1185). See, for example, Manabe Shunshō 真鍋俊照, “Tonkō butsuga no sashiki hō” 敦煌佛畫の彩色法, *Indogaku bukkyōgaku kenkyū* 印度學佛教學研究 55.1 (2006-7): 252–59.

³⁰ While the term “maṇḍalas in the making” is inspired by Cynthia Bogel, its usage in the present volume is slightly different from hers. She refers to “maṇḍalas in the making” as “what the Japanese would define as the maṇḍala but without the systematic ritual tradition or specific textual sources that accompanied Kūkai’s Diamond World and Womb maṇḍala images.” See Bogel, *With a Single Glance*, 98.

rituals based upon the three mysteries (*sanmi* 三密) of body, speech, and mind.³¹ “Body” is defined as the use of hand gestures known as *mudrā*, “speech” refers to verbal incantations called *dhāraṇī* or mantra, and “mind” is defined as a state of meditative concentration, or *samādhi*. The question of whether a formal lineage of esoteric Buddhism existed in China during the period under discussion, however, has long been a matter of debate among scholars, and the question of terminology also remains unsettled.³² It was not until the Song dynasty (960-1279), in fact, that the Chinese term *mijiao* 密教 (J. *mikkyō*), translated literally as “esoteric teaching,” came to clearly denote a class of teachings separate from the Mahāyāna tradition dominant in East Asia.³³ While a

31 According to the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra*, the three mysteries are the means by which Mahāvairocana Buddha’s “innermost enlightenment” is revealed and performatively replicated. Ryūichi Abé, *The Weaving of Mantra: Kūkai and the Construction of Esoteric Buddhist Discourse* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), 129.

32 For example, Robert Sharf writes, “There is a vast gap between the conception of esoteric Buddhism found in these tenth- and eleventh-century Chinese works on the one hand and the Japanese understanding of esoterism traced to Kūkai on the other.” Robert H. Sharf, “Appendix I: On Esoteric Buddhism in China,” in Robert H. Sharf, *Coming to Terms with Chinese Buddhism: A Reading of the Treasure Store Treatise* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2002), 263-78; 275. The historical evidence points to the esoteric Buddhist lineage as having been a retroactive construction that developed in tandem with the construction of similar lineages in Chan (Zen) and other schools; Amoghavajra himself seems to have had no sense that he was establishing a distinct and separate tradition from the Mahāyāna, even as he prized the teachings of the *Vajrasekhara Sūtra*. See Orzech, “The ‘Great Teaching of Yoga,’” 50-57. For an outline of different scholarly positions on usage of the terms “tantra” and “esoteric Buddhism,” see Charles D. Orzech, Richard K. Payne, and Henrik H. Sørensen, “Introduction: Esoteric Buddhism and the Tantras in East Asia: Some Methodological Considerations,” in Charles D. Orzech, Henrik H. Sørensen, and Richard K. Payne, eds., *Esoteric Buddhism and the Tantras in East Asia* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2011), 3-18; 5. Charles Orzech provides the most thorough discussion of the relevant terminology and historiographical issues in “The ‘Great Teaching of Yoga.’”

33 Orzech, “The ‘Great Teaching of Yoga,’” 44. Charles Orzech rightly notes that “esoteric Buddhism,” which has some basis in emic terminology (“esoteric teaching”), is still a functional term for modern use. According to Orzech, the terms that appeared frequently in works by Amoghavajra include mantra (*zhenyan* 真言), vajra (*jin’gang* 金剛), and yoga (*yugie* 瑜伽); see 46-47. Nevertheless, it should be noted that both “esoteric Buddhism” and “tantrism” are essentially modern inventions. “Esoteric Buddhism” first appeared in the late-nineteenth-century writings of Theosophists A.P. Sinnett and H.P. Blavatsky; see Orzech, “The ‘Great Teaching of Yoga,’” 39-40. The term “tantrism” emerged as a dialectical category in the colonial-era encounter between South Asians and Europeans; see Hugh Urban, *Tantra: Sex, Secrecy, Politics, and Power in the Study of Religion* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2003), 27.

conclusive definition of esoteric Buddhism in China lies beyond the scope of this book, a close study of the Maṇḍala of Eight Great Bodhisattvas offers a more nuanced examination of the position of maṇḍalas within religious practice at Dunhuang, and a recognition of this particular iconographic form as a visual exegesis of the nature of Buddhahood.

At Dunhuang, the Tibetan and Guiyijun periods witnessed an unprecedented production of maṇḍalas in all material forms. These included mural paintings, portable paintings, diagrams, and amulets. In addition to the Maṇḍala of Eight Great Bodhisattvas, other maṇḍalas prominently represented at Dunhuang include those associated with the Five Buddhas of the Vajradhātu Maṇḍala, the *Sarvadurgatipariśodhana tantra*, and the bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara, to be discussed in later chapters of this book. The ritual technology and spatial template of these maṇḍalas were applied not only to initiation rituals, but also to repentance and mortuary rites. Alternately bearing Chinese and Tibetan inscriptions and artistic styles, Dunhuang maṇḍalas developed in the meeting of these two cultures.

From its inception in India, one abiding characteristic of the Maṇḍala of Eight Great Bodhisattvas throughout Asia lay in the variation of the central deity, which could be identified by epigraphic evidence or iconography as the historical Buddha Śākyamuni, Amitābha Buddha of the Western Pure Land, or the transcendental Buddha Vairocana or Mahāvairocana. Even Buddhist sūtras pertaining to the eight bodhisattvas do not always clearly identify the central Buddha, thus enabling the introduction of iconographic variants.³⁴ In Shingon Buddhism, the division between esoteric and exoteric Buddhism was equated with the distinction between the teachings of Śākyamuni and those of Mahāvairocana.³⁵ Therefore, variations in the central Buddha as described above imply that the Maṇḍala of Eight Great Bodhisattvas could be shared between conventionally esoteric and exoteric contexts.

Earlier scholars pointed to the eighth century as the crucial moment at which esoteric Buddhism in China took form, due to the roles played by the so-called “three masters of the Kaiyuan era” – Śubhakarasiṃha, Vajrabodhi, and Amoghavajra – as translators of the *Mahāvairocana* and *Vajraśekhara Sūtras*, which formed the scriptural bases of the Two Realms Maṇḍala.³⁶ More recently, scholars have tried to locate the nascent origins of esoteric Buddhism in China as early as the Northern and Southern dynasties (386–589). Some have

34 Phyllis Granoff, “A Portable Buddhist Shrine from Central Asia,” *Archives of Asian Art* 22 (1968-69): 80-96; 88.

35 Sharf, “On Esoteric Buddhism in China,” 276.

36 For an extended treatment, see Chou, “Tantrism in China.”

even characterized this as a “proto-tantric” or “proto-esoteric Buddhist” phase, particularly in regard to the recitation of the verbal incantations known as *dhāraṇīs* that also played an important role in esoteric Buddhist rituals.³⁷

Nevertheless, what the visual evidence from Dunhuang demonstrates, particularly during the Guiyijun period, is that the Maṇḍala of Eight Great Bodhisattvas was transformed through the application of the spatial template and the insertion of deities associated with the Vajradhātu Maṇḍala. The process of the esotericization of the *Sūtra for Humane Kings* by Amoghavajra in precisely this manner has been discussed previously by Charles Orzech.³⁸ The existence of such a process implies that the Maṇḍala of Eight Great Bodhisattvas also could be reimagined anew in different historical periods at Dunhuang, toward distinct cultural and religious ends. In reference to certain Buddhist deities that transcend easy doctrinal categorization, Bernard Faure has identified a phenomenon by which “a god’s name often is hardly more than a ‘floating signifier,’ an impossible algebraic sign whose value constantly changes, but which at all times represents a bundle of social groups and interests.”³⁹ Another “floating signifier” was the Maṇḍala of Eight Great Bodhisattvas.

37 For a variety of perspectives on these issues, see Michel Strickmann, *Mantras et Mandarins: Le Bouddhisme Tantrique en Chine* (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1996), 71-72; Richard D. McBride II, “Dhāraṇī and Spells in Medieval Sinitic Buddhism,” *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 28.1 (2005): 85-114; Sørensen, “Esoteric Buddhism at the Crossroads”; Koichi Shinohara, *Spells, Images, and Maṇḍalas: Tracing the Evolution of Esoteric Buddhist Rituals* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014); and Jacob Dalton, “How Dhāraṇīs WERE Proto-Tantric: Liturgies, Ritual Manuals, and the Origins of the Tantras,” in David B. Gray and Ryan Richard Overbey, *Tantric Traditions in Transmission and Translation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 199-229. Problematically, in modern Japanese scholarship *dhāraṇīs* have been considered characteristic of miscellaneous esoteric Buddhism (雜密, Ch. *zami*, J. *zōmitsu*), which was seen in opposition to the pure esoteric Buddhism (純密, Ch. *chunmi*, J. *junmitsu*) as exemplified by the Shingon school. This terminology was unknown in Kūkai’s own writings or in any other writings from the Heian or Kamakura (1185-1333) periods in Japan, as well as any Indian or Chinese texts. It was only in the writings of the Shingon monk Ekō 慧光 (1666-1734) of the Edo period (1615-1868) that the use of these opposing terms first appeared. See Abé, *Weaving of Mantra*, 153; and Sharf, “On Esoteric Buddhism in China,” 267.

38 Orzech, *Politics and Transcendent Wisdom*.

39 Bernard Faure, *Gods of Medieval Japan*, vol. 1, *The Fluid Pantheon* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2016), 9. For the “new medievalism” in studies of Japanese Buddhism that emphasize sociopolitical and cultural contexts rather than doctrinal approaches, see Faure, *Fluid Pantheon*, 4. Faure cautions against assigning stable identities to deities (here generally called “gods”), and argues that deities are “nodes in constantly changing networks”; see 8, 14.

Overview of Chapters

This book illuminates Buddhist maṇḍalas from Dunhuang by unlearning many of the most basic habits and assumptions regarding Buddhist maṇḍalas in Japan, and takes the position that material objects and texts play equivalent roles in shaping the discourse on esoteric Buddhism. To begin, an argument is made for a more complex understanding of the possibilities for visual and iconographic interpretations of the *Mahavairocana Sūtra* and *Vajraśekhara Sūtra* that unyokes them from the Two Realms Maṇḍala. These two sūtras, the basis for the Two Realms Maṇḍala, could be expressed in ways other than the paired paintings. Furthermore, we find that maṇḍalas in Dunhuang developed not in a strictly teleological fashion but rather through an accretion of a number of modular units that represented both conventionally esoteric and exoteric elements. In essence, what were thought to be the building blocks of maṇḍalas in the Shingon tradition could be taken apart and reassembled in new and innovative ways unforeseen by conventional narratives of esoteric Buddhism and its visual cultures in East Asia. Finally, by situating the Maṇḍala of Eight Great Bodhisattvas in the context of eighth- to tenth-century Dunhuang, it becomes apparent that the maṇḍala was significant both for its performative restaging of the Buddha's enlightenment as well as for its evocation of political authority and historical memory during the Tibetan and Guiyijun periods. During this time, the Maṇḍala of Eight Great Bodhisattvas was an unusual motif at Dunhuang, seen only in four cave shrines – Mogao Cave 14 and Yulin Caves 25, 20, and 38 – that likely were associated with patronage by local rulers.

Chapter One sets the stage by exploring core tenets of the ritual use of maṇḍalas, as presented in manuals that were based upon the *Revered and Victorious Dhāraṇī of the Buddha's Uṣṇīṣa* (*Foding zunsheng tuoluoni* 佛頂尊勝陀羅尼), one of the most important *dhāraṇīs* that circulated in Tang China both in the Central Plains region as well as at Dunhuang. It is in this chapter that the Maṇḍala of Eight Great Bodhisattvas is introduced in the context of the “maṇḍalization” of this *dhāraṇī*. The introduction of maṇḍalas to the *dhāraṇī* in the eighth century resulted in entirely new conceptions of ritual space. Prior to this, the efficacy of the *dhāraṇī* had been activated through reciting and copying its text, through bodily contact by wearing its words as a talisman, or by more diffuse means through the shadows cast by stone pillars carved with the syllables of the *dhāraṇī*, or even carried by the wind that blew upon those pillars. Maṇḍala rituals, on the other hand, were performed at an altar that was a purified, consecrated, and bounded space.

The imperial metaphor of the Maṇḍala of Eight Great Bodhisattvas and its relevance to narratives of the Buddha's enlightenment are analyzed in Chapter Two. Representing the earliest extant maṇḍalas in India, this maṇḍala was also important during the Tibetan empire, the Tibetan occupation of Dunhuang, and the post-Tibetan Guiyijun period as an emblem of political authority. Although it has often been considered as an early example of the Garbhadhātu Maṇḍala on account of its eightfold structure, the Maṇḍala of Eight Great Bodhisattvas may be viewed instead as a spatial template that was amenable to different doctrinal contexts and uniquely suited to expressions of imperial authority during the Tibetan and post-Tibetan periods. Furthermore, the power of the maṇḍala as an imperial emblem resulted from its visual referencing of the coronation of the Buddha in Akaniṣṭha Heaven, an alternative narrative of the Buddha's enlightenment that is preserved in sūtras of the Huayan (Flower Garland) school, which flourished during the Tang dynasty, and the esoteric tradition.

Chapter Three addresses the multicultural legacy of the Tibetan empire during the Guiyijun period in Dunhuang, and its impact on art and religion, by considering the intersections between the Maṇḍala of Eight Great Bodhisattvas and artistic style. The visual programs of cave shrines that likely were associated with the post-Tibetan Guiyijun rulers indicate a continued interest in Tibetan artistic styles and certain iconographic forms even after the ouster of Tibetan rule from Dunhuang. During this period, it is probable that the Maṇḍala of Eight Great Bodhisattvas continued to serve as a symbol of political legitimacy through its appropriation by Guiyijun rulers of the Zhang 張 and Cao 曹 clans. Furthermore, iconographic elements associated with the Vajradhātu Maṇḍala were adapted to the Maṇḍala of Eight Great Bodhisattvas, indicating religious developments during this period that are evident in both the Chinese and Tibetan milieux.

The final two chapters elucidate the impact of repentance rituals, designed to expiate the negative karma of devotees, on the visual program of the Guiyijun-era Mogao Cave 14, which likely was associated with the Zhang clan. Chapter Four examines the insertion of maṇḍalas into repentance rituals, particularly a conjunction of maṇḍalas featuring five Buddhas and eight bodhisattvas. Described in little-studied Dunhuang manuscripts that comprise a local lineage of texts related to the *Vajraśekhara Sūtra*, these common lay rituals were transformed by the spatial template of maṇḍalas, and subsequently shaped the iconographic program of Mogao Cave 14. In Chapter Five, a separate set of repentance rituals focused on a cycle of bodhisattva figures lining the lower walls of Mogao Cave 14 is examined. Drawn instead from the *Sūtra on the Names of the Buddha* (*Foshuo Foming jing* 佛說佛名經), these images point

to a visual and somatic articulation of the bodhisattva path that became intertwined with the Maṇḍala of Eight Great Bodhisattvas.

This book builds upon a deep tradition of iconographic studies of Buddhist maṇḍalas by paying keen attention to localized cultural and religious contexts in addition to issues of format, pictorial conventions, and materiality. Rather than treating maṇḍalas as stable objects, viewing them in context enables a keen understanding of maṇḍalas as pictorial forms and devotional foci that encapsulated visionary experiences and ritual space, and that were subject to purposeful choices on the part of donors, clergy, and artists. In so doing, the various means by which maṇḍalas came into being in Dunhuang during the eighth to tenth centuries become visible. In the process, the material from Dunhuang not only sheds light upon the little-known history of Buddhist maṇḍalas in China, but also has the potential to complicate our notion of how an esoteric Buddhist visuality can or should look.

From *Dhāraṇī* to Maṇḍala

The earliest maṇḍalas in China were associated with Buddhist incantations called *dhāraṇīs* (*tuoluoni* 陀羅尼).¹ According to Michel Strickmann, maṇḍalas make their first appearance in a Chinese text in a *dhāraṇī* sūtra associated with the bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara of the Thousand Arms and Thousand Eyes (Qianyan qianbi Guanshiyin pusa 千眼千臂觀世音菩薩). This text uses the term maṇḍala to refer to the space used for ritual.² Although the efficacy of *dhāraṇīs* was based initially upon their recitation by devotees, during the Tang dynasty the painted, printed, and sculptural forms in which they were materialized grew vastly in number. As we will see, the semantic range of maṇḍalas was nearly as broad as that of *dhāraṇīs*. This chapter seeks to unpack the processes by which maṇḍalas were incorporated into *dhāraṇī* praxis. To do so, translations of and ritual commentaries on one of the most important *dhāraṇīs* from Tang China, titled *Foding zunsheng tuoluoni jing* 佛頂尊勝陀羅尼經 (*Uṣṇīṣavijayā dhāraṇī; Sūtra of the Revered and Victorious Dhāraṇī of the Buddha's Uṣṇīṣa*, hereafter *Revered and Victorious Dhāraṇī*), will be examined. This close analysis will illuminate the process through which maṇḍalas were joined

- 1 In addition to *dhāraṇīs*, verbal incantations were known in medieval China by a variety of names that reflected their perceived efficacies. The term *shenzhou* 神咒, or “divine spell,” reflecting the supernatural perceptions of verbal incantations, appeared in Daoist texts and subsequently in Buddhist texts from the third century onward. See Michel Strickmann, *Chinese Magical Medicine*, ed. Bernard Faure (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2002), 103. Another term, *zongchi* 總持 (“complete grasp”), suggests the mnemonic quality of verbal incantations, closely related to another term, *chizhou* 持咒 (“incantation that is grasped”). See Strickmann, *Mantras et Mandarins*, 69. Paul Copp elaborates further on the complex set of referents for this term. See Paul F. Copp, *The Body Incantatory: Spells and the Ritual Imagination in Medieval Chinese Buddhism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014), 11. See also Ronald M. Davidson, “Studies in Dhāraṇī Literature I: Revisiting the Meaning of the Term *Dhāraṇī*,” *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 37 (2009): 97–147. As the incantations examined in this chapter generally are self-titled as *dhāraṇī*, this term will be used for ease of discussion.
- 2 Strickmann, *Mantras et Mandarins*, 144. The text cited is the *Dhāraṇī Incantation Sūtra of Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva of a Thousand Eyes and Thousand Arms* (*Qianyan qianbi Guanshiyin pusa tuoluoni shenzhou jing* 千眼千臂觀世音菩薩陀羅尼神咒經, T1057), attributed to Zhitong 智通 (active mid-7th century). It describes a ritual associated with the Thousand-Armed and Thousand-Eyed Avalokiteśvara during which a maṇḍala was produced on a ground of white sandalwood using colored powders. The author thanks Paul Copp for this reference.

with earlier forms of Buddhist praxis; it will also show how this process introduced new concepts of ritual space and soteriology alongside pre-established modes of devotion.

By definition, a *dhāraṇī* incantation is simply an ungrammatical sequence of Indic words that were transliterated into Chinese.³ In practice, the imaginative scope of *dhāraṇīs* far exceeded this. The earliest Buddhist *dhāraṇīs* appeared in the context of Mahāyāna Buddhist sūtras, such as the *prajñāpāramitā* (“perfection of wisdom”) sūtras, in which the chanting of *dhāraṇīs* was praised by the Buddha as being among the righteous activities of bodhisattvas.⁴ The *Lotus Sūtra*, which was first translated into Chinese in the third century CE, is one of the better-known sūtras that contains *dhāraṇīs*. In the brief Chapter Twenty-six, titled simply “Dhāraṇī,” a number of bodhisattvas, heavenly kings, and *rākṣasa* daughters (demon-like beings) offer up a total of five *dhāraṇīs* in order to protect and shield those believers who read and practice the sūtra, along with promises of protection against perils as widespread as demons, poison herbs, and decline or harm.⁵ Gradually, sūtras devoted solely to particular *dhāraṇīs* as well as compilations of *dhāraṇīs* emerged, such as the *Tuoluoni jijing* 陀羅尼集經 (*Sūtra of Collected Dhāraṇīs*) of Atikūṭa (Adiquduo 阿地瞿多, active mid-7th century).⁶ It is precisely because of the omnipresent nature of *dhāraṇīs* that questions regarding their “proto-tantric”

3 Copp, *Body Incantatory*, 4. Copp wisely reminds us that, although *dhāraṇīs* are traditionally understood to have been comprised of Sanskrit words, many of the sūtras brought to China were written in languages other than Sanskrit, raising the possibility that the same may hold true for the *dhāraṇīs* within those sūtras. See Copp, *Body Incantatory*, 244-45 n. 14. Copp provides an important overview of the ways in which *dhāraṇīs* were defined in Buddhist writings in *Body Incantatory*, 1-28.

4 Abé, *Weaving of Mantra*, 164. For the role of *dhāraṇīs* in the spiritual attainments of the bodhisattva, see Copp, *Body Incantatory*, 20-25. Lü Jianfu argues that the earliest *dhāraṇīs* were those of the *prajñāpāramitā* sūtras. See Lü Jianfu 呂建福, *Zhongguo mijiaoshi* 中國密教史 (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 1995), 29. Indeed, the *prajñāpāramitā* sūtras themselves may constitute some of the earliest Mahāyāna sūtras, appearing as early as 100 BCE. See Paul Williams, *Mahāyāna Buddhism: The Doctrinal Foundations*, 2nd ed. (London and New York: Routledge, 2010), 47-49.

5 Burton Watson, trans., *The Lotus Sutra* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), 307-11. The Watson translation is based on the Chinese translation by Kumārajīva of 406 CE (T262).

6 On this important compilation (T901), see Koichi Shinohara, “The All-Gathering Maṇḍala Ceremony in Atikūṭa’s Collected Dhāraṇī Scriptures: Reconstructing the Evolution of Esoteric Buddhist Ritual,” *Journal Asiatique* 298.2 (2010): 389-420; and Shinohara, *Spells, Images, and Maṇḍalas*, 28-88.

character have been raised in the scholarly literature.⁷ The practice of reciting *dhāraṇīs* was widespread in medieval China not only among members of the monastic community, but among laypeople as well.⁸

The popularity of the *Revered and Victorious Dhāraṇī* in Tang China may be attributed to its perceived efficacies as well as to imperial patronage; the text, which underwent successive translations, was appropriated as the scriptural basis for Buddhist rituals focused upon both mundane and supramundane ends.⁹ Employed for mortuary rituals, it was viewed as a vehicle for the eradication of negative karma and as a conduit to awakening. The historical circumstances of the eighth century, including the disastrous An Lushan rebellion (755-63) and the repeated threat of Tibetan and Uyghur invasions, precipitated a reliance upon Buddhism for the purposes of state protection. It was a small leap from the properties of the *Revered and Victorious Dhāraṇī* – the negation of karmic obstructions – to the negation of obstructions to state security.

Dhāraṇī Pillars in Medieval China

The basic narrative of the *Revered and Victorious Dhāraṇī* recounts the response of Śākyamuni Buddha, the historical Buddha, to the plight of Shanzhu 善住,

7 Robert Sharf has contended that the difficulty of identifying a distinct school of esoteric Buddhism in China is due to the ubiquity of *dhāraṇī* and visualization practices there; see Sharf, “On Esoteric Buddhism in China,” 264. The “proto-tantric” nature of *dhāraṇīs* was first articulated by Michel Strickmann in *Mantras et mandarins*, 130. In McBride, “Dhāraṇī and Spells,” 113-14, the author argues that *dhāraṇī* were not proto-tantric but rather belonged to mainstream Chinese religion. Yet other scholars have argued that paying attention to ritual manuals associated with *dhāraṇīs* reveals the gradual emergence of esoteric Buddhism. See Lü, *Zhongguo mijiaoshi*, 22-39; and more recently, Shinohara, *Spells, Images, and Maṇḍalas*; and Dalton, “How Dhāraṇīs WERE Proto-Tantric.”

8 See Li Xiaorong 李小榮, *Dunhuang mijiao wenxian lungao* 敦煌密教文獻論稿 (Beijing: Renmin wenxue chubanshe, 2003), 293-98, for the dissemination of *dhāraṇīs* in China, and 295 for lay devotion to *dhāraṇīs*.

9 Four translations of this *dhāraṇī* were sponsored under the patronage of Empress Wu 武則天 (r. 690-705), out of the thirteen canonical texts belonging to this genre. For the role played by Empress Wu in fostering the association between the *dhāraṇī* and the cult of the bodhisattva Mañjuśrī on Mount Wutai, as well as the general interest of her clan in the *dhāraṇī*, see Jinhua Chen, “Śarīra and Scepter: Empress Wu’s Political Use of Buddhist Relics,” *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 25.1, 2 (2002): 33-150, in particular 103-11. Furthermore, in 776, Emperor Daizong ordered monks and nuns to recite the *dhāraṇī* twenty-one times daily for one month (T52.2120:852c4-13). Paul Copp writes of the fluid nature of *dhāraṇīs*, “none more so, at least in terms of explicit description, than spells such as the *Mahāpratisarā* and *Uṣṇīṣavijayā dhāraṇīs*”; see his *Body Incantatory*, 5.

who was a lower-ranking deity. Following the most widely circulated translation of the sūtra, *Foding zunsheng tuoluoni jing* (*Sūtra of the Revered and Victorious Dhāraṇī of the Buddha's Uṣṇīṣa*), attributed to Buddhapālita (Fotuo-boli 佛陀波利, active late 7th century), Shanzhu suddenly hears a voice in the deep of night. This voice tells him that he will die after seven days, be reborn into seven successive animal bodies, experience the sufferings of hell, and finally, be reborn, blind, into a poor and lowly family.¹⁰

In distress, Shanzhu calls upon Indra (Dishitian 帝釋天), lord of the deities, and recounts what the voice has told him. Sensing that the Buddha is the only one who can help Shanzhu to avoid this terrible fate, Indra explains Shanzhu's plight to Śākyamuni, whereupon rays of light emanate from the Buddha's *uṣṇīṣa*, or cranial protuberance (referenced in the title of the *dhāraṇī*), and spread across the ten directions. The light further circles the Buddha three times and enters the Buddha's mouth. The Buddha then addresses Indra and extols the benefits of the *dhāraṇī*, ranging from eradicating all negative karma and obstructions, to destroying the suffering of unfavorable rebirths, to deliverance from all hells, animal rebirths, and the realm of King Yama.¹¹

The Buddha explains to Indra that the benefits are offered to those who hear, recall, or recite the *dhāraṇī*.¹² Therefore, the efficacy of the *dhāraṇī* initially rests upon the enactment of its sonic and auditory properties. Following his teaching of the *dhāraṇī*, however, the Buddha gives a number of instructions regarding the ways in which it could be revered, and explains how to carry out the rituals based upon it. The benefits of the *dhāraṇī* are promised to anyone who is "capable of writing, circulating, retaining, reciting, listening, and making offerings."¹³

Among the most visible acts of devotion to the *dhāraṇī* was the establishment of stone pillars on which the text was carved.¹⁴ Although this topic has been treated in earlier scholarship, the basic parameters of the material form

¹⁰ *Foding zunsheng tuoluoni jing* is T967. See T19:967.349c26-350a15.

¹¹ T19:967.350a27-b3; T19:967.351a1-11. Within Buddhist cosmology, the six realms of rebirth are hell, animals, hungry ghosts, demigods, humans, and gods; King Yama is the judge of the deceased.

¹² T19:967.350b7-20.

¹³ T19:967.351b5-6.

¹⁴ While this chapter contrasts the spatial logic of *dhāraṇī* pillars with that of altars and maṇḍalas, it is worth noting that one multitiered example from Kunming not only was carved with the text of numerous *dhāraṇīs*, but also with deities in a maṇḍalalic formation. See Angela F. Howard, "The Dhāraṇī Pillar of Kunming, Yunnan: A Legacy of Esoteric Buddhism and Burial Rites of the Bai People in the Kingdom of Dali (937-1253)," *Artibus Asiae* 57.1, 2 (1997): 33-72.

and functions of *dhāraṇī* pillars are worth repeating here.¹⁵ It should be noted that the pillars were not themselves the focus of devotion, but rather, as expressed in the passage below, the *dhāraṇī*'s benefits were transmitted to anyone by the dust and shadows cast by the pillar, just as benefits were transmitted to those who were able to hear the recitation of its syllables.

The Buddha said to Indra: If one were to inscribe this *dhāraṇī* upon a tall banner (*chuang* 幢), and place it on a high mountain, a tower, or within a stūpa, then, Indra, if monks or nuns, male or female donors, men or women, were to see this banner or come close to it or were its shadow to fall upon them, or wind to blow the dust from the *dhāraṇī* banner onto them, then, Indra, all these beings' sinful deeds, which should ordinarily cause them to fall into the evil paths of hells, or animal rebirths, or the realm of King Yama, or the world of hungry ghosts, or birth in the body of an āsura, would have no ill effects at all. They will not be polluted with sinful taints. Indra, these beings will receive the prophecies of future buddhahood from every single buddha. They will attain the stage of non-regress within annutāra-samyak-sambodhi.¹⁶

First, a clarification regarding the translation of the word *chuang* 幢 is in order. *Chuang* may be understood as both "banner" and "pillar."¹⁷ Perhaps to clarify

15 For an important recent treatment of *dhāraṇī* pillars, see Liu Shufen 劉淑芬, *Miezui yu duwang: Foding zunsheng tuoluoni jingchuang zhi yanjiu* 滅罪與度亡：佛頂尊勝陀羅尼經幢之研究 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2008). Liu argues for the multivalent associations of *dhāraṇī* pillars, stating that they functioned not only as vehicles for the conveyance of the *dhāraṇī* but also as stūpas. On *dhāraṇī* pillars, see also Copp, *Body Incantatory*; and Kuo Liying, "Dhāraṇī Pillars in China: Functions and Symbols," in Dorothy C. Wong and Gustav Heldt, eds., *China and Beyond in the Mediaeval Period: Cultural Crossings and Inter-Regional Connections* (New Delhi: Mahonar Publishers and Distributors; Amherst, NY: Cambria Press, 2014), 351-85.

16 Translation of T19:967.351b9-18 from Copp, *Body Incantatory*, 146, with minor changes.

17 Based on her reinterpretation of the mural painting on the south wall of Mogao Cave 217, which had long been understood to contain scenes from the *Lotus Sūtra* (see the authoritative account in Eugene Y. Wang, *Shaping the Lotus Sutra: Buddhist Visual Culture in Medieval China* [Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 2005], 79-121), Shimono Akiko argues that visual evidence exists for the practice of inscribing the *dhāraṇī* upon a cloth banner, and then hanging it from a tall structure. See Shimono Akiko 下野玲子, "Tonkō Bakukōkutsu dai 217 kutsu nanheki kyōhen no shin kaishaku" 敦煌莫高窟第二一七窟南壁經變の新解釋, *Bijutsushi* 美術史 54.1 (2004): 96-115. Until Shimono's analysis, images pertaining to the *Revered and Victorious Dhāraṇī* had been recognized only in Mogao Caves 44 and 454, which date from the Song dynasty; see Wang Huimin 王



FIGURE 10 *Dhāraṇī pillar. Tang dynasty (618-907), 857. Stone. H. 4.9 m. Foguangsi, Mount Wutai, Shanxi Province. PHOTOGRAPH BY SUN-AH CHOI (2009).*

this ambiguity, a dedicatory inscription on a *dhāraṇī* pillar occasionally would specify that it was a “stone pillar” (*shichuang* 石幢). Furthermore, a dedicatory inscription might refer to a *dhāraṇī* pillar as a “shadow pillar” (*yingchuang* 影幢) in order to evoke the capacity of shadows or dust to transmit the *dhāraṇī*’s efficacy.¹⁸

惠民, “Dunhuang Foding zunsheng tuoluoni jingbian kaoshi” 敦煌佛頂尊勝陀羅尼經變考試, *Dunhuang yanjiu* 敦煌研究 1991.1:7-18. The most recent treatment of the painting on the south wall of Mogao Cave 217 appears in Shi Pingting 施萍婷 and Fan Quan 範泉, “Guanyu Mogaoku di 217 ku nanbi bihuade sikao” 關於莫高窟第217窟南壁壁畫的思考, *Dunhuang yanjiu* 敦煌研究 2011.2:12-20, in which the authors reject both interpretations of the painting. Kuo Liying identifies images of *dhāraṇīs* inscribed and installed on top of three-tiered parasols, mountains, or buildings in Mogao Caves 23, 31, 55, 103, 156, 217, and 454, calling them “banner poles.” She relates this practice to Dunhuang manuscripts that describe the practice of installing banners and parasols. See Kuo, “Dhāraṇī Pillars in China,” 361, 366-71. For depictions of *dhāraṇī* lecterns in the Mogao cave shrines, see Neil Schmid, “Whosoever Writes this Dhāraṇī ...’ The Ritual Use of Dhāraṇī Lecterns in Medieval East Asia,” unpublished paper presented at the conference “Cultural Crossings: China and Beyond in the Early Medieval Period,” University of Virginia, 2010.

¹⁸ Liu, *Miezui yu duwang*, 52-53.

Dhāraṇī pillars typically were constructed from more than one piece of stone; they were composed of three parts: a pedestal, the main body of the pillar upon which the *dhāraṇī* and dedicatory and donor inscriptions were inscribed, and the upper portion (fig. 10).¹⁹ They were most often eight-sided pillars, although other *dhāraṇī* pillars exhibited four, six, or even as many as sixteen sides. Because the eight-sided pillar was so common, at times *dhāraṇī* pillars were also called “eight-sided stele” (*baleng bei* 八楞碑).²⁰ The evocation of the term “stele” suggests that one aspect of the multivalent functions of *dhāraṇī* pillars was the preservation of Buddhist or other texts by inscribing them onto stone steles. Due to the capability of the *dhāraṇī* for eradicating past sins and hells, *dhāraṇī* pillars inscribed with the *Revered and Victorious Dhāraṇī* were not only displayed in public spaces; attesting to the popularity of the *dhāraṇī* during the Tang dynasty precisely for its varied benefits in the afterlife, these pillars were often placed beside or inside tombs for the benefit of the deceased.²¹

Most *dhāraṇī* pillars ranged from one to four meters in height, with a few exceptions exceeding ten meters. The Buddhapālita translation of the *Revered and Victorious Dhāraṇī* was the *dhāraṇī* most often inscribed upon the surfaces of these pillars.²² The earliest *dhāraṇī* pillar to bear the *Revered and Victorious Dhāraṇī* is dated to 689 and originated in Shaanxi Province.²³ The practice of establishing *dhāraṇī* pillars was widespread, and although the majority of these pillars originally were located in Shaanxi Province, the provenance of others reaches as far as Sichuan Province in the southwest and Hebei Province in the northeast. In addition to geographic scope, the establishment of *dhāraṇī* pillars extended well beyond the Tang dynasty, demonstrating the breadth and longevity of this practice.²⁴

19 Liu, *Miezui yu duwang*, 60; Kuo, “Dhāraṇī Pillars in China,” 351.

20 Liu, *Miezui yu duwang*, 51-52.

21 See Liu, *Miezui yu duwang*, 122-98; and Kuo, “Dhāraṇī Pillars in China,” 363-65.

22 Liu, *Miezui yu duwang*, 68.

23 Liu, *Miezui yu duwang*, 54.

24 See the table of *dhāraṇī* pillars in Liu, *Miezui yu duwang*, 54-60. No less than the great Tang poet Li Bo 李白 (701–ca. 762) was invited to compose a eulogy on the *dhāraṇī* pillar of Chongmingsi 崇明寺 in present-day Shandong Province. Originally located in the marketplace, the pillar likely was moved to the south gate of the monastery in the first decade of the eighth century. It was described by Li as “the most impressive sight in this whole region,” and its efficacy was attributed to the belief that “its pure refulgence casts light on beings, its incense breeze shakes away dust.” See Paul W. Kroll, *Dharma Bell and Dhāraṇī Pillar: Li Po's Buddhist Inscriptions* (Kyoto: Scuola Italiana di Studi sull'Asia Orientale, 2001), 55, 64.

Although no *dhāraṇī* pillars are extant at Dunhuang, more than one hundred Chinese-language manuscripts from Dunhuang are related to the *Revered and Victorious Dhāraṇī*.²⁵ Of copies of the *Sūtra of the Revered and Victorious Dhāraṇī of the Buddha's Uṣṇīṣa*, the vast majority represent the Buddhapālita translation with the preface relating the tale of Buddhapālita's encounter with the bodhisattva Mañjuśrī (Wenshushili pusa 文殊師利菩薩) on Mount Wutai 五台山. Two copies of the *dhāraṇī* sūtra (both of which are the Buddhapālita translation) are dated, providing insight into the reception of the text at Dunhuang. The manuscript housed at Beijing University (*Beida* 北大 D.077) dates to the eighth day of the fourth month of the year 717 (*Kaiyuan* 開元 5), and was copied by Hu Sijing 斛斯敬. The version at Shanghai Library (*Shangtu* 上圖 094) dates to the sixth day of the eleventh month of the same year, and was copied by Fan Gan'er 范感兒.²⁶ The dates of these two manuscripts suggest the circulation of the *dhāraṇī* sūtra through the Hexi Corridor not long after the probable composition of its preface around the year 689. The provenance of yet other manuscripts speaks to the broad circulation of the *dhāraṇī* sūtra and its ritual manuals. For example, a pair of non-canonical *qiqing* 啟請, or invocation manuals, is attributed to the monk Huiluan 慧鑾, who was originally from Jiangling County 江陵縣 in Hubei Province and was later associated with the Sanjie Monastery 三界寺 in Dunhuang.²⁷

The practice of erecting *dhāraṇī* pillars was predicated upon the ability of these structures to infuse the devotee's body with the sacrality embodied in the syllables of the *dhāraṇī* through what Paul Copp has termed "material efficacy."²⁸ Returning to the Buddhapālita translation, the final means of

25 According to Lü Jianfu's estimate based on the *Dunhuang yishu zongmu suoyin*, the manuscripts total 118 in number; among them, 98 are sūtras, 12 are the *dhāraṇī* alone, 6 are prefaces, and 2 are invocation manuals (*qiqing*). See Lü, *Zhongguo mijiaoshi*, 357 n. 1. According to Misaki Ryōshū, 105 copies of the sūtra and 10 copies of the *dhāraṇī* alone are extant; see Misaki Ryōshū 三崎良周, *Kōza Tonkō* 講座敦煌, vol. 7, *Tonkō to Chūgoku bukkyō* 敦煌と中國佛教 (Tokyo: Daitō shuppansha, 1984), 116. Li Xiaorong enumerates more than 120 copies of the sūtra; see Li, *Dunhuang mijiao wenxian lungao*, 49.

26 Li, *Dunhuang mijiao wenxian lungao*, 49.

27 These *qiqing*, S.4378 and S.2567, are discussed in Li, *Dunhuang mijiao wenxian lungao*, 56–58. The Sanjie Monastery probably stood in front of the Mogao Caves. Rong Xinjiang has suggested that it may have been located on the site of the wooden building directly across from Mogao Cave 16. See Rong Xinjiang, "The Nature of the Dunhuang Library Cave and the Reasons for its Sealing," *Cahiers d'Extrême-Asie* 11 (1999–2000): 247–75; 264.

28 Copp, *Body Incantatory*, 154. Here, Copp cites David Frankfurter's concept of "concrete efficacy," articulated in his 1994 essay "The Magic of Writing and the Writing of Magic: The Power of the Word in Egyptian and Greek Traditions," *Helios* 21 (1994): 189–221.

observing the *dhāraṇī* as explained in the sūtra text was the making of offerings. As opposed to the use of pillars, the presentation of offerings and the maṇḍala rituals based upon the *Revered and Victorious Dhāraṇī* entailed the creation of a bounded ritual space in which the awakening experience of Śākyamuni was performatively re-enacted; such practices involved the use of images and meditative visualization. The offering method prescribed entailed the construction of a square altar upon which incense was burned. The *dhāraṇī* was then recited 108 times while the practitioner assumed the correct *mudrā*.²⁹ Like the Dunhuang manuscripts, altar diagrams from Dunhuang also provide important insights into how the *dhāraṇī* was put into practice.

Maṇḍalas and Altars

Within the Shingon tradition is a well-established typology of the four types of maṇḍalas. The first is the *mahā maṇḍala*, or “great maṇḍala,” in which the deities are represented, usually painted, in their anthropomorphic forms. Next is the *samaya maṇḍala*, in which deities are represented by their iconographic attributes alone; followed by the *dharma maṇḍala*, which employs the Sanskrit seed syllables associated with the individual deities. Finally, the *karma maṇḍala* is a sculptural maṇḍala in which the deities are rendered in fully three-dimensional and anthropomorphic form.³⁰ In the translations and ritual commentaries associated with the *Revered and Victorious Dhāraṇī*, however, this terminology does not exist. Rather, maṇḍalas are defined variously as altars – closely related to the site of Śākyamuni’s enlightenment – or as circles of deities produced through a complex process of meditative visualization. As such, the emphasis is less on the materiality of maṇḍalas than on their capability to conjure the experience of Buddhist awakening.

The use of a square altar for making offerings, first noted in the Buddhapālita translation, is also employed in the translation of the *Revered and Victorious Dhāraṇī* by Divākara (Dipoheluo 地婆訶羅, 612-687), titled *Zuisheng foding tuoluoni jingchu yezhang zhou jing* 最勝佛頂陀羅尼淨除業障咒經 (*Sūtra of the Most Victorious Buddha’s Uṣṇīṣa Dhāraṇī for Eradicating Karmic Obstacles*).³¹

²⁹ T19:967.351c28-352a7.

³⁰ Bogel, *With a Single Glance*, 206-7.

³¹ *Zuisheng foding tuoluoni jingchu yezhang zhou jing* is T970. Divākara, a monk whose origins lay in central India, left home at a young age to be educated at the venerable monasteries of Mahābodhi and Nālandā in northeastern India (T51:2073.154c11). According to his brief biography in *Song Gaoseng zhuan* 宋高僧傳 (*Song Biographies of Eminent Monks*),

This translation contains instructions for the construction of what is specifically named a maṇḍala; significantly, this maṇḍala is associated with a ritual altar.³² The maṇḍala ritual in Divākara's second translation of the sūtra is explained in the following manner:

The Buddha said to Indra, those who wish to perform this maṇḍala ritual should, on the fifteenth day of the first half of the month, make an earthen altar from perfumed water, loess soil, and cow dung. The altar has a circle inside a square and measures four forearms [in length]. The border is five colored and has three layers. On all four sides of the altar, make another boundary in a similar manner by means of a white-colored border.³³

After the preparation of the altar, flowers, incense, and goods are offered, and a bottle of relics is placed in the center of the altar.³⁴ Upon the presentation of offerings, the practitioner prepares himself in the following manner:

Be pure in keeping the vows and eat the three pure foods [milk, curds, and rice]. Put on new and clean clothing, and at the west side of the altar, put your palms together, kneel on your right knee, and pray. First, make the *mudrā* of Buddha protection ... Recite this Most Victorious Dhāraṇī of the Buddha's Uṣṇīṣa 1008 times. All bad karma resulting from the ten evils and comparable sins will be completely eradicated ... The Buddha said to Indra, thus is the Most Victorious Dhāraṇī of the Buddha's Uṣṇīṣa.³⁵

Three similarities may be found among the self-named maṇḍala ritual in the Divākara translation above and the offering method given in the earlier

he was also known by the Chinese name Rizhao 日照, and was renowned for his outstanding skill in incantations (*zhou* 咒; T50:2061.719a19-21). Coming to China in 676, he subsequently received the patronage not only of Emperor Gaozong 高宗 (r. 649-83) but also of Empress Wu.

32 The first translation by Divākara with Du Xingyi 杜行顗, Yancong 顏棕, and others (T969) was completed in 682. Jinhua Chen, *Philosopher, Practitioner, Politician: The Many Lives of Fazang (643-712)* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2007), 438-47, provides an account of Divākara's residence and activities in Luoyang and Chang'an.

33 T19:970.361b1-4.

34 T19:970.361b5-11. Charles Orzech and Henrik Sørensen discuss the significance of stūpas and relics in esoteric Buddhism; see Orzech and Sørensen, "Stūpas and Relics in Esoteric Buddhism," in Charles D. Orzech, Henrik H. Sørensen, and Richard K. Payne, eds., *Esoteric Buddhism and the Tantras in East Asia* (Leiden: E.J. Brill), 146-52.

35 T19:970.361b11-19.

Buddhapālita translation: the instructions for the making and furnishing of a square altar; the presentation of offerings; and finally, instructions to kneel on the right knee, the assumption of a *mudrā*, and the recitation of the *dhāraṇī* for a prescribed number of repetitions. The visualization or contemplation of deities is not explicitly described in either method, although the presence and subsequent departure of deities is suggested in the Divākara translation. Lastly, the successful performance of the ritual results in the attainment of *samādhi*, a state of concentration. But was an image or icon placed on the east side of the altar, opposite the practitioner? On this point, the passage is not explicit.

The explanation of a maṇḍala as an altar in Divākara's second translation of the *Revered and Victorious Dhāraṇī* is echoed in later, Song-dynasty sources. For example, the section titled *Litan dejie* 立壇得戒 (*Regulations for Constructing Altars*) in *Da Song sengshi lüe* 大宋僧史略 (*Great Song Dynasty Abbreviated Histories of Monks*), by Zanning 贊寧 (919-1001), gives the following definition of *maṇḍala*:

[When] the fully ordained monks established their monastic rituals and built altars in the eastern lands, it was then that [their use] began [in the eastern lands]. To explain their maṇḍalas, only the method of construction is differentiated. Whether scraping away great amounts of earth to plan the site, or using wood to structure the different levels, these are all called *tan* (altar). Removing earth and sweeping the ground, is accordingly called *shan* (purified ground). Although *shan* 壇, *chang* 場, and *tan* 壇 are not the same, these are all the maṇḍalas of the Western Regions.³⁶

Another source from the Song dynasty, *Fanyi mingyi ji* 翻譯名義集 (*Compendium on Translating the Meanings of Names*), attributed to Fayun 法雲 (b. 1088), gives the following definition of *maṇḍala*: “Maṇḍala, this is translated as altar (*tan* 壇).”³⁷ The remainder of the entry on maṇḍalas proceeds to give the definitions of altars (*tan*) and purified ground (*shan*) from various pre-Buddhist Chinese literary sources, including the *Shi* 詩 (*Book of Songs*, ca. 600 BCE), *Guoyu* 國語 (*Discourses of the State*, 4th century BCE), *Erya* 爾雅 (*Approaching Refinement*, 3rd century BCE), *Zhou shu* 周書 (probably Yi

³⁶ *Da Song sengshi lüe* is T2126. T54:2126.238b8-11. This passage refers to certain Indian monk-translators who were established in Luoyang during the Eastern Han dynasty (25-220 CE) and Three Kingdoms period (220-80), including Zhu Lüyan 竺律炎 and Vighna (Weizhinan 維祇難), who were both active during the first quarter of the third century; see T54:2126.238b5-7.

³⁷ *Fanyi mingyi ji* is T2131. T54:2131.1168b4.

Zhoushu 逸周書, or *Lost Book of Zhou*, 1st century BCE), and *Hanshu* 漢書 (*History of the Former Han Dynasty*, 111 CE), as if in an attempt to naturalize their function and use.³⁸

But what sort of image was placed on or beside the altar? The altar in the Buddhapālita translation, upon which offerings of grasses and flowers were strewn, was erected in front of a Buddha image. The maṇḍala altar in the Divākara translation included a bottle of relics placed in the center, perhaps with a *bodhi* image (an image of the Indian prince Siddhārtha Gautama, soon to become the Buddha, seated facing east in meditation under the *bodhi* tree at Bodhgayā) placed on the east side, and a more elaborate list of offerings to be scattered over the altar is provided, in addition to the flowers that were offered in the Buddhapālita version.

Returning to the maṇḍala altar in the Divākara translation, preceding the maṇḍala ritual are two rituals in which a *bodhi* image is the object of devotion. These detail “the essentials of upholding the Most Victorious Dhāraṇī of the Buddha’s Uṣṇīṣa.” In the first ritual,

The Buddha said to the four world-protecting kings (*lokapāla*), Brahmā, King Yama, and others, listen carefully and I will explain to you. If there are living creatures who have suffered from all manner of miseries, those whose sins are of utmost gravity or those who are without recourse, [they] ought to bathe and purify themselves on the fifteenth day of the first half of the month, put on clean garments and accept the eight precepts.³⁹ In front of a *bodhi* image, with an upright mind, kneel on the right knee. Recite this *dhāraṇī* a full 1008 times. The various sins and karmic obstructions of this person will be completely eliminated, and at that moment, [the person] will attain the *dhāraṇīs*, the *dhāraṇī* gates; his eloquence will be unobstructed and he will be pure and liberated.⁴⁰

In the second ritual, the Buddha instructs Indra that people who have committed sins should repent in the following manner:

38 T54:2131.1168b5-12.

39 The eight precepts are defined as the first eight of the full list of ten or eleven lay precepts: not killing, not stealing, not engaging in lewd behavior, not lying, not being fond of alcohol, not slandering others, not using reckless speech, and not using ornate speech.

40 T19:970.360c6-12.

As their only conveyance is their bad karma, after death, they will certainly fall into Avīci hell and suffer a myriad great miseries.⁴¹ When each *kalpa* has been exhausted, they will be reborn again. If they were to fall into an animal rebirth or as a domestic animal or any type of wild bird or beast, they would cycle among bad rebirths, with no recourse for rescue. Such a person ought to [stand] in front of a *bodhi* image on the fifteenth day of the first half of the month. Taking gold and silver vessels that can hold one *sheng*, fill them with good and pure water and set them inside the altar. Accept the bodhisattva precepts and uphold the practice of abstinence in a pure fashion. At the west side of the altar, face east toward the image. Burn incense, perform oblations, kneel on your right knee and continuously chant. With utmost sincerity, begin reciting this *dhāraṇī* a full 1008 times, without stopping in the middle. Then, taking the water, sprinkle it up and down into the four directions. Make a vow to become completely purified. After performing this ritual, such a person will be liberated from the evil karma that would put them into the realms of beasts and hungry ghosts.⁴²

In both rituals, the *dhāraṇī* is recited 1008 times in front of a *bodhi* image on the fifteenth day of the first half of the month. The second ritual adds the construction of an altar, the presentation of offerings, and the specification of the directional orientation of the *bodhi* image. Returning to the question of whether the maṇḍala ritual may or may not have entailed the use of an image, we are left with two possibilities: first, the *bodhi* image was placed on the east side of the altar in a process of elaboration from the “essentials” of the maṇḍala ritual; second, the *bodhi* image was simply omitted in the maṇḍala ritual. Moreover, was the *bodhi* image intended to be a sculpture or a painting?

Bodhi means wisdom or enlightenment. As mentioned previously, the term “*bodhi* image” refers to an image of Siddhārtha, soon to be the Buddha, seated facing east in meditation under the *bodhi* tree at Bodhgayā (in present-day Bihār, northeastern India). Resisting all efforts of the demon Māra to tempt and distract him from his meditation, Siddhārtha touches the ground with his right hand in the characteristic gesture known as the “earth-touching” *mudrā* (*bhūmisparśa mudrā*), which calls the earth to witness his impending enlightenment and thus symbolizes his victory over the evil intentions of Māra.

41 This is one of the eight hot hells, where sinners are reborn to suffer continuously without relief.

42 T19:970.361a14-24.

Before this moment, in an effort to distract Siddhārtha from his quest for enlightenment, Māra first sent his alluring daughters to tempt him, but Siddhārtha paid them no heed. Next, Māra sent an army of evil demons to attack him, but Siddhārtha remained steadfast, and the demons' weapons were turned into scented ointments and flower blossoms. At this point, Māra argued that he was of superior spiritual merit. Siddhārtha in turn asked Māra who would be willing to attest to his spiritual achievements. Gesturing to his gathered army, Māra claimed them as his witnesses, and then asked the solitary prince who would be his witness. In reply, Siddhārtha touched the ground with his right hand, calling upon the earth as his witness. The earth replied with a thundering roar of affirmation, frightening Māra and his army into flight.

By sunrise, Siddhārtha had achieved awakening. Although the *bodhi* image is associated with the life of Śākyamuni Buddha (whom Siddhārtha became), scholars have debated over whether it depicts Śākyamuni or Vairocana.⁴³ A full discussion of the identification of the *bodhi* image with a specific Buddha is beyond the scope of the present chapter; what is certain is that the image was known to Chinese of the Tang dynasty through reports from travelers who returned from India, and subsequently received patronage under Empress Wu 武則天 (r. 690-705).⁴⁴

In the *Great Tang Dynasty Record of the Western Regions* (*Da Tang xiyuji* 大唐西域記), the monk Xuanzang 玄奘 (ca. 596-664) narrates the tale of the *bodhi* image of the Mahābodhi Temple in Bodhgayā, located east of the *bodhi* tree under which Siddhārtha attained enlightenment. Xuanzang attributes the miraculous production of the sculpture to the bodhisattva Maitreya (Mile pusa 彌勒菩薩), and describes the figure as seated facing the east.⁴⁵ Shortly before his death, Xuanzang entreated a disciple to make a *bodhi* image (*putixianggu* 菩提像骨) using fragrant woods.⁴⁶ In 643, the Tang envoy Wang Xuance 王玄策 also saw the image of the Buddha with the *bhūmisparśa mudrā* at the Mahābodhi Temple. He described it as the “auspicious image of the western nations” (*xiguo ruixiang* 西國瑞像) seated atop a “diamond pedestal” (*jingang*

43 Some of these arguments and references are summed up in Li Yumin 李玉珉, “Shilun Tangdai jiangmo chengdaoshi zhuangshi fo” 試論唐代降魔成道式裝飾佛, *Gugong xueshu jikan* 故宮學術季刊 23.3 (2006): 39-90.

44 On the medieval Chinese reception of the *bodhi* image and problems of the original and copies, see Sun-ah Choi, “*Zhenrong to Ruixiang*: The Medieval Chinese Reception of the Mahābodhi Buddha Statue,” *Art Bulletin* 97.4 (2015): 364-87.

45 *Da Tang xiyuji* is T2087. See T51:2087.915c26-916b20.

46 The story about Xuanzang requesting the *bodhi* image is cited from *Xu Gaoseng zhuan* 續高僧傳 (*Further Biographies of Eminent Monks*) in Li, “Shilun Tangdai jiangmo,” 55.

zuo 金剛座). His account gives a narrative of the creation of the sculpture that is similar to Xuanzang's, and the dimensions of the image and throne that he provides are also the same.⁴⁷ Moreover, Wang Xuance brought a copy of the image back to Chang'an, a copy that was produced on-site at the Mahābodhi Temple by Song Fazhi 宋法智, a sculptor who accompanied Wang on his journey. The monk Yijing 義淨 (635-713) was also known to have brought a copy of the *bodhi* image from the Mahābodhi Temple back to Luoyang.⁴⁸

Many images of the Buddha forming the *bhūmisparśa mudrā* and seated atop a throne were made in Tang China; such images have been found from Chang'an and Luoyang to Sichuan and Dunhuang. Divākara, who had himself studied at the Mahābodhi Temple, not only integrated the iconography into the rituals associated with the *Revered and Victorious Dhāraṇī*, but also donated such an image: "[He] made a *kasaya* out of crimson silk and pearls, and moreover made an offering of a *bodhi* tree image."⁴⁹

The main iconographical features of the *bodhi* image include the right hand held in the *bhūmisparśa mudrā*, the bejeweled body and crown, and the *vajrāsana*, or diamond throne, which represents the seat upon which Śākyamuni gained enlightenment – the very seat for which he had contested Māra.⁵⁰ The *bodhi* image thus represents a particular view on Buddhist soteriology: liberation gained by victory over obstructions, which creates a fitting association with the *Revered and Victorious Dhāraṇī*. Moreover, the east-facing position of the practitioner as specified in the *dhāraṇī* emulates the actual position, though not the gestures, of Śākyamuni as depicted in the *bodhi* image. Finally, what was emphasized was a definite place, an association with a certain location that was reinforced through travel and transmission.

The original *bodhi* image in the Mahābodhi Temple was a sculpture. From the textual descriptions cited previously, it is clear that copies of the original *bodhi* image brought to China likewise took the form of sculptures. Iterations of the *bodhi* image produced throughout China during the Tang dynasty were also created in sculptural form, such as relief sculptures from the Tower of

47 Wang Xuance *xingzhuan* 王玄策行傳 (*Travel Account of Wang Xuance*) is cited and analyzed in Li, "Shilun Tangdai jiangmo," 52-53.

48 Amy McNair, *Donors of Longmen: Faith, Politics, and Patronage in Medieval Chinese Buddhist Sculpture* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2007), 97.

49 T51:2073.154c28-29. A *kasaya*, or cassock, is the robe worn by a Buddhist monk.

50 The *bodhi* image also may be known as the *vajrāsana* image.



FIGURE 11 Bodhi image. Tang dynasty (618-907), late 7th–early 8th century. Limestone. H. 2.4 m. Leigutai South Grotto, Longmen Caves, Luoyang, Henan Province. FROM WATT ET AL., CHINA: DAWN OF A GOLDEN AGE, 300, PLATE 192.

Seven Jewels 七寶台, Leigutai South Cave 擂鼓台南洞 at Longmen 龍門石窟 (fig. 11), and numerous examples in Sichuan Province.⁵¹

⁵¹ For regional overviews of the *bodhi* image in China, see Li, “Shilun Tangdai jiangmo”; Chang Qing 常青, “Shilun Longmen chu Tang mijiao diaoke” 試論龍門初唐密教雕刻, *Kaogu xuebao* 考古學報 3 (2001): 335-60; and Lei Yuhua 雷玉華 and Wang Jianping 王劍平, “Shilun Sichuan de ‘puti ruixiang’” 試論四川的菩提瑞像, *Sichuan wenwu* 四川文物 1 (2004): 85-91. The *bodhi* image also appears in paintings from Dunhuang, where it is

The fixation of medieval Chinese pilgrims with the sculpture inside the Mahābodhi Temple echoes the historical process through which a temple housing the *bodhi* image came to replace a rather humble enclosure around the *bodhi* tree. A relief carving from the Bhārhut stūpa railing dating to the second century BCE displays a two-story structure encircling the *bodhi* tree, and features devotees kneeling before the *vajrāsana* (fig. 12).⁵² By the early fifth century, however, the travel account of the monk Faxian 法顯 (ca. 337-422) provides evidence of a tower built at the site. In the seventh-century travel account of Xuanzang cited above, the presence of a full-fledged temple at the site is made clear.⁵³

Moreover, the Divākara translation, which is dated to this same period, places the *bodhi* image to the east of the altar. This placement would recreate the actual position of the Mahābodhi Temple to the east of the stone *vajrāsana* (fig. 13). Therefore, the repentance ritual described in the Divākara translation was performative in the sense that the practitioner assumed the position of Śākyamuni. From this foundation, the type of practice that emerged subsequently in the eighth century changed the soteriological paradigm and removed the distinctions between internal and external experience, the foreign and the local, the historical and the present-day.

The aforementioned tales and archaeological evidence both suggest that copies of the *bodhi* image rather than, for example, the stone *vajrāsana* were made for, or through the patronage of, Chinese devotees and pilgrims.

grouped with other famous Buddhist images from India. A classic study of paintings of famous or auspicious images (*ruixiangtu*) from Dunhuang, divided between the National Museum of India in New Delhi (Ch.xxii0023) and the British Museum (Asia OA 1919,1-1,0.51), is Alexander C. Soper, "Representations of Famous Images at Tun-huang," *Artibus Asiae* 27.4 (1965): 349-64. See also Roderick Whitfield, "Ruixiang at Dunhuang," in K.R. van Kooij and H. van der Veere, eds., *Function and Meaning in Buddhist Art, Proceedings of a Seminar Held at Leiden University, 21-24 October 1991* (Groningen: Egbert Forsten, 1995), 149-56; the *bodhi* image appears in the National Museum of India portion. The motif also appears in the mural paintings of Mogao Caves 231, 237, 98, 126, 108, and 454, and Yulin Cave 33. See Zhang Xiaogang 張小剛, "Zaitan Dunhuang Majiatuoguo fangguang ruixiang yu puti ruixiang" 再談敦煌摩伽陀國放光瑞祥與菩提瑞祥, *Dunhuang yanjiu* 敦煌研究 2009.1:21-25. Scholars have debated whether this image represents Vairocana, Mahāvairocana, or Buddhōṣṇīṣa; see Li, "Shilun Tangdai jiangmo," 41-42; and Choi, "Zhenrong to Ruixiang," 383 nn. 7-9.

52 It is worth noting, however, that the railing of the structure as shown in the Bhārhut carving does not precisely match the actual archaeology of BodhGayā. The author is grateful to Rob DeCaroli for this insight.

53 John Guy, "The Mahābodhi Temple: Pilgrim Souvenirs of Buddhist India," *Burlington Magazine* 133 (1991): 356-67; 358-59.

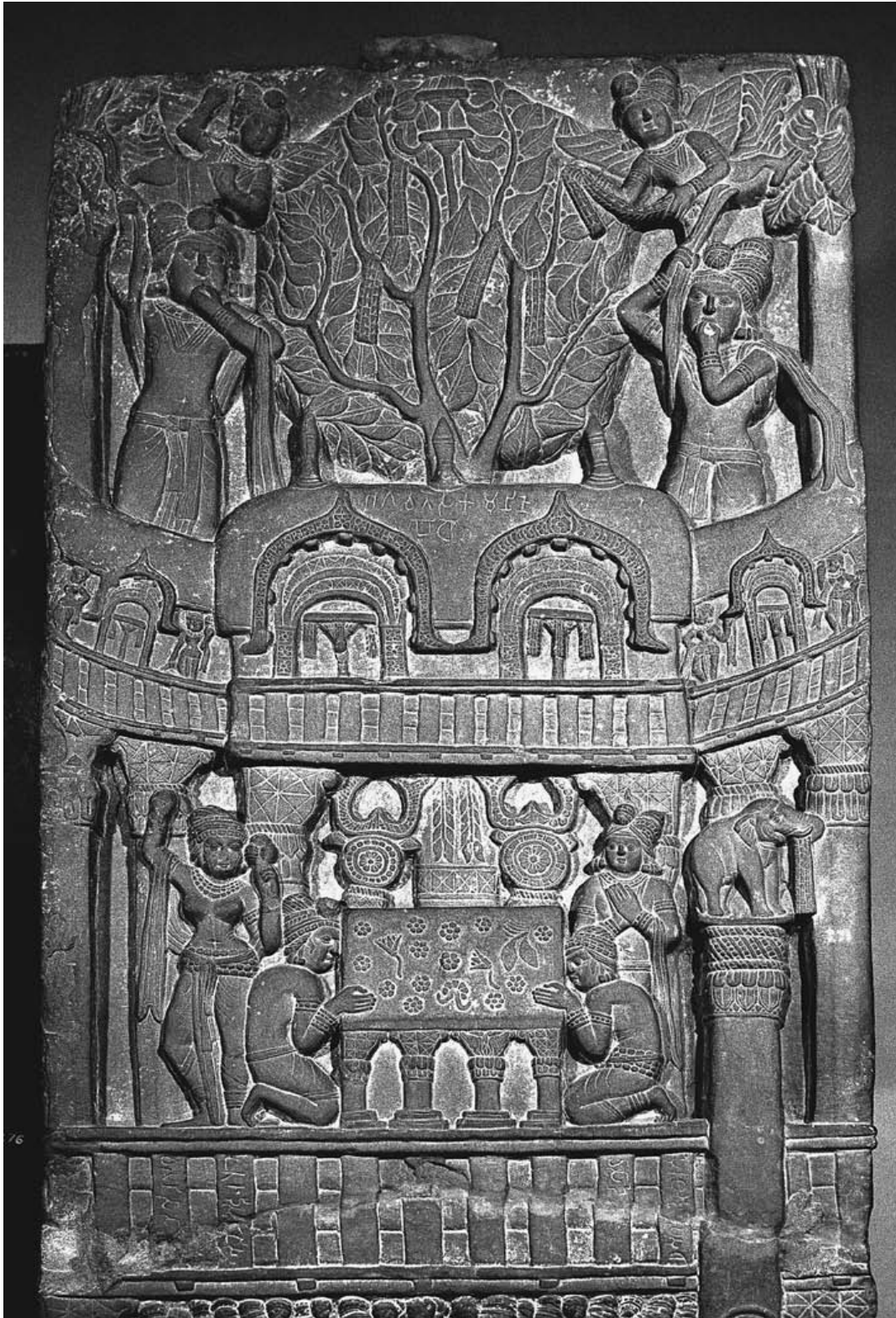


FIGURE 12 *Relief carving depicting the bodhi tree shrine and vajrāsana at Bodhgayā. Śuṅga period (185-75 BCE), 2nd century BCE. Sandstone. From Bhārhut, Madhya Pradesh, India. INDIAN MUSEUM, KOLKATA, INDIA. PHOTO BY JOHN C. HUNTINGTON.*



FIGURE 13 Vajrāsana at Bodhgayā. Mauryan period (322-185 BCE), 3rd century BCE. Sandstone. 16.5 × 141 × 240 cm. Bihār, India. PHOTO BY JOHN C. HUNTINGTON.

Nevertheless, the notion of the seat of enlightenment permeated the Tang and Song discourse on maṇḍalas. Because the *bodhi* image conflated both place (*vajrāsana*) and practitioner (Śākyamuni), it was unnecessary to treat the *vajrāsana* at Bodhgayā as a separate form.

For the purposes of the Chinese practitioner, the *vajrāsana* could be recreated locally in the form of the altar, or maṇḍala. The ritual manuals attributed to Amoghavajra and Śubhakarasiṃha contain instructions pertaining to maṇḍalas as a focus for ritual practice.⁵⁴ In the manuals, the instructions for worship given in the Buddhapālita translation are expanded and given more complex form. Although the recitation of the *dhāraṇī* still comprises the main focus, the practice of writing the *dhāraṇī* upon the surfaces of pillars or its placement into stūpas is omitted in these texts; instead, the practice of meditative visualization is incorporated. The earlier practices associated with the *dhāraṇī* did not disappear entirely from the medieval Chinese landscape, but were now joined by the practice of meditative visualization.

54 Kuo Liying 郭麗英 summarizes the main differences between the two manuals in her “Butchōsonshōdarani no denpa to gishiki” 佛頂尊勝陀羅尼の傳播と儀式, *Tendai gakuho* 天台學報 October 2007:1-39. Charles Orzech has exhaustively analyzed the “maṇḍalization” of the *Sūtra for Humane Kings* by Amoghavajra and its role in state protection during the Tang dynasty. See Orzech, *Politics and Transcendent Wisdom*.

For some time, the ritual function of maṇḍalas, in particular the Two Realms Maṇḍala of Shingon Buddhism, had been interpreted as providing aids for visualization.⁵⁵ This may be a conflation of the practice of contemplation (觀想 Ch. *guanxiang*, J. *kansō*) and the construction or painting of maṇḍalas; in essence, it blurs distinctions between internal and external practices. Contemplation involves the internal visualization of the deities whose presence is invoked by the incantation of a *dhāraṇī* or mantra. Often the intention is for the deities to be visualized as appearing in spatial or hierarchical relationship to one another; such relationships reflect how deities are represented in maṇḍalas.

While distinctions between internal and external practices are blurred, nevertheless, sūtras and ritual manuals also prescribe distinct sets of instructions for the external practice of “constructing” maṇḍalas or of “drawing” or “painting” maṇḍalas and the deities that are arranged within. The maṇḍala is treated as a ritual space within which the deities invoked by the incantation of the *dhāraṇī* or mantra assume their proper positions.

Visualizing the Maṇḍala

The ritual manual attributed to Śubhakarasiṃha, *Zunsheng foding xiu yuqiefayigui* 勝佛頂脩瑜伽法儀軌 (*Commentary on the Yoga Ritual of the Revered and Victorious Buddha's Uṣṇīṣa*), contains instructions pertaining to both visualization and painted images; in particular, it describes a nine-part maṇḍala of Vairocana surrounded by eight “Uṣṇīṣa Wheel-Turning Kings” (*foding lunwang* 佛頂輪王) as well as a painting of a “Buddha image” (*foxiang* 佛像).⁵⁶ The main deity of the maṇḍala, Vairocana, is the same as the image visualized in Chapter

55 See the critique by Robert Sharf in “Visualization and Mandala in Shingon Buddhism,” in Robert H. Sharf and Elizabeth Horton Sharf, eds., *Living Images: Japanese Buddhist Icons in Context* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2001), 15–251; 151–53.

56 *Zunsheng foding xiu yuqiefayigui* is T973. “Wheel-Turning King” refers to a universal monarch or ruler. That the attendant deities to the central Buddha are identified as “Uṣṇīṣa Wheel-Turning Kings” brings the Śubhakarasiṃha ritual manual much closer to the Indo-Tibetan *dhāraṇī*, in which the eight attendant deities are not bodhisattvas, as in the Amoghavajra ritual manual, but rather Uṣṇīṣa Buddhas. The eight Uṣṇīṣa Buddhas as a group also bear associations with the Five Jinas, or Wisdom Buddhas. For an English translation of the Indo-Tibetan *dhāraṇī*, see Tadeusz Skorupski, trans., *The Sarvadurgatipariśodhana tantra: Elimination of All Evil Destinies* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1983). The Śubhakarasiṃha ritual manual, divided into twelve chapters, is the most complex of the ritual manuals.

Three of the text, titled “Revered and Victorious Buddha’s Uṣṇīṣa Mantra: Invoking the Main Deity” (*Zunsheng foding zhenyan zhaoqing benzun dengpin disan* 勝佛頂真言召請本尊等品第三).⁵⁷ The instructions for making the “painted image” (*huaxiang* 畫像) are given in Chapter Seven, titled “Revered and Victorious Buddha’s Uṣṇīṣa Mantra: Practicing Yoga and [Making the] Painting” (*Zunsheng foding zhenyan xiu yuqie huaxiang pin diqi* 尊勝佛頂真言修瑜伽畫像品第七). The production of the painted image is described as the “outer method” (*waixiang fazhe* 外相法者), and begins with summoning a painter on an auspicious month and day.⁵⁸ The text continues,

Summon the painter to bathe, and administer the *samaya* precepts or administer the *samaya* consecration. After finishing the bath, change garments. Eat the three pure foods (milk, curds, and rice), not motley or unclean foods. Furthermore, do not stint on the costs. The painting materials are white felt or good fine cloth made of silk or the like. Make the painting as [the image] in the ritual. Rely upon the diagram to the left.⁵⁹ Set the dimensions for the cloth or silk upon which it is painted as you wish. In the middle, paint a large circle in a bright shining white color. Divide the large circle into nine circles. In the eight corners place a treasured vase, and in the mouth of each vase, place a prize blossom. Above them, place a three-pronged *vajra*. In the four corners outside the central circle, place four precious wheels, upon each of which is propped a *vajra*. Wrap the treasured vases and *vajras* in multicolored silk and suspend them. In the middle circle, paint Vairocana *tathāgata*. On his head, he wears a Five-Buddhas crown. Manifold precious flowers emit light. He sits cross-legged atop a seven-lion throne. His hands are clasped in the *dharmadhātu mudrā*.⁶⁰

After painting Vairocana in the central circle, the instructions proceed to narrate the process of painting the eight Uṣṇīṣa Wheel-Turning Kings, their accoutrements, their positions, and their *mudrās* in a similar manner. After this is completed, a jeweled canopy should be painted above the

57 T19:973.369c17-370b29.

58 T19:973.375c7-12.

59 It is unclear which diagram is referred to here, but it may be the one on T19:973.370a18 that illustrates Chapter Three of the text, on summoning the main deity. This diagram closely matches the description of the painting to be made.

60 T19:973.375c12-376a3.

composition.⁶¹ Using the image described above as a basis, the practitioner is instructed to cultivate yoga as follows:

Contemplate your body as the dharma body of Vairocana so that the dharma realm in all directions is all one substance and attribute.⁶²

The final line reads,

I have now finished explaining briefly the contemplation of the image and the painting method.⁶³

These instructions suggest that the painted maṇḍala may have been intended as a guide for visualization practice aimed at the dissolution of the boundaries between Vairocana, as depicted in the painting, and the practitioner. Yet the text does not explain clearly the exact manner in which the painting was displayed (if it was displayed at all), nor does it describe how the painting was intended to be used by the practitioner. Even detailed altar diagrams that specify the placement of ritual objects and the positions of deities do not indicate where paintings, if ever used, were displayed. For example, a ninth- to tenth-century altar diagram from Dunhuang for the recitation of the *Revered and Victorious Dhāraṇī* indicates the position of the practitioner and ritual implements such as vases, incense, and water basins (fig. 14). The positions of the Buddha in the center and other deities are likewise indicated, but particulars regarding the use of paintings are not specified.

Returning to Chapter Seven of the Śubhakarasiṃha manual, the text provides separate instructions for the practitioner who wishes to uphold the *dhāraṇī*, which also necessitates use of a painting, in this case made from a large piece of silk. The composition consists of a meditation cave on Sweet Dew Mountain (Ganlu shan 甘露山), inside of which Śākyamuni is seated in the lotus position. On the right are Indra and Shanzhu, and on the left are Brahmā and Māra. Finally, two heavenly kings appear on either side of the Buddha.⁶⁴ The figures in the composition conflate elements from the *Revered*

⁶¹ T19:973.376a3–b7.

⁶² T19:973.376b9–11.

⁶³ T19:973.376b12.

⁶⁴ T19:973.376b17–25. The ritual manuals by the Kuchean monk Ruona 若那 (T19:974F) and the unattributed T19:974E also give instructions for making a painting similar to this. Ruona is believed to have been active during the Tang dynasty; see Chen, “Śarīra and Scepter,” 105 n. 188.

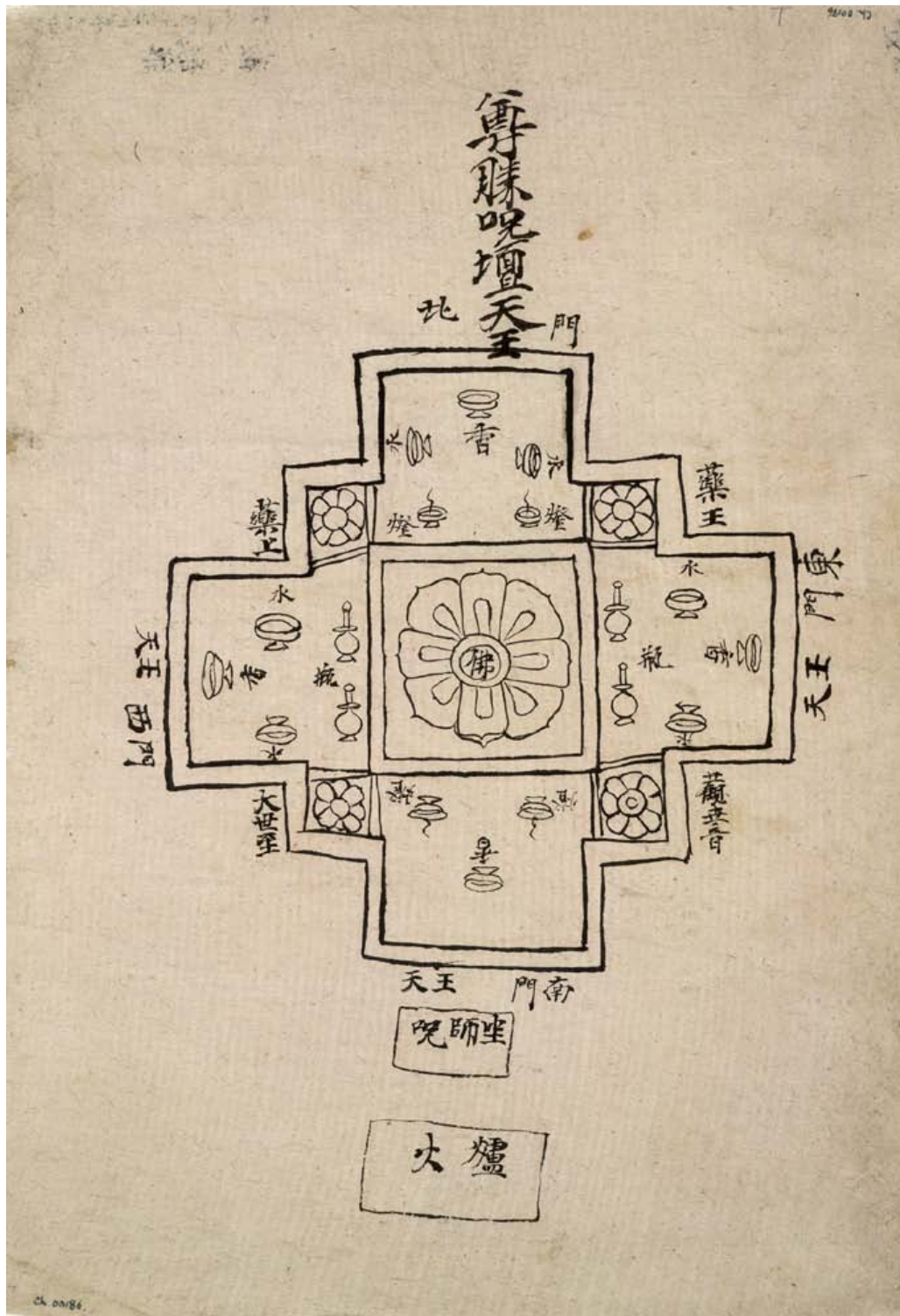


FIGURE 14 Altar diagram for Revered and Victorious Dhāraṇī. Tang dynasty (618-907), 9th-10th century. Ink on paper. 44 × 30.5 cm. From Dunhuang. BRITISH MUSEUM, LONDON, 1919,0101,0.74. © THE TRUSTEES OF THE BRITISH MUSEUM.

and Victorious *Dhāraṇī* and the story of the Buddha's defeat of Māra (although the Buddha's *bhūmiśparśa mudrā* from the latter tale is not specified). It is as if the Buddha were preaching the *dhāraṇī* and its benefits not only to Indra, Brahmā, and Shanzhu, but to Māra as well.

The instructions given for the appearance and dimensions of this painting are stricter than those for the first painting of Vairocana. Whereas the painted maṇḍala could be made in any size that the practitioner wished, the painting of Śākyamuni described above was to be made from three widths of silk that were each one *zhang* 丈 in height.⁶⁵ The text specifies the use of colored pigments, but only pigments that utilize aromatic resin for the binding agent rather than animal glue. The demands outlined for the painter, however, are less strict; the painting master is required to be cleansed, and to not have eaten smoked or pungent foods. The stipulations do not require the painter to have received the precepts or consecration, and do not specify that he must have eaten the three pure foods. From the beginning of work on the first day of the second half of the month, the painting must be completed in seven days.⁶⁶

After this, the next step is to construct a square altar, the center of which is round, and to place incense burners and bottles at the four sides. The *dhāraṇī* practitioner's seat is placed at the west gate facing east, and the "Buddha image" (*foxiang*) – the painting of Śākyamuni described above – hangs facing the west. In addition to the Buddha image, multicolored banners are hung outside the altar on four sides.⁶⁷ After the preparations are complete, the recitation of the *dhāraṇī* takes place over the course of seven days.⁶⁸ No visualization practice is described; the ritual is in fact a repentance ritual comparable to that included in Divākara's second translation of the *Revered and Victorious Dhāraṇī*, with the painted Buddha image substituting for the *bodhi* image.

65 A *zhang* is slightly longer than three meters. A ninth-century painting of the Thousand-Armed and Thousand-Eyed Avalokiteśvara in the Stein Collection of the British Museum (1919,0101,0.35, Ch.lvi.0019) conforms closely to the description of this painting's size (especially with regard to width); it measures 2.26 meters in height and 1.67 meters in width – or three widths of silk, with each width measuring around 55 centimeters wide. Roderick Whitfield notes the practice at Dunhuang of sewing together widths of silk measuring between 54 and 60 centimeters wide, after which a textile border was attached; see Whitfield, "Ruixiang at Dunhuang," 151.

66 T19:973.376b13-16.

67 Banners made of silk, hemp, and paper that were used in Buddhist and Daoist rituals have been recovered from Dunhuang. See Zhao Feng 趙豐, ed., *Dunhuang sichou yishu quanji: Yingcang juan* 敦煌絲綢藝術全集: 英藏卷 (Shanghai: Donghua daxue chubanshe, 2007), 58-93.

68 T19:973.376b25-c8.

The ritual manual attributed to Amoghavajra, titled *Foding zunsheng tuoluoni niansong yiguifa* 佛頂尊勝陀羅尼念誦儀軌法 (*Ritual Commentary on the Recitation of the Revered and Victorious Dhāraṇī of the Buddha's Uṣṇīṣa*), describes the ritual as follows:

For the *dhāraṇī* recitation method, first perceive the multitude of deities within the *samaya maṇḍala*.⁶⁹ Obtain consecration and recognize the main deity ... Then in a quiet place in the mountains or inside a clean room, paint an image of the object of veneration, the *Revered and Victorious Dhāraṇī*, and place it on the east wall. The one doing the recitation faces it. Where the *dhāraṇī* is to be recited, excavate the ground to a depth of one and a half *cun* 寸 ...⁷⁰

Next, the ground is cleared, the surface is made level and pure, and a rope is used to mark off nine evenly spaced positions. In the center, the position of Vairocana Buddha is established, after which the positions of the eight bodhisattvas Avalokiteśvara (here rendered as Guanzizai pusa 觀自在菩薩), Maitreya (Cishi pusa 慈氏菩薩), Ākāśagarbha (Xukongzang pusa 虛空藏菩薩), Samantabhadra (Puxian pusa 普賢菩薩), Vajrapāṇi (Jin'gangshou pusa 金剛手菩薩), Mañjuśrī (Wenshushili pusa 文殊師利菩薩), Sarvanivāraṇaviṣkambhin (Chugaizhang pusa 除蓋障菩薩), and Kṣitigarbha (Dizang pusa 地藏菩薩) are established in a clockwise sequence. These images are drawn using white sandalwood, which is “taken as welcoming the sages to their positions.”⁷¹ Next, the ritual space is furnished, which includes the construction of a canopy with pennants hanging on all four sides, the placement of incense burners at the four gates and water bottles at the four corners, and offerings of flowers and perfumed waters. Finally, the seat of the practitioner is erected.⁷²

After a purification rite, the practitioner eventually executes a sequence of *mudrās*, after which Mount Sumeru – the sacred mountain at the center of the Buddhist universe – is envisioned arising from the center of the ritual space. At the top of the mountain stands a seven-jewel tower, inside of which is Vairocana

69 *Foding zunsheng tuoluoni niansong yiguifa* is T972. As mentioned previously, the *samaya maṇḍala* uses accoutrements, such as lotus blossoms, jewels, or *vajras*, to represent deities.

70 T19:972.364b14-18. Portions of the translation and reading of this text given here are based upon Paul F. Copp, “Voice, Dust, Shadow, Stone: The Makings of Spells in Medieval Chinese Buddhism” (Ph.D. diss., Princeton University, 2005), 287-88. A *cun* measures slightly more than one inch.

71 T19:972.364b19-c9.

72 T19:972.364c9-13.

Buddha surrounded by numerous bodhisattvas and *mahāsattvas* (great bodhisattvas).⁷³ The practitioner envisions his body transforming into that of Vairocana. After this, the *Revered and Victorious Dhāraṇī* is recited.⁷⁴ The last part of the ritual is the sending back of the Buddha and heavenly retinue.⁷⁵

From the examples given above from the ritual manuals attributed to Amoghavajra and Śubhakarasiṃha, it is clear that maṇḍalas attached to the *Revered and Victorious Dhāraṇī* were intertwined with visualization practice and the production of paintings during the eighth century; nevertheless, the Śubhakarasiṃha manual differentiates the yoga ritual from the repentance ritual. The maṇḍalas associated with the *Revered and Victorious Dhāraṇī* in these two manuals introduce a nine-part structure, with Vairocana, the cosmic Buddha, as the main deity. The texts provide specific instructions for the painting of the images. The Śubhakarasiṃha manual describes images painted onto silk, whereas the Amoghavajra manual describes images drawn directly onto the ground of the ritual space using white sandalwood.

The Amoghavajra ritual manual also mentions a portable image, that of the *Revered and Victorious Dhāraṇī*; this portable image is installed on the east wall before the commencement of the preparation of the ritual space. Could this image have looked the same as the maṇḍala drawn onto the ritual space using white sandalwood? On this, the text is unclear. The practice of placing an image to the east of the ritual space or altar remained from the earlier repentance rituals, but now a painting has replaced the *bodhi* image.

Neither the Amoghavajra nor Śubhakarasiṃha ritual manual refers to painted images as “maṇḍalas.” In the Amoghavajra manual, the ritual space is most commonly referred to as the “place of enlightenment” (*daochang* 道場) or *bodhimaṇḍa*, thereby evoking the *vajrāsana* of Śākyamuni.⁷⁶ As a result, the maṇḍala in this case is still associated with a specific space or place. In the Śubhakarasiṃha manual, however, the term “maṇḍala” does not refer to the ritual space; rather, it refers to the calling forth of deities – in a process of internal visualization – to their appropriate places within a “large circle” (*da yuanming* 大圓明) by reciting the accompanying mantras in proper sequence.⁷⁷ The text calls the visual representation of the assembled deities simply a “painted image” (*huaxiang* 畫像).⁷⁸ In other words, the definition of maṇḍala

73 T19:972.364c20-365b28.

74 T19:972.366b26-367b25.

75 T19:972.368a11.

76 T19:972.364c13, T19:972.365a06, T19:972.365a14, T19:972.368a12.

77 T19:973.370b1, T19:973.370b7-29. The mantras are prefaced by the statement that “below, the maṇḍala will be explained completely.”

78 T19:973.375c5.

appears to reference something quite different from an altar or painted image. According to the Śubhakarasiṃha manual, “maṇḍala” describes the assembly of deities whose presence is invoked in a predetermined arrangement during a process of visualization that is facilitated by the recitation of verbal incantations in conjunction with the use of *mudrās*.

Both the Amoghavajra and Śubhakarasiṃha ritual manuals incorporate visualization practices that pertain to painted maṇḍalas. Thus, we may surmise that it was not until visualization was incorporated into the repertoire of practices surrounding the *Revered and Victorious Dhāraṇī* that a need for painted maṇḍalas arose at all.⁷⁹ The painted maṇḍala in the Śubhakarasiṃha manual is a portable image, made to the size most agreeable to the practitioner, and used as a guide for visualization. In the Amoghavajra manual, the painting of deities in the ritual space is intended to serve as a receptacle for the visualized deities, an aid to show them their proper places. These paintings were intended to be very simple. The painting described in the Śubhakarasiṃha manual was very likely made without the use of color, although some color indications are noted. The painting in the Amoghavajra manual was made using white sandalwood. We might ask why the altar diagrams from Dunhuang do not indicate the display of painted maṇḍalas adjacent to the altar; the answer may be that these maṇḍalas were one and the same with the altar.⁸⁰

Yet we should bear in mind that, in the three altar or maṇḍala rituals associated with the *Revered and Victorious Dhāraṇī*, an image was placed on the east side of the altar, facing the practitioner, who was either seated on the west side or otherwise facing the image. In the Divākara translation, this image may have been the *bodhi* image. In the Śubhakarasiṃha manual, this image is the painting of Śākyamuni on Sweet Dew Mountain. In the Amoghavajra manual, this image is given as the *Revered and Victorious Dhāraṇī*. As with the painted maṇḍalas, the placement of these sculptures or paintings is not indicated on altar diagrams. We may note, however, that the image facing the practitioner was not necessarily a painted maṇḍala.⁸¹ Furthermore, in the Śubhakarasiṃha

79 This viewpoint disagrees with Koichi Shinohara’s argument that, “as the Esoteric Buddhist ritual tradition evolved, the status of images became increasingly uncertain.” See Shinohara, *Spells, Images, and Maṇḍalas*, 36.

80 Paul Copp notes the “iconic nature of the altar *maṇḍala*” in his analysis of Dunhuang altar diagrams; see his “Altar, Amulet, Icon: Transformations in *Dhāraṇī* Amulet Culture, 740–980,” *Cahiers d’Extrême-Asie* 17 (2008): 239–64; 248–49.

81 Regarding the Japanese context, Cynthia Bogel notes that “There are examples of ancient drawings or painted images serving as *honzon*, but the degree to which the ritualist visually engages the image is not stated in the texts.” She further notes that, in contemporary practices on Mount Kōya, maṇḍalas are not used as a “visual focus or cue.” See Bogel, *With a Single Glance*, 208–9. Sarah Fraser has suggested that the appearance of verbal or visual

manual, the distinction between the large and finely detailed painting of Śākyamuni for display and the less polished, diagram-like drawing of the maṇḍala is quite clear. In this manual, the main icon is not a painted maṇḍala, but rather a painting of the Buddha.

In sum, the reinvention and reappropriation of the *Revered and Victorious Dhāraṇī* through successive translations and ritual manuals reveals that the understanding and practice of maṇḍalas was in flux throughout the Tang dynasty. Importantly, ritual manuals introduced the concept of a bounded ritual space, the altar, which was the focal point for the envisioning of the deities of the maṇḍala. This concept was distinct from the belief in the conveyance of the *dhāraṇī*'s benefits through the dust and shadows cast by stone pillars. In the seventh century, the maṇḍala ritual as defined by Divākara took place at an altar, and may have been associated with the *bodhi* image. Thus, the Divākara ritual, in which the practitioner faced east, involved the performative restaging of Śākyamuni Buddha's enlightenment at Bodhgayā. In the eighth century, the rituals attributed to Śubhakarasiṃha and Amoghavajra introduced the practice of meditative visualization, in which the practitioner became one and the same as Vairocana, the cosmic Buddha. This practice, in turn, was distinct from the re-enactment of Śākyamuni Buddha's enlightenment, which was rooted in a particular time and place. Moreover, as Vairocana is all-penetrating and not limited by time or space, this particular model of enlightenment was uniquely suited to the turbulent political circumstances of eighth-century China.

The introduction of meditative visualization to the eighth-century rituals associated with the *Revered and Victorious Dhāraṇī* intertwined the use of painted images with devotion to the *dhāraṇī*. Two types of painted images can be discerned from the ritual manuals of Śubhakarasiṃha and Amoghavajra: an image painted simply on silk or on the ground of the ritual space, used as a support for visualization; and a more elaborate polychrome painting that was placed east of the altar or ritual space. The idea that, within the context of the *Revered and Victorious Dhāraṇī*, painted maṇḍalas were not intended to be elaborate polychrome paintings; and that, in a sense, they existed as ephemera or as "unseen" images, might help to explain the dearth of extant large-scale paintings in Tang China comparable to the Two Realms Maṇḍala of Shingon Buddhism in Japan.⁸²

cues on certain diagrams from Dunhuang could indicate that they were used alternately as visualization aids or for painting production. See Sarah E. Fraser, *Performing the Visual: The Practice of Buddhist Wall Painting in China and Central Asia, 618-960* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2004), 149-54.

82 Paul Copp, for example, has noted textual evidence for the use of sand, or more accurately, "powder maṇḍalas" in China. See Copp, "Altar, Amulet, Icon," 248.

The Crowned Buddha and Narratives of Enlightenment

From the eighth to the tenth century, the Maṇḍala of Eight Great Bodhisattvas was a prominent feature of the iconographic programs of cave shrines and monasteries in South Asia, stretching from Mahārāṣṭra in the west to Orissa and Bihār in the east. Almost immediately, this maṇḍala appeared at sites in Southeast Asia, Tibet, China, and Japan. This chapter treats carvings and paintings of the Maṇḍala of Eight Great Bodhisattvas produced during the Tibetan empire. As will become evident, local instantiations of this maṇḍala often varied considerably in visual form and material format, even while the iconography remained consistent. Despite these local variations, the conjunction of the central Buddha with eight bodhisattvas represents a particular understanding of the Buddha's awakening experience that was distinct from the conventional narrative centered upon the events under the *bodhi* tree at Bodhgayā. A concern with the Buddha's awakening was already evident in Buddhist sculpture of the Pāla period (8th–12th century) from eastern India; in sculpture from this period, the image of the Buddha assuming the *bhūmiśparśa mudrā* receives special emphasis.¹

Approaching maṇḍalas from the perspective of the Buddha's experience rather than that of the practitioner has the potential to reorient modern scholarly discourse regarding maṇḍalas in significant ways. Since the early twentieth century, maṇḍalas have been couched in the language of psychological interiority. The Swiss psychiatrist and psychoanalyst Carl Jung (1875–1961), who claimed to sketch a maṇḍala every morning, stated that the circular form of the maṇḍala was an “archetype of wholeness” that expressed the “totality of the individual.”² Jung's views came to be echoed in the work of the Tibetologist Giuseppe Tucci (1894–1984), who was concerned with maṇḍalas as a “means of reintegration.”³ Analyzing the Maṇḍala of Eight Great Bodhisattvas from the

1 See Janice Leoshko, “Scenes of the Buddha's Life,” *Silk Road Art and Archaeology* 3 (1993–94): 251–71, especially 261–63; and Janice Leoshko, “Looking at Buddha Images,” *Archives of Asian Art* 52 (2000/2001): 63–82.

2 C.G. Jung, *Mandala Symbolism*, trans. R.F.C. Hull (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1972), 4–5.

3 Giuseppe Tucci, *The Theory and Practice of the Mandala* (reprint, Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, 2001), 16, 21–22.

perspective of the Buddha, however, places it firmly in its own time and context. In this context, the concern lay not only with the nature of the Buddha's awakening, but was also dictated by the prerogatives of the Tibetan empire, its peace negotiations with Tang China, and the maintenance in its eastern territories of a multilingual and multicultural Dunhuang.

The Cult of Vairocana in Early Tibet

Following earlier precedents in East and South Asia, the cult of Vairocana, known in Tibetan as Nampar Nangdze (rNam par snang mdzad), and the imperial history of Tibet were inextricably intertwined.⁴ In a classic study, H.E. Richardson noted the prevalence of Vairocana as the main icon in temples throughout Tibet, suggesting that the worship of Vairocana had reached Tibet by the eighth century.⁵ Indeed, the association of Vairocana with the foundation of the Tibetan empire was firmly established under Tri Songdetsen (Khri srong lde btsan, r. 755–ca. 797), during whose reign “the Tibetan imperial state itself came to be constituted, through a principle of homology, as the body and maṇḍala of the Buddha Vairocana,” as Matthew Kapstein has argued.⁶ Around 779, Samye (Bsam yas), Tibet's first Buddhist monastery, was constructed in what is now Shannan during the reign of Tri Songdetsen (fig. 15). Samye's iconographic program appeared to place particular emphasis upon Vairocana. According to the description in the *Testament of Ba* (9th–10th century), an account of the establishment of Buddhism in Tibet and the monastery's founding, an image of Vairocana accompanied by the eight bodhisattvas was installed on the top floor; on the second floor, Vairocana was likewise the main deity. The main icon of the first floor was Śākyamuni, representing the earthly form of Vairocana.⁷

4 Matthew T. Kapstein, *The Tibetan Assimilation of Buddhism: Conversion, Contestation, and Memory* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 59–60.

5 H.E. Richardson, “The Cult of Vairocana in Early Tibet,” in Tadeusz Skorupski, ed., *Indo-Tibetan Studies: Papers in Honour and Appreciation of Professor David L. Snellgrove's Contribution to Indo-Tibetan Studies* (Tring: Institute of Buddhist Studies, 1990), 271–74. Richardson observes that, while certain temples were attributed to the reign of Songtsen Gampo (r. ca. 617–49), it is doubtful that the cult of Vairocana had reached Tibet in the seventh century; see his “Cult of Vairocana in Early Tibet,” 272. Matthew Kapstein urges similar caution by noting the mythologization of Songtsen Gampo. See Kapstein, *Tibetan Assimilation of Buddhism*, 54.

6 Kapstein, *Tibetan Assimilation of Buddhism*, 60.

7 Kapstein, *Tibetan Assimilation of Buddhism*, 60–61. Amy Heller notes that the top floor was built in the Indian style, the second floor in the Chinese style, and the first floor in the Tibetan

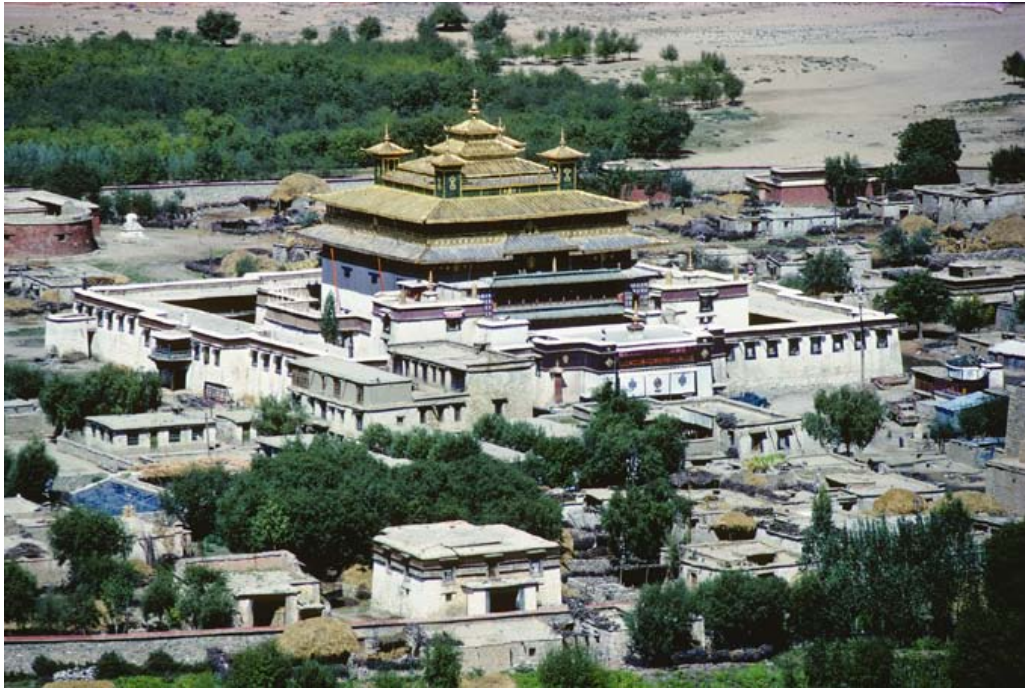


FIGURE 15 *Samye Monastery. Pugyal dynasty (7th–9th century), ca. 779. Shannan, Tibet Autonomous Region. © KATIA BUFFETRILLE 1989.*

The transmission of Buddhism to Tibet is divided into two main periods: the first phase of transmission, from the mid-seventh to mid-ninth century, was fostered under the patronage of the kings of the Pugyal (Spu rgyal) dynasty (7th–9th century); the second phase, from the late tenth to the mid-eleventh century, took place under the leadership of the translator Rinchen Zangpo (Rin chen bzang po, 958–1055). During the early phase, several prominent images of the Maṇḍala of Eight Great Bodhisattvas, with Vairocana as the main deity, were produced in eastern Tibet. Certain of these images were made under the patronage of the monk Yeshe Yang (Ye shes dbyangs, d. 866), the abbot of Triga (Khri ga) monastery. Located in present-day Qinghai Province, this monastery was the center for a cult of Vairocana. The impact of the teachings of Yeshe Yang was felt in central and eastern Tibet and at Dunhuang.⁸ Information from the inscriptions accompanying these maṇḍalas and Tibetan-language Dunhuang manuscripts provides important insight into the conceptualization of Vairocana and the eight bodhisattvas during the Pugyal dynasty.

style, reflecting the architects and artisans who constructed the monastery and the monks who resided there. See Amy Heller, *Tibetan Art: Tracing the Development of Spiritual Ideals and Art in Tibet 600–2000 A.D.* (Milan: Editoriale Jaca Book SpA, 1999), 35–37.

⁸ Heller, *Tibetan Art*, 49.

In terms of iconography, the main Buddha figures of the maṇḍala all feature a jeweled crown, lion throne, and the gesture of meditation (*dhyāna mudrā*); however, each maṇḍala exhibits variations in spatial context, composition, and artistic style. The first of these is a low-relief carving of the Maṇḍala of Eight Great Bodhisattvas located in Denma Drak (Ldan ma brag), Daggyab Province, in the Kham region of the present-day Tibet Autonomous Region (fig. 16).⁹ The dedicatory inscription to the work, which was commissioned by the abbot Yeshe Yang, states that the sculpture was made in 816 (“in the summer of the monkey year during the reign of the *tsenpo* [monarch] Tri Songdetsen”) at the beginning of treaty negotiations between the Tang and Tibetan Pugyal courts for the “spiritual benefit of the sovereign *tsenpo* and the prosperity of all sentient beings.” The inscription names the Tibetan ministers in charge of the negotiations and the Tibetan and Chinese craftsmen who executed the work.¹⁰

A brief word on historical background is necessary here. According to traditional historical accounts, Songtsen Gampo (Srong btsan sgam po, r. ca. 617-49), the founder of the Tibetan empire, married two princesses, one Chinese and the other Nepalese. The marriages were part of a strategic alliance on the part of the Tibetans with the Chinese and Nepalese.¹¹ The peace brokered by this

9 Amy Heller discusses the rediscovery of the carving in 1986, and its historical attribution to the Chinese Princess Wencheng 文成 (628–ca. 680), in “Ninth Century Buddhist Images Carved at Ldan Ma Brag to Commemorate Tibeto-Chinese Negotiations,” in Per Kvaerne, ed., *Tibetan Studies: Proceedings of the 6th Seminar of the International Association for Tibetan Studies, Fagernes, 1992* (Oslo: Institute for Comparative Research in Human Culture, 1994), 335-49, 12-19 (Appendix); 338-39. The carvings had been hidden from view by a stūpa that was constructed in the twentieth century, and later by a temple. An image of the now-restored and repainted carvings can be seen in Li Ling 李翎 and Liao Yang 廖陽, eds., *Zhongguo zangchuan fojiao diaosu quanji 5: Shidiao 中國藏傳佛教雕塑全集 5: 石彫* (Beijing: Beijing meishu sheying chubanshe, 2002), plates 22-24. The author thanks Amy Heller for pointing out the renovation of the carvings.

10 Heller, “Ninth Century Buddhist Images,” with modifications to the romanization of Tibetan names and terms; for Heller’s translations of the inscriptions, see 12-14. The Wylie transliteration for *tsenpo* is *btsan po*.

11 John C. Huntington, “The Pāla Legacy Abroad: The Transmission to Nepal, Tibet, and China,” in Susan L. Huntington and John C. Huntington, eds., *Leaves from the Bodhi Tree: The Art of Pāla India (8th–12th Centuries) and its International Legacy* (Dayton, OH: The Dayton Art Institute with University of Washington Press, 1989), 249-395; 283-84. Each princess brought with her a dowry: Princess Wencheng of Tang China brought an image of Śākyamuni; Princess Amśuvarman of Nepal brought images of Akṣobhyavajra, Dharmacakra Maitreya, Tārā, and a begging bowl. The palace of the king was located at the current site of the Potala Palace in Lhasa. Separate temples were built for the objects



FIGURE 16 *Maṇḍala of Eight Great Bodhisattvas. Puyal dynasty (7th–9th century), 816. Stone carving with applied color. H. 4 m. Denma Drak, Dargayab Province, Tibet Autonomous Region. PHOTOGRAPH BY NIMA DORJEE AND ELISABETH BENARD (1983).*

marriage alliance lasted until the deaths of Emperor Taizong 太宗 (r. 626-49) of China in 649 and of Songtsen Gampo shortly thereafter. For the next half-century, control of the Tarim Basin and the Chinese military garrisons in Central Asia vacillated between the Tibetans and Chinese. In 692, the four garrisons were recovered by the Chinese, and in 696, the Tibetans offered a peace proposal to the Tang court.¹² The disastrous An Lushan rebellion of 755, however, precipitated another period of turmoil, which culminated in the Tibetan capture of the Tang capital, Chang'an, in 763.¹³ The Tibetans turned their sights further afield, and captured Dunhuang, then called Shazhou 沙州, in 786. A new peace treaty was finally negotiated between the Chinese and Tibetans in 821-22, a response to uneasy relations between the Tibetan and Tang courts due to the perceived actions of the latter to forge a strategic marriage alliance with the Uyghurs against the Tibetans; such an alliance would have weakened the Tibetan hold on Silk Road territories in present-day Xinjiang and Gansu. The treaty was commemorated in the bilingual inscriptions carved upon a four-sided pillar located at the Jokhang temple in Lhasa.¹⁴ As mentioned above, Yeshe Yang's patronage of the Denma Drak maṇḍala commemorates the beginning of negotiations for this treaty some six years earlier.

The Denma Drak relief carving was produced in a recessed rock cliff. The central Buddha, wearing a crown, is seated inside an arched niche on a lotus pedestal with two lions standing below in profile; his hands form the *dhyāna mudrā*. The Buddha is flanked by eight bodhisattvas arranged in two vertical columns reaching the top of his crown; seated atop lotus pedestals, each holds a specific attribute as his body turns in movement. Particularly distinctive is the stiff, cape-like garment in which the Buddha is attired, characteristic of

brought by each princess: the Ramoche temple was founded by Princess Wencheng, and the Jokhang temple was built by Princess Amśuvarman. The historical annals further report that artisans from China and Nepal were brought to Tibet for the construction of new temples. King Songtsen Gampo was likened to Avalokiteśvara, Princess Wencheng to the goddess Tārā, and Princess Amśuvarman to the goddess Bhṛkuṭī. For an account of early Tibetan history, see Dotson, *Old Tibetan Annals*.

12 Christopher I. Beckwith, *The Tibetan Empire in Central Asia* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1987), 54, 58.

13 Beckwith, *Tibetan Empire in Central Asia*, 145-48.

14 For the 821-22 treaty, see Matthew T. Kapstein, "The Treaty Temple of the Turquoise Grove," in Matthew T. Kapstein, ed., *Buddhism Between Tibet and China* (Boston: Wisdom Publications), 21-72; 26-30. An updated transcription and translation of the inscriptions from the four sides of the pillar are provided in H.E. Richardson, "The Sino-Tibetan Treaty Inscription of A.D. 821/823 at Lhasa," *The Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland* 2 (1978): 137-62.

Kashmiri sculpture.¹⁵ Taken together, the crown, lion throne, and *dhyāna mudrā* are understood as attributes of Vairocana, and the conjunction of the three characterizes the Tibetan images of the Maṇḍala of Eight Great Bodhisattvas.¹⁶

A maṇḍala at Bimda (Bis mda), located near Jyekundo (Skye rgu mdo) in the southern part of present-day Qinghai Province, is dated 806, thus predating the Denma Drak maṇḍala (fig. 17a, b). Slightly smaller than the carving at Denma Drak, the Bimda maṇḍala is differentiated by two features: not only is it carved into a cliff, but it is also enclosed inside a temple. The accompanying dedicatory inscription confirms its commission by Yeshe Yang.¹⁷ The central Buddha is similarly crowned and seated on a lion throne, his hands displaying the *dhyāna mudrā*. The figure is elongated and clad in a full-length robe punctuated by heavy sleeves in the style of the Tibetan king.¹⁸ Wearing similar robes, the eight bodhisattvas stand on either side of the central Buddha in two rows of two bodhisattvas each; their spatial arrangement and static bodily positions distinguish them from their counterparts at Denma Drak.¹⁹ Of particular interest is the presence of contemporaneous inscriptions in the vicinity of the temple that are included among the Dunhuang manuscripts.²⁰

15 Heller, "Ninth Century Buddhist Images," 336-37.

16 The accompanying Tibetan inscriptions are translated by Amy Heller in "Ninth Century Buddhist Images," 12-14. These inscriptions note not only the patronage of the carving but also the names of the Tibetan and Chinese stone carvers. Heller further observes that the style of the lions beneath the throne is consistent with that seen in Tibetan tomb sculptures. See Heller, *Tibetan Art*, 49.

17 The inscription reads, "Carved at the behest of the monk-translator Yeshe Yang in the dog year (806), in the reign of Tri Songdetsen." See Heller, "Buddhist Images and Rock Inscriptions from Eastern Tibet, VIIIth to Xth Century, Part IV," in H. Krasser, M.T. Much, E. Steinkellner, and H. Tauscher, eds., *Tibetan Studies: Proceedings of the 7th Seminar of the International Association for Tibetan Studies, Graz 1995*, vol. 1 (Wien: Verlag der Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften), 385-403; 390, with modified Tibetan romanization. Intriguingly, the accompanying inscriptions include quotations from the Gaṇḍavyūha, one of the earliest Buddhist texts translated in Tibet. See Heller, *Tibetan Art*, 50.

18 For an analysis of the Buddha's garment, see Heller, *Tibetan Art*, 49.

19 These carvings are discussed at greater length in Amy Heller, "Eighth and Ninth Century Temples and Rock Carvings of Eastern Tibet," in Jane Casey Singer and Phillip Denwood, eds., *Tibetan Art: Toward a Definition of Style* (London: Laurence King in association with Alan Marcuson, 1997), 86-103; 101-3, including a stylistic comparison of these images to slightly later examples from Nanzhao, reflecting contacts between the Tibetans and Nanzhao kingdom.

20 Heller, "Buddhist Images and Rock Inscriptions," 391.



FIGURE 17a, b *Mandala of Eight Great Bodhisattvas with Vairocana* (a) and *bodhisattvas* (b). *Pugyal dynasty* (7th–9th century), 806. *Stone carving with applied color and textiles*. H. 160 cm. *Binda, Qinghai Province*. FROM LI AND LIAO, EDS., *ZHONGGUO ZANG-CHUAN FOJIAO DIAOSU QUAN* 5: SHIDIAO, 8, PLATE 9 (A) AND 10, PLATE 11 (B).

As noted above, Triga monastery, located in the Tsongkha (Tsong kha) region southeast of Kokonor Lake in present-day Qinghai Province, was the center for a cult of Vairocana in early Tibet. The monastery occupied a pivotal position south of the major routes connecting Chang'an with Dunhuang, and along routes that extended between Sichuan, Yunnan, and the Silk Road oasis cities. Dunhuang manuscripts attest to the connective role of Triga in the region. Some manuscripts preserve parts of Triga's monastic syllabus; others confirm its communication with monasteries in Sichuan. Manuals from Triga were circulated to Lhasa and Samye, and were translated in Dunhuang and central Tibet. Evidence of an ethnically mixed population of Chinese and Tibetan monks at Triga further attests to the prevalence of cultural and religious interchanges that facilitated transmission of the cult of Vairocana and the eight bodhisattvas.²¹

No Chinese-language copies of the *Sūtra of the Maṇḍala of Eight Great Bodhisattvas* (*Bada pusa mantuluo jing* 八大菩薩曼荼羅經) appear in the Dunhuang manuscript corpus. Attributed to Amoghavajra, this sūtra represents the earliest attempt to integrate a simple list of the group of eight bodhisattvas into the circular structure of the maṇḍala.²² It instructs the devotee through the steps of visualizing the Buddha and eight bodhisattvas of the maṇḍala; not only are the bodhisattvas visualized in sequential order, but they are also visualized in terms of their spatial relationship to one another. Among the Tibetan-language Dunhuang manuscripts, however, is one copy of the *Sūtra of the Maṇḍala of Eight* [*Great Bodhisattvas*], IOL Tib J 317/1, referenced also in Q.158, Pelliot tibétain 81, and Pelliot tibétain 104. This manuscript fragment, which provides the mantras for several bodhisattvas, is comparable to the canonical text of the sūtra.²³ But even more proximate evidence for the

21 Chinese and Tibetan Chan masters alike resided at Triga. See Heller, "Buddhist Images and Rock Inscriptions," 395.

22 Diana Pyle Rowan, "Portable Buddhist Shrines of the T'ang Period" (Ph.D. diss., New York University, 1997), 150. Rowan also writes that "It seems plausible to consider the simple horizontal rows of bodhisattvas – four placed on each side of the main deity – as representative of the earlier texts" (159). This point is worth pondering; however, we also should consider the role of format (for example, vertical stone slabs or silk hanging scrolls) in determining the spatial layout of figures within a pictorial composition. The *Sūtra of the Maṇḍala of Eight Great Bodhisattvas* is T1167.

23 Jacob Dalton and Sam van Schaik, *Tibetan Tantric Manuscripts from Dunhuang: A Descriptive Catalogue of the Stein Collection at the British Library* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2006), 48-49. Tanaka Kimiaki cites both Stein No. 317.I (*sic*) and Pelliot No. 104 (1) (*sic*). See Tanaka Kimiaki 田中公明, *Tonkō: Mikkyō to bijutsu* 敦煌:密教と美術 (Kyoto: Hōzōkan), 36 n. 3.

Vairocana cult in Tibet may be found from yet other manuscripts that describe rituals devoted to Vairocana and the eight bodhisattvas.

According to Amy Heller, Pelliot tibétain 7A and Pelliot tibétain 108 outline a ritual of praise dedicated to Vairocana and the eight bodhisattvas. Based upon a comparison of the two fragments, they appear to describe the same ritual, with Pelliot tibétain 108 as the more complete version.²⁴ In this ritual, Vairocana, identified as the lord of Akaniṣṭha Heaven (*Ajiaerzha tian* 阿迦貳吒天, or *Ajianizha tian* 阿迦尼吒天), occupies the center of a maṇḍala. While his *mudrā* is not provided, he is described as being in a meditative mood, which Heller argues alludes to his assumption of the *dhyāna mudrā*.²⁵ He is further referred to as “the jewel of wish-fulfilling jewels,” suggesting the bejeweled appearance of Vairocana in the Tibetan maṇḍalas.²⁶ The text provides the names of the eight bodhisattvas: Avalokiteśvara, Maitreya, Ākāśagarbha, Samantabhadra, Vajrapāṇi, Mañjuśrī, Sarvanivāraṇaviṣkambhin, and Kṣitigarbha.²⁷ This is the same group that appears in the *Sūtra of the Maṇḍala of Eight Great Bodhisattvas*. The reference to Akaniṣṭha Heaven is crucial for our understanding of the Maṇḍala of Eight Great Bodhisattvas in Tibet, and in particular, the appearance of the crowned Buddha.

The Crowned Buddha

What might account for the prevalence of the crowned Buddha in Tibetan examples of the Maṇḍala of Eight Great Bodhisattvas? The iconography of the crowned or adorned Buddha likely originated in what is now eastern Afghanistan and northern Pakistan in the fifth to sixth century, before its transmission to Kashmir in the early eighth century.²⁸ One reason for the appearance

24 Amy Heller, “P.T. 7A, P.T. 108, P.T. 240 and Beijing Bstan ‘gyur 3489: Ancient Tibetan Rituals Dedicated to Vairocana,” in Gene Smith, ed., *The Pandita and the Siddha: Tibetan Studies in Honor of E. Gene Smith* (Dharamsala: Amnye Machen Institute, 2007), 85–91; 86.

25 Heller’s argument about the *mudrā* is based upon a comparison between the description of Vairocana’s meditative mood and the terminology in common usage. The *dhyāna mudrā* is displayed by Vairocana in the examples of the Maṇḍala of Eight Great Bodhisattvas discussed here. See Heller, “P.T. 7A, P.T. 108,” 87.

26 Heller, “P.T. 7A, P.T. 108,” 87.

27 Heller, “P.T. 7A, P.T. 108,” 88. P.T. 108 and P.T. 7A are transcribed in the same article, 88–89.

28 Claudine Bautze-Picron, *The Bejewelled Buddha From India to Burma: New Considerations* (New Delhi: Sanctum Books, 2010), 1. Bautze-Picron’s thorough study demonstrates that, in India, the crowned Buddha was depicted with a variety of *mudrās*. Therefore, its consistent association with the *dhyāna mudrā* in the Tibetan images must be significant.

of this form must be that Vairocana and the Maṇḍala of Eight Great Bodhisattvas resonated with the Tibetan imperium. From an early period in South Asia, the ideal of the *cakravartin*, a wheel-turning king who rules his realm effectively and with benevolence, was associated closely with the image of the adorned Buddha.²⁹ Indeed, certain images of the crowned Buddha from northwest India were associated with a royal context and state protection.³⁰ From this perspective, it should come as no surprise that the central Buddha of a Maṇḍala of Eight Great Bodhisattvas commemorating a peace treaty between the Tibetans and Tang China would be crowned. Yet another reason might be the role that the coronation of the Buddha played in his enlightenment narrative as understood in the esoteric Buddhist tradition, a role that was echoed in the *abhiṣeka* (coronation) rituals so prominent in esoteric Buddhist praxis.

As outlined in Chapter One, the standard accounts of the enlightenment posited that Siddhārtha Gautama achieved awakening, becoming Śākyamuni Buddha, by the morning after his defeat of the demon Māra, who tried to claim Siddhārtha's seat on the eastern side of the *bodhi* tree. Māra sent his army to attack Siddhārtha, and his alluring daughters to tempt his resolve, but to no avail. Finally, Māra attempted to claim the seat, while calling upon his army as witness. In return, Siddhārtha touched the ground with his right hand, calling the earth to witness his superior claim to the seat of enlightenment in the earth-touching gesture codified as the *bhūmisparśa mudrā*.³¹ In artworks from

Previous scholarship on the crowned Buddha generally has centered upon a few key issues: whether the Buddha can be identified as Śākyamuni or Vairocana; its relation to the three Buddha bodies (*trikāya*), and by extension, with Hīnayāna or Mahāyāna Buddhism; and finally, its association with concepts of kingship or the statue at Bodhgayā. For a review of scholarship, see Bautze-Picron, *Bejewelled Buddha*, 4-7.

29 Bautze-Picron, *Bejewelled Buddha*, 2. One of the most famous icons of early Tibet, the Jowo Śākyamuni, now housed in the Jokhang temple in Lhasa, was purportedly brought to Tibet as part of the dowry of the Chinese Princess Wencheng on the occasion of her marriage to Songtsen Gampo. Cameron David Warner examines the controversial circumstances behind its crowning in the early fifteenth century by Tsongkhapa (Tsong kha pa, 1357-1419), the founder of the Gelugpa (Dge lugs pa) sect of Tibetan Buddhism; see Warner, "Re/Crowning the Jowo Śākyamuni: Texts, Photographs, and Memories," *History of Religions* 51.1 (2011): 1-30.

30 Deborah Klimburg-Salter, "Mahākāśyapa and the Art of Bāmiyān," in Catherine Jarrige and Vincent Lefèvre, eds., *South Asian Archaeology 2001, Proceedings of the Sixteenth International Conference of the European Association of South Asian Archaeologists held in Collège de France, Paris, 2-6 July 2001*, vol. 2 (Paris: ADPF/Éditions Recherches sur les Civilisations, 2005), 535-49; 547.

31 For the crowned Buddha in *bhūmisparśa mudrā*, see Paul Mus, "Le Buddha paré, son origine indienne, Çakyamuni dans le Mahayanisme moyen," *Bulletin de l'École Française*



FIGURE 18 Defeat of Māra, from Scenes from the Life of the Buddha. Kushan dynasty (30-375), late 2nd–early 3rd century. Grey schist. 67 × 289.8 × 9.8 cm (all four panels). FREER GALLERY OF ART AND ARTHUR M. SACKLER GALLERY, SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION. WASHINGTON, D.C.; PURCHASE—CHARLES LANG FREER ENDOWMENT, F1949.9A–D (DETAIL).

the Kuṣāṇa (1st–3rd century) to Pāla period, the defeat of Māra was treated as a synecdoche to represent the totality of the Buddha's awakening experience; the moment of the Buddha's awakening was not represented separately.

For example, a grey schist carving in the collection of the Freer Gallery of Art displays the Buddha serenely seated under the *bodhi* tree at Bodhgayā, in the center of a frenzied group of weapons-bearing human and hybrid members of Māra's army (fig. 18). Two events are conflated: the moment at which the army launches its assault; and the next moment, in which Māra attempts to claim the Buddha's seat as his own, calling upon his army to bear witness. The Buddha, in turn, points to the earth in the *bhūmisparśa mudrā* in order to call the earth to witness his superior claim to the seat of enlightenment. Visual

d'Extrême-Orient 28/1-2 (1928): 153-280; and Benjamin Rowland, Jr., "The Bejewelled Buddha in Afghanistan," *Artibus Asiae* 24.1 (1961): 20-24.

confirmation of his defeat of Māra is evident in the soldiers toppled under the Buddha's seat.

In certain traditions, however, the enlightenment of Śākyamuni did not take place under the *bodhi* tree at Bodhgayā; rather, it unfolded in Akaniṣṭha Heaven, the heaven of the final limit of form, where Śākyamuni was crowned by the Buddhas of the ten directions and recognized as the cosmic Buddha Mahāvairocana.³² In Buddhist cosmology (fig. 19), the universe is divided into three realms (*traiḍhātuka* or *trailokya*): the realm of desire (*kāmadhātu*), whose inhabitants are subject to all sorts of sensual desires; the realm of form (*rūpadhātu*), whose celestial denizens possess bodily forms but have cast off all desires; and the realm of formlessness (*ārūpyadhātu*), which is characterized by a complete liberation from material existence.³³ The realm of form consists of four vertically oriented regions, the fourth (or highest) of which is comprised of eight heavens. Akaniṣṭha Heaven is the eighth of those heavens, or the uppermost of all of the heavens of the realm of form.³⁴

In articulating the correspondence between the historical Buddha and the cosmic Buddha, it is also helpful to bear in mind the *trikāya*, or threefold model of the Buddha body that developed within Mahāyāna Buddhism. The *trikāya* model distinguishes between the *dharmakāya* (dharma body), the *saṃbhogakāya* (reward body), and the *nirmāṇakāya* (transformation body). Within this model, the *dharmakāya* represents the Buddha's essential teachings, and came to be equated with the formless, invisible, and eternal figure of the cosmic Buddha, who is coextensive with the cosmos, or *dharmadhātu* (*fajie* 法界). The *saṃbhogakāya*, in turn, represents the reward body assumed by the Buddha after the long period spent in training as a bodhisattva and the fulfillment of his vows, and is closely associated with the concept of the Pure Lands, the realms that are purified by the Buddhas' meritorious deeds. Finally, the *nirmāṇakāya* stands for the physical or human body of the Buddha that appears temporarily in order to attend to sentient beings. Thus, in the *trikāya*

32 In Chinese, Akaniṣṭha Heaven is alternately rendered as the Heaven of the Most Rarefied Form (*sejiujing tian* 色究竟天) or the Uppermost Heaven (*you ding tian* 有訂天), according to the entry for "Akaniṣṭha Heaven" in the Digital Dictionary of Buddhism; see <<http://www.buddhism-dict.net/ddb/>> (last accessed 3.12.2017). For the initiation in Akaniṣṭha Heaven, see also Rob Linrothe, "Skirting the Bodhisattva: Fabricating Visionary Art," *Etudes Mongoles et Siberiennes, Centrasiatiques et Tibetaines* 42 (2011); <<http://emscat.revues.org/1803>> (last accessed 3.3.2013).

33 For a comprehensive overview of Buddhist cosmology, see Akira Sadakata, *Buddhist Cosmology: Philosophy and Origins*, trans. Gaynor Sekimori (Tokyo: Kosei Publishing Company, 1997).

34 Sadakata, *Buddhist Cosmology*, 63-67.

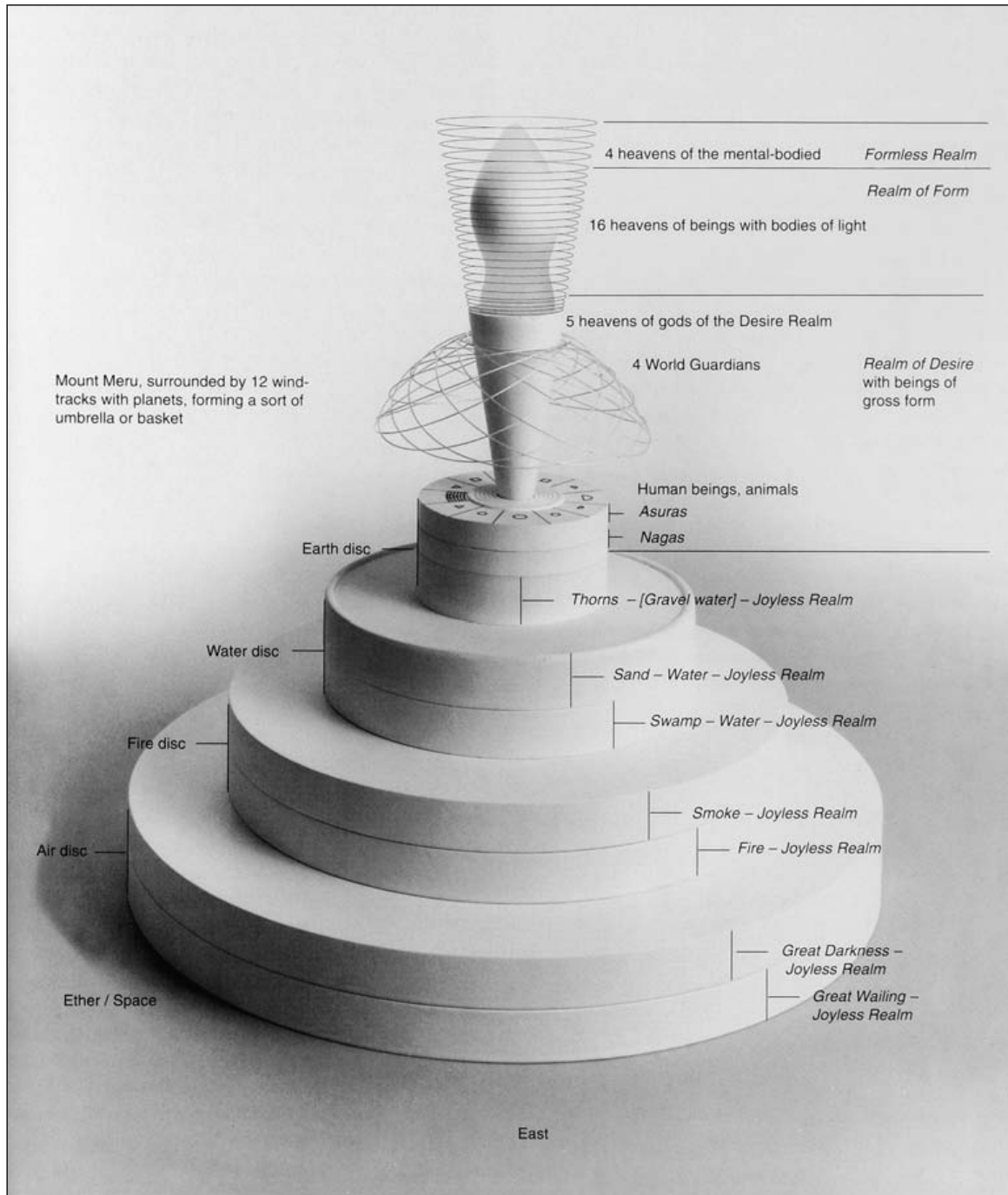


FIGURE 19 *Model of the Cosmos (according to the Kalachakra tradition)*. FROM BRAUEN, THE MANDALA: SACRED CIRCLE IN TIBETAN BUDDHISM (1997), 23, FIG. 12.

system, Śākyamuni is no longer merely the historical Buddha existing within a linear passage of time marked by past, present, and future, but rather is the earthly emanation (*nirmāṇakāya*) of the *dharmakāya*, Vairocana.³⁵

According to the *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra* (*Lengjia jing* 楞伽經), a core Chan (Zen) sūtra, it is in Akaniṣṭha Heaven that all Buddhas have attained enlightenment.³⁶ In an extended-verse soliloquy from the bodhisattva Mahamati, for example, the speaker questions why no enlightenment occurs in the realm of desire, and why it happens in Akaniṣṭha Heaven.³⁷ The association between the Buddha's awakening and Akaniṣṭha Heaven provides an alternative narrative of enlightenment in the *Vajraśekhara Sūtra* (*Jin'gangding yiqie rulai zhenshi she dacheng xianzheng dajiaowang jing* 金剛頂一切如來真實攝大乘現證大教王經).³⁸ In the opening passage of the sūtra, Mahāvairocana resides in the Great Mani Jewel Hall of Akaniṣṭha Heaven (*zhu Ajianizha tianwang gongzhong damonidian* 住阿迦尼吒天王宮中大摩尼殿), a place described as festooned lavishly with banners and gemstones, accompanied by a grand retinue of Buddhas and bodhisattvas.³⁹ At that moment, all of the *tathāgatas* gather themselves as if in a cloud and descend to earth, where the bodhisattva Sarvārthasiddhi is seated at the *bodhimaṇḍa*, or seat of enlightenment, at Bodhgayā.⁴⁰ He is awakened by the *tathāgatas* from his state of *āsphānaka samādhi*, an ascetic meditation practice, which he is informed will not lead to his attainment of unsurpassed perfect enlightenment (*wushang zhengdengjue*

35 The *trikāya* system was an elaboration of an earlier, two-body model present in Indian Mahāyāna Buddhism in which the *rūpakāya*, the physical body of the Buddha, was contrasted against the *dharmakāya*. For an elucidation of the two- and three-body models, see Nagao Gadjin, "On the Theory of Buddha-Body (*Buddha-kāya*)," *The Eastern Buddhist* 6.1 (1973): 25-53; and Guang Xing, *The Concept of the Buddha: Its Evolution from Early Buddhism to the Trikāya Theory* (London and New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2005).

36 Adrian Snodgrass, *The Symbolism of the Stupa* (Ithaca, NY: Southeast Asia Program, Cornell University, 1985), 335. The *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra* was translated into Chinese four times between the fifth and early eighth century. The sūtra was subsequently translated into Tibetan by the translator Facheng 法成 (Go Chodrup ['Go Chos grub]), who was active in Dunhuang in the second quarter of the ninth century.

37 Red Pine, trans., *The Lankavatara Sutra: A Zen Text* (Berkeley, CA: Counterpoint, 2012), 59.

38 The *Vajraśekhara Sūtra* is T865.

39 T18.865:207a17; T18.865:207a10-25.

40 Sarvārthasiddhi, meaning "the one who is possessed of all the perfection of all his goals," is defined by Ryūichi Abé as an esoteric variant of the name Siddhārtha. Abé, *Weaving of Mantra*, 142. Siddhārtha Gautama, in turn, was Śākyamuni's name before his enlightenment. See Rolf W. Giebel, "The Chin-kang-ting ching yü-ch'ieh shih-pa-hui chih-kuei: An Annotated Translation," *Journal of Naritatan Institute for Buddhist Studies* 18 (1995): 129 n. 19.

puti 無上正等覺菩提).⁴¹ Sarvārthasiddhi subsequently seeks instruction from the gathered *tathāgatas*.⁴²

At this point, the narrative of Sarvārthasiddhi's awakening diverges from that of Siddhārtha's. The Buddhas instruct him on a process of contemplation of five mantras that culminates with his contemplation of a *vajra* – an esoteric ritual implement representing a stylized diamond thunderbolt – upon a lunar disk in his heart, and finally, his visualization of himself as a Buddha. He is consecrated by all of the Buddhas and given the name Vajradhātu (Adamantine Realm). It is then that he attains awakening.⁴³ His awakening is further empowered by his consecration by the *maṇi* gem of the bodhisattva Ākāśagarbha, after which Vajradhātu is brought to a pavilion on the summit of Mount Sumeru, where he is enthroned on the lion throne of all Buddhas, and the Buddhas of the four directions – Akṣobhya, Ratnasambhava, Amitābha, Amoghasiddhi – seat themselves facing their respective quadrants.⁴⁴

The Vajradhātu Maṇḍala is constructed when Vajradhātu, as Mahāvairocana, performs the *abhiṣekha* for the exoteric bodhisattvas present by bestowing his *vajra* upon them during a state of *samādhi*, or deep concentration, thereby transforming them into the esoteric deities of the maṇḍala.⁴⁵ Consideration of the narrative elements concerning Sarvārthasiddhi/Vajradhātu explains not only the crown worn by the Buddha, but also his assumption of the *dhyāna mudrā*: this alternative awakening narrative begins with Sarvārthasiddhi's *samādhi* at the *bodhimāṇḍa* and ends with his coronation. Crowns bearing a motif of the Five Buddhas, commemorating the moment of Vajradhātu's enthronement, are a common element of esoteric ritual paraphernalia (fig. 20).

As Ryūichi Abé asserts, the *Vajraśekhara Sūtra* attempts to narrate what really happened when the Buddha became enlightened, from the perspective of a “narrator who understands the esoteric ritual and linguistic technology of

⁴¹ *Āsphānaka samādhi* is described as a meditation practice that annihilates one's desires through the cessation of one's breath, or a state of meditation marked by an absence of mental activity. For the former interpretation, see Abé, *Weaving of Mantra*, 143; for the latter, see Rolf W. Giebel, trans., *Two Esoteric Sūtras: The Adamantine Pinnacle Sūtra, the Susiddhikara Sūtra* (Berkeley, CA: Numata Center for Buddhist Translation and Research, 2001), 103-4 n. 8. The emphasis in this passage from the *Vajraśekhara Sūtra* is that austerities and ascetic practice will not lead to unsurpassed perfect enlightenment.

⁴² T18:865.207c10-15.

⁴³ T18:865.207c16-208a21.

⁴⁴ T18:865.208a22-b8.

⁴⁵ Abé, *Weaving of Mantra*, 144.



FIGURE 20 *Five Buddhas crown*. Guiyijun period (848-1036), second half of 10th century. Ink and color on paper. 28.7 × 54 cm. From Dunhuang. MUSÉE DES ARTS ASIATIQUES—GUIMET, PARIS, MG. 17781. © RMN—GRAND PALAIS / ART RESOURCE, NY.

the three mysteries.”⁴⁶ He further describes the *abhiṣeka* as a general theory of enlightenment: “not a one-time historical event in the distant past involving the Buddha Śākyamuni but rather an art – or, more appropriately, a science – of ritual practice, a work that can be reproduced regardless of historical conditions.”⁴⁷

While an account of the Buddha’s enlightenment is absent from the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra* (*Da piluzhena chengfo shenbian jiachi jing* 大毘盧遮那成佛神變加持經), the opening passage states that Mahāvairocana resides in Askaniṣṭha Heaven in the “vast adamantine palace of the dharma realm empowered by the *tathāgatas*” (*zhu rulai jiachi guangda jin’gang fajie gong* 住如來加持廣大金剛法界宮).⁴⁸ In the Tibetan version of the sūtra, the location of the Buddha is described as “the regally jeweled great residence, which is most

46 Abé, *Weaving of Mantra*, 142.

47 Abé, *Weaving of Mantra*, 141.

48 T18.848:1a10. The *Mahāvairocana Sūtra* is T848. See also Orzech, *Politics and Transcendent Wisdom*, 147, for a discussion of the location of Mahāvairocana in Askaniṣṭha Heaven at the beginning of the *Mahāvairocana* and *Vajraśekhara Sūtras*.

splendidly adorned with royal gems ... and the abode of all Tathāgatas.”⁴⁹ Mahāvairocana is seated on a lion throne formed from the bodies of bodhisattvas (*puti zhi shen wei shizi zuo* 菩薩之身為師子座).⁵⁰ Furthermore, in the commentary by Yixing and Śubhakarasiṃha on the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra*, as in the *Lankāvatāra Sūtra*, the palace of Maheśvara in Askaniṣṭha Heaven is named as the place where Buddhas have attained awakening since ancient times (*guyue gongye, cigong shi gufo cheng puti chu, suowei Moxihouluo tian-gong* 故曰宮也, 此宮是古佛成菩提處, 所謂摩醯首羅天宮).⁵¹ This language is echoed in the commentary on the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra* by the Indian master Buddhaguhya (active 8th century), which states that this tantra was preached by Vairocana as the *saṃbhogakāya* who lives at certain times in Akaniṣṭha Heaven, and at other times on Mount Sumeru.⁵²

This account of the Buddha’s awakening is echoed and elaborated upon in later Tibetan traditions. According to the survey by Kedrupje Gelek Palsang (Mkhas sgrub rje dge legs dpal bzang, 1385-1438) of the Buddhist tantras, the Buddhas of the ten directions lead Siddhārtha – then immersed in the “fourth great meditation” – to Askaniṣṭha Heaven, where he is consecrated:

At the time, the Buddhas of all the ten directions assembled, aroused him from that samādhi by snapping their fingers, and said to him, “You cannot become a Manifest Complete Buddha by this samādhi alone.” “Then how shall I proceed,” he implored them. They guided him to the Akaniṣṭha heaven. Moreover, while his maturation body (*vipāka-kāya*) stayed on the bank of the same Nairāñjanā River, the mental body (*manomaya-kāya*) of the Bodhisattva Sarvārthasiddha proceeded to the Akaniṣṭha heaven. After the Buddhas of the ten directions had given him garment initiation (*vastra-abhiṣeka*) and diadem initiation (*mukuta-abhiṣeka*), they bade him enter the intense contemplation in sequence of the five abhisambodhi. After completing the five abhisambodhi, he became a manifest complete Buddha as Mahāvairocana, the saṃbhogakāya ... He proceeded

49 Stephen Hodge, trans., *The Mahā-Vairocana-Abhisambodhi Tantra with Buddhaguhya’s Commentary* (New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003), 26, 47. Hodge’s translation was prepared from Tibetan editions of the text and T848.

50 T18.848:1a12.

51 T39.1796:580a29–b1. This commentary is T1796. See Snodgrass, *Symbolism of the Stupa*, 335. The subjugation of Maheśvara by the bodhisattva Vajrapāṇi cements the latter’s role as a protector deity and converter of opponents. See Ronald M. Davidson, *Indian Esoteric Buddhism: A Social History of the Tantric Movement* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 148–52.

52 Hodge, *Mahā-Vairocana-Abhisambodhi Tantra*, 47.

to the summit of Mt. Sumeru and pronounced the yoga tantras. Thereupon, he proceeded to the world of men and re-entered his maturation body on the bank of the Nairāñjanā. Then he arose, defeated Māra ...⁵³

The “fourth great meditation” refers to the state from which Siddhārtha achieves awakening and becomes Śākyamuni Buddha.⁵⁴ That is, at the very point of attaining awakening in the conventional sense, he actually achieves awakening in Askaniṣṭha Heaven. The crowned and meditating Buddha on the lion throne thus conflates what were hitherto two distinct events, according to two different traditions: the solitary meditation of Śākyamuni under the *bodhi* tree, and the resplendent coronation of Mahāvairocana in Akaniṣṭha Heaven by the Buddhas of the ten directions.

We should note that Akaniṣṭha Heaven is cited as the residence of Vairocana in two of the Tibetan manuscripts from Dunhuang that describe the Maṇḍala of Eight Great Bodhisattvas: the aforementioned Pelliot tibétain 7A and Pelliot tibétain 108. This shared citation could suggest associations between these manuscripts and the *Vajraśekhara* or *Mahāvairocana Sūtra*. In Pelliot tibétain 240, Vairocana is described as residing in a “divine palace of jewels,” which correlates with the description of the Mani Jewel Hall of Akaniṣṭha Heaven in the *Vajraśekhara Sūtra*. The five-fold structure of the maṇḍala that Vairocana occupies evokes the concept of the Five Families – *tathāgata*, *vajra*, *padma* (lotus), *ratna* (jewel), and *karma* (action) – found in the *Vajraśekhara Sūtra*.⁵⁵ Other Tibetan manuscripts, though not specifically referencing the Maṇḍala of Eight Great Bodhisattvas, not only relate the Vairocana in Akaniṣṭha Heaven to the *Vajraśekhara Sūtra* but to the Mahāyāna *Brahma’s Net Sūtra* (Skt. *Brahmajāla Sūtra*, Ch. *Fanwang jing* 梵網經) as well. In Pelliot tibétain 242, Vairocana occupies the center of a maṇḍala. His description within the

53 Mkhas-Grub-Rje, *Introduction to the Buddhist Tantric Systems*, trans. F.D. Lessing and Alex Wayman (1968; reprint, New Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1998), 27; adapted with some stylistic modifications. A similar account is given in David L. Snellgrove, “Buddhism in North India and the Western Himalayas: Seventh to Thirteenth Centuries,” in Deborah E. Klimburg-Salter, *The Silk Route and the Diamond Path: Esoteric Buddhist Art on the Trans-Himalayan Trade Routes* (Los Angeles: Published under the sponsorship of the UCLA Art Council, 1982), 74-75. The Nairāñjanā is a river near Bodhgayā at which the Buddha-to-be practiced austerities for six years.

54 The awakening experience of Siddhārtha is marked by his entrance into four levels of *samādhi*, which takes place on the evening following his defeat of Māra. John S. Strong, *The Buddha: A Short Biography* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2001), 73-76.

55 Heller, “P.T. 7A, P.T. 108,” 86. The Five Families or Five Divisions are discussed further in Chapter Three.

manuscript echoes elements of the Lotus Treasury Realm as narrated in the *Brahma's Net Sūtra*; in the palm of Vairocana's hand is a world ocean of phenomenal worlds, in each of which resides a *tathāgata*.⁵⁶ Although Akaniṣṭha Heaven is not cited as the residence of the Buddha in the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra* (*Huayan jing* 華嚴經), the *Brahma's Net Sūtra* opens with Śākyamuni in the palace of Maheśvara, which is located in Akaniṣṭha Heaven (*ershi Shijiamounifo, zai disi chandi zhong Moxishouluo tianwang gong* 爾時釋迦牟尼佛, 在第四禪地中摩醯首羅天王宮).⁵⁷ From this reference, we may conclude that this scene portrays the moments just before Śākyamuni's coronation and subsequent enlightenment.

The crowned Buddha in *dhyāna mudrā*, then, fills a gap in standard representations of the life events of the Buddha by depicting the actual moment of the awakening. By virtue of the crown and the *dhyāna mudrā*, this image comprises a conflation of Śākyamuni under the *bodhi* tree and Vairocana/Mahāvairocana in Akaniṣṭha Heaven. References to the coronation of the Buddha and palatial imagery are found in both esoteric and Mahāyāna texts: the *Vajraśekhara Sūtra*, *Mahāvairocana Sūtra*, and *Brahma's Net Sūtra*. This sharing suggests that the motif of the crowned Buddha assuming the *dhyāna mudrā* could have moved fluidly between ritual commentaries derived from all of these texts, as was the case in the Tibetan manuscripts from Dunhuang analyzed by Amy Heller. The motif might be considered a “free agent,” unmoored from any specific textual context or doctrinal concerns. Rather, it was simply a key toward understanding the nature of Vairocana and of Buddhist enlightenment as articulated in the esoteric and Mahāyāna literature.

The experience of *abhiṣeka* as enlightenment is visually expressed in a portable wooden shrine in the collection of the Nelson-Atkins Museum (fig. 21). Carved in relief, the main panel contains an iconographic grouping representing the Maṇḍala of Eight Great Bodhisattvas. Portable shrines of this type were favored by travelers and pilgrims; the main panel is joined to two side panels that fold inward, protecting and concealing the carvings when the shrine is not in use. The central Buddha of the main panel is seated with hands in the meditation gesture and wears an elaborate crown, as in other examples of the Maṇḍala of Eight Great Bodhisattvas from early Tibet. Flanking the canopy above the Buddha's head are two *apsaras*, minor heavenly deities, below each of which is a column of four bodhisattvas.⁵⁸

56 Heller, “P.T. 7A, P.T. 108,” 86 and note 7. Heller describes Vairocana as a “generator” of the cosmos, and states that links to the Vajradhātu cycle are also evident, as Vairocana is said to reside in a realm named *rdo rje dbyings*.

57 T24.1484:997b12-13. Vairocana's residence in the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra* is the Lotus Treasury Realm.

58 Phyllis Granoff and Rob Linrothe differ on the identification of several of the eight bodhisattvas; see Granoff, “Portable Buddhist Shrine,” 90-91; and Rob Linrothe, “What They Saw:



FIGURE 21 *Traveling Shrine with Vairocana and Eight Bodhisattvas. 8th–9th century. Wood with traces of polychrome and gold. 31.1 × 35.6 cm. From Kashmir or Central Asia. THE NELSON-ATKINS MUSEUM OF ART, KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI. PURCHASE: WILLIAM ROCKHILL NELSON TRUST, 44-18. PHOTO: JOSHUA FERDINAND.*

Our attention, however, is drawn to the small tableau directly underneath the Buddha (fig. 22). On either side of the stalk supporting the Buddha's lotus pedestal are two additional bodhisattvas. Distinct from the eight bodhisattvas flanking the Buddha, these two figures turn not toward the Buddha but rather

Kaśmīrā in the Eyes of Western Himalayas,” in Rob Linrothe, *Collecting Paradise: Buddhist Art of Kashmir and its Legacies* (New York: Rubin Museum of Art, 2014), 29-107; 35. Whereas Granoff identifies all eight, Linrothe believes that only six can be identified. They also differ on the interpretation of the same iconographic attributes; for example, the sword-wielding deity in the left column is identified by Granoff as Samantabhadra, based upon Japanese iconography, whereas Linrothe identifies the same as Ākāśagarbha. Certainly the conclusive identification of all eight bodhisattvas is tricky, given the generic nature of the attributes that some hold (particularly the flowers), although others, such as the sword and *vajra*, lend themselves to more obvious correlation.



FIGURE 22
Detail of Traveling
Shrine with Vairocana
and Eight Bodhisattvas
(fig. 21). The Nelson-
Atkins Museum of Art.
PHOTO: JOSHUA
FERDINAND.

toward the small male figure kneeling beneath them with hands drawn together in a prayerful gesture (*añjali mudrā*). The bodhisattva on the right touches the devotee's forehead in a gesture of benediction, while the bodhisattva on the left holds a rounded object overturned above the devotee's head. This small tableau likely represents the scene of an *abhiṣeka* ceremony.⁵⁹ *Abhiṣeka* literally means "to sprinkle water upon the head" (*guanding* 灌頂). Such initiation rites originally were based upon the imperial coronation rites performed in South Asia, during which the initiate was anointed with water during the ceremony.⁶⁰ The object held over the devotee's head represents a water vessel of the type used during the *abhiṣeka* ceremony. The devotee,

59 Granoff identifies this scene as an *abhiṣeka* ceremony, whereas Linrothe believes this to be merely a scene representing the conferral of blessings. Granoff, "Portable Buddhist Shrine," 90; Linrothe, "What They Saw," 31. As the object held over the devotee's head appears to be a water bottle, this scene appears to represent an *abhiṣeka* ceremony rather than a generic blessing.

60 A scene of imperial *abhiṣeka* may still be seen in the wall paintings of the Ajanta Caves in western India. See Mochizuki Shinkō 望月信亨, *Bukkyō daijiten* 佛教大辭典, vol. 1 (Tokyo: Bukkyō daijiten hakkōjo, 1931-63), 811.

exhibiting a shorn head and trailing robes, appears to be a monk rather than a layperson.⁶¹ Monks and nuns underwent ordination rites when they joined the monastic community (*saṃgha*). Furthermore, in Mahāyāna Buddhism, the act of ordination became imbued with the language of the bodhisattva path, and was subsequently called “bodhisattva ordination” (*bodhisattva-upasampadā*), a process by which the initiate undertook the bodhisattva precepts (*pūṣajīe* 菩薩戒).⁶²

A shift in the practice of initiation in esoteric Buddhism led *abhiṣeka* to imply identification with one of the deities of the maṇḍala as the vehicle of soteriology, as well as initiation into esoteric Buddhist praxis. The initiation typically took place over two days. On the first day, the preparations were made, including the performance of the *homa*, or fire offering, which was a ritual of purification. The maṇḍala also would be constructed by the master on the first day. The initiate was given consecrated grass to place under his or her pillow, and was told to recall whatever dreams came in the middle of the night. On the second day, the initiate was brought forward to recall those dreams. Then, the initiate would throw a flower onto the maṇḍala, and the family (*kula*) on which it fell was duly noted, as it determined which mantras were to be conferred. The initiate was then consecrated by the anointing of water – the very action depicted in the carving on the portable shrine – and the conferral of ritual items. Finally, instruction in the mantra and Buddha family was provided. As time went on, the *abhiṣeka* ritual also came to include the practice of visualizing oneself as the particular deity of the maṇḍala upon whom the flower fell.⁶³

Because the crowned Buddha could represent the Buddha’s own coronation or *abhiṣeka* as Vairocana/Mahāvairocana in Akaniṣṭha Heaven by the Buddhas of the ten directions, the initiate depicted at the bottom of the central panel of the portable shrine may be interpreted as undergoing an experience very much like the Buddha’s own enlightenment narrative and serves as the viewer’s entry point into the tableau. Thus we might interpret the *abhiṣeka* in the manner articulated by Ryūichi Abé: as a reproducible ritual action unconstrained by history or place.⁶⁴ This interpretation is perfectly suited to an object – the por-

61 Here, Rob Linrothe’s identification of the figure as a monk seems to be accurate; Linrothe, “What They Saw,” 31. Phyllis Granoff, on the other hand, believes this to be a layperson; Granoff, “Portable Buddhist Shrine,” 90.

62 Ronald M. Davidson, “Initiation,” in Robert E. Buswell, ed., *Encyclopedia of Buddhism*, vol. 1 (New York: Macmillan Reference, 2004), 375-77; 375.

63 Davidson, “Initiation,” 375-76.

64 Abé, *Weaving of Mantra*, 141-42.

table shrine – that was by its very nature mobile, intended for transport over long distances.

The intention here is not to argue conclusively that the *Vajraśekhara Sūtra*, to which Abé refers, is the singular scriptural basis for the iconography of the crowned Buddha in *dhyāna mudrā*, but rather to underscore the particular role played by the *abhiṣeka* in esoteric Buddhist praxis. Furthermore, the emphasis upon the coronation of the Buddha was shared among esoteric and Mahāyāna scriptural sources that collectively may have accounted for the appearance of the crowned Buddha image.⁶⁵

Networks of Transmission

In the past, the Nelson-Atkins shrine has been identified as an object of Central Asian manufacture due to archaeological discoveries of similar wooden shrines from the vicinity of Turfan and Khotan in Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region. One such example is a fragment of a fifth- to sixth-century shrine made of juniper wood now held in the Metropolitan Museum of Art (fig. 23). Only the central panel, containing a standing Buddha carved in relief, is extant. The height and width of this panel are similar to those of the central panel of the Nelson-Atkins shrine. This suggests that the original sizes of the two shrines were roughly equivalent, despite the differences in date and material.

Based on comparisons to this and other objects, Phyllis Granoff has proclaimed the Nelson-Atkins shrine to be a “remarkable landmark in the history of Central Asian Buddhist art.”⁶⁶ More recently, Rob Linrothe has argued that the shrine was produced for a Kashmiri patron, and that the commonalities between this shrine and others like it from Central Asia are the result of the

65 The reason Phyllis Granoff identifies the main Buddha figure in the portable shrine as Śākyamuni is on account of the role he plays as the main deity of the maṇḍala in the *Sūtra of the Maṇḍala of Eight Great Bodhisattvas*, “upon which this mandala was presumably constructed.” Granoff, “Portable Buddhist Shrine,” 92.

66 Granoff, “Portable Buddhist Shrine,” 81. Granoff notes incongruities between the various regional styles represented in the Nelson-Atkins shrine. She concludes that the faces resemble stucco heads from Turfan, the figure represents Indian precedents, and the ornamental motifs are derived from northeast Turkestan and points further west; see “Portable Buddhist Shrine,” 87. Diana Pyle Rowan accepts the Central Asian provenance of the shrine; through a detailed study of its stylistic traits, she concludes that the shrine displays stylistic elements from Dunhuang, Khotan, Tibet, and Pāla India. See Rowan, “Portable Buddhist Shrines of the T’ang Period,” 106–31.



FIGURE 23 *Traveling Shrine of Buddha with Radiating Halo and Mandorla. 5th–6th century. Juniper wood with traces of color and gold. 36.2 × 14 × 6.7 cm. From Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region. METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART, NEW YORK, FLETCHER FUND, 29.19. ARTWORK IN THE PUBLIC DOMAIN, USED WITH CREATIVE COMMONS LICENSE.*

interaction between those two regions.⁶⁷ The Nelson-Atkins shrine, however, was not discovered in Central Asia; rather, it was acquired in Nepal.⁶⁸ Moreover, it bears a Tibetan inscription written in ink on the back that begins with the syllables *byan chub* (enlightenment). The full inscription might originally have read “*byan chub sems*” (*bodhicitta*, “thought of awakening”) or “*byan chub sems dpa*” (*bodhisattva*).⁶⁹ An inscription (though presumably of uncertain date) alluding in some sense to enlightenment would relate well to the *abhiṣeka* scene of the central panel.

Based on the Tibetan inscription, iconography, and style, it is more likely that the shrine was made by Kashmiri artists located within the Tibetan empire, rather than in Central Asia. Pratapaditya Pal has noted that the shrine may have been made for a Central Asian patron, but one who was aware of the style of Kashmiri bronze icons, attributing the transfer of stylistic elements – such as the Buddha’s crown, drapery, and the modeling of the figures – to the flow of Kashmiri bronzes to other parts of Asia.⁷⁰ As early as the eighth century, clay objects found in Tibetan tombs display Kashmiri influence, attesting to the contacts between these regions.⁷¹ It is known that Kashmiri artists were present in the later Guge kingdom of the tenth century in Western Tibet (present-day Ngari [Mnga’ ris] Prefecture, Tibet Autonomous Region), and scholars previously have observed that not all Kashmiri-style bronzes were made in Kashmir. For example, a large standing Buddha figure in the Cleveland Museum of Art bearing a Tibetan dedicatory inscription, and alternately dated to around 900 or the late tenth–early eleventh century, may have been made in Kashmir and then brought to Tibet, or made by a Kashmiri artist in Tibet (fig. 24).⁷²

67 Linrothe, “What They Saw,” 31.

68 Linrothe, “What They Saw,” 33.

69 Linrothe, “What They Saw,” 33. Granoff believes the inscription to originally have read “*byan chub sems [dpah]*” (*bodhisattva*), “Portable Buddhist Shrine,” 81; as does Rowan, “Portable Buddhist Shrines of the T’ang Period,” 104. Given the inscription, could the tableau beneath the Buddha depict a bodhisattva ordination ceremony?

70 Pratapaditya Pal, *Bronzes of Kashmir* (Graz: Akademische Druck- u. Verlagsanstalt, 1975), 248–49.

71 Heller, *Tibetan Art*, 34.

72 Pal, *Bronzes of Kashmir*, 31, 100–101. The Cleveland Museum’s website provides both the earlier and later dates for the sculpture: <<http://www.clevelandart.org/art/1966.30#art-object-detail-views>> (last accessed 6.18.2017). Elsewhere, Pal states that “Perhaps no other country has been more indebted to Kashmir for its culture than Tibet”; *Bronzes of Kashmir*, 39. Indeed, the broad reach of Kashmiri objects was the focus of an exhibition curated by Rob Linrothe, “Collecting Paradise: Buddhist Art of Kashmir and its Legacies,” shown at the Mary and Leigh Block Museum of Art, Northwestern University, and the Rubin Museum of Art, New York, in 2015, accompanied by the publication of an exhibi-



FIGURE 24 *Standing Buddha. Ca. 900 or late 10th–early 11th century. Brass with silver and copper inlay. H. 98.1 cm, w. (base) 28.2 cm. From Kashmir. THE CLEVELAND MUSEUM OF ART, JOHN L. SEVERANCE FUND 1966.30. © THE CLEVELAND MUSEUM OF ART.*

Furthermore, according to his biography, the monk translator Rinchen Zangpo brought thirty-two Kashmiri artists to Western Tibet.⁷³ Therefore, by the late tenth or early eleventh century, a clear precedent had been established for the activity of Kashmiri artists within the Tibetan realm.

Let us bear in mind the resonance of the iconographic motif of the Maṇḍala of Eight Great Bodhisattvas for early Tibet. The maṇḍala in the central panel of the Nelson-Atkins shrine is unusual for extant examples of wooden traveling shrines from this period and region.⁷⁴ Much like Kashmiri bronze Buddha sculptures dating from the seventh to eleventh century, the primary focus of such wooden shrines is generally on a single Buddha with two main bodhisattva attendants.⁷⁵ The arrangement of the bodhisattvas of the maṇḍala on the central panel of the Nelson-Atkins shrine into two vertical columns, however, is comparable to the arrangement of bodhisattvas at Denma Drak. In conjunction with the Tibetan inscription, the sum of these factors makes a compelling case for the production and use of the Nelson-Atkins shrine within a Tibetan cultural environment.

Yet certain iconographic and stylistic elements are seen commonly in Kashmiri bronzes, suggesting that the Nelson-Atkins shrine was made either by a Kashmiri artist or, at the very least, by an artist who was exposed to Kashmiri stylistic idioms. That is to say, the central panel of the Nelson-Atkins shrine was carved in a manner that approximates certain characteristics of Kashmiri bronze icons.⁷⁶ Among the features seen in such icons are the combined motifs of the crown and cape, the earliest incarnation of which appeared in

tion catalogue of the same title. The introduction (1-8) of John Siudmak's *The Hindu-Buddhist Sculpture of Ancient Kashmir and its Influences* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2013) provides an outline of earlier scholarship on the art of Kashmir.

73 Christian Luczanits, "From Kashmir to Western Tibet: The Many Faces of a Regional Style," in Rob Linrothe, *Collecting Paradise: Buddhist Art of Kashmir and its Legacies* (New York: Rubin Museum of Art, 2014), 109-49; 109.

74 For comparative examples, see Granoff, "Portable Buddhist Shrine," 82, 84-85; Linrothe, "What They Saw," 33; Christian Boehm, "Miniaturized Buddhist Worlds: Portable Sandalwood Shrines in China and Japan," *Arts of Asia* 44.5 (2014): 95-103; and Watanabe Hajime 渡邊一, "Chimanjizō kokudashi ko butsuganzō ni tsuite" 智満寺蔵刻出小佛龕像に就いて, *Bijutsu kenkyū* 美術研究 50 (1936): 1-9.

75 For Kashmiri bronzes, see Pal, *Bronzes of Kashmir*, 86-119.

76 The focus here on metal sculptures as opposed to stone sculptures is due to the portability of the former. The Asia Society and Pritzker Collection sculptures measure 31.1 and 36.8 centimeters in height, respectively, making them nearly equivalent in size to the Nelson-Atkins shrine. A much larger stone sculpture of a Buddha with crown and three-cornered cape, measuring 91 centimeters in height, appears in Linrothe, "What They Saw," fig. 1.29.

Afghanistan in the sixth century.⁷⁷ From there, the conjoined motifs appeared in a number of Kashmiri bronze and brass sculptures, such as an early-eighth-century sculpture at New York's Asia Society (fig. 25), and another dated 714 in the Pritzker Collection (fig. 26).⁷⁸ Both Buddha figures wear a five-peaked crown adorned with pearls and jewels, from which ribbons on either side flow toward the Buddha's shoulders in a stylized pattern. Both figures similarly wear heavy earrings and jeweled necklaces. These characteristics also are shared by the Buddha of the Nelson-Atkins shrine. Another shared trait of the two Kashmiri sculptures is the three-cornered cape, adorned with tassels, that is draped over the upper torso of each Buddha. While the Buddha of the Nelson-Atkins shrine does not wear a cape, his bared chest covered only by a scarf, the central Buddha of the Denma Drak maṇḍala is attired in a variation of the cape seen in the Kashmiri sculptures.

Interpretations of the crowned and bejeweled Buddha have stressed variously the deity's associations with the *saṃbhogakāya* of the *trikāya* concept of multiple Buddha bodies, or his associations with concepts of sovereignty and consecration.⁷⁹ Elsewhere, the cape has been considered as a Kashmiri "mantle of authority."⁸⁰ All of these associations conform to our knowledge of the Tibetan contexts in which the Maṇḍala of Eight Great Bodhisattvas with the crowned Buddha appeared. In addition to the lack of a cape, another distinct difference between the Kashmiri sculptures and the Nelson-Atkins shrine must be noted. In the former, the Buddhas display the gesture of teaching (*dharmacakra mudrā*); in contrast, the Buddha of the Nelson-Atkins shrine assumes the *dhyāna mudrā*, which, as we have seen, may be associated with the Buddha's awakening.

Finally, contacts with the broader region of Dunhuang cannot be ignored. The armor and trailing scarves of the heavenly kings in the middle section of the side panels of the Nelson-Atkins shrine may be compared to similar images

77 According to Deborah Klimburg-Salter, the cape initially represented the "golden robe" of Śākyamuni, to be passed on to Maitreya. See Klimburg-Salter, "Mahākāśyapa and the Art of Bāmiyān," 536.

78 The Asia Society sculpture and possible connections to the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra* are discussed in Bautze-Picron, *Bejewelled Buddha*, 54-57.

79 For the former interpretation, see Mus, "Le Buddha paré"; and Ananda K. Coomaraswamy, "The Buddha's Cūḍā, Hair, Uṣṇīṣa, and Crown," *The Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (October 1928): 815-41. For the latter, see Yuvraj Krishan, "The Origin of the Crowned Buddha Image," *East and West* 21.1/2 (1971): 91-96. Krishan further rejects the notion that the crowned Buddha was an exclusively Mahāyāna phenomenon.

80 Linrothe, "What They Saw," 56, 59.

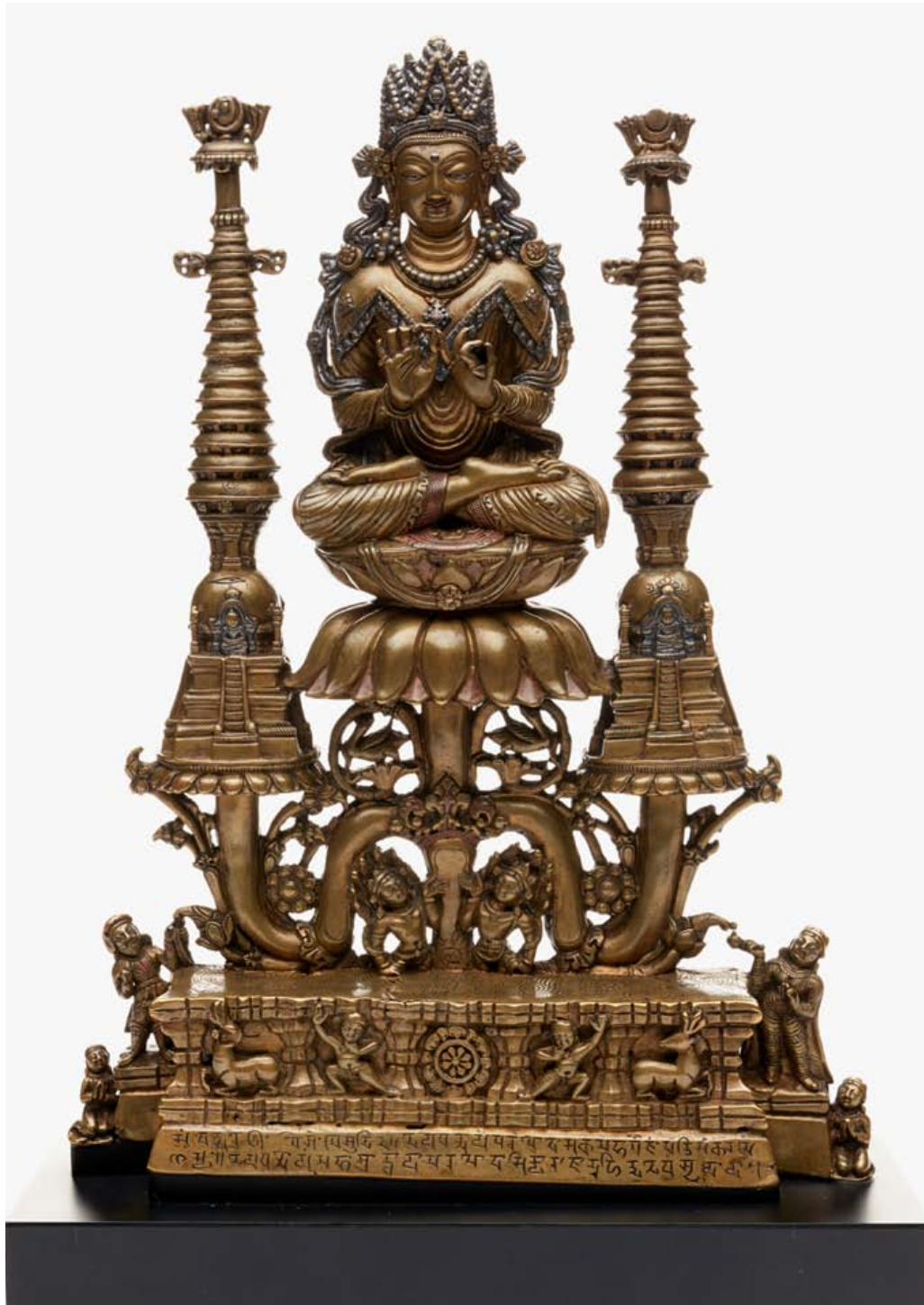


FIGURE 25 *Crowned Buddha. 8th century. Brass with inlays of copper, silver, and zinc. 31.1 × 22.86 × 8.89 cm. From Kashmir or northern Pakistan. ASIA SOCIETY MUSEUM, NEW YORK, MR. AND MRS. JOHN D. ROCKEFELLER 3RD COLLECTION, 1979.44. PHOTOGRAPHY BY SYNTHESCAPE, COURTESY OF ASIA SOCIETY. ASIA SOCIETY / ART RESOURCE, NY.*



FIGURE 26 *Crowned Buddha and attendants. Paṭola Śāhi dynasty (6th–8th century), 714. Brass. H. 36.8 cm. From Kashmir. PRITZKER COLLECTION. PHOTOGRAPH BY HUGHES DUBOIS.*



FIGURE 27 Vaiśravaṇa. Northern Song dynasty (960-1127), second half of 10th century. Ink and color on paper. 40 × 26.5 cm. From Dunhuang. MUSÉE DES ARTS ASIATIQUES—GUIMET, PARIS, MG. 17670. PHOTO: DANIEL ARNAUDET. © RMN—GRAND PALAIS / ART RESOURCE, NY.

from Dunhuang (fig. 27).⁸¹ Furthermore, the arrangement of the eight bodhisattvas of the maṇḍala into two vertical columns does not appear only at Denma Drak and in the Nelson-Atkins shrine. This arrangement is seen in a portable painting from Dunhuang now in the British Museum, an early-ninth-century work in the Stein Collection (fig. 2), which dates to roughly the same period as the rock-cut Tibetan maṇḍalas; it is also observed in two maṇḍalas located on the east wall of the Guiyijun-era Yulin Cave 20 (figs. 28, 29).⁸² Features of the Buddhas in the Nelson-Atkins shrine and in the Stein painting point to yet another association. The bare chests of the Buddhas together with the roundness of their faces, with high, arched eyebrows, wide eyes, long nose, and small lips, suggest the regional style of the Kashmiri bronzes. Given the combination of iconographic and stylistic features seen in the Nelson-Atkins shrine, it is likely that portable objects like it may have served as conduits of religious and artistic transmission throughout the Tibetan empire.

Stylistic Bilingualism in Images of Vairocana

The imagery of the Maṇḍala of Eight Great Bodhisattvas held particular significance in the religious and political climate of Dunhuang and surrounding regions in the eighth through tenth centuries. Such imagery was distinct from prior representations of Vairocana across East Asia and at Dunhuang. In China and Japan, Vairocana was represented according to the description in the *Brahma's Net Sūtra*, in which, speaking from the palace of Maheśvara, he explains the Lotus Treasury Realm, in which his lotus pedestal consists of a thousand petals, each manifesting a Śākyamuni Buddha. Each lotus petal also manifests one billion Mount Sumerus, one billion suns and moons, one billion sets of four continents, one billion Jambudvīpas, and one billion Śākyamuni bodhisattvas each seated under a *bodhi* tree preaching on the bodhisattva stag-

81 Linrothe, "What They Saw," 34, figs. 1.4, 1.5. For manuscripts pertaining to the cult of Vaiśravaṇa, heavenly king of the north, at Dunhuang, see Henrik H. Sørensen, "Perspectives on Buddhism in Dunhuang during the Tang and Five Dynasties Period," in Vadime Elisseeff, ed., *The Silk Roads: Highways of Culture and Commerce* (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2000), 27-48; 35.

82 The author is grateful to Katherine Wasdin for drawing attention to this. Xi Lin 席琳, in the article "Tubo chandingyin Piluzhena yu bada pusa zuhe tuxiang yanjiu" 吐蕃禪定印毘盧遮那與八大菩薩組合圖像研究, *Kaogu yu wenwu* 考古與文物 2014.6:41-48, makes similar observations, arguing that four distinct types of spatial configurations of the Maṇḍala of Eight Great Bodhisattvas may be found across Asia.



FIGURE 28 *Maṇḍala of Eight Great Bodhisattvas. Guiyijun period (848-1036). Mural painting. South side of east wall, Yulin Cave 20, Anxi, Gansu Province. PHOTOGRAPH BY WU JIAN. COURTESY OF THE DUNHUANG ACADEMY.*



FIGURE 29 Maṇḍala of Eight Great Bodhisattvas. *Guiyijun* period (848-1036). Mural painting. North side of east wall, Yulin Cave 20, Anxi, Gansu Province. PHOTOGRAPH BY WU JIAN. COURTESY OF THE DUNHUANG ACADEMY.

es.⁸³ These Śākaymunis are transformation bodies of the original one thousand Śākaymunis, of which Vairocana (here named Locana; Lushena 盧舍那) is the original source.⁸⁴ Vairocana is depicted in this manner in the Fengxiansi Cave at Longmen, located near Luoyang, Henan Province (fig. 30), and at Tōdaiji in Nara (fig. 31). The *bodhi* image discussed in Chapter One (see fig. 11) also has been considered by some scholars as a form of Vairocana associated with the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra*.⁸⁵

At Dunhuang, Vairocana frequently was represented as the cosmological Buddha, appearing in a garment imprinted with a complex image of Buddhist cosmology. Nine images of the cosmological Buddha are found in the Mogao cave shrines dating from the Northern and Southern dynasties to Tibetan period. Among the earliest of these is the image that appears on the south wall of the main chamber of Mogao Cave 428 (fig. 32).⁸⁶ The Buddha stands under a canopy flanked by bodhisattvas on either side, with right hand raised in the *abhaya mudrā*, or “fear not” gesture. His garment is adorned with a number of small vignettes, with Mount Sumeru prominently placed over the torso. The uppermost portion of the garment depicts Buddhas in a heavenly realm, the middle portion represents the human realm, and the hem displays images of the Buddhist hells. Such paintings represent the body of Vairocana as coextensive with the *dharmadhātu*. During the Tibetan period, a new mode of portraying the cosmological Buddha emerged, as the Buddha was inserted into transformation tableaux based on the *Sūtra of Repaying Kindness (Dafangbian Fo bao'enjing 大方便佛報恩經)*.⁸⁷ According to the sūtra, the Buddha is known by many names and appears in different realms; one of these names is Locana. Five such mural paintings are found in the Mogao caves, dating to the Tibetan

83 Jambudvīpa refers to the human realm, the southernmost of the four continents surrounding Mount Sumeru.

84 T24.1484:997b12–c14.

85 Choi, “*Zhenrong to Ruixiang*,” 383 n. 8. Choi also proposes that the jewelry worn by the figures in the *bodhi* images is the result of Chinese devotees’ emulation of Xuanzang’s tale, which held that, because not enough clay was available to complete the original statue in the Mahābodhi Temple, people decorated the unfinished parts with jewels instead; “*Zhenrong to Ruixiang*,” 371, 381.

86 Yin Guangming 殷光明, “Dunhuang Lushena fajie tuxiang yanjiu zhi yi” 敦煌盧舍那法界圖像研究之一, *Dunhuang yanjiu* 敦煌研究 2001.4:1–12. In addition to Dunhuang paintings, sculptures of the cosmological Buddha also exist. One of the most important of these is a large, sixth-century stone sculpture in the Freer Gallery of Art; see Angela Falco Howard, *The Imagery of the Cosmological Buddha* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1986).

87 *Dafangbian Fo bao'enjing* is T156. It appears to be an apocryphal sūtra composed in China.



FIGURE 30 ↑
Locana Buddha. Tang dynasty (618-907),
675. Stone. H. 17.14 m. Fengxian Temple,
Longmen Caves, Luoyang, Henan Province.
 PHOTO BY JOHN C. HUNTINGTON.

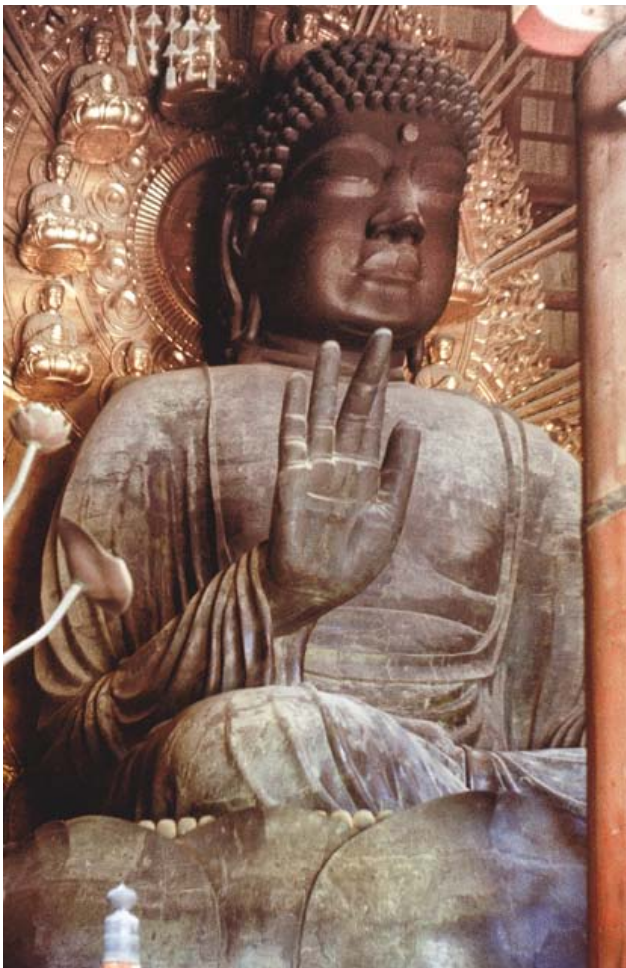


FIGURE 31
Great Buddha. 17th-century restoration of
original from Nara period (710-94).
Bronze. H. 15 m. Daibutsuden, Tōdaiji,
Nara, Japan. PHOTO BY JOHN C.
 HUNTINGTON.



FIGURE 32
Cosmological Buddha. Northern Zhou dynasty (557-81). Mural painting. South wall, Mogao Cave 428, Dunhuang, Gansu Province. FROM DUNHUANG WENWU YANJIUSUO, ED., *ZHONGGUO SHIKU: DUNHUANG SHIKU*, VOL. 1, PLATE 162.

FIGURE 33 ↓
Cosmological Buddha in the foreground of a transformation tableau from the Sūtra of Repaying Kindness. Tibetan period (786-848). Mural painting. North wall, Mogao Cave 154, Dunhuang, Gansu Province. PHOTOGRAPH BY ZHANG WEIWEN. COURTESY OF THE DUNHUANG ACADEMY.



and Guiyijun periods.⁸⁸ In these compositions, Vairocana appears in a miniaturized position in the foreground of the painting (fig. 33).

Vairocana in the context of the Maṇḍala of Eight Great Bodhisattvas, then, was a new and unfamiliar iconographic mode, transmitted to Dunhuang from Tibet as a visual expression of Tibetan royal authority. The Dunhuang Tibetan manuscript fragments Pelliot tibétain 16 and IOL Tib J 751 (known as the “Prayers of Dega Yutsel”) refer to a “Temple of the Treaty” established at the site of Dega Yutsel (De ga g.yu tshal), or the “turquoise grove of Dega,” which contained a Maṇḍala of Eight Great Bodhisattvas. As we have noted, Yeshe Yang’s patronage of the Denma Drak maṇḍala marked the beginning of treaty negotiations between the Tibetans and Chinese. Following that event by only a few years, the Temple of the Treaty maṇḍala commemorated a pacification treaty negotiated between the Tibetans and Tang China in 821-22.⁸⁹ The exact location and identification of the temple have remained unclear, although certain scholars have debated the possibility of identifying the Temple of the Treaty as Yulin Cave 25, located in Anxi, Gansu Province (fig. 34). Several features of the mural paintings in this cave, dating to the Tibetan period, accord with the description of the Temple of the Treaty. The main chamber of the cave shrine contains a Maṇḍala of Eight Great Bodhisattvas on the rear or east wall (fig. 35) and paintings of Maitreya and Amitābha on the north and south walls (figs. 36, 37). The fact that the manuscript fragments name wrathful and other deities, which do not appear in the mural paintings, complicates identification.⁹⁰ Furthermore, whereas the T-shaped cartouches accompanying the Maṇḍala of Eight Great Bodhisattvas accommodate both Tibetan and Chinese script, the cartouches on the north and south walls are vertical, suitable only for Chinese characters. This difference has led some scholars to argue that the paintings

88 Michelle McCoy, “Filial Piety in the Dharma Realm: Notes on a Dunhuang Motif,” *Orientalizations* 47.4 (2016): 73-81; Yin Guangming 殷光明, “Dunhuang Lushena fajie tuxiang yanjiu zhi er” 敦煌盧舍那法界圖像研究之二, *Dunhuang yanjiu* 敦煌研究 2002.1:46-56.

89 Kapstein, “Treaty Temple of the Turquoise Grove.” The article was published in an earlier form as Matthew T. Kapstein, “The Treaty Temple of De-ga g.yu-tshal: Identification and Iconography,” in Huo Wei 霍巍 and Li Yongxian 李永憲, eds., *Xizang kaogu yu yishu* 西藏考古與藝術 (Chengdu: Sichuan renmin chubanshe, 2004), 98-127. For a discussion of this and other treaties between Tang China and the Tibetans, see Yihong Pan, “The Sino-Tibetan Treaties in the Tang Dynasty,” *T’oung Pao*, Second Series 78.1/3 (1992): 116-61; see 143-48 for a discussion of the 821-22 treaty.

90 Kapstein, “Treaty Temple of the Turquoise Grove,” 46-52. Through a study of historical geography and linguistics, Kapstein has argued that the Temple of the Treaty was located at the Yulin cave shrines.

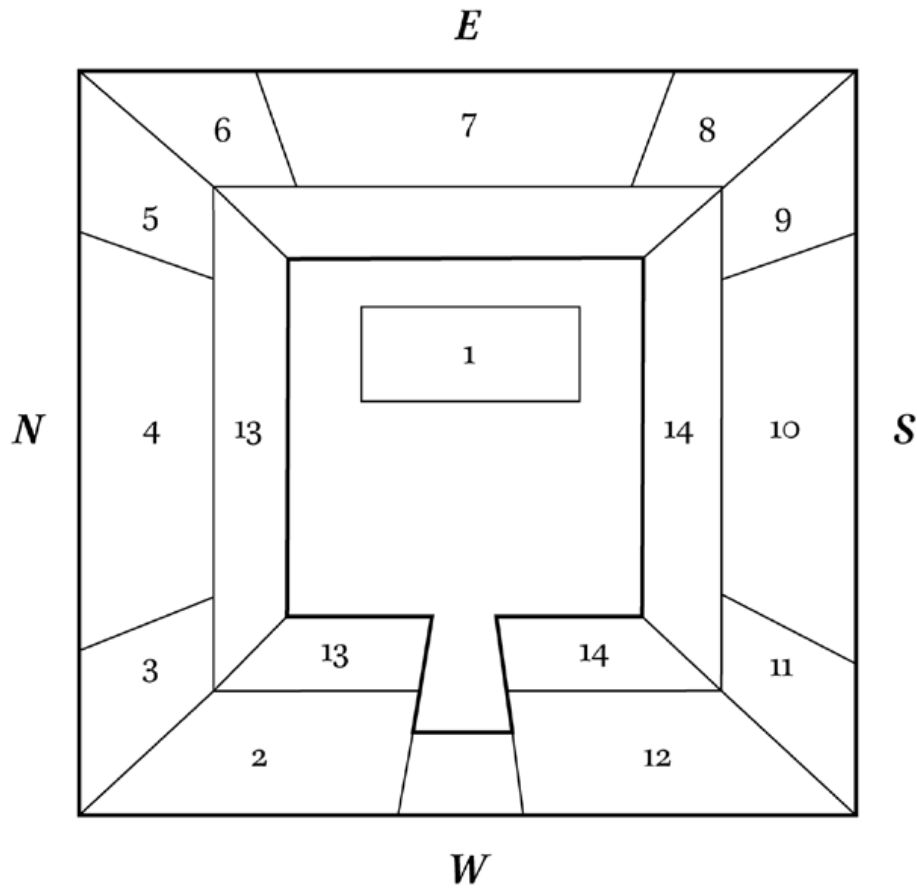


FIGURE 34 *Iconographic program of the main chamber of Yulin Cave 25.* (1) altar platform, (2) Mañjuśrī tableau, (3) bodhisattva, (4) Maitreya tableau, (5) bodhisattva, (6) Bhaiṣajyaguru, (7) Maṇḍala of Eight Great Bodhisattvas, (8) Kṣitigarbha (as reconstructed from Lo photograph), (9) Mahāsthāmaprāpta, (10) Amitābha tableau, (11) Avalokiteśvara, (12) Samantabhadra tableau, (13) female donor figures, (14) male donor figures. DRAWING BY ERNEST BARONI.

were executed at different times, under different circumstances, rather than as a unified iconographic program.⁹¹ In the absence of obvious overpainting, it

⁹¹ Yoshiro Imaeda has argued that the east wall painting was executed first, during the Tibetan period, and that the north and south wall paintings were executed later, under the Guiyijun, thereby accounting for the differences in painting style and cartouches. See Yoshiro Imaeda, "T-Shaped Inscription Frames in Mogao (Dunhuang) and Yulin Caves," *Report of the Japanese Association for Tibetan Studies* 53 (2007): 89-99, especially 90-92. Another problem is that the only Tibetan-language inscriptions in Yulin Cave 25 postdate the establishment of the Temple of the Treaty. See Kapstein, "Treaty Temple of the Turquoise Grove," 56-57; and Xie Jisheng 謝繼勝 and Huang Weizhong 黃維忠, "Yulinku di

is equally likely, however, that these stylistic choices were made purposefully, rather than resulting from different periods of production.

The Yulin site is a group of forty-two cave shrines dating from the Northern Wei (386-534) to Qing dynasty (1644-1911) located on opposite banks of the Yulin River. Although the right side of the mural painting of the Maṇḍala of Eight Great Bodhisattvas in Cave 25 has become disengaged from the wall, the overall iconographic program can be reconstructed on the basis of photographs taken by James and Lucy Lo in the 1940s.⁹² The cave shrine is composed of a main chamber and antechamber. The main chamber features an altar platform with a Song-dynasty sculpture of Vairocana Buddha seated atop a Mount Sumeru platform with hands positioned in the *dhyāna mudrā*. Behind the sculpture, on the east (rear) wall of the cave, is the painting of Vairocana Buddha with the Eight Great Bodhisattvas (fig. 35); the bodhisattvas originally were arranged in two columns of two figures on either side of the Buddha, in a manner comparable to the arrangement of the bodhisattvas in the maṇḍala at Bimda (see fig. 17a, b).⁹³ Vairocana Buddha is seated atop a lotus seat on a lion throne with his hands similarly positioned in the *dhyāna mudrā*, consistent with the Buddhas from Tibetan examples of the Maṇḍala of Eight Great Bodhisattvas. A peaked crown adorned with pearly spires is placed atop his head, encircling the *uṣṇīṣa*, and small conch shells dangle from the crown along both sides of his face. Hoop earrings hang from the elongated earlobes, and wavy strands of hair spill over onto the Buddha's shoulders. The Buddha wears jeweled armbands, bracelets, and anklets, as well as a single-strand pearl necklace with a scalloped necklace below; his body is clothed with a floral sash

25 ku bihua zangwen tiji shidu” 榆林窟第25窟壁畫藏文題記釋讀, *Wenwu* 文物 2007.4:70-78. For the Tibetan inscription on the north wall of Yulin Cave 25, see also Sha Wutian 沙武田, *Yulinku di 25 ku: Dunhuang tuxiang zhongde Tang Fan guanxi* 榆林窟第25窟: 敦煌圖像中的唐蕃關係 (Beijing: Shangwu yinshuguan, 2016), 43-46.

92 James and Lucy Lo arrived at Dunhuang in 1943 and photographed the cave shrines for eighteen months, using a system of mirrors and cloth screens in order to distribute natural light inside the caves. Their archive of 2,590 photographs is now housed in Princeton University's Visual Resources Collection.

93 A recently published Tibetan-period rock-cut Maṇḍala of Eight Great Bodhisattvas in Mangkam County, Tibet Autonomous Region, is arranged in a similar manner, with two rows of two bodhisattvas on either side of the Buddha; work on this site began in the second half of 2016. Like the other examples discussed, the central Buddha is crowned and assumes the *dhyāna mudrā*. See “Tubo Period Petroglyphs Found in Tibet,” Xinhua's China Economic Information Service, 8 January 2017; <<https://archaeologynewsnetwork.blogspot.com/2017/01/tubo-period-petroglyphs-found-in-tibet.html>> (last accessed 1.17.2017).



FIGURE 35 Manḍala of Eight Great Bodhisattvas. Tibetan period (786-848). Mural painting. East wall, Yulin Cave 25, Anxi, Gansu Province. COURTESY OF THE DUNHUANG ACADEMY.



FIGURE 36 Maitreya tableau. Tibetan period (786-848). Mural painting. North wall, Yulin Cave 25, Anxi, Gansu Province. COURTESY OF THE DUNHUANG ACADEMY.



FIGURE 37 Amitābha tableau. Tibetan period (786-848). Mural painting. South wall, Yulin Cave 25, Anxi, Gansu Province. COURTESY OF THE DUNHUANG ACADEMY.

that falls diagonally from his left shoulder, in addition to a scarf draped around his arms, and patterned trousers.

The centrality of Vairocana and the Maṇḍala of Eight Great Bodhisattvas to the reinforcement of imperial identity is underscored by the selection of this iconographic grouping in the design of the Temple of the Treaty, comparable to similar associations of Vairocana with the throne in China, Japan, and Southeast Asia.⁹⁴ As Vairocana was understood to represent the Tibetan monarch, so the Maṇḍala of Eight Great Bodhisattvas represented the Tibetan empire.⁹⁵ Furthermore, given that the central Buddha is crowned, the imperial associations are fitting here.

The generally elongated, yet robust proportions of the body of Vairocana in the mural painting may be compared to extant sculptural examples from Tibet and Nepal. The facial and bodily features of the Buddha are described through a combination of fine, unmodulated lines and heavy shading, emphasizing the figure's high, arched eyebrows, thickly lidded eyes, and broad lips. A standing copper-alloy bodhisattva sculpture in a private collection is the first sculpture to have been attributed to the Tibetan Pugyal dynasty (fig. 38), specifically to the first half of the ninth century.⁹⁶ While the eyebrows of the Tibetan sculpture are more arched than those of the Yulin Cave 25 Vairocana, the faces of both figures display similar contours through the swelling of the full cheeks resolving in a short, pointy chin. The shoulders of both figures are broad and muscular, with little articulation of the musculature of the thick arms, and the torso of each figure narrows to an improbably slim waist from a broad, massive chest.

A standing ninth-century Nepalese sculpture of Padmapāṇi (a form of the bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara) allows for similar comparisons (fig. 39). Despite the more prominent forehead and higher eyebrows of the Padmapāṇi, both figures display similar modeling of the facial contours. The body of the Nepalese Padmapāṇi is more taut than that of the Yulin Cave 25 Vairocana, although the general handling of the upper part of the body is similar, narrowing dramatically from the broad shoulders and chest to the small waist.

94 Kapstein, "Treaty Temple of the Turquoise Grove," 53.

95 Kapstein, *Tibetan Assimilation of Buddhism*, 60-65.

96 Yury Khokhlov, "Metal Sculptures of the Tibetan Imperial Period," *Asianart.com*, 24 January 2013; <<https://www.asianart.com/articles/khokhlov/index.html>> (last accessed 5.21.2014). Khokhlov notes that the early date of this sculpture was later questioned, in particular, in the Sotheby's catalogue dated 25 March 1999, lot. 63, entry on "rare Tibetan copper figure of bodhisattva 11/12th century."



FIGURE 38
Standing bodhisattva. Pugyal dynasty (7th–9th century), ca. first half of 9th century. Copper alloy with insets, cold gold paste, and pigments. H. 64.5 cm. From Central Tibet. Private collection. FROM RHIE AND THURMAN, EDS., WISDOM AND COMPASSION, 416, PLATE 169 (19A). PHOTOGRAPH BY PETER OSZVALD.

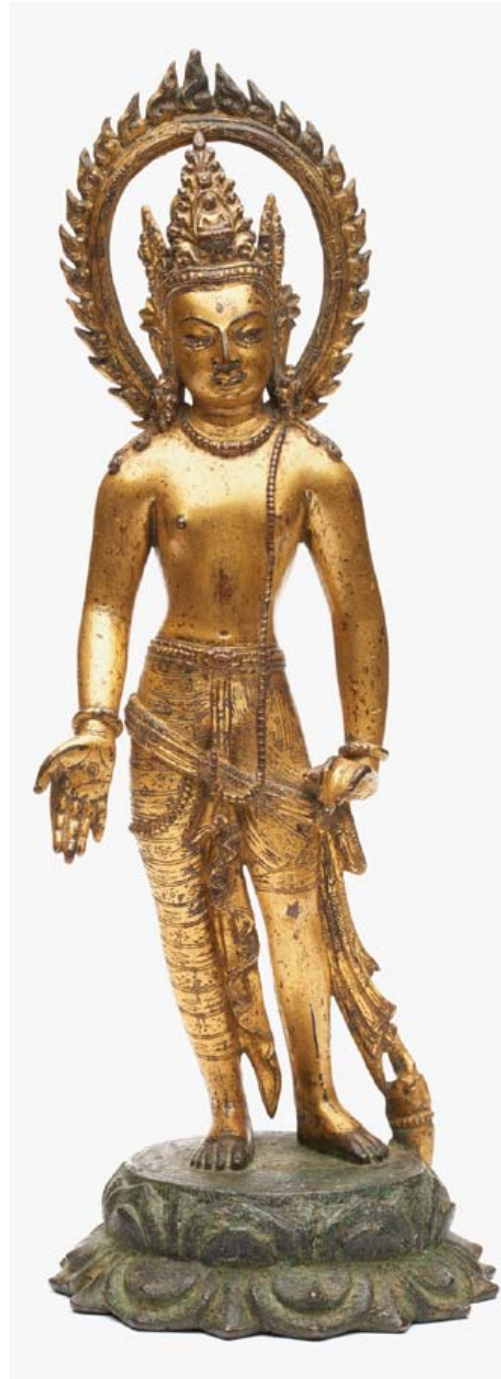


FIGURE 39
Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara. Licchavi period (ca. 5th century–ca. 750), 8th–9th century. Gilt copper. 33.7 × 12.7 × 12.1 cm. From Nepal. ASIA SOCIETY MUSEUM, NEW YORK, ESTATE OF BLANCHETTE HOOKER ROCKEFELLER, 1992.3. ASIA SOCIETY / ART RESOURCE, NY.

The similarities between Nepalese and Tibetan works are no accident; the Nepalese may have established a presence in Lhasa as early as the seventh century.⁹⁷ The movement of Nepalese artists to Tibet during the eighth century is recorded in traditional accounts of the construction of Samye as the first Buddhist monastery in Tibet. The aforementioned *Testament of Ba* chronicles Nepalese and Tibetan artists working side by side in the decoration of Samye.⁹⁸ Furthermore, the work of Nepalese artists at other Buddhist temples in Tibet is also recorded.⁹⁹ In turn, similar interactions between Tibetan, Indian, and Chinese artists are mentioned; the three stories of the main building of Samye were said to have been constructed in the Tibetan, Chinese, and Indian styles, respectively, by craftsmen from each of those regions.¹⁰⁰

The association of the artistic style seen in the Yulin Cave 25 maṇḍala with the Tibetan presence at Dunhuang is substantiated by portable paintings, found in the library cave, of Buddhist deities with similarly elongated proportions, one of which bears a Tibetan inscription. The first of these depicts Avalokiteśvara with a tall jeweled crown and oval-shaped mandorla (fig. 40). Yet another displays a bodhisattva tentatively identified as Ākāśagarbha (fig. 41). The sun and the moon in this work, however, are typically associated with Avalokiteśvara, and without any other identifying characteristics, such as the sword or *cintāmaṇi* jewel commonly held by Ākāśagarbha, it is possible that this might also be a representation of Avalokiteśvara. The shape of the mandorla and halo, as well as the treatment of the face and body, are comparable

97 Heller, *Tibetan Art*, 33. The presence of Nepalese artists is important to keep in mind, as certain non-Chinese stylistic elements in Dunhuang paintings have, in the past, been termed uncritically as the “Pāla style.” This interpretation is due to the chronological overlap between the Pāla and late Tang periods; see Kou Jia 寇甲 and Zhao Xiaoxing 趙曉星, “Tubo tongzhi Dunhuang shiqide mijiao yuanliu yu yishu fengge – Tubo tongzhi Dunhuang shiqide mijiao yanjiu zhi san” 吐蕃統治時期敦煌的密教與其他信仰之關係——吐蕃統治敦煌時期的密教研究, *Dunhuangxue jikan* 敦煌學季刊 2007.4:279-89, especially 286-87. The Pāla style impacted Nepalese art but is not considered to have reached Tibet directly until the eleventh and twelfth centuries, fostered by the movement of artists from eastern India to Tibet in the company of monks such as the Bengali master Atiśa (982–ca. 1055). See Pratapaditya Pal and Hugh Richardson, *The Art of Tibet: A Catalogue of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art Collection* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Museum of Art in association with the University of California Press, 1983), 115-16.

98 Heller, “Buddhist Images and Rock Inscriptions,” 388-89.

99 Heller, “Buddhist Images and Rock Inscriptions,” 388.

100 Ulrich von Schroeder, *Buddhist Sculptures in Tibet* (Hong Kong: Visual Dharma Publications, Ltd., 2001), 723.



FIGURE 40
Avalokiteśvara. Tibetan period
(786-848), early to mid-9th
century. Ink and color on
paper. 30 × 26 cm. From
Dunhuang. BRITISH MUSEUM,
LONDON, 1919,0101,0.160
(CH.00401). © THE TRUSTEES
OF THE BRITISH MUSEUM.

to those of the Buddha in Yulin Cave 25. Furthermore, a Tibetan inscription at the bottom of the painting identifies the patron as “Leg-mo, the noble lady.”¹⁰¹

A silk painting of the medicine Buddha Bhaiṣajyaguru (Yaoshi rulai 藥師如來) and retinue from Dunhuang (fig. 42), dated 836 and now held in the Stein Collection at the British Museum, provides an instructive example of the mingling of regional styles.¹⁰² The figures of Bhaiṣajyaguru at the top and the

¹⁰¹ Entry for 1919,0101,0.168.+ (Ch.00377), International Dunhuang Project; <http://idp.bl.uk/database/oo_scroll_h.a4d?uid=1785662548;recnum=40227;index=1> (last accessed 3.2.2017).

¹⁰² This painting is titled *Paradise of Bhaiṣajyaguru* by the British Museum; see Roderick Whitfield, *The Art of Central Asia: The Stein Collection in the British Museum*, vol. 1 (Tokyo: Kodansha International, 1982-84), plate 16. It is titled *Maṇḍala of the Thousand-armed Avalokiteśvara* by Heather Stoddard; see her *Early Sino-Tibetan Art*, 2nd ed. (Bangkok:



FIGURE 41
 Ākāśagarbha(?). Tibetan period
 (786-848), early to mid-9th
 century. Ink and color on paper.
 42.5 × 26 cm. From Dunhuang.
 BRITISH MUSEUM, LONDON,
 1919,0101,0.168.+ (CH.00377).
 © THE TRUSTEES OF THE
 BRITISH MUSEUM.

Thousand-Armed Avalokiteśvara at the bottom, in addition to Samantabhadra seated on an elephant and Mañjuśrī seated on a lion, with their round faces and stocky bodies, convey the standard Tang-period style seen at Dunhuang. Particularly in the treatment of the Buddha, a comparison can be made to an early-eighth-century painting from Dunhuang, also in the Stein Collection (fig. 43). The main Buddhas of both paintings display round faces, arched eyebrows,

Orchid Press, 2008), 10-13. The composition consists of Bhaiṣajyaguru at the top, flanked by two bodhisattvas, under which are Samantabhadra and Mañjuśrī, and the Thousand-Armed Avalokiteśvara at the bottom of the painting. The work has suffered serious damage to the bottom portion; the Thousand-Armed Avalokiteśvara is cropped at the torso, and the flanking figures are barely perceptible. Because the dedicatory inscription names Bhaiṣajyaguru first, the British Museum's title for the painting is followed here. For a discussion of the date, see Stoddard, *Early Sino-Tibetan Art*, 11.



FIGURE 42 Pure Land of Bhaiṣajyaguru. *Tibetan period (786-848)*, 836. *Ink and color on silk.* 152.3 × 177.8 cm. *From Dunhuang.* BRITISH MUSEUM, LONDON, 1919,0101,0.32 (CH.XXXVII.004). © THE TRUSTEES OF THE BRITISH MUSEUM.

broad eyelids, and small lips characteristic of the Tang style. Whereas the bodhisattvas flanking the Buddha in the earlier work convey a similar style, the bodhisattvas flanking Bhaiṣajyaguru are rendered in a distinctively Nepalese-derived Tibetan style similar to the figures of Yulin Cave 25, with taut, elongated bodies and haloes.¹⁰³

In her study of the Bhaiṣajyaguru painting, Heather Stoddard further notes the difference in dress between the bodhisattvas flanking the Buddha, whose fairly exposed torsos are covered only by a scarf, to the more conservative dress

¹⁰³ In a nod to the Nepalese style, Stoddard calls this manner “Tibeto-Nepalese”; *Early Sino-Tibetan Art*, 11.



FIGURE 43 Buddha Preaching the Law. Tang dynasty (618-907), first half of 8th century. Ink and color on silk. 39 × 102 cm. From Dunhuang. BRITISH MUSEUM, LONDON, 1919,0101, 0.6 (CH.LIII.001). © THE TRUSTEES OF THE BRITISH MUSEUM.

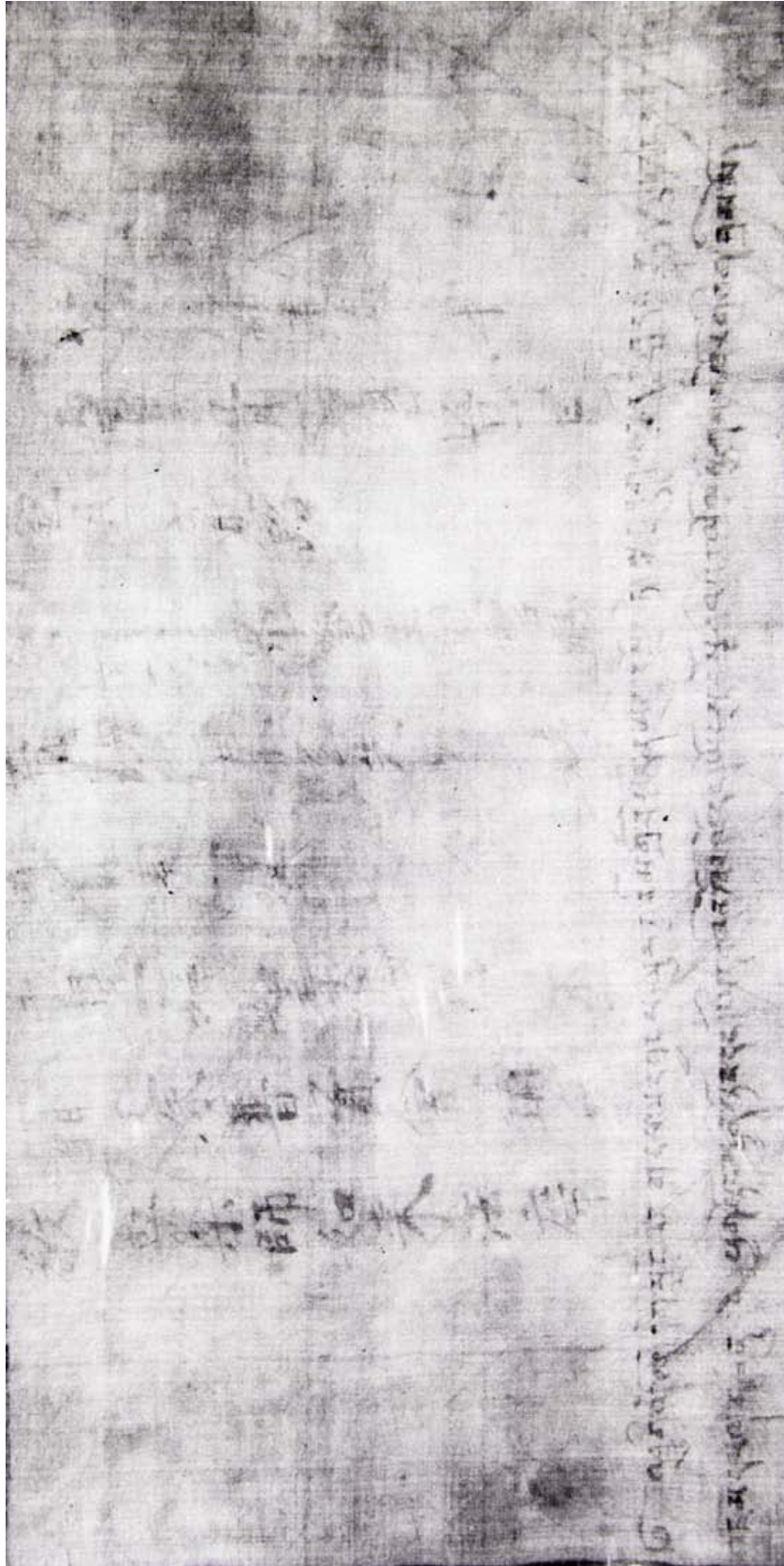


FIGURE 44 Detail of bilingual inscription in Chinese and Tibetan, Pure Land of Bhaiṣajyaguru (fig. 42). BRITISH MUSEUM. © THE TRUSTEES OF THE BRITISH MUSEUM.

of Samantabhadra and Mañjuśrī, who wear long-sleeved robes.¹⁰⁴ Due to the existence of two painting styles, Stoddard has hypothesized that this composition was the work of two different painters or of one painter familiar with the different painting styles in circulation at Dunhuang.¹⁰⁵ Paralleling the use of distinct painting styles, the dedicatory inscription, located below the seat of Bhaiṣajyaguru, is written first in Chinese, then in Tibetan (fig. 44). It names a Tibetan monk, Pelyang (Dpal dbyangs), as the artist. The Chinese inscription, brushed uncharacteristically from left to right in the Tibetan style, reads,

Respectfully painted one group of Bhaiṣajyaguru on his dharma seat; Mañjuśrī, Samantabhadra, and their assemblies, one group; thousand-armed, thousand-eyed [Avalokiteśvara], one group; Cintāmaṇicakra, one group; Amoghapāśa, one group; through this to acquire merit on behalf of his deceased [father and] mother ... to be reborn in the Dharmadhātu ... together ascend the way of enlightenment. The year *bingchen* 丙辰, ninth moon *guimao* 癸卯, the first fifteen [days], the day *dingsi* 丁巳, executed and completed.¹⁰⁶

The Tibetan inscription brushed below in two lines is more terse:

In the year of the dragon, I, the monk Pelyang, painted in a group the images of Bhaiṣajyaguru, Samantabhadra, Mañjuśrī-kumāra, a thousand-armed, thousand-eyed Avalokiteśvara, Cintāmaṇicakra, Parīṇatacakra, etc., for the benefit of my health and to transfer the merit [created by the act of painting, to all living beings].¹⁰⁷

In addition to small variations in the deities represented (i.e., Amoghapāśa vs. Parīṇatacakra), another striking difference lies in the intended beneficiaries of the painting. The Tibetan inscription expresses the benefits of the painting for Pelyang's own health, whereas the Chinese inscription states that the act of painting will acquire merit for his deceased parents. It is as if the two inscriptions, brushed in different languages, were adhering to different cultural norms as well. In Chinese dedicatory inscriptions from the Northern and Southern dynasties, the naming of one's parents as the beneficiaries of merit accrued as a result of a donation was a common formula.

¹⁰⁴ Stoddard, *Early Sino-Tibetan Art*, 11.

¹⁰⁵ Stoddard, *Early Sino-Tibetan Art*, 10.

¹⁰⁶ Whitfield, *Art of Central Asia*, 311.

¹⁰⁷ Stoddard, *Early Sino-Tibetan Art*, 10, with modification of the Tibetan romanization.

Due to the presence of two painting styles and the fading of the artist's name in the Chinese inscription, it may be questioned whether the painting was executed by two different painters. Yet a comparison of the techniques used for different groups of figures indicates consistency in the brushwork, and therefore suggests the work of the same painter or group of painters.¹⁰⁸ Heather Stoddard's research into the identity of the painter Pelyang has brought to light a bilingual Tibetan-Chinese manuscript compiled by this monk, Pelliot tibétain 1257, which contains a catalogue of Buddhist sūtras. As Stoddard notes, the name Pelyang therefore appears twice at Dunhuang within a Tibetan-Chinese context, attesting to the bilingualism that was common during this time.¹⁰⁹

Paul Demiéville has highlighted evidence from the Dunhuang manuscripts that indicates the bilingualism prevalent among members of the monastic community, certain government officials, and interpreters, both during and after the Tibetan period at Dunhuang. Among the foremost of these bilingual figures was the translator Wu Facheng 吳法成, whose Tibetan name was Go Chodrup ('Go Chos grub). Born in Dunhuang during the Tibetan period, he played a prominent role as a translator of Buddhist texts from Tibetan to Chinese and from Chinese to Tibetan.¹¹⁰ In addition to such direct translations, Dunhuang manuscript copies of certain Chinese Buddhist texts preserve inter-linear notes in Tibetan, and two scrolls of the Chinese text "The View of the Mahāyāna Madhyamaka" contain the Tibetan transliteration of the Chinese characters.¹¹¹ Glossaries and phrasebooks included in the Dunhuang manuscripts indicate the need for communication between Chinese and Tibetans in a multicultural and multilingual society.¹¹² Associations or communities were even formed among what Takata Tokio has termed "Tibetanized" Chinese, who were fluent not only in their native language but in Tibetan as well.¹¹³

The visual and linguistic bilingualism evident in the Bhaiṣajyaguru painting is reflected in the mingling of the Chinese and Tibetan communities at Dunhuang. During and following the period of Tibetan occupation, a sizable

¹⁰⁸ Whitfield, *Art of Central Asia*, 311-12; Stoddard, *Early Sino-Tibetan Art*, 12.

¹⁰⁹ Stoddard, *Early Sino-Tibetan Art*, 12-13. Based on her reading of Giuseppe Tucci's *Minor Buddhist Texts*, vol. 2 (Roma: Istituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente, 1958), Stoddard further hypothesizes that Pelyang may once have been the abbot of Samye.

¹¹⁰ Paul Demiéville, *Le Concile de Lhasa* (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale de France, 1952), 20-21 n. 5.

¹¹¹ Sam van Schaik and Imre Galambos, *Manuscripts and Travellers: The Sino-Tibetan Documents of a Tenth-Century Buddhist Pilgrim* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2011), 29-30.

¹¹² van Schaik and Galambos, *Manuscripts and Travellers*, 30-31.

¹¹³ Takata, "Multilingualism in Tun-huang," 8-9.

Tibetan monastic community existed in Dunhuang, and Chinese and Tibetan clergy lived side by side in the same monasteries.¹¹⁴ For example, Tibetan monks were known to have resided in the Yulin caves.¹¹⁵ The Dunhuang monastery Longxingsi 龍興寺, established in the eighth century, kept both Chinese and Tibetan Buddhist manuscripts in its library.¹¹⁶ Pelliot tibétain 994 provides a list of the Tibetan names of the major monasteries in Dunhuang, along with their Chinese equivalents.¹¹⁷ Furthermore, in 844, the aforementioned Chinese monk Hongbian, superintendent of monks during the Tibetan period, and the Tibetan monk Wangchuk (Dbang phyug) jointly convened a celebration among the local population that was dedicated to a member of the Tibetan royal family.¹¹⁸

Thousands of copies of the *Sūtra of Immeasurable Light* (*Aparimitāyurnāma Sūtra*), brushed in Chinese and Tibetan, were produced between the 820s and 840s as an offering for the Tibetan King Relpachen (Tri Tsugdetsen).¹¹⁹ The bilingualism in painting styles evident in the Bhaiṣajyaguru painting may well be reflected in the languages in which this sūtra was copied. As Iwao Kazushi notes, the format of these sūtra copies also reflects the dialogue between the two cultures; not only were the Chinese copies of the *Aparimitāyurnāma Sūtra* brushed onto scrolls, a typical East Asian format, but the Tibetan copies were made on scrolls as well. The conventional Tibetan format was the oblong *pothī*, originally from India and based upon the shape of palm leaves. Thus, the appropriation of the Chinese scroll format for the Tibetan copies represents

114 For a study of the Chinese, Tibetan, and other populations living in Dunhuang during the Tibetan period, see Gertraud Taenzer, *The Dunhuang Region during Tibetan Rule (787-848): A Study of the Secular Manuscripts Discovered in the Mogao Caves* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2012), 110-206.

115 Sørensen, "Perspectives on Buddhism," 47 n. 97.

116 Pelliot tibétain 999, as discussed in Sørensen, "Perspectives on Buddhism," 38.

117 Sørensen, "Perspectives on Buddhism," 38-39.

118 Pelliot tibétain 1000, 1001, and 999, as discussed in Sørensen, "Perspectives on Buddhism," 39-40. The celebration marked the occasion of the birth or ascension to the throne of Osung ('Od srungs), a royal family member.

119 In addition to the *Aparimitāyurnāma Sūtra*, copies also were made of the Tibetan *Śata-sāhasrikāprajñāpāramitā Sūtra* and the Chinese *Mahāprajñāpāramitā Sūtra*. For a historical overview of studies of the sūtra-copying project, see Brandon Dotson, "The Remains of the Dharma: Editing, Rejecting, and Replacing the Buddha's Words in Officially Commissioned Sūtras from Dunhuang, 820s to 840s," *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 36/37 (2013/2014): 5-68; 6-10.

“likely a fusion of Chinese and Tibetan styles.”¹²⁰ Copies of the *Aparimitāyurnāma Sūtra* were kept at the aforementioned Longxingsi in Dunhuang.¹²¹

The sūtra-copying project, which likely began in 826, thus commenced shortly after the peace treaty that resulted in the construction of the Temple of the Treaty.¹²² Pelliot tibétain 999 expressly notes that the sūtras were copied “as a gift for the previous emperor, the son of gods Tri Tsugdetsen.”¹²³ It seems meaningful that a bilingual sūtra-copying project dedicated to the long life of the Tibetan emperor who had negotiated the 821-22 peace treaty was focused in the culturally mixed eastern province of Dunhuang and carried out predominantly by Chinese scribes.¹²⁴ It is important to note that, under the terms of the peace treaty, both the Chinese and Tibetan text recognized China as the sovereign of the east and Tibet as the ruler of the west.¹²⁵ Furthermore, the

120 Iwao Kazushi, “The Purpose of Sūtra Copying in Dunhuang under the Tibetan Rule,” in Irina Popova and Liu Yi, eds., *Dunhuang Studies: Prospects and Problems for the Coming Second Century of Research* (St. Petersburg: Slavica, 2012), 102-5; 102.

121 Iwao, “Purpose of Sūtra Copying,” 102. See also Yoshiro Imaeda, “À propos du manuscrit Pelliot tibétain 999,” in Paul Harrison and Gregory Schopen, eds., *Sūryacandrāya: Essays in Honour of Akira Yuyama on the Occasion of his 65th Birthday* (Swisttal-Odendorf: Indica et Tibetica Verlag, 1998), 87-94; 92.

122 Fujieda Akira 藤枝晃, “Toban shihaiki no Tonkō” 吐蕃支配期の敦煌, *Tōhō Gakuhō* 東方學報 31 (1961): 199-292. The author is grateful to Stephen Teiser for this reference.

123 Dotson, “Remains of the Dharma,” 10, with modification of the Tibetan romanization. Dotson’s translation departs from that of Iwao, who renders the same passage as “previously, on behalf of the Divine Son Khri-gtsug-lde-brtsan”; see Iwao, “Purpose of Sūtra Copying,” 102. For Pelliot tibétain 999, see Imaeda, “À propos du manuscrit Pelliot tibétain 999.”

124 Iwao notes that the *Aparimitāyurnāma Sūtra* likely was copied for the benefit of the Tibetan emperor’s long life and good afterlife. Iwao, “Purpose of Sūtra Copying,” 104. The scribes and editors who worked on all of the sūtras in the copying project were primarily Chinese. See Dotson, “Remains of the Dharma,” 63.

125 Pan, “Sino-Tibetan Treaties,” 146. The term “nephew-uncle relationship” (*wonzhang* [*dbon zhang*]) was used to refer to the relationship that was forged between the two states through intermarriage. Nevertheless, it should not be construed to mean that Tibet occupied a lesser position than China, as none of the foreign-born princesses gave birth to a Tibetan emperor. Brandon Dotson, “The ‘Nephew-Uncle’ Relationship in the International Diplomacy of the Tibetan Empire (7th–9th Centuries),” in Brandon Dotson, Kalsang Norbu Gurung, Georgios Halkias, and Timothy Myatt, eds., *Contemporary Visions in Tibetan Studies: Proceedings of the First International Seminar of Young Tibetologists, London, 9-13 August 2007* (Chicago: Serindia Publications, 2009), 223-38; 234. Yihong Pan argues that, by the time of the 821-22 treaty, the Tibetans and Chinese recognized each other as equals; see Pan, “Sino-Tibetan Treaties,” 146.

treaty of 821-22, initially drafted by the Tibetans, was viewed by them as more important than earlier treaties negotiated with the Chinese.¹²⁶

The stylistic bilingualism noted in the Bhaiṣajyaguru painting is also apparent in Yulin Cave 25. For example, when the central Vairocana of the Maṇḍala of Eight Great Bodhisattvas is compared to the paintings of Maitreya Buddha from the north wall and Amitābha Buddha from the south wall of the same cave, the differences between the elongated proportions of the face and body of Vairocana and the rounded, Tang-style features of the latter two are evident. Vairocana clearly was painted in a different style from Maitreya and Amitābha. Nevertheless, the painting techniques in all three are comparable. The combination of outlines with shading and the heavily lidded eyes, for example, are the same in all three; this consistency suggests that all of the mural paintings were executed by the same workshop of painters, rather than two different groups of painters.¹²⁷ In the Bhaiṣajyaguru painting, however, the relatively minor figures of attendant bodhisattvas have been painted in a Nepalese-derived Tibetan style, as we have noted; in contrast, in Yulin Cave 25, it is the central Vairocana Buddha that has been given emphasis with this treatment.¹²⁸

126 Kazushi Iwao, "Reconsidering the Sino-Tibetan Treaty Inscription," *Journal of Research Institute* 49 (2012): 19-28; 24-25.

127 Based upon the observations of Karl Debreczeny, Matthew Kapstein's assertions regarding the attribution of the north, south, and east wall paintings in Yulin Cave 25 to the same group of painters seem correct; see Kapstein, "Treaty Temple of De-ga g.yu-tshal," 123-24; and Kapstein, "Treaty Temple of the Turquoise Grove," 54, 71 n. 117.

128 The term "Tibetan style" is adopted here with cognizance of the debates surrounding the emergence of a true Tibetan style in Tibetan art; see Stoddard, *Early Sino-Tibetan Art*, 3-5. At the same time, we must be aware of what Patricia Berger characterizes as the implications of the "teeter-tottering hyphen" and its power to shape expectations; see her *Empire of Emptiness: Buddhist Art and Political Authority in Qing China* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2003), 7. For this reason, the term "Tibetan" rather than "Sino-Tibetan" is employed here to emphasize the impact of this painting style, when used for select motifs, for visually marking a Tibetan presence and the Tibetan origins of the Maṇḍala of Eight Great Bodhisattvas. Inspiration is also taken from Karl Debreczeny's critical examination of the "Sino-Tibetan synthesis" in three Ming temples in his "Sino-Tibetan Artistic Synthesis in Ming Dynasty Temples at the Core and Periphery," *The Tibet Journal* 28 (2003): 49-108. Finally, an article by Linda Lojda, Deborah Klimburg-Salter, and Monica Strinu argues for the origins of a "Tibetan Himalayan style" in silk banner paintings from Dunhuang, and asserts that this style, particularly as seen in the handling of the face and body, was then transmitted to Western Tibet; see their "The Tibetan Himalayan Style: Considering the Central Asian Connection," in Carmen Meinert, ed., *Transfer of Buddhism Across Central Asian Networks (7th to 13th Centuries)* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2016), 121-46.

In articles published in 2004 and 2009, Matthew Kapstein has advanced a theory that the Temple of the Treaty referred to in Pelliot tibétain 16 and IOL Tib J 751 could be identified as Yulin Cave 25.¹²⁹ More recently, he has retracted this argument and asserted instead that Yulin Cave 25 is not the Temple of the Treaty but rather an imitation of it, or an antecedent dating to the reign of Tri Desongtsen (Khri lde strong btsan, r. 805-15), copied by his son Relpachen, during whose reign the 821-22 treaty was settled.¹³⁰ Yet, given the distribution of rock-carved images of the Maṇḍala of Eight Great Bodhisattvas in Eastern Tibet at the sites of Bimda and Denma Drak, and the association of the maṇḍala at the latter site with the peace negotiations leading to the peace treaty, is it possible that Yulin Cave 25 was constructed in emulation of the Temple of the Treaty?¹³¹ In conjunction with the sūtra-copying project of the 820s-40s, the establishment of Yulin Cave 25 might then be viewed as a way of commemorating the 821-22 peace treaty at Dunhuang.

Two rows of bodhisattvas appear to the left of the Buddha in Yulin Cave 25; the portion of the wall to the right of the Buddha has suffered extensive damage, and those paintings can no longer be seen. To the left of each bodhisattva is a horizontal cartouche for a Tibetan inscription, which is perpendicular to a vertical cartouche for a Chinese inscription. Any inscriptions in the horizontal cartouches are now faded, but the Chinese inscriptions in the vertical cartouches identify the bodhisattvas as follows: in the top row (from right to left), Ākāśagarbha (Xukongzang pusa 虛空藏菩薩) and Kṣitigarbha (Dizang pusa 地藏菩薩); in the bottom row, Maitreya (Mile pusa 彌勒菩薩) and Mañjuśrī (Wenshushili pusa 文殊師利菩薩). Horizontal cartouches intended for Tibetan-language inscriptions are seen elsewhere in the cave, such as one cartouche on the painting of the Maitreya transformation tableaux on the north wall. The now-missing right-hand side of the mural painting may be reconstructed from images in the Lo Photograph Archive. Chinese inscriptions identify the left-hand bodhisattva in the top row as Vajrapāṇi (here rendered as Jin'gangzang pusa 金剛藏菩薩, or Vajragarbha), and those on the bottom as Avalokiteśvara (Guanshiyin pusa 觀世音菩薩) and Sarvanivāraṇaviṣkambhin (Wuzhang'ai pusa 無障礙菩薩). Although the inscription accompanying the

129 Kapstein, "Treaty Temple of De-ga g.yu-tshal" and "Treaty Temple of the Turquoise Grove."

130 Matthew T. Kapstein, "The Treaty Temple of De ga g.yu tshal: Reconsiderations," 32-37, 34; see <https://www.academia.edu/12902885/The_Treaty_Temple_of_De_ga_g.yu_tshal_Reconsiderations> (last accessed 6.14.2014).

131 Kapstein states that it is "equally possible" that Yulin Cave 25 predates the Temple of the Treaty, suggesting that the cave dates to the reign period of Tri Desongtsen, but he does not provide an explanation why; see his "Treaty Temple of De ga g.yu tshal: Reconsiderations," 34.



FIGURE 45

Detail of T-shaped cartouche next to Locana Buddha, Maṇḍala of Eight Great Bodhisattvas (fig. 35). East wall, Yulin Cave 25. COURTESY OF THE DUNHUANG ACADEMY.

bodhisattva adjacent to Vajrapāṇi is no longer legible, by process of elimination this figure may be understood to represent Samantabhadra.¹³²

The cartouche next to the Buddha in Yulin Cave 25 (fig. 45) bears the Chinese inscription 清淨法身盧那舍佛 (*qingjing fashen Lunashe fo*), “the pure *dharma*-*makāya* Locana Buddha.”¹³³ Locana, or Vairocana Buddha, is the main Buddha of the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra* and *Brahma’s Net Sūtra*, residing in the Lotus Treasury Realm; his body is coextensive with the entire universe, according to the principle of interpenetration theorized by the Huayan school. The Lotus Treasury Realm is introduced in Book Five of the eighty-fascicle translation of the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra*, the key sūtra of the Huayan school, as the world system purified and adorned by the Buddha’s past deeds.¹³⁴ In this translation, the Buddha is referred to as Vairocana Buddha (Piluzhena fo 毘盧舍那佛). In the sixty-fascicle translation of the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra* and in the *Brahma’s Net*

132 Sha Wutian 沙武田, “Yulinku di 25 ku bada pusa mantuluo tuxiang buyi” 榆林窟第25窟八大菩薩曼荼羅圖像補遺, *Dunhuang yanjiu* 敦煌研究 2009.5:18-24; 1-22.

133 Note that the positions of the characters *na* 那 and *she* 舍 have been transposed.

134 T279:39a17-18.

Sūtra, he is referred to by the contraction Locana Buddha (Lushena fo 盧舍那佛).¹³⁵

The etymology of Vairocana, meaning “the luminous one,” stretches back to the *Rgveda* (ca. 1500-1200 BCE) and other Vedic contexts in which the name Vairocana appears in conjunction with the celestial deities.¹³⁶ The connotations of light and radiance continue through to the designation of the esoteric Mahāvairocana as the “great sun *tathāgata*” (dari rulai 大日如来). In modern scholarship, Vairocana is not always differentiated clearly from Mahāvairocana of the esoteric Buddhist sūtras. The distinction between the two may not have been very clear to premodern devotees either, as demonstrated by the conflation of Vairocana with Mahāvairocana in the Tibetan manuscripts from Dunhuang discussed earlier in this chapter.¹³⁷

As cited in the inscription next to the Buddha in Yulin Cave 25, *dharmakāya* describes the formless body of the Buddha, which is the true body of reality. Although the *dharmakāya* concept was first articulated in early Buddhist literature, it took on distinct meanings within the Mahāyāna corpus, in which it was equated with *tathatā*, meaning suchness or real nature, which was further identified with *śūnyatā*, or emptiness.¹³⁸ The achievement of *tathatā* was considered to be the very essence of Buddhahood.¹³⁹ Because *tathatā* is coextensive with the entire universe, *dharmakāya* came to be understood as the cosmic body of the Buddha.¹⁴⁰ In the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra*, emphasis is placed on the salvific quality of the *dharmakāya*, able to manifest in different forms according to the principle of expedient means, and containing all of the wisdom and

135 The sixty-fascicle translation (T278) of the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra* was completed by Buddhahadra (Fotuobatuoluo 佛陀跋陀羅, 359-429) in 421, and the eighty-fascicle translation (T279) by Śikṣānanda (Shichanantuo 實叉難陀, active 695-700) was completed in 699. The translation of the *Brahma's Net Sūtra* (T1484) is attributed to Kumārajīva in 406, but this sūtra is believed to be apocryphal.

136 Charles Orzech, “Mahāvairocana,” in Mircea Eliade, ed., *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, vol. 9 (New York: Macmillan, 1987), 5607-9.

137 Importantly, Amanda Goodman notes simultaneous references to Locana Buddha (in the context of the *Brahma's Net Sūtra*) and Mahāvairocana in P.3913; see her “The Ritual Instructions for Altar Methods (*Tanfa yize*): Prolegomenon to the Study of a Chinese Esoteric Buddhist Ritual Compendium from Late-Medieval Dunhuang” (Ph.D. diss., University of California, Berkeley, 2013), 52-53.

138 The concept of the *dharmakāya* in the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā*, which appears in four Chinese translations dating from the late second to early fifth century, is discussed in Guang, *Concept of the Buddha*, 75-80.

139 Guang, *Concept of the Buddha*, 77.

140 Guang, *Concept of the Buddha*, 80.

virtues of the Buddha.¹⁴¹ As mentioned previously, within the three-body (*trikāya*) system, the *dharmakāya* was joined by the concepts of the *saṃbhogakāya* and *nirmāṇakāya*, respectively the enjoyment or reward body that results from bodhisattva practice, and the manifested body that teaches the dharma. Confusingly, however, the adorned Buddha such as the example in Yulin Cave 25 generally is considered to represent the *saṃbhogakāya* rather than the *dharmakāya* named in the inscription. This seeming contradiction might be explained by understanding the *saṃbhogakāya* as an expression of the Buddha's delight and enjoyment after his awakening.¹⁴²

The Eight Bodhisattvas

One example that highlights problems of iconographic interpretation is a Tibetan-period silk painting of the Maṇḍala of Eight Great Bodhisattvas from Dunhuang. This aforementioned work in the British Museum dates to the early ninth century; the main deity, seated atop a square throne with an open lotus blossom, previously had been identified as Amitābha but is now accepted as Vairocana (fig. 2).¹⁴³ The hands of the Buddha are held in the *dhyāna mudrā*, reminiscent of the Buddhas of the folded maṇḍalas from the Ellora cave-temple complex in Mahārāṣṭra, India. This *mudrā* generally is attributed to either Mahāvairocana of the Japanese Garbhadhātu Maṇḍala or Amitābha of the Western Pure Land. Six horizontal cartouches accommodating Tibetan

141 Guang, *Concept of the Buddha*, 82-86, citing from translations by Dharmarakṣa (Zhu Fahu 竺法護, ca. 233–ca. 310) that were incorporated into the larger *Avataṃsaka Sūtra*, corresponding to Chapters 32, 33, and 22 of Buddhahadra's translation and Chapter 27 of Śikṣānanda's translation.

142 Nagao, "On the Theory of Buddha-Body," 32-33.

143 Matsumoto Eiichi, Roderick Whitfield, and Jacob Dalton all have identified the main deity as Amitābha, due to the *mudrā*, which is commonly assumed by this Buddha, as well as the presence of sandbars and birds in the foreground as evidence of the Western Pure Land. See Whitfield, *Art of Central Asia*, 309; Matsumoto Eiichi 松本榮一, *Tonkōga no kenkyū* 敦煌畫の研究, vol. 1 (Tokyo: Tōhō bunka gakuin, 1937), 633-42; and Jacob Dalton, "Amitābha with the Eight Bodhisattvas," in Susan Whitfield and Ursula Sims-Williams, eds., *The Silk Road: Trade, Travel, War and Faith* (London: British Library, 2004), 202-3. Although the identification of the central deity as Vairocana, rather than Amitābha, seems accurate, certain elements of Pure Land imagery may have been incorporated into these foreground details. Tanaka Kimiaki and Guo Youmeng have identified the central Buddha as Vairocana. See Tanaka, *Tonkō*, 20-38; and Guo Youmeng 郭祐孟, "Dunhuang shiku 'Lushenafo bing bada pusa mantuluo' chutan" 敦煌石窟盧舍那並八大菩薩曼荼羅初探, *Dunhuangxue jikan* 敦煌學季刊 1 (2007): 45-63, especially 51-53.

inscriptions identify the names of the bodhisattvas arranged in two vertical columns flanking the central Buddha; all but the top two are badly faded.¹⁴⁴

According to the Tibetan inscriptions, the second bodhisattva in the left-hand column can be identified as Kṣitigarbha, and the third bodhisattva in this column is Mañjuśrī. In the right-hand column, the second bodhisattva is Sarvanivāraṇaśambhin, and the third is Samantabhadra.¹⁴⁵ With the identities of the remaining bodhisattvas assigned according to iconographic attributes, the full group of eight bodhisattvas is generally listed as follows: in the left-hand column, Maitreya, Kṣitigarbha, Mañjuśrī, and Ākāśagarbha; and in the right-hand column, Avalokiteśvara, Sarvanivāraṇaśambhin, Samantabhadra, and Vajrapāṇi.¹⁴⁶

Unlike the bodhisattvas, the central Buddha of the maṇḍala is not accompanied by a cartouche. The body is lean and taut in the Tibetan style, swelling from the broad shoulders and robust chest before narrowing to a slender waist. Although the figure clearly bears the elongated earlobes traditionally associated with the Buddha, he uncharacteristically wears a tall bejeweled crown, ornate necklaces, and armbands. The Buddha previously was identified as Amitābha due not only to the *dhyāna mudrā* but also to the presence of sandbars and birds in the foreground, which are elements associated with the Western Pure Land (fig. 46).¹⁴⁷ More recently, however, the iconographic grouping has been identified as Mahāvairocana of the Garbhadhātu Maṇḍala flanked by the eight great bodhisattvas.¹⁴⁸

144 The bodhisattvas in this painting are arranged around the main deity, but are not distributed into a set spatial structure. This type of painting has been termed a “horizontal maṇḍala.” For a comparison between the horizontal maṇḍala of Tabo Monastery with the “fully developed” maṇḍala of the Nako Translator’s Temple (both located in Himachal Pradesh, India), see Christian Luczanits, *Buddhist Sculpture in Clay, Early Western Himalayan Art, Late 10th to Early 13th Centuries* (Chicago: Serindia Publications 2004), 81. See also the same source, page 73, for a discussion of the horizontal maṇḍalas at Mangnang Monastery in western Tibet: “Thus, while all the deities of the maṇḍala are depicted, the ritual space they are meant to occupy is not.”

145 Matsumoto, *Tonkōga no kenkyū*, 634–37.

146 Susan Whitfield with Ursula Sims-Williams, eds., *The Silk Road: Trade, Travel, War and Faith* (Chicago: Serindia Publications, 2004), 203. See also Roderick Whitfield, *Art of Central Asia*, 309.

147 See note 143 above.

148 Tanaka, *Tonkō*, 21–22. Tanaka does not give an explicit reason for why he identifies the Buddha as Mahāvairocana of the Garbhadhātu Maṇḍala. Presumably his identification is based on the *mudrā* that the deity assumes, which is the *mudrā* of contemplation seen in the figure of Mahāvairocana in the Hall of the Central Dais Eight Petals in the Garbhadhātu Maṇḍala of the Shingon Two Realms Maṇḍala. In this maṇḍala, however, Mahāvairocana



FIGURE 46 *Detail of foreground, Maṇḍala of Eight Great Bodhisattvas (fig. 2), BRITISH MUSEUM. © THE TRUSTEES OF THE BRITISH MUSEUM.*

In Japanese visual culture, Mahāvairocana of the Garbhadhātu Maṇḍala commonly bears the *dhyāna mudrā*, despite no explicit description of this iconographic attribute in the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra*, which purportedly provides the textual basis for the maṇḍala. On account of this *mudrā*, in earlier scholarship on the Maṇḍala of Eight Great Bodhisattvas, the central Buddha – regardless of geographic provenance – frequently was equated with Mahāvairocana Buddha of the Garbhadhātu Maṇḍala. Perhaps no more vocal proponent of this theory has been Tanaka Kimiaki, who has identified several appearances of the “Taizō Dainichi” 胎藏大日 (Mahāvairocana of the Garbhadhātu Maṇḍala) in mural and portable paintings of the Maṇḍala of Eight Great Bodhisattvas. In addition to the painting in the British Museum (fig. 2) and the Nelson-Atkins shrine (fig. 21), he also has pointed to images from Tibet and the eastern Indian state of Orissa.¹⁴⁹ Tanaka’s core argument is that the Taizō Dainichi and Eight Great Bodhisattvas appeared in the regions of the Silk Road occupied by the Tibetan empire in the eighth and ninth centuries, following a path of transmission from the origin point of this grouping in India and spreading to Central and Eastern Tibet.¹⁵⁰

These views have reverberated in the writings of other scholars. Yoritomi Motohiro has noted that the Maṇḍala of Eight Great Bodhisattvas embodied spatial concepts similar to those of the Garbhadhātu Maṇḍala.¹⁵¹ Pak Hyōng-

is not surrounded by the eight great bodhisattvas, but by the four directional Buddhas and four bodhisattvas (Avalokiteśvara, Samantabhadra, Maitreya, and Mañjuśrī), with each of the directional Buddhas and bodhisattvas arranged on a lotus petal surrounding him. The *Mahāvairocana Sūtra*, which purports to provide the textual basis for the Garbhadhātu Maṇḍala, does not describe the *mudrā* of Mahāvairocana. The text only describes the lotus seat of the Buddha, his head ornament, and the multicolored rays that surround him. See Alex Wayman and R. Tajima, *The Enlightenment of Vairocana* (1992; reprint, New Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1998), 118.

149 Tanaka, *Tonkō*, 20–38.

150 Tanaka, *Tonkō*, 31, 35. In 2003, Tanaka further argued that such images were “related to the Vairocanābhisaṃbodhi-sūtra,” and advocated for this sūtra’s “rather important role in the formation of Buddhist iconography in Tibet at an early age” before the text fell into decline. See Kimiaki Tanaka, “On the Tradition of the Vairocanābhisaṃbodhi-Sūtra and the Garbhamaṇḍala in Tibet,” in Erberto F. Lo Bue, ed., *Art in Tibet: Issues in Traditional Tibetan Art from the Seventh to the Twentieth Century* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2011), 193–201; 193, 198–99. This volume presents the proceedings of the Tenth Seminar of the International Association for Tibetan Studies, Oxford, 2003.

151 Yoritomi Motohiro 頼富本宏, “Indo no hachidaibutsu zō ni tsuite” インドの八大菩薩像について, in Kōyasan daigaku bukkyōgaku kenkyūshitsu 高野山大學佛教學研究室, ed., *Bukkyō to bunka; Nakagawa Zenkyō Sensei shōtoku kinen ronshu* 佛教と文化：中川善教先生頌徳記念論集 (Kyoto: Dōhōsha, 1983), 589–602; 573.

kuk has written of the “high likelihood” that the central Buddha bearing the *dhyāna mudrā* and a “bodhisattva-like” adorned appearance is the Taizō Dainichi, and Liu Yongzeng has identified several examples of the Maṇḍala of the Taizō Dainichi and Eight Great Bodhisattvas at the Mogao and Yulin cave shrines.¹⁵² All of the above begs the following questions: Can a Buddha in *dhyāna mudrā* – a meditating Vairocana – be found outside the Garbhadhātu Maṇḍala? To what other contexts may Vairocana bearing the *dhyāna mudrā* be attributed? Were visual representations of the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra* other than the Garbhadhātu Maṇḍala present in any region of Asia?

The evidence from the state of Orissa in eastern India suggests the possible ways in which the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra* took visual form, despite the difficulty in reconstructing the original arrangement of sculptural ensembles.¹⁵³ The visual corpus from Orissa is comprised of high-relief sculptures of Buddhas and bodhisattvas carved onto stone stelae, which were typically arranged around a stupa (reliquary mound). Thomas Donaldson has noted that an eighth-century stone stele from the site of Lalitagiri (fig. 47), with a relief carving of Vairocana assuming the *dhyāna mudrā* and seated on a lotus pedestal supported by two lions, bears a mantra on the back that appears in the Chinese and Tibetan translations of the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra*. Based upon this inscription, Donaldson argues that this figure may be identified as Abhisambodhi Vairocana from the Garbhadhātu Maṇḍala. The context in which the mantra appears frames the Buddha’s *samādhi*, or state of meditative concentration, as a victory over Māra.¹⁵⁴ According to Donaldson, this stele originally may have

152 Pak Hyōng-kuk 樸亨國, “Hachi daibosatsu no seiritsu to zuzō henka ni tsuite” 八大菩薩の成立と圖象變化について, in Miyaji Akira 宮治昭, ed., *Indo kara Chūgoku e no bukkō bijutsu no denpa to tenkai ni kansuru kenkyū* インドから中國への佛教美術の傳播と展開に関する研究 (Nagoya: Nagoya daigaku, 2001), 326-56; 336, see also 337-38. Liu Yongzeng 劉永增, “Dunhuang shiku bada pusa mantuluo tuxiang jieshuo (shang)” 敦煌石窟八大菩薩曼荼羅圖像解說(上), *Dunhuang yanjiu* 敦煌研究 2009.4:12-23; 19-21.

153 Stephen Hodge argues that evidence points to the compilation of the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra* either in northeastern India (from Nālandā to the Himalayas) or northern Orissa, noting that “all the people who we know were connected with the transmission of the MVT [*Mahā-Vairocana-Abhisambodhi Tantra*] resided there.” By “there,” Hodge refers to Nālandā, pointing to the periods of time that Śubhakarasiṃha, Wuxing, and Buddhaguhya spent in residence at this monastic university. See Hodge, “Introduction,” *Mahāvairocana-Abhisambodhi Tantra*, 17.

154 Thomas Eugene Donaldson, “Probable Textual Sources for the Buddhist Sculptural Maṇḍalas of Orissa,” *East and West* 45.1/4 (1995): 173-204, in particular 185. Donaldson notes that sculptural maṇḍalas begin to appear at the end of the seventh century, and



FIGURE 47
Vairocana stele. 8th century. Stone. 100.3 × 52.1 cm. Lalitagiri, Orissa, India. FROM DONALDSON, ICONOGRAPHY OF THE BUDDHIST SCULPTURE OF ORISSA, VOL. 2, FIG. 103.

been part of a group of stelae that formed a maṇḍala arranged around the base of a stupa, although the original configuration is unclear.¹⁵⁵

A slightly different picture emerges from the Eastern Tibetan sites of Drag Lhamo (Brag lha mo; ca. 790) in Denkhog (Ldan khog) near Chamdo (Chab mdo) in present-day Tibet Autonomous Region (fig. 48a-c), and Lepkhog (Leb

continue into the ninth century; see 179-80. The author is grateful to Rob Linrothe for this reference.

- ¹⁵⁵ Another example cited by Donaldson is the mid-eighth-century stelae group from Udayagiri, also in Orissa, consisting of four Buddhas: Akṣobhya (east), Ratnasambhava (south), Amitābha (west), and Vairocana with *dhyāna mudrā* (north); see Donaldson, "Probable Textual Sources," figs. 1-4. Each Buddha is flanked by two bodhisattvas for a total of eight bodhisattvas. According to Donaldson, the matted hair of Vairocana distinguishes the figure from Amitābha, and the lack of ornamentation coincides with Śubhakarasiṃha's description of Vairocana in his commentary on the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra*. Donaldson argues that the identities of the eight bodhisattvas accord with the bodhisattvas in the intermediate and third layers of the Garbhadhātu Maṇḍala as described in chapters one and sixteen of the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra*. See Donaldson, "Probable Textual Sources," 181-84.

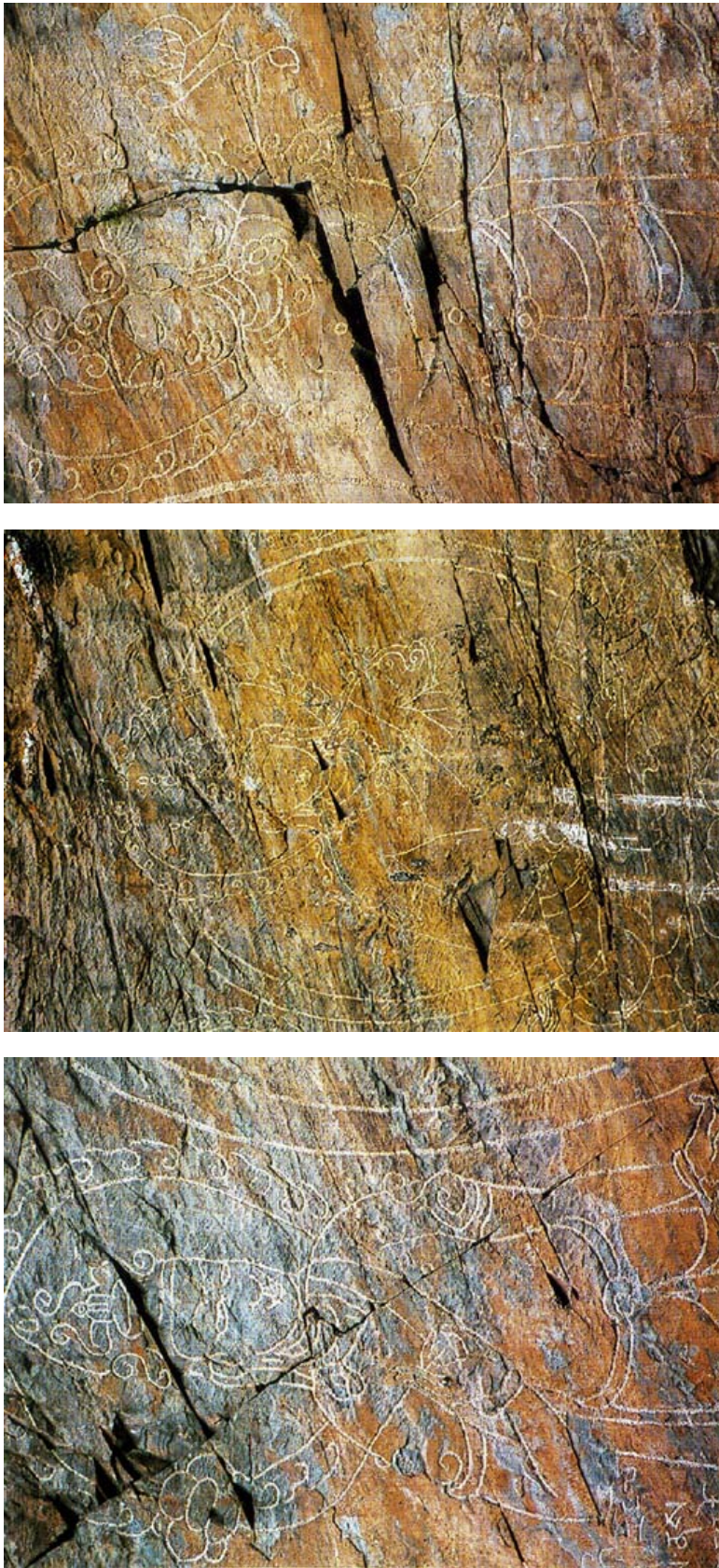


FIGURE 48a–c *Vairocana flanked by Avalokiteśvara and Vajrapāṇi. Puyyal dynasty (7th–9th century), ca. 790. Stone with incised design. Drag Lhamo, Denkhog, near Chamdo, Tibet Autonomous Region. PHOTOGRAPH BY PEMA TSERING.*

Khog; ca. 814) near Jyekundo in present-day Qinghai Province (fig. 49). Carvings from these sites preserve images that represent Vairocana flanked by Avalokiteśvara and Vajrapāṇi according to a Three-Family (*trikula*) system of *tathāgata*, *vajra*, and *padma* (lotus) that was associated with the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra*.¹⁵⁶ The Buddhas at both sites accordingly display the *dhyāna mudrā*. The iconography of the Lepkhog carvings is confirmed by an inscription offering “salutations to Buddha Vairocana and Vajrapāṇi and Avalokiteśvara.”¹⁵⁷

In Tibet, the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra* was preserved both in its original form and in ritual commentaries during the Pugyal dynasty. The aforementioned Buddhaguhya, about whom little is known, is credited with the transmission of the sūtra to Tibet. Tibetan sources indicate that he likely was born around 700 and lived in the area of Vārāṇasī in present-day Uttar Pradesh, India. Around 760, while living at the monastery Nālandā (in present-day Bihār), he received an invitation from Tri Songdetsen to come to Tibet and teach. Ultimately

¹⁵⁶ The Three-Family system is associated with certain classifications of tantras. The classic fourfold scheme of *kriyā*, *caryā*, *yoga*, and *anuttarayoga* tantras, a classification based in part on varying degrees of external rituals and internal contemplations, likely crystallized in twelfth-century Tibet; for a detailed account, see Jacob P. Dalton, “A Crisis of Doxography: How Tibetans Organized Tantra during the 8th–12th Centuries,” *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 28.1 (2005): 115–81. Nevertheless, nascent systems of doxography date as early as Buddhaguhya, the mid-eighth-century Indian monk responsible for commentaries on the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra*, which fell variously under the *caryā* or *yoga* tantra classification; see Robert E. Buswell, Jr. and Donald S. Lopez, Jr., *The Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2014), 511. Buddhaguhya himself classified the sūtra under the *kriyā* tantra, or simultaneously under the *kriyā* and *yoga* tantras; see Dalton, “Crisis of Doxography,” 122–23, 122 n. 19. The *kriyā* and *caryā* tantras are characterized by a Three-Family (*trikula*) scheme, whereas the *yoga* and *anuttarayoga* tantras are characterized by a Five-Buddha, or *pañcatathāgata*, grouping. For the Three- and Five-Family schemes, see also Charles D. Orzech, “Esoteric Buddhism in the Tang,” in Charles D. Orzech, Henrik H. Sørensen, and Richard K. Payne, eds., *Esoteric Buddhism and the Tantras in East Asia* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2011), 263–85; 276, 279.

¹⁵⁷ The inscription further states that the images were carved in the horse year, which is tentatively dated to 814, or 826/838. See Heller, “Buddhist Images and Rock Inscriptions,” 392. The carvings at Drag Lhamo are accompanied by two inscriptions that praise Tri Songdetsen and his patronage of Buddhism, but do not identify the figures shown. See Heller, “Buddhist Images and Rock Inscriptions,” 389–90. Heller discusses the style of the calligraphy (which resembles that seen in the Dunhuang manuscripts) and dating of the carving on pages 386–87. Xie Jisheng also notes the presence of a Chinese-language inscription that seems to identify the donor’s surname as Yang 楊; see Xie Jisheng 謝繼勝, “Chuan-Qing-Zang jiaojie diqu zangchuan moya shike zaoxiang yu tiji fenxi” 川青藏交界地區藏傳摩崖石刻造像與題記分析, *Zhongguo zangxue* 中國藏學 2009.1:123–41; 124.



FIGURE 49 *Vairocana flanked by Avalokiteśvara and Vajrapāṇi. Puyal dynasty (7th–9th century), ca. 814. Stone carving. Lepkhog, near Jyekundo, Qinghai Province. PHOTOGRAPH BY NANCY E. LEVINE (NOVEMBER 1994).*

declining the invitation, perhaps due to his advanced age, Buddhaguhya is said to have instructed the Tibetan delegation on the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra* and other texts.¹⁵⁸ Buddhaguhya is credited with a commentary on, and summary of, the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra*; the sūtra was translated into Tibetan a few decades later by Śilendrabodhi and Peltsek (Dpal brtsegs; both active late 8th–9th century).¹⁵⁹

Based on this information, it is clear not only that the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra* was known in early Tibet, but that the Three-Family system accordingly was represented as Vairocana flanked by Vajrapāṇi and Avalokiteśvara at Lepkhog, and possibly at Drag Lhamo as well. Nevertheless, to identify all Buddhas displaying the *dhyāna mudrā* within a maṇḍalic formation as the Taizō Dainichi is an imposition of the Two Realms Maṇḍala upon an unrelated set of material. The evidence from Eastern Tibetan sites indicates that the iconography of the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra* could be visually interpreted, outside Japan, in ways that were distinct from the Garbhadhātu Maṇḍala of Shingon Buddhism.

¹⁵⁸ Hodge, *Mahā-Vairocana-Abhisambodhi Tantra*, 17, 22–23.

¹⁵⁹ Hodge, *Mahā-Vairocana-Abhisambodhi Tantra*, 15, 17.

Furthermore, in the opening passages of the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra*, Mahāvairocana is attended by an assembly of *vajradharas* (various *vajra*-wielding celestial beings) and bodhisattvas led by four rather than eight bodhisattvas: Samantabhadra, Maitreya, Mañjuśrī, and Sarvanivāraṇaviṣkambhin.¹⁶⁰ Simply put, it is more difficult to find evidence for the eight bodhisattvas in the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra* than it is to recognize their presence in the *Vajraśekhara* and *Avataṃsaka Sūtras*, the latter of which is closely related to the *Brahma's Net Sūtra* and was instrumental in the formation of Huayan Buddhism.

The Gaṇḍhavyūha chapter of the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra* presents eight goddesses who are among the fifty-three *kalyāṇamitras* (*shanzhishi* 善知識), or spiritual friends (i.e., teachers), visited by the boy pilgrim Sudhana (Shancai tongzi 善才童子). The first of these is the earth goddess Sthāvarā, residing in Bodhgayā, where she has protected Vairocana since the time of Dīpankara Buddha, a Buddha of the past who lived on earth one hundred thousand years ago.¹⁶¹ Sudhana then makes a detour to Kapilavastu in order to visit the night goddess Vāsantī, after which he returns to Bodhgayā to visit seven night goddesses in succession, several of whom are described as seated in the Buddha's circle. For example, the night goddess Sarvanagararakṣāsambhavatejaḥśrī states that, "right here in the presence of Vairocana Buddha there is a night goddess named Sarvavṛkṣapraphullanasukhasaṃvāsā, who is sitting next to me."¹⁶²

This passage is important for two reasons. First, it describes an arrangement in which the goddesses are seated adjacent to one another in an assembly in the presence of Vairocana, suggestive of the arrangement of the eight bodhisattvas of the maṇḍala.¹⁶³ Second, it associates Vairocana with the seat of enlightenment at Bodhgayā. In the standard narrative of the Buddha's enlightenment, it was Siddhārtha who sat beneath the *bodhi* tree. Yet this passage suggests a conflation of Vairocana and Śākyamuni that characterizes the *Vajraśekhara Sūtra's* telling of the enlightenment narrative.

In the *Vajraśekhara Sūtra*, eight bodhisattvas lead the large assembly of bodhisattvas attending Mahāvairocana in Akaniṣṭha Heaven. Listed as follows, the final four names are unfamiliar to us from the standard grouping: Vajrapāṇi,

¹⁶⁰ Rolf W. Giebel, trans., *The Vairocanābhisaṃbodhi Sutra* (Berkeley, CA: Numata Center for Buddhist Translation and Research, 2005), 4; T18.848:1a9-23.

¹⁶¹ Thomas F. Cleary, *The Flower Ornament Scripture: A Translation of the Avataṃsaka Sutra* (Boston and London: Shambhala Publications, 1987), 1283.

¹⁶² Cleary, *Flower Ornament Scripture*, 1345. For the entire sequence of goddesses, see T10.279:368b27-401c8.

¹⁶³ Douglas Osto, "Proto-Tantric' Elements in The Gaṇḍavyūha-sūtra," *Journal of Religious History* 33.2 (2009): 165-77; 169-70.

Avalokiteśvara, Mañjuśrī, Ākāśagarbha, Vajramuṣṭi, Sahacittotpādadharmacakrapravartin, Gaganagañja, and Sarvamārabalapramardin.¹⁶⁴ In the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra*, however, no clear groupings of eight bodhisattvas are found. While Mahāvairocana of the Garbhadhātu Maṇḍala is seated at the center of an eight-petaled lotus that superficially resembles the circular structure of a maṇḍala, the deities seated on the lotus petals are a group of four Buddhas and four bodhisattvas, not eight bodhisattvas.

In short, the resonance and significance of the Maṇḍala of Eight Great Bodhisattvas during the Tibetan empire and Tibetan period at Dunhuang was due to a number of overlapping factors. This maṇḍala was a powerful symbol of Tibetan kingship during a period of peace-treaty negotiations between the Tibetans and Chinese. Individual images from Dunhuang reveal an artistic bilingualism in the mingling of the Nepalese artistic styles introduced during the Tibetan empire and the Tang Chinese artistic styles of Dunhuang. This artistic bilingualism, in turn, mirrors the linguistic bilingualism of the period. Finally, the iconography of the Maṇḍala of Eight Great Bodhisattvas should not be attributed solely to conventionally esoteric Buddhist contexts. Rather, it should be acknowledged as an iconographic form that may have made sense equally in Mahāyāna contexts as well.

¹⁶⁴ Giebel, *Two Esoteric Sūtras*, 19-20.

Mandalas and Historical Memory

In the year 848, after nearly a century of Tibetan rule in Dunhuang, the Chinese general Zhang Yichao expelled the Tibetan commander, initiating a military campaign to regain China's Central Asian territories.¹ A native son of Dunhuang, Zhang had known only Tibetan rule.² By the early 840s, the weakening Tibetan empire paved the way for new leadership in the region. First, the Uyghur empire, which adjoined Tibet's northern border, fell in 840, destabilizing the region. Only two years later, the Tibetan emperor Lang Darma was assassinated, resulting in internal power struggles and a degradation of central authority.³ In 848 and again in 851, Zhang Yichao sent envoys to the Tang capital of Chang'an in order to report his victory over the Tibetans. As a result of the latter envoy, by which time Zhang had attempted to consolidate the territories of the Hexi Corridor, the Tang court awarded him the title of military governor (*jiedushi* 節度使) of the newly established Return to Allegiance Army (Guiyijun), so named because it pledged allegiance to the Tang court of China.⁴

This chapter will unpack two important developments during the Guiyijun era. The first is the continued legacy of the Tibetan period, manifested through

- 1 An account of Zhang Yichao's life as viewed through Dunhuang manuscripts is provided in Rong Xinjiang 榮新江, *Guiyijun shi yanjiu: Tang Song shidai Dunhuang lishi kaosuo* 歸義軍史研究: 唐宋時代敦煌歷史考索 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1996), 62-78. Gertraud Taenzer hypothesizes that, because only a small number of Tibetan officials and servants lived in Dunhuang, Zhang Yichao's army mainly had to battle members of the Tibetan army that were stationed roughly eight kilometers east at present-day Anxi; see Taenzer, "Changing Relations between Administration, Clergy and Lay People in Eastern Central Asia: A Case Study according to the Dunhuang Manuscripts Referring to the Transition from Tibetan to Local Rule in Dunhuang, 8th–11th Centuries," in Carmen Meinert, ed., *Transfer of Buddhism Across Central Asian Networks (7th to 13th Centuries)* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2016), 19-56; 36.
- 2 The Zhang clan was relatively powerful in the early Tang dynasty, but seems to have become less influential during the Tibetan period, avoiding official service. Of Zhang Yichao's early history, we know little but for his keen interest in Buddhism, military affairs, and loyalty to the Tang court, as represented in the Dunhuang manuscripts. See Jidong Yang, "Zhang Yichao and Dunhuang in the 9th Century," *Journal of Asian History* 32.2 (1998): 97-144; 105-9.
- 3 Yang, "Zhang Yichao and Dunhuang," 109-10; Beckwith, *Tibetan Empire in Central Asia*, 168-70.
- 4 Rong, *Guiyijun shi yanjiu*, 64-65, 78; Yang, "Zhang Yichao and Dunhuang," 113-18; Beckwith, *Tibetan Empire in Central Asia*, 170-71.

stylistic and iconographic choices in the Mogao and Yulin cave shrines. Likely because of the perpetuation of this legacy, the Maṇḍala of Eight Great Bodhisattvas continued to serve as a symbol of political legitimacy in the post-Tibetan era through its appropriation by the Guiyijun rulers. Second, the adaptation of iconographic elements from the Vajradhātu Maṇḍala to the Maṇḍala of Eight Great Bodhisattvas reveals religious advances during this period. Much like the carvings and paintings of the Maṇḍala of Eight Great Bodhisattvas discussed in the previous chapter, paintings and monochrome ink diagrams based upon the Vajradhātu Maṇḍala varied greatly in composition and style despite consistency in iconography. Yet it is precisely the visual treatment of the maṇḍala that provides insight into how the human work of ritual was conceptualized and distinguished from the heavenly realm of the Buddhas of the maṇḍala.

Mogao Cave 156 and the Victory of Zhang Yichao

Mogao Cave 156 is renowned for the paintings on the bottom panel of the south and north walls, which memorialize the triumphal procession of Zhang Yichao (fig. 50) and his consort, Lady Song (fig. 51), into the newly recovered lands of the Hexi Corridor. On the south wall, the inscription accompanying the oversized image of Zhang Yichao states, “Picture of the procession of Zhang Yichao, military governor of Hexi, acting minister of works and concurrent censor-in-chief, and his assembled troops expelling the Tibetan occupation and recovering the Hexi territory” (*Hexi jiedushi jianxiao sikong jian yushi dafu Zhang Yichao tongjun □chu Tubo shoufu Hexi yidao hangtu* 河西節度使檢校司空兼御史大夫張義潮統軍□除吐蕃收復河西一道行圖).⁵ The procession numbers more than one hundred figures.⁶ Many of the members of the procession are riding purposefully on horseback in an orderly military formation, clad in armor and wielding boldly decorated banners. The procession is accompanied by a retinue of musicians, dancers, and civilian onlookers.⁷

5 Dunhuang yanjiuyuan 敦煌研究院, ed., *Dunhuang Mogaoku gongyangren tiji* 敦煌莫高窟供養人題記 (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1986), 74. Rong Xinjiang reads the missing character as *sao* 掃; Rong, *Guiyijun shi yanjiu*, 68.

6 Li Yuebai 李月伯, “Dunhuang Mogaoku di 156 ku fu di 161 ku de neirong jiqi yishu jiazhi” 敦煌莫高窟第156窟附第161窟的內容及其藝術價值, in Li Yuebai, *Dunhuang shiku yishu: Mogaoku di 156 ku fu di 161 ku (wan Tang)* 敦煌石窟藝術: 莫高窟156窟附第161窟 (晚唐) (Jiangsu: Jiangsu meishu chubanshe, 1995), 13–24; 21.

7 For representations of musical instruments and dancing in the procession, see Chen Ming 陳明, “Zhang Yichao chuxingtu zhongde lewu” 張義潮出行圖中的樂舞, *Dun-*



FIGURE 50 Procession of Zhang Yichao. Gujiyuan period (848-1036), second half of 9th century. Mural painting, South wall, Mogao Cave 156, Dunhuang, Gansu Province. COURTESY OF THE DUNHUANG ACADEMY.



FIGURE 51 Procession of Lady Song. *Guìyijun period (848-1036), second half of 9th century. Mural painting. North wall, Mogao Cave 156, Dunhuang, Gansu Province. COURTESY OF THE DUNHUANG ACADEMY.*

On the north wall directly opposite, Lady Song's procession consists not of a military retinue but rather of dancers and attendants on foot and horseback, bearing sedan chairs, or riding in horse-drawn carriages. The inscription adjacent to her image identifies the mural painting as a "Picture of the excursion of Lady Song of Henei Province in the state of Song" (*Songguo heneijun furen Songshi chuhangtu* 宋國河內郡夫人宋氏出行圖).⁸ The paired mural paintings share themes of conquest and domestication. Following the conventional clockwise circumambulatory motion beginning from the south wall and wrapping around to the north wall, we first find a visual commemoration of Zhang Yichao's triumphal reclamation of the recovered territories by a grand military procession, after which his consort Lady Song is ushered in to settle the pacified region.

The patronage and date of Mogao Cave 156 remain open-ended questions. Because a lengthy dedicatory inscription originally carved on the north wall of the antechamber records the sponsorship of a cave shrine by Zhang Huaishen 張淮深 (d. 890), the nephew of Zhang Yichao who assumed power in 867 and ruled for the next twenty-three years, it often has been assumed that the younger man was the patron.⁹ Also problematic are references to Zhang Yichao by different titles in inscriptions in the main chamber and corridor, which indicate different periods of his political career.¹⁰ One viable possibility

huang yanjiu 敦煌研究 2003.5:51-54; and Zhu Xiaofeng 朱曉峰, "Zhang Yichao tongjun chuxingtu yizhang ledui leqi kao" 張議潮統軍出行圖依仗樂隊樂器考, *Dunhuang yanjiu* 敦煌研究 2015.4:25-34.

8 Dunhuang yanjiuyuan, ed., *Dunhuang Mogaoku gongyangren tiji*, 74.

9 The Chinese inscription, now mostly effaced, is recorded in the manuscript P.3720; the title of the manuscript is *Mogaoku ji* 莫高窟記, and the portion pertaining to the sponsorship of the cave shrine is titled *Zhang Huaishen zaoku ji* 張淮深造窟記. The manuscript and a comparison of its content to the original inscription is the focus of Imre Galambos, "Manuscript Copies of Stone Inscriptions in the Dunhuang Corpus: Issues of Dating and Provenance," *Asiatische Studien Études Asiatiques* 63 (2009.4): 809-26. Intriguingly, Galambos notes that, while the original inscription was written in vertical columns from left to right, the manuscript was written in vertical columns from right to left; see 814-15. Given that Tibetan was written from left to right while Chinese was written from right to left, it is tempting to speculate on the reasons for this discrepancy. In addition to P.3720, P.2762 and S.5630 also note that Mogao Cave 156 was Zhang Huaishen's merit cave; see Dunhuang yanjiuyuan 敦煌研究院, ed., *Dunhuang shiku neirong zonglu* 敦煌石窟內容總錄 (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1996), 36-37. For Zhang Huaishen, see Rong, *Guýijun shi yanjiu*, 78-88. Another procession scene is present in Mogao Cave 94, which is also attributed to the patronage of the Zhang clan.

10 Chen Ming notes that Zhang Yichao is called *Shangshu* 尚書 (minister), a title by which he was known between 848 and 851, in an inscription on the south wall of the corridor.

is that the construction began under Zhang Yichao and was continued under Zhang Huaishen.¹¹ Nevertheless, the inscription's date of 865 provides a firm *terminus ante quem* for the completion of the cave shrine.

Regardless of whether the cave should be viewed as a result of sole or joint patronage, it is clear that the Zhang clan was mistrusted to some extent by the Tang court, despite its conferral upon Zhang Yichao of the title of military governor. As noted previously, Zhang Yichao sent two envoys to Chang'an before receiving official recognition from the court; furthermore, his elder brother Zhang Yitan 張議譚 (d. 867) was compelled to stay in Chang'an as a hostage in order to demonstrate the clan's loyalty. After Zhang Yitan died in 867, Zhang Yichao was called to Chang'an in his elder brother's place, and Zhang Huaishen was appointed as his successor.¹² In an extended reprisal of the events of a decade earlier, Zhang Huaishen sent envoys to Chang'an in 867, 877, and 886, but did not receive the insignia of recognition from the Tang court until 888.¹³

It is perhaps due to the power struggle between the Tang court and the Guiyijun that the iconographic program of Mogao Cave 156 placed special emphasis on the pictorial narrative of Zhang Yichao's conquest of the Tibetans. Yet certain visual motifs subvert this narrative. What this performative retelling of the Zhang clan's legacy leaves out is instead revealed in certain paintings on the ceiling of the west wall niche. This niche (fig. 52) contains a figure of Maitreya Buddha seated with legs pendent as its main icon; the ceiling of the niche assumes the form of a truncated pyramid (*luxing* 盞形), in which the four sloping walls meet at the flat surface of the ceiling (fig. 53). This is a method of construction that was applied commonly to the main ceilings and ceilings of niches in open-plan caves such as Mogao Cave 156. A painting of the Thousand-Armed Avalokiteśvara, with its head positioned toward the east wall and surrounded by attendants, is the primary motif of the niche's ceiling (fig. 54). The four slopes are painted with yet other images of various forms of the

This inscription refers to Zhang Yichao as the main patron (*kuzhu* 窟主). In the inscription located next to his image on the south wall of the main chamber, he is called *Sikong* 司空 (minister of works), a higher-ranking title by which he was known between 861 and 867. See Chen Ming 陳明, "Guanyu Mogaoku di 156 kude jige wenti" 關於莫高窟第156窟的幾個問題, *Dunhuangxue jikan* 敦煌學輯刊 2006.3:90-96; 91-92. For this and other reasons, Chen concludes that the cave was constructed between 851 and 861. Curiously, the large size of the donor figures in the corridor invites comparisons to donor figures of caves attributed to the succeeding Cao clan of Guiyijun rulers.

11 This is the view of Rong Xinjiang; see Rong, *Guiyijun shi yanjiu*, 5-6. Rong provides a much shorter chronology for the cave's construction, between 861 and 865.

12 Rong, *Guiyijun shi yanjiu*, 162-64, 183-84.

13 Rong, *Guiyijun shi yanjiu*, 78-88.

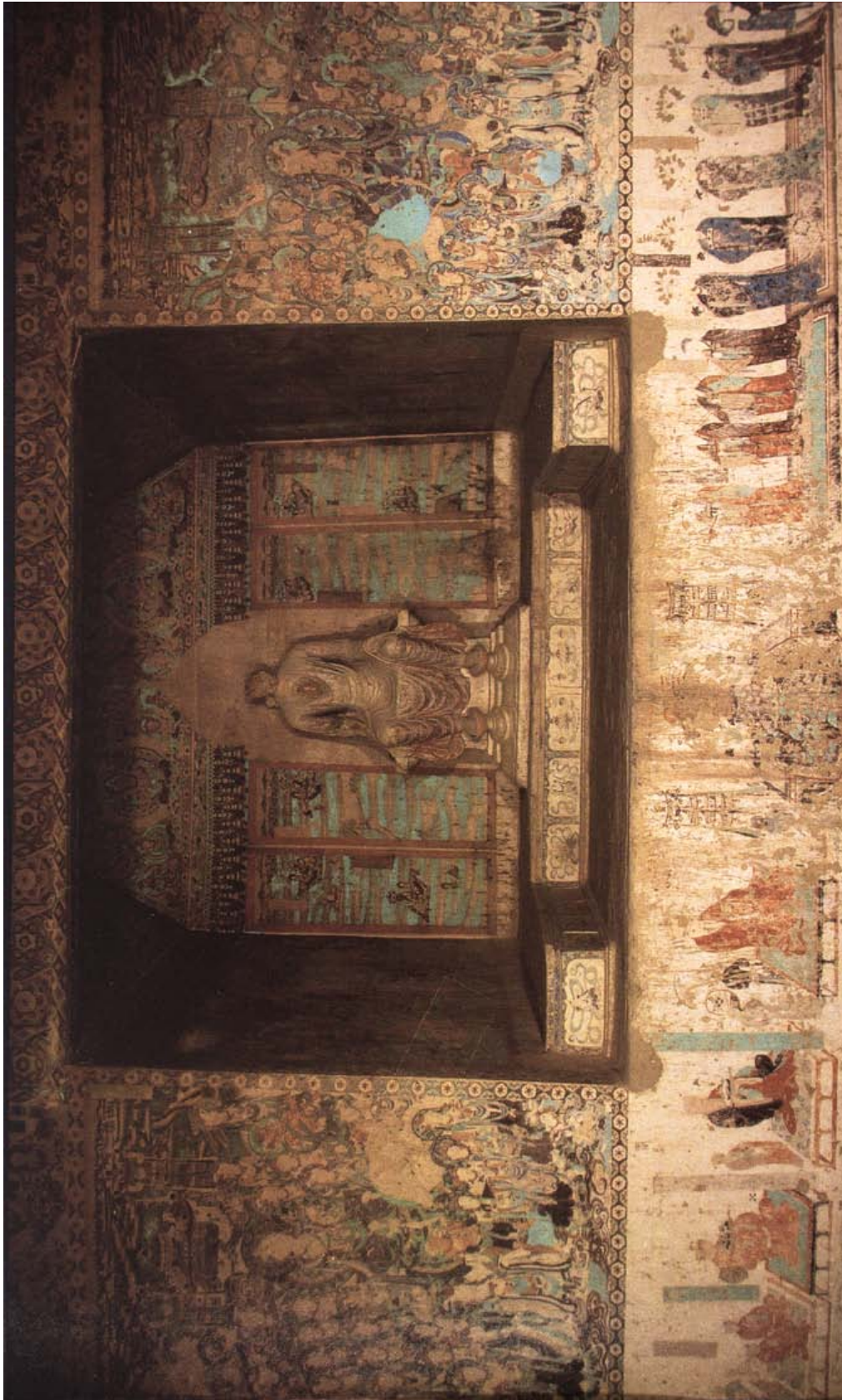


FIGURE 52 West wall niche with Buddha icon and donor images. Guiyijun period (848-1036), second half of 9th century. Mogao Cave 156, Dunhuang, Gansu Province. FROM LI, ED., *DUNHUANG SHIKU YISHU: MOGAOKU DI 156 KU FU DI 161 KU* (WAN TANG), 29, PLATE 4.

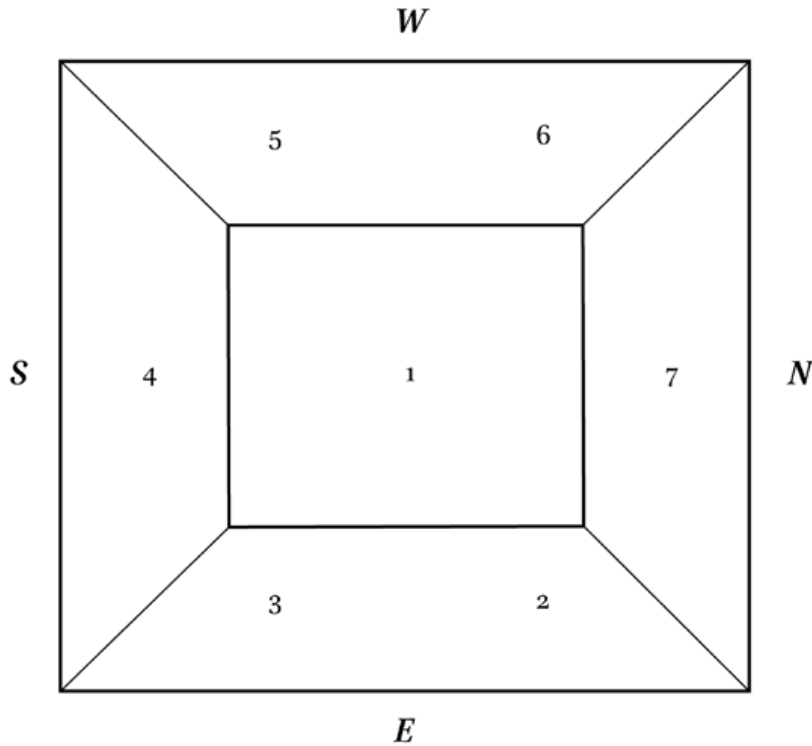


FIGURE 53 *Plan of truncated pyramid ceiling, west wall niche, main chamber of Mogao Cave 156. (1) Thousand-Armed Avalokiteśvara, (2) Vajrasattva, (3) Ākāśagarbha, (4) Amoghapāśa, (5) eight-armed Avalokiteśvara, (6) Hayagrīva, (7) Cintāmaṇicakra.*

DRAWING BY ERNEST BARONI.

bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara (as identified by the small figures of Amitābha in their crowns); for example, Cintāmaṇicakra (Ruyilun Guanyin 如意輪觀音), who bears the wish-fulfilling gem, is located on the north slope (fig. 55). Amoghapāśa (Bukong juansuo Guanyin 不空羂索觀音), who uses a lasso to draw devotees near, is paired opposite on the south slope (fig. 56). The west slope contains images of an eight-armed Avalokiteśvara and Hayagrīva (Matou Guanyin 馬頭觀音; fig. 57), a wrathful form of the bodhisattva. These paintings all are executed in a style that combines precise linear outlines with robust modeling.

These paintings are accessible to a viewer who stands directly in front of the west wall niche. From this position, however, nearly hidden from view are the paintings on the east ceiling slope (fig. 58). Here, two bodhisattvas are seated next to one another, their bodies twisted in mirror-image positions. The bodhisattva on the left wears a five-peaked crown and holds a *vajra* and a *vajra*-handled *ghaṇṭā* bell, identifying it as Vajrasattva (Jin'gangsatu 金剛薩埵).

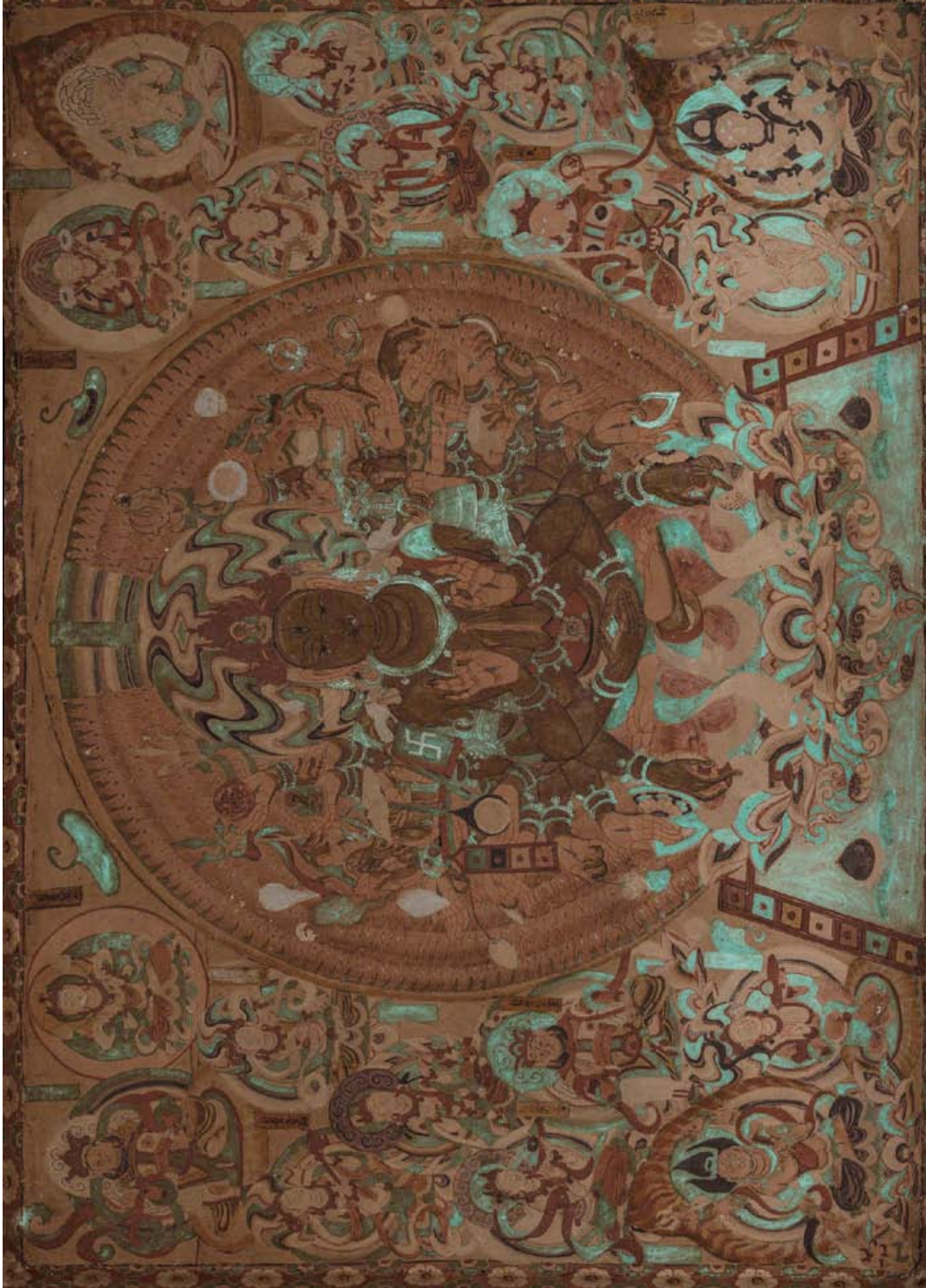


FIGURE 54 Thousand-Armed Avalokitesvara. Guiyijun period (848-1036), second half of 9th century. Mural painting. Ceiling of west wall niche, Mogao Cave 156, Dunhuang, Gansu Province. COURTESY OF THE DUNHUANG ACADEMY.



FIGURE 55 Cintāmaṇicakra. Guiyijun period (848-1036), second half of 9th century. Mural painting. North slope of west wall niche, Mogao Cave 156, Dunhuang, Gansu Province. COURTESY OF THE DUNHUANG ACADEMY.



FIGURE 56 Amoghapaśa. *Guizijun* period (848-1036), second half of 9th century. Mural painting. South slope of west wall niche, Mogao Cave 156, Dunhuang, Gansu Province. COURTESY OF THE DUNHUANG ACADEMY.



FIGURE 57 Eight-Armed Avalokiteśvara and Hayagrīva. Guanyin period (848-1036), second half of 9th century. Mural painting. West slope of west wall niche, Mogao Cave 156, Dunhuang, Gansu Province. COURTESY OF THE DUNHUANG ACADEMY.



FIGURE 58 Vajrasattva and Ākāśagarbha. Guiyijun period (848-1036), second half of 9th century. Mural painting, East slope of west wall niche, Mogao Cave 156, Dunhuang, Gansu Province. COURTESY OF THE DUNHUANG ACADEMY.

The figure on the right similarly wears a five-peaked crown but holds a sword in the right hand, identifying it as Ākāśagarbha.¹⁴

Several elements distinguish these two figures from those previously discussed. To begin with, the crowns that they wear do not bear images of Amī-tābha, as is the case with the various Avalokiteśvara images. The five-peaked design of their crowns, in fact, bears general similarities to those worn by the Buddhas in examples of the Tibetan Maṇḍala of Eight Great Bodhisattvas. Second, their haloes and mandorlas are also strikingly different from those of the Avalokiteśvara images, which are composed of a combination of wavy, spiky, and scroll-like patterns. Instead, the haloes and mandorlas of the east-slope bodhisattvas are marked by broad bands of color, comparable to the figures in the aforementioned Maṇḍala of Eight Great Bodhisattvas in the British Museum and that in Yulin Cave 25, both of which date to the Tibetan period (see figs. 2, 35). Finally, their elongated bodies are much closer to the earlier, Tibetan-period images than to the other images on the ceiling of the west wall niche, which display a more compact body type. What this juxtaposition of styles suggests is the continuation of the stylistic norms of the Tibetan period even after the defeat of the Tibetans and the establishment of the Guiyijun. The east-slope paintings, then, complicate or even contradict the message of the paintings of Zhang Yichao's and Lady Song's processions, which convey the decisive ouster of the Tibetans and victorious reclamation of territory by the Guiyijun.

Despite the seeming clarity of the standard historical narrative represented by the triumphal procession of Zhang Yichao, it is now apparent that Tibetan linguistic, cultural, and artistic norms continued to circulate in the Hexi Corridor even after the establishment of the Guiyijun. The bilingualism that characterized the Tibetan period at Dunhuang has been noted previously. As a devout Buddhist reared in this multicultural environment, Zhang Yichao himself not only copied Chinese sūtras, but Tibetan Buddhist texts as well, and even took a Tibetan name. He is associated with sixteen Tibetan-language sūtras and Buddhist texts, all in the collections of the Dunhuang Municipal Museum and Gansu Provincial Library, the majority of which are eulogies on

14 These two bodhisttavas have been identified erroneously in the past as Vajra samaya bodhisattva (Jin'gang sanmei pusa 金剛三昧菩薩) and Vajra contemplating bodhisattva (Jin'gang siwei pusa 金剛思惟菩薩). See Li Yuebai 李月伯, *Dunhuang shiku yishu: Mogaoku di 156 ku fu di 161 ku (wan Tang)* 敦煌石窟藝術：莫高窟第156窟附第161窟 (晚唐) (Jiangsu: Jiangsu meishu chubanshe, 1995); and Dunhuang yanjiuyuan, ed., *Dunhuang shiku neirong zonglu*, 61.

prajñā, or wisdom.¹⁵ Long after the fall of the Tibetan empire and inception of the Guiyijun, the Tibetan language and writing system continued to be used in Dunhuang by non-Tibetans. Research on Tibetan manuscripts from Dunhuang indicates that Tibetan continued to serve as a *lingua franca* into the tenth century as a medium of written communication among the multiethnic peoples of the Hexi Corridor, and among local Chinese as well. Its use was not keyed to social class; Tibetan was appropriated for private and official communication as well as for religious texts. Not only was the basis for bilingualism – or multilingualism – established during the Tibetan period, but the phonetic nature of the Tibetan writing system likely made it easier to learn than Chinese for non-Chinese peoples, thus enabling it to function as a “shared code in people’s linguistic repertoires.”¹⁶

Such continuities were evident in the Buddhist establishment as well. A highly organized Buddhist administration was established during the Tibetan period, supervised by the bureau of the superintendent of monks (*dusengtong si* 都僧統司). This system remained largely in place after the establishment of the Guiyijun.¹⁷ Also noteworthy is the matter of Zhang Yichao’s tutelage under the aforementioned Buddhist monk and translator known in Tibetan as Go Chodrup and in Chinese as Wu Facheng.¹⁸ The details of Facheng’s life may be

15 Zhang Yanqing 張延清, “Zhang Yichao yu Tubo wenhua” 張議潮與吐蕃文化, *Dunhuang yanjiu* 敦煌研究 2005.3:87-92; 90-92. Zhang Yanqing gives Zhang Yichao’s Tibetan name as 贊熱; see 90.

16 Takeuchi, “Sociolinguistic Implications of the Use of Tibetan,” 343. Building upon earlier research by Géza Uray, Takeuchi had discovered fifty-seven Tibetan-language manuscripts dating from the post-Tibetan period by the publication of his article in 2004. See also Uray, “L’emploi du tibétain”; Uray, “New Contributions to Tibetan Documents”; and Takata, “Multilingualism in Tun-huang.”

17 Xie Chongguang 謝重光, “Tubo zhanlingqi yu Guiyijun shiqide Dunhuang sengguan zhidu” 吐蕃佔領期與歸義軍時期的敦煌僧官制度, *Dunhuang yanjiu* 敦煌研究 1991.3:52-61; 54; Chikusa Masaaki 竺沙雅章, “Dunhuang Tuboqide sengguan zhidu” 敦煌吐蕃期的僧官制度, in *Zhongguo wenhua daxue Zhongguo wenxue xi* 中國文化大學中國文學系, ed., *Di’er jie Dunhuangxue guoji yantaohui lunwenji* 第二屆敦煌學國際研討會論文集 (Taipei: Hanxue yanjiu zhongxin, 1991), 145-50.

18 Whether Facheng was Chinese or Tibetan has been the subject of some controversy. Some scholars believe that he was Tibetan, and that his Chinese name was therefore a translation of his Tibetan name; see Paul Pelliot, “Notes à propos d’un catalogue du Kanjur,” *Journal Asiatique* 4 (1914): 111-50; and Sha Wutian 沙武田, “Dunhuang Tubo yijing sanzang fashi Facheng gongdeku kao” 敦煌吐蕃譯經三藏法師法成功德窟考, *Zhongguo zangxue* 中國藏學 2008.3:40-47. Others maintain instead that he was actually Chinese; see Ueyama Daishun 上山大峻, “Daihankoku daitoku sanzō hōshi shamon Hōjō no kenkyū (jō)” 大蕃國大德三藏沙門法成の研究(上), *Tōhō gakuō* 東方學報

pieced together from Chinese-language eulogies written in his honor and the colophons of his translations of Buddhist texts. From these manuscripts, we know that Facheng resided in a number of monasteries in and around Dunhuang, where he translated Chinese Buddhist texts into Tibetan, and Tibetan Buddhist texts into Chinese. He was at Yongkangsi 永康寺 from 833 to 835, then at Xiuduosi 修多寺 from 842 to 846, and finally at Kaiyuansi 開元寺 after 848.¹⁹ The last colophon from his hand is dated 859, suggesting that he may have died not long after.²⁰

Zhang Yichao is known to have been Facheng's disciple, and even after the establishment of the Guiyijun, Facheng did not leave Dunhuang but rather stayed behind at Zhang's behest.²¹ Due to the ruler's devotion to his religious teacher, it is reasonable to assume that Facheng's Buddhist interests in particular had an impact on his disciple. Facheng's translations include several Yogācāra ("Consciousness-Only" school) and *prajñāpāramitā* texts.²² Importantly, among his translations from Chinese to Tibetan are a number of *dhāraṇī* sūtras addressing different multi-armed and multi-headed forms of Avalokiteśvara, several of which are represented on the ceiling of the west wall niche of Mogao Cave 156: the Eleven-Headed Avalokiteśvara (Shiyimian Guanyin 十一面觀音), the Thousand-Armed Avalokiteśvara, Amoghapāśa, and Cintāmaṇicakra.²³ Below the west wall niche is a row of donor images.

38 (1967): 133-98; and Imaeda, "Provenance and Character of the Dunhuang Documents." The picture is complicated by the fact that Facheng completed translations in both Tibetan and Chinese.

19 Zhang, "Zhang Yichao yu Tubo wenhua," 89.

20 Paul Demiéville, "Récents travaux sur Touen-houang," *T'oung Pao*, Second Series, 56.1/3 (1970): 1-95; 49.

21 See Rong, *Guiyijun shi yanjiu*, 269; and Wang Baisui 王百歲, "Tangdai Tubo gaoseng Facheng" 唐代吐蕃高僧法成, in Zhongguo minzu guwenzi yanjiuhui 中國民族古文字研究會, ed., *Sichou zhi lu minzu guwenzi yu wenhua xueshu taolunhui huiyi lunwenji* 絲綢之路民族古文字與文化學術討論會會議論文集 (Beijing: Zhongguo minzu guwenzi yanjiuhui, 2005), 477-84; 484. The Chinese-language manuscript P4660 contains a eulogy on Facheng, which states that the minister of works (*sikong*), referring to Zhang Yichao, invited Facheng to be his teacher. See Rong, *Guiyijun shi yanjiu*, 269; and Wang, "Tangdai Tubo gaoseng Facheng," 478.

22 For a discussion of the non-canonical nature of the Yogācāra texts translated by Facheng, see Sørensen, "Perspectives on Buddhism in Dunhuang," 31. Sørensen further notes the prevalence of Yogācāra teachings at Dunhuang during the Tibetan period.

23 Dang Cuo and Ueyama Daishun come to different conclusions regarding Facheng's translation output, based upon the primary sources that they consult. According to Dang Cuo, one-third of the listed categories of Facheng's translations was comprised of "esoteric" texts, many of which include not only texts addressing multi-armed and multi-headed

Although the inscriptions are now faded, several of the donor images appear to represent monks, illustrating the close relationship between members of the Buddhist clergy and the Zhang clan. The donor images are a visual reminder not only of the deep Buddhist faith that Zhang Yichao had, but also of the crucial role played by the Buddhist establishment in supporting his political authority in Dunhuang.²⁴

The Cult of Avalokiteśvara at Dunhuang

Chinese-language manuscripts, mural paintings, and portable paintings point to the deep-set devotion to Avalokiteśvara at Dunhuang, which echoed similar devotion elsewhere in China.²⁵ From the Northern and Southern dynasties

forms of Avalokiteśvara, but *dhāraṇī* sūtras as well. See Dang Cuo 黨措, “Tubo shiqi Facheng zai Dunhuangde midian chuanyi jiqi yingxiang” 吐蕃時期法成在敦煌的密典傳譯及其影響 (M.A. thesis, Shaanxi Normal University, 2006), 19. Dang states that Facheng translated *dhāraṇī* sūtras pertaining to the following four forms of Avalokiteśvara from Chinese to Tibetan: the Eleven-Headed Avalokiteśvara, the Thousand-Armed Avalokiteśvara, Amoghapāśa, and Cintāmaṇicakra; see Dang, “Tubo shiqi Facheng,” 40-49, for detailed textual analyses and comparisons to canonical Chinese texts. Dang’s primary sources are the Beijing and Derge editions of the Tibetan Kanjur (“Translated Words”; a portion of the Tibetan Buddhist canon). Interestingly, Ueyama Daishun notes, on the other hand, that Facheng translated from Chinese into Tibetan *dhāraṇī* sūtras pertaining to Avalokiteśvara, the Eleven-Headed Avalokiteśvara, and the Thousand-Armed Avalokiteśvara; he does not mention the *dhāraṇī* sūtras of Amoghapāśa and Cintāmaṇicakra. Ueyama’s primary sources are Tibetan-language Dunhuang manuscripts from the Ōtani Collection. See Ueyama, “Daihankoku daitoku sanzō hōshi ... (jō),” 183-87, for detailed philological analyses, including comparisons to the relevant Chinese-language manuscripts from Dunhuang. A comparison between these two sets of primary sources reveals the impact of Facheng’s translation activities on later Tibetan Buddhism, and the connections between the Dunhuang manuscripts and Tibetan Buddhism after the second transmission. Although Facheng did translate some *dhāraṇī* sūtras from Tibetan into Chinese, they do not include those relevant to Avalokiteśvara. This might suggest the impact of the Chinese cult of Avalokiteśvara upon the Tibetans. For Facheng’s Chinese-language translations, see Ueyama Daishun 上山大峻, “Daihankoku daitoku sanzō hōshi shamon Hōjō no kenkyū (ge)” 大蕃國大德三藏沙門法成の研究(下), *Tōhō gakuō* 東方學報 39 (1968): 119-22.

24 Yang, “Zhang Yichao and Dunhuang,” 122-23. Hongbian himself assisted Zhang Yichao in overthrowing the Tibetans; see Taenzer, “Changing Relations,” 35.

25 Numerous Chinese-language manuscripts from Dunhuang relate to the various forms of Avalokiteśvara; see Li, *Dunhuang mijiao wenxian lungao*, 74-143. For studies of mural paintings, see the following articles by Peng Jinzhang 彭金章: “Dunhuang shiku bukong

onward, images of Avalokiteśvara in the conventional, multi-headed, and multi-armed forms were created in the Mogao cave shrines. The bodhisattva was undeniably a frequent subject of mural paintings: the conventional Avalokiteśvara is represented in twenty caves, the Eleven-Headed Avalokiteśvara in nineteen caves, Cintāmaṇicakra in sixty-four caves (by sixty-five paintings), Amoghapāśa in fifty-seven caves, and the Thousand-Armed and Thousand-Eyed Avalokiteśvara in thirty-seven caves (by forty paintings).²⁶

During the Tibetan and Guiyijun periods, the pairing or grouping of multiple Avalokiteśvaras was pictured not only in cave shrines, but in portable paintings as well. A large painting on silk from the Stein Collection in the British Museum (fig. 59) depicts two Avalokiteśvaras turned to face each other as mirror images. They wear identical garments, with slight variations in color palette, and crowns bearing a small image of Amitābha. The main difference between the two lies in the objects that they hold. The bodhisattva on the left holds a lotus blossom, and the one on the right supports a water bottle. Two Chinese-language inscriptions, one for each bodhisattva, are written in mirror image, each starting from the center of the cartouche at the top of the painting. Both inscriptions ascribe the patronage of the painting to a cleric named Yiwen 義溫 of the temple Yongansi 永安寺 who had “fallen into the hands of the Tibetans.” For this reason, it seems likely that the painting was made during the Tibetan period. The remaining text of the inscriptions expresses wishes for the deceased parents of other donors, suggesting a collaboration between the main patron and ancillary donors.²⁷

In the Pelliot Collection of the Musée Guimet is a fragment of a painting on hemp that similarly depicts two paired Avalokiteśvaras turned toward one another in three-quarter view (fig. 60). Dating to the Guiyijun period, the bodhisattvas in this painting appear not as mirror images but rather as variations on a theme. The bodhisattva on the left has a spiky halo, and the halo of

juansuo Guanyin jingbian yanjiu” 敦煌石窟不空絹索觀音經變研究, *Dunhuang yanjiu* 敦煌研究 1999.1:1-24; “Mogaoku di 148 ku mijiao neisi waisi gongyang pusa kaoshi” 莫高窟第148窟密教內四外四供養菩薩考釋, *Dunhuang yanjiu* 敦煌研究 2004.6:1-6; “Mogaoku di 76 ku shiyimian babei Guanyin kao” 莫高窟第76窟十一面八臂觀音考, *Dunhuang yanjiu* 敦煌研究 1994.3:42-48; and “Qianyan zhaojian qianshou huchi” 千眼照見千手護持, *Dunhuang yanjiu* 敦煌研究 1996.1:11-31.

26 These statistics are collated from Dunhuang yanjiuyuan, ed., *Dunhuang shiku neirong zonglu*; Su Bai 宿白, “Dunhuang Mogao ku mijiao yiji zhaji (shang)” 敦煌莫高窟密教遺跡札記(上), *Wenwu* 文物 1989.9:45-53; and Henrik H. Sørensen, “Typology and Iconography in the Esoteric Buddhist Art of Dunhuang,” *Silk Road Art and Archaeology* 2 (1991/92): 285-349.

27 Whitfield, *Art of Central Asia*, 321-22.



FIGURE 59 Two Avalokiteśvaras. Tibetan period (786-848), mid-9th century. Ink and color on silk. 147.3 × 105.3 cm. FROM DUNHUANG. BRITISH MUSEUM, LONDON, 1919,0101,0.3 (CH.XXXVIII.005). © THE TRUSTEES OF THE BRITISH MUSEUM.



FIGURE 60 Two Aspects of Avalokiteśvara. *Guiyijun* period (848-1036), second half of 9th–early 10th century. Ink and color on hemp. 47 × 51 cm. FROM DUNHUANG. MUSÉE DES ARTS ASIATIQUES–GUIMET, PARIS, EO.1139. © RMN-GRAND PALAIS / ART RESOURCE, NY.

the bodhisattva on the right is adorned with wavy patterns. The canopy above the head of each bodhisattva is also different; the one on the left features flowers, and the one on the right is festooned with draperies and tassels. The bodhisattva on the left holds a small image of Amitābha, and the one on the right holds a lotus blossom. A cartouche at the top of the painting is divided into halves; only the left side is brushed with the Chinese inscription “obeisance to the bodhisattva who prolongs life.”²⁸

The Tibetan-language material from Dunhuang reveals a parallel cult of Avalokiteśvara that flourished from the Tibetan period onward. The significance of Avalokiteśvara to Tibetan religious culture and history needs little

²⁸ Jacques Giès, ed., *Les Arts de l'Asie Centrale*, vol. 1 (London: Serindia, 1994-96), 341.

introduction. The seventh-century Tibetan emperor Songtsen Gampo was believed to have been an incarnation of Avalokiteśvara, as were successive generations of Dalai Lamas. For these reasons, Avalokiteśvara played a key role in the Buddhist transformation of Tibet and is considered Tibet's patron bodhisattva. Nevertheless, scholarly reassessment has posited that the Tibetan cult of Avalokiteśvara should be viewed as a development from the eleventh century onward, which is when literary accounts relating Songtsen Gampo to the deity first appear.²⁹

With this in mind, evidence from the Mogao cave shrines and the Dunhuang manuscripts allows us to pinpoint with greater historical specificity the nature of the cult of Avalokiteśvara during the Guiyijun era under the patronage of the Zhang clan and the tutelage of the monk-translator Facheng. Such evidence suggests that the cult was not merely a product of the later transmission of Buddhism to Tibet in the eleventh century. This view is substantiated by a number of examples in cave shrines that either are firmly attributed to the patronage of the Zhang clan or are likely to have been associated with them.

In addition to the *dhāraṇī* sūtras pertaining to Avalokiteśvara that were translated by Facheng, more than twenty additional Tibetan-language manuscripts from Dunhuang relating to the bodhisattva, representing a variety of textual genres and manuscript formats, have been found.³⁰ Devotion to Avalokiteśvara was clearly a prerogative in the design of the visual program of Mogao Cave 156, which was attributed to Zhang Yichao or Zhang Huaishen. An even greater emphasis upon Avalokiteśvara can be seen in the Guiyijun-period Mogao Cave 161 (fig. 61), which is located directly above Mogao Cave 156 in the uppermost level of caves on the cliff face. Strikingly, in the visual program of Mogao Cave 161, special emphasis is placed upon bodhisattvas rather than Buddha pure-land scenes. Cave 161 generally is believed to date slightly earlier than Cave 156, because the caves are thought to have been excavated from the top of the mountain downward.³¹ The close proximity of the two caves, as

29 Kapstein, *Tibetan Assimilation of Buddhism*, 144-55. Ariane Macdonald notes that the first account of Songtsen Gampo as an incarnation of Avalokiteśvara appears in 1167. See Ariane Macdonald, *L'annuaire de l'École Pratique des Hautes Études*, 4th section (Paris: EPHE, 1968-69), 532.

30 Sam van Schaik, "The Tibetan Avalokiteśvara Cult in the Tenth Century: Evidence from the Dunhuang Manuscripts," in Ronald M. Davidson and Christian Wedemeyer, eds., *Tibetan Buddhist Literature and Praxis* (Proceedings of the Tenth Seminar of the IATS, 2003, Vol. 4) (Leiden: EJ Brill, 2006), 55-72. Van Schaik also discusses a number of portable paintings of Avalokiteśvara executed in an "Indic" style; see 64-65 and 70-71.

31 Guo Youmeng 郭祐孟, "Wan Tang Guanyin famende kaizhan – yi Dunhuang Mogaoku 161 ku wei zhongxinde tantao" 晚唐觀音法門的開展—以敦煌莫高窟161窟為中心的

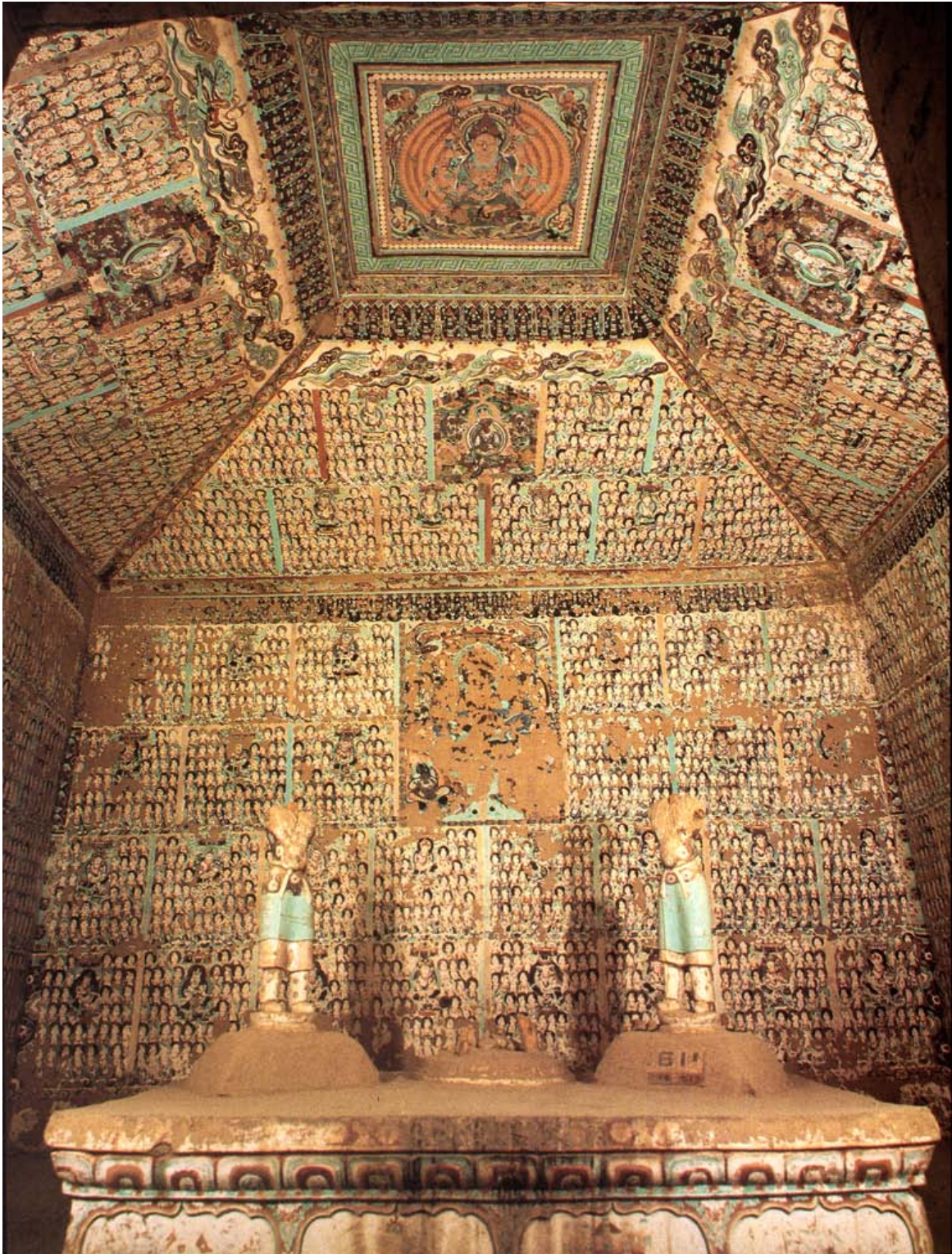


FIGURE 61 *Mogao Cave 161. Guiyijun period (848-1036), second half of 9th century. Dunhuang, Gansu Province. FROM LI, ED., DUNHUANG SHIKU YISHU: MOGAOKU DI 156 KU FU DI 161 KU (WAN TANG), 198, PLATE 191.*



FIGURE 62 Thousand-Armed Avalokiteśvara. *Guiyijun* period (848-1036), second half of 9th century. Mural painting. Ceiling, Mogao Cave 161, Dunhuang, Gansu Province. PHOTOGRAPH BY ZHANG WEIWEN. COURTESY OF THE DUNHUANG ACADEMY.

探討, *Yuanguang foxue xuebao* 圓光佛學學報 8 (2003): 103-44; 107. Wang Huimin believes that a Dunhuang manuscript dated 951, preserved in the Dunhuang Research Academy, refers to Cave 161 as the site of worship of the “Dushashen” (獨煞神), which is the same as Avalokiteśvara, Dushashen being the Khotanese name for the bodhisattva. The manuscript describes the lighting of lamps to the Dushashen in a hall “below the cliffs” (崖下). Theorizing that this refers to the Mogao cave shrines, Wang hypothesizes that the hall of the Dushashen is none other than Cave 161, as this cave is situated in the uppermost level of cave shrines. See Wang Huimin 王惠民, “Dushashen yu dushashen tang kao” 獨煞神與獨煞神堂考, *Dunhuang yanjiu* 敦煌研究 1995.1:128-34.

well as parallels in iconography, composition, and style, strongly suggests that they are close in date, and were executed under the patronage of the Zhang clan or Facheng. A precedent for the attribution of a vertical column of cave shrines to the same patron exists in the construction of Mogao Caves 16, 365, and 366, which all were donated by the Guiyijun-era superintendent of monks, Hongbian.³²

Like the west wall niche in Mogao Cave 156, the ceiling of Mogao Cave 161 also takes the form of a truncated pyramid. On the ceiling of Mogao Cave 161, as on the ceiling of the west wall niche in Cave 156 (see fig. 54), the same motif of the Thousand-Armed Avalokiteśvara (fig. 62) is repeated. The fact that this is the only one of nearly five hundred painted cave shrines at the Mogao site with such an image at the top of the ceiling of the main chamber itself demonstrates that special emphasis was placed upon the Thousand-Armed Avalokiteśvara in this cave.³³ Both paintings are executed in a manner that combines linear brushwork with heavy modeling, and the forms are rendered in the robust style of the Tang dynasty. Despite superficial differences, such as the handling of the haloes and rows of hands, the compositions of the two images bear striking similarities. In both paintings, the Thousand-Armed Avalokiteśvara is surrounded by four attendants located in the corners, and holds aloft two *vajras* that nearly reach the outermost circle of hands. The closeness between the two images suggests shared patronage or involvement by the Zhang clan.

In total, seven images of Avalokiteśvara are found in Mogao Cave 161: in addition to the ceiling painting, four images appear on the ceiling slopes, one on the west wall, and another on the east wall above the door (figs. 63-68); this last image depicts Avalokiteśvara on his island abode of Mount Potalaka. The bodhisattvas on the ceiling slopes retain the elongated bodies and banded haloes that characterize the Tibetan style as seen in Cave 156, and in Tibetan-period images. Their attendants include the inner and outer offering goddesses in the upper left and right corners; some are accompanied by flame-enclosed Wisdom Kings (Skt. Vidyārāja, Ch. Mingwang 明王) in the lower corners, indicating the incorporation of specifically esoteric imagery.³⁴ Furthermore,

32 See Dunhuang yanjiuyuan, ed., *Dunhuang shiku neirong zonglu*, 11, 148-49.

33 Data collated from Dunhuang yanjiuyuan, ed., *Dunhuang shiku neirong zonglu*.

34 The inclusion of offering goddesses and Wisdom Kings in these paintings does not exhibit much systematization. For example, on the east ceiling slope, Avalokiteśvara is accompanied by what appear to be two images of the inner offering goddess Vajranṛtyā (Adamantine Dance) in the upper left and right corners, and by a Wisdom King and the male sage Rṣi Vasu (Posouxian 婆藪仙) in the lower left and right corners, respectively. Rṣi Vasu is usually paired with Śrī Devī (Gongdetian 功德天) rather than a Wisdom King. The inner offering goddess Vajralāsyā (Adamantine Play) appears on both the north and south



FIGURE 63
Avalokiteśvara. *Guiyijun* period (848-1036), second half of 9th century. Mural painting. East slope of ceiling, Mogao Cave 161, Dunhuang, Gansu Province.

FROM LI, ED., *DUNHUANG SHIKU YISHU: MOGAOKU DI 156 KU FU DI 161 KU (WAN TANG)*, 209, PLATE 207.



FIGURE 64
Avalokiteśvara. *Guiyijun* period (848-1036), second half of 9th century. Mural painting. West slope of ceiling, Mogao Cave 161, Dunhuang, Gansu Province.

FROM LI, ED., *DUNHUANG SHIKU YISHU: MOGAOKU DI 156 KU FU DI 161 KU (WAN TANG)*, 207, PLATE 205.



FIGURE 65
Avalokiteśvara. *Guiyijun* period (848-1036), second half of 9th century. Mural painting. South slope of ceiling, Mogao Cave 161, Dunhuang, Gansu Province. FROM LI, ED., *DUNHUANG SHIKU YISHU: MOGAOKU DI 156 KU FU DI 161 KU* (WAN TANG), 206, PLATE 204.



FIGURE 66
Avalokiteśvara. *Guiyijun* period (848-1036), second half of 9th century. Mural painting. North slope of ceiling, Mogao Cave 161, Dunhuang, Gansu Province. FROM LI, ED., *DUNHUANG SHIKU YISHU: MOGAOKU DI 156 KU FU DI 161 KU* (WAN TANG), 208, PLATE 206.

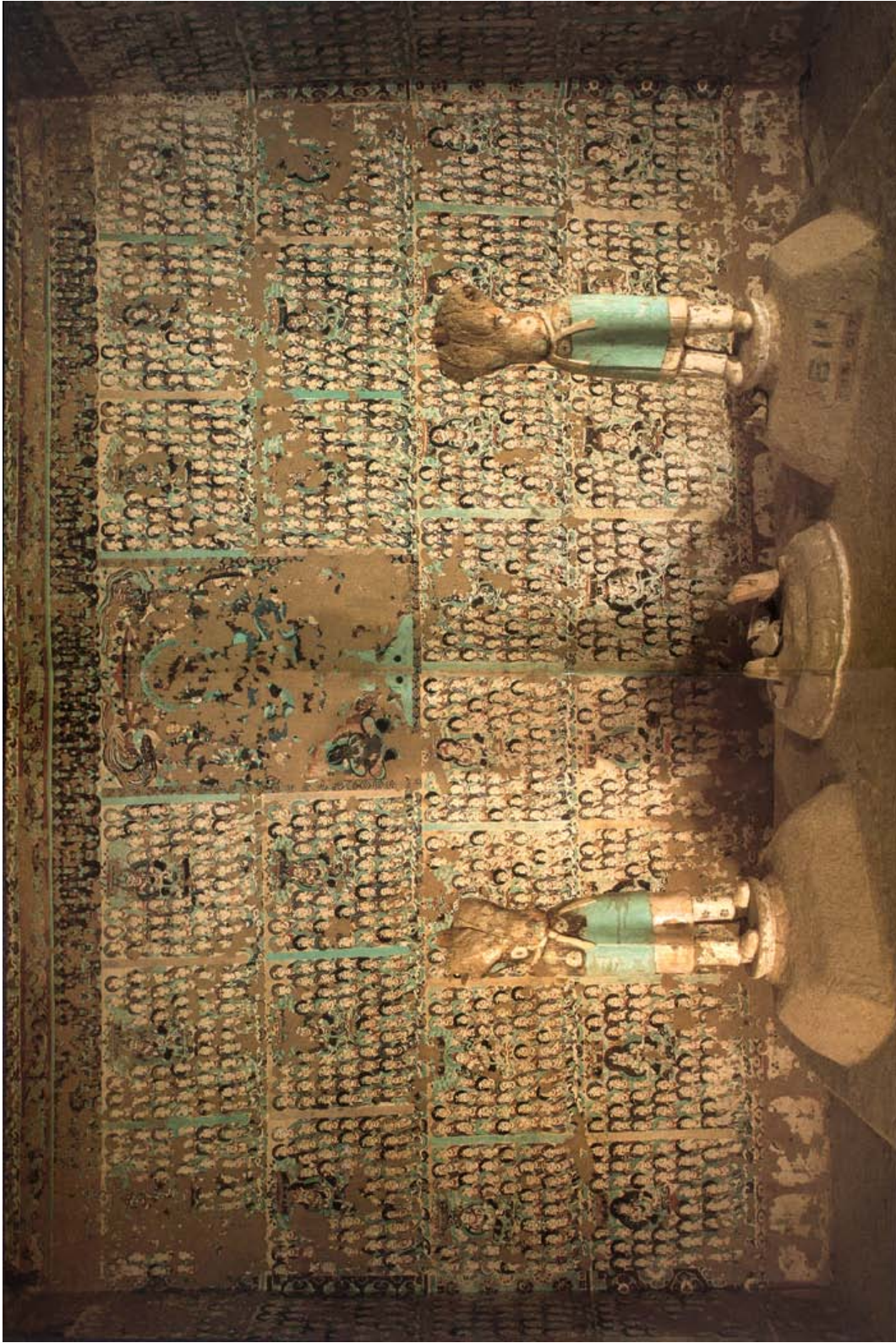


FIGURE 67 Avalokitesvara. Guiyijun period (848-1036), second half of 9th century. Mural painting. West wall, Mogao Cave 161, Dunhuang, Gansu Province. FROM LI, ED., *DUNHUANG SHIKU YISHU: MOGAOKU DI 156 KU FU DI 161 KU (WAN TANG)*, 210-11, PLATE 208.



FIGURE 68 Avalokiteśvara on Mount Potalaka. *Guiyijun* period (848-1036), second half of 9th century. Mural painting. East wall, Mogao Cave 161, Dunhuang, Gansu Province. FROM LI, ED., *DUNHUANG SHIKU YISHU: MOGAOKU DI 156 KU FU DI 161 KU* (WAN TANG), 214, PLATE 213.

although the main sculptural icon of the cave no longer exists, the two sculpted attendant figures, possibly bodhisattvas, are dressed in a characteristically Tibetan style, wearing knee-length tunics tied at the waist over trousers, unlike the typical Indian style of dress consisting of flowing garments and scarves.³⁵

ceiling slopes, and the inner offering goddess Vajragīti (Adamantine Song) appears on the north and west ceiling slopes.

35 Guo Youmeng has posited that the lost main icon was Avalokiteśvara, flanked by two donor figures; see Guo, “Wan Tang Guanyin famende kaizhan,” 111. Sha Wutian similarly has argued that the main icon was Avalokiteśvara, flanked by two bodhisattvas; see Sha, “Dunhuang Tubo yijing sanzang fashi Facheng,” 44. Finally, Wang Huimin believes that

Therefore, the paintings and sculptures in this cave shrine exhibit the synthesis of Tang Chinese and Nepalese-derived Tibetan styles that is also evident in Yulin Cave 25 and Mogao Cave 156.

The cave is unique for its exceptionally small size, as well as for the complete lack of donor images and dedicatory inscriptions, which renders the historical circumstances of its patronage enigmatic. It is uncertain whether the patron of the cave was Zhang Yichao or Facheng. Due to his perceived status as the teacher of Zhang Yichao and the stress placed upon Avalokiteśvara, Facheng was the patron of the cave, according to Sha Wutian; Wang Huimin, on the other hand, contends that references in a Dunhuang manuscript to the construction of a clay pagoda match such a pagoda located just above Mogao Cave 161, proving that the cave's patron was the Zhang clan.³⁶ With neither donor images nor dedicatory inscriptions as a reference point, this issue is difficult to resolve. Nevertheless, it is possible to view this cave as the result of the joint patronage of the Zhang clan and Facheng, or as the result of Zhang Yichao's Buddhist belief as shaped by Facheng, who was noted for his translations of *dhāraṇī* sūtras pertaining to Avalokiteśvara.

Finally, the Guiyijun-period Mogao Cave 14 takes the visual programs of Caves 156 and 161 a step further by incorporating the greatest number of the various forms of Avalokiteśvara in a single cave shrine (fig. 69). Cave 14 is situated on the second level of caves directly north of Mogao Cave 17, the so-called library cave.³⁷ The rectangular cave lies on an east-west axis, divided into an antechamber to the east and the main chamber to the west (fig. 70).³⁸ Mogao Cave 14 is a relatively small cave with only a few donor figures on the east-

the main sculptural icon was the Thousand-Armed Avalokiteśvara, flanked by two Heavenly Kings; see Wang, "Dushashen yu dushashen tang kao," 130-31.

36 See Sha, "Dunhuang Tubo yijing sanzang fashi Facheng," 46-47; and Wang, "Dushashen yu dushashen tang kao," 131. Wang further argues that Zhang Yichao considered the Thousand-Armed Avalokiteśvara to be a *xiangrui* 祥瑞, or good omen, particularly of just and rightful rule (132); therefore, the Thousand-Armed Avalokiteśvara was incorporated into the iconographic programs of Mogao Caves 161 and 156. As the manuscript reference to the *xiangrui* does not specifically name the identity of the good omen, Wang's argument is unconvincing.

37 In the early eleventh century, numerous documents and paintings were sealed in the library cave, to be discovered and dispersed in the early twentieth century.

38 As the paintings of the antechamber date from the Song dynasty and have suffered extensive damage, it is the mural paintings in the main chamber that inform the modern scholar's reading of the original iconographic program of the cave.



FIGURE 69 East-facing wall and niche of central pillar, Mogao Cave 14. Guiyijun period (848-1036), second half of 9th century. Mural painting. Dunhuang, Gansu Province. FROM LIANG, ED., *DUNHUANG SHIKU YISHU: MOGAO KU DI SHISI KU* (WAN TANG), 30-31, PLATE 1.

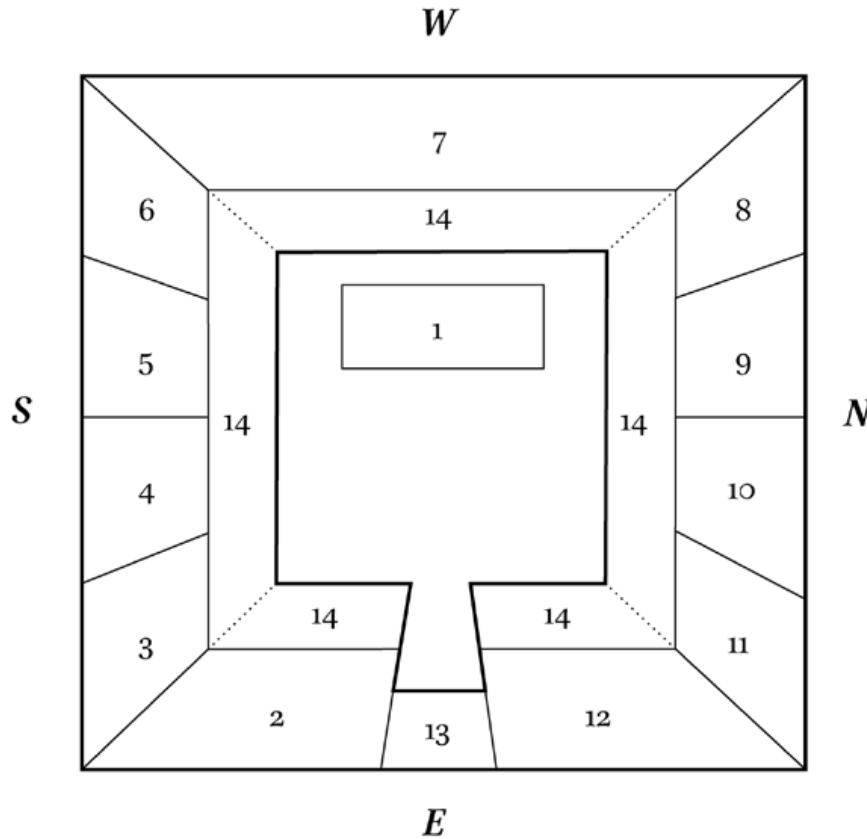


FIGURE 70 *Plan of main chamber of Mogao Cave 14.* (1) central pillar, (2) Samantabhadra, (3) Thousand-Armed Avalokiteśvara, (4) Amoghapāśa, (5) Eleven-Headed Avalokiteśvara tableau, (6) Maṇḍala of Eight Great Bodhisattvas, (7) Thousand Buddhas, (8) Vajrasattva, (9) Avalokiteśvara tableau, (10) Cintāmaṇicakra, (11) Thousand-Armed Mañjuśrī, (12) Mañjuśrī, (13) Many Treasures Pagoda, (14) fifty-one bodhisattvas.
DRAWING BY ERNEST BARONI.

facing wall of the central pillar, indicating that, like Mogao Cave 156, it too was a “family cave” (*jiaku* 家窟) dedicated by members of a single clan.³⁹

The upper register of each wall is divided equally into four frames by intricate floral borders. No longer devoted to Buddha pure-land scenes, from west to east, the paintings on the north wall depict Vajrasattva, an Avalokiteśvara

39 The dimensions of the main chamber of the cave are 2.95 meters on the east-west axis, and an average of 3.13 meters on the north-south axis. The height of the walls is 2.7 meters, and the height range of the recessed ceiling is 3.5 to 3.65 meters. See Shi Zhangru 石璋如, *Mogaoku xing* 莫高窟形 (Taipei: Zhongyang yanjiuyuan lishi yuyan yanjiusuo, 1996), 288.



FIGURE 71 North wall, main chamber of Mogao Cave 14. From west (left) to east (right): Vajrasattva, Avalokiteśvara tableau, Cintāmaṇicakra, Thousand-Armed Mañjuśrī. Guiyijun period (848-1036), second half of 9th century. Mural painting, Dunhuang, Gansu Province. COURTESY OF THE DUNHUANG ACADEMY.



FIGURE 72 South wall, main chamber of Mogao Cave 14. From east (left) to west (right): Thousand-Armed Avalokiteśvara, Amoghapāśa, Eleven-Headed Avalokiteśvara tableau, Maṇḍala of Eight Great Bodhisattvas. Guiyijun period (848-1036), second half of 9th century. Mural painting. Dunhuang, Gansu Province. COURTESY OF THE DUNHUANG ACADEMY.

tableau, Cintāmaṇicakra, and the Thousand-Armed Mañjuśrī (Qianbi qianbo Wenshushili pusa 千臂千鉢曼殊室利菩薩; fig. 71). Directly opposite on the south wall, from east to west, are images of the Thousand-Armed and Thousand-Eyed Avalokiteśvara, Amoghapāśa, an Eleven-Headed Avalokiteśvara tableau, and the Maṇḍala of Eight Great Bodhisattvas (fig. 72). Like the paintings on the ceiling slopes of the west wall niche in Mogao Cave 156, the images face each other to form distinct pairs: Thousand-Armed Mañjuśrī and Thousand-Armed Avalokiteśvara; Cintāmaṇicakra and Amoghapāśa; Avalokiteśvara and Eleven-Headed Avalokiteśvara; and finally, Vajrasattva and Mahāvairocana.⁴⁰

Also similar to Mogao Cave 156, the donor images of Mogao Cave 14 are located just below the niche containing the main sculptural icon; however, the dedicatory inscriptions appear to postdate the initial construction of the cave shrine.⁴¹ The donor images of Mogao Cave 14 represent male and female laypeople dressed in aristocratic garments. The female donor images are adorned by elaborately decorated and flowered headdresses that are comparable to those worn by the female donors in Mogao Cave 156 (see fig. 52).⁴² For these reasons, and for the prominence given to the multi-headed and multi-armed forms of Avalokiteśvara, it is likely that the patrons of Mogao Cave 14, much like those of Caves 156 and 161, were also members of the Zhang clan.⁴³

40 For the pairing of the Thousand-Armed Mañjuśrī and Thousand-Armed Avalokiteśvara, see Michelle C. Wang, "The Thousand-armed Mañjuśrī at Dunhuang and Paired Images in Buddhist Visual Culture," *Archives of Asian Art* 66.1 (2016): 81-105.

41 The inscriptions record donations by three sets of unrelated female donors. This seems at odds with the obvious status of Cave 14 as a family cave. Furthermore, the inscriptions are very dark, whereas other inscriptions on the north and south walls of Mogao Cave 14 have faded, further suggesting that the dedicatory inscriptions are later in date. For transcriptions of the dedicatory inscriptions, see Dunhuang yanjiuyuan, ed., *Dunhuang Mogaoku gongyangren tiji*, 8.

42 For the transformation in clothing styles from the Tang to Five Dynasties period, see Shen Congwen 沈從文, *Zhongguo gudai fushi yanjiu* 中國古代服飾研究 (Shanghai: Shanghai shudian chubanshe, 2006), 391-95.

43 Stylistic elements also support the dating of Mogao Cave 14 to the Guiyijun period. Comparisons to the color palette, deities' haloes, and floral and geometric borders seen in the nearby Mogao Caves 9 and 12, both of which should be dated by donor inscriptions to the Guiyijun period, substantiate this dating for Mogao Cave 14 as well. The donor inscriptions in Mogao Caves 9 and 12 mention Guiyijun donors from the Zhang and Suo 索 clans, including Zhang Chengfeng 張承奉 and Suo Xun 索勲, which dates those caves to the late ninth century. See Dunhuang yanjiuyuan, ed., *Dunhuang Mogaoku gongyangren tiji*, 6-8. Suo Xun was the guardian of Zhang Chengfeng; both ruled as military governor, Suo Xun from 892 to 894 and Zhang Chengfeng from 894 to 910. The power struggle between

The Maṇḍala of Eight Great Bodhisattvas in the Guiyijun Period

As we have seen, multiple images of Avalokiteśvara are a striking element of the visual program of Mogao Cave 14, which contains mural paintings of five different forms of the deity on the north and south walls of the main chamber. In fact, these images seem to replace the Buddha pure-land scenes that were a standard motif throughout the Tang dynasty. Yet another striking element is the mural painting at the western end of the south wall of the main chamber, which represents one of the key examples of the Maṇḍala of Eight Great Bodhisattvas from the Guiyijun era (fig. 73). At the center of this large composition is a seated and crowned Buddha atop a lion throne with hands placed in the *dhyāna mudrā*, and surrounded by sixteen attendants and guardians. Below the throne is the crossed *vajra*, or *viśvavajra*, which represents the stability of the earth and therefore the *vajrāsana*, or seat of enlightenment at Bodhgayā.⁴⁴ The iconography of the crowned Buddha in *dhyāna mudrā*, seated on a lion throne, links this particular Buddha with others from the Tibetan period; the crossed *vajra* reinforces the theme of the Buddha's awakening.

Stylistically, like the Yulin Cave 25 Buddha (see fig. 35), the central deity of the Mogao Cave 14 maṇḍala wears a jeweled headdress with five peaks, each further decorated by spires of pearls, and with conch shells dangling on either side of the head. A strand of pearls hangs around the neck, which is further adorned by a heavy necklace laden with gemstones and pearls, and jewelry of similar design hangs from the earlobes and encircles the upper arms and ankles of the figure. The deity also wears a sash slung diagonally across the torso, and a finely woven lower garment.

Like the central Buddha of the Maṇḍala of Eight Great Bodhisattvas in Yulin Cave 25 and distinct from the adjacent paintings, the central Buddha of the Mogao Cave 14 maṇḍala also is painted in a distinctively Tibetan manner, particularly in the robust yet slender articulation of the face and body. The high arched eyebrows, heavily lidded eyes, and fleshy lips all echo the features of the central Buddha of the Yulin Cave 25 maṇḍala. The persistence of these stylistic norms echoes the continued resonance of Tibetan cultural and linguistic norms in Guiyijun-era Dunhuang.

Despite the continuity of the Maṇḍala of Eight Great Bodhisattvas into the Guiyijun era, its treatment in Mogao Cave 14 differs from paintings of the Tibetan period in several ways. For example, the Maṇḍala of Eight Great

the Zhang and Suo clans marked the end of the Zhang Guiyijun and transition to the Cao Guiyijun.

44 Robert Beer, *The Encyclopedia of Tibetan Symbols and Motifs* (Boston: Shambhala, 1999), 239–40. The *viśvavajra* also represents the Five Buddhas, discussed later in this chapter.



FIGURE 73 Maṇḍala of Eight Great Bodhisattvas. *Guiyijun period (848-1036), second half of 9th century. Mural painting. South wall, Mogao Cave 14, Dunhuang, Gansu Province. COURTESY OF THE DUNHUANG ACADEMY.*

Bodhisattvas is now less prominent in Mogao Cave 14 than it is in Yulin Cave 25. In the latter, the painting is the only motif on the rear wall, and is clearly visible behind the main sculptural icon. In Mogao Cave 14, the maṇḍala is only one of several motifs, and is located on the western end of the south wall, where it is nearly shielded from view by the chamber's central pillar (see fig. 69). Much like the difficult-to-see paintings of Vajrasattva and Ākāśagarbha in the west

wall niche of Mogao Cave 156, the Maṇḍala of Eight Great Bodhisattvas in Mogao Cave 14 is not an image that immediately demands the gaze of the viewer; rather, it requires the viewer to look hard in order to find it. The hidden quality of the painting, executed in a distinctively Tibetan style, might have been due to the lingering suspicion with which the Tang court treated the Zhang clan, questioning their loyalty.⁴⁵ For this reason, as with the Vajrasattva and Ākāśagarbha paintings in Mogao Cave 156, although the Tibetan element is present, it is not obvious at first glance.

Another departure is the treatment of the eight bodhisattvas of the maṇḍala in Mogao Cave 14. These figures now are arranged in a circular fashion, as described in Amoghavajra's *Sūtra of the Maṇḍala of Eight Great Bodhisattvas* and *Ritual Commentary on the Recitation of the Revered and Victorious Dhāraṇī of the Buddha's Uṣṇīṣa*, rather than in two rows as in the Tibetan-period images. Unlike the painting in Yulin Cave 25, the cartouches for dedicatory inscriptions are blank; therefore, the identification of the figures has been questioned.⁴⁶ As identified by iconographic attributes, the bodhisattvas, from top to bottom in the left column, are Vajrapāṇi, Samantabhadra, Avalokiteśvara, and Sarvanivāraṇaviṣkambhin; from top to bottom in the right column, they are identified as Ākāśagarbha, Maitreya, Mañjuśrī, and Kṣitigarbha.⁴⁷

45 The choice of whether or not to wear Tibetan-style clothing was also a contested issue for Chinese subjects under Tibetan rule. See Shao-yun Yang, "Stubbornly Chinese? Clothing Styles and the Question of Tang Loyalism in Ninth-Century Dunhuang," *International Journal of Eurasian Studies* 5 (2016): 152-87.

46 As recently as 2003, the central Buddha had been identified as a *vajra*-bearing Avalokiteśvara (Jin'gang Guanyin 金剛觀音); see Su, "Dunhuang Mogao ku," 49. This figure also has been identified as Māmakī (Jin'gangmu 金剛母), the consort to the main deity Vajrapāṇi in the Hall of Vajrapāṇi in the Garbhadhātu Maṇḍala; see Liang Weiyong 梁尉英, "Xianmi zachen – youxuan wenjian: Mogao ku di shisi Tangmi neirong he yishu tese" 顯密雜陳—幽玄穩健: 莫高窟第十四唐密內容和藝術特色, in Duan Wenjie 段文傑, ed., *Dunhuang shiku yishu: Mogao ku di shisi ku (wan Tang)* 敦煌石窟藝術: 莫高窟第十四窟 (晚唐) (Jiangsu: Jiangsu meishu chubanshe, 1996), 24. This latter iconographic identification ties into Liang's larger argument that Cave 14 is based upon the Garbhadhātu Maṇḍala, and that the individual paintings represent specific halls within the maṇḍala. Peng Jinzhang also adheres to the identification of this figure as Māmakī; see Peng Jinzhang 彭金章, ed., *Dunhuang shiku quanji* 敦煌石窟全集, vol. 10, *Mijiao huaquan* 密教畫卷 (Hong Kong: Shangwu yinshuguan, 2003), 122.

47 Pak, "Hachi daibosatsu no seiritsu," 336-37. The author is grateful to Hamada Tamami for providing this reference. The bodhisattvas may be identified by their attributes: Vajrapāṇi (three-pronged *vajra*), Samantabhadra (lotus blossom), Avalokiteśvara (holding lotus blossom, Buddha in headdress), Sarvanivāraṇaviṣkambhin (Indic manuscript), Kṣitigarbha (seal with Buddhist *svastika* on top of a lotus blossom), Mañjuśrī

Yet one more crucial difference is found between this Guiyijun-era maṇḍala and earlier examples dating to the Tibetan period, and that is the incorporation of a group of four deities, the offering goddesses of the Vajradhātu Maṇḍala, into the assembly of eight bodhisattvas. The offering goddesses are located immediately on the left and right sides of the central Buddha, inside the circle of surrounding bodhisattvas (fig. 74). Although they are enclosed within haloes and mandorlas in a comparable manner to the eight bodhisattvas, they are distinguished from the latter by their slightly smaller size and by their female gender. Across from the goddess at upper left holding the *vajra* is one who beckons toward the Buddha while holding a lamp in her left hand. Below this goddess is one whose body is twisted as if dancing, with her right arm bent and raised, and the left hand lowered. Based on these characteristics, the goddesses may be identified as Vajralāsyā (Adamantine Play; Jin'gangxi 金剛嬉; upper left), Vajramālā (Adamantine Garland; Jin'gang man 金剛鬘; lower left), Vajragīti (Adamantine Song; Jin'gang ge 金剛歌; upper right), and Vajranṛtyā (Adamantine Dance; Jin'gang wu 金剛舞; lower right).⁴⁸

For several reasons, the Mogao Cave 14 Buddha should be understood to represent Mahāvairocana Buddha of the Vajradhātu Maṇḍala and *Vajraśekhara Sūtra*, rather than Locana, or Vairocana Buddha of the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra* and *Brahma's Net Sūtra*.⁴⁹ The adaptability of the Maṇḍala of Eight Great Bodhisattvas to a variety of doctrinal and ritual contexts has been noted. During the Guiyijun period, elements from the *Vajraśekhara Sūtra* and Vajradhātu Maṇḍala were incorporated into the Maṇḍala of Eight Great Bodhisattvas. One example of this is the appearance of the offering goddesses associated with the

(lotus blossom), Maitreya (water bottle on top of lotus blossom, pagoda in headdress), and Ākāśagarbha (sword). Moreover, the identification of Samantabhadra, Sarvanivāraṇaviṣkambhin, Kṣitigarbha, and Ākāśagarbha is substantiated by comparison to inscriptions on the painting of the Maṇḍala of Eight Great Bodhisattvas in Yulin Cave 25. Guo Youmeng provides different identifications for the eight bodhisattvas. From top to bottom in the left column, he lists Vajrapāṇi, unidentified, Avalokiteśvara, and Mañjuśrī; from top to bottom in the right column, he finds Samantabhadra, Maitreya, unidentified, and Ākāśagarbha. Guo does not identify Sarvanivāraṇaviṣkambhin and Kṣitigarbha in this composition. See Guo, "Dunhuang shiku 'Lushenafu bing,'" 54-57.

48 For the offering goddesses and their descriptions, see also Giebel, *Two Esoteric Sutras*, 56-58; and T18.865:214b8-c27.

49 According to Lai Pengju, the Maṇḍala of Eight Great Bodhisattvas in Mogao Cave 14 represents Huayan Buddhism mingled with esoteric elements; Lai Pengju 賴鵬舉, *Dunhuang shiku zaoxiang sixiang yanjiu* 敦煌石窟造像思想研究 (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2009), 262-80. As argued in Chapter Two, however, the iconography was not proprietary to either exoteric or esoteric Buddhism; rather, its focus was on the Buddha's narrative of enlightenment.

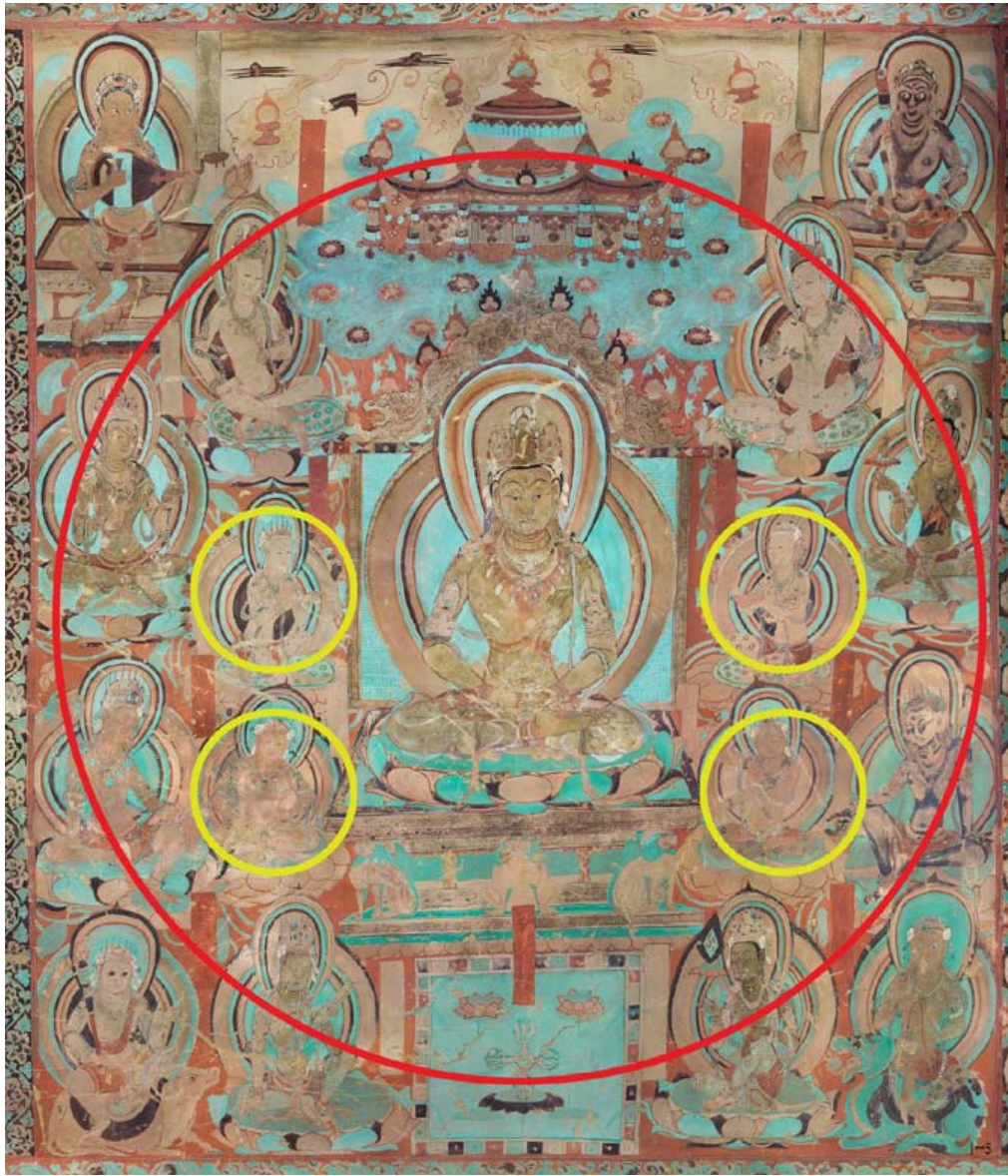


FIGURE 74 Maṇḍala of Eight Great Bodhisattvas. *Guiyijun* period (848-1036), second half of 9th century. Mural painting. South wall, Mogao Cave 14, Dunhuang, Gansu Province. The red circle intersects the eight bodhisattvas, and the offering goddesses are circled in yellow. COURTESY OF THE DUNHUANG ACADEMY.

Vajradhātu Maṇḍala; in the *Vajraśekhara Sūtra*, these inner offering goddesses are generated by Mahāvairocana from his adamantine *samādhi* and called to their proper places in the Vajradhātu Maṇḍala, along with the four outer offering goddesses.⁵⁰ No Chinese or Tibetan-language manuscripts of the

⁵⁰ Giebel, *Two Esoteric Sūtras*, 56-58; T18.865:214b8-c27. For the subsequent sequence of the four outer offering goddesses, see Giebel, *Two Esoteric Sūtras*, 58-61; and T18.865:214c28-215b20.



FIGURE 75 Vajrasattva. *Guiyijun* period (848-1036), second half of 9th century. Mural painting. North wall, Mogao Cave 14, Dunhuang, Gansu Province. COURTESY OF THE DUNHUANG ACADEMY.

Vajraśekhara Sūtra from Dunhuang have survived. Nevertheless, it is clear from extant manuscripts that the ritual and iconographic system of the sūtra served as the basis for localized praxis.⁵¹

Another key to both the identification of the central Buddha as Mahāvairocana and the incorporation of esoteric iconography from the Vajradhātu Maṇḍala is the painting of Vajrasattva directly opposite on the north wall (fig. 75). In the *Vajraśekhara Sūtra*, Vajrasattva is the first of the sixteen great

⁵¹ This is discussed in Chapter Four.

bodhisattvas generated by Mahāvairocana, directly after the four Buddhas take their seats in the four quarters of the Vajradhātu Maṇḍala.⁵² Seated atop a lotus pedestal and a square throne, Vajrasattva wears the peaked headdress of the Five Jinas (“victorious” Buddhas), also known as the Five Wisdom Buddhas of the esoteric tradition, and holds a five-pronged *vajra* in his right hand and a *vajra*-handled *ghaṇṭā* in his left.⁵³ The *vajra* and *ghaṇṭā* also were used commonly as ritual implements, as shown by a gilt-copper pair from the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (fig. 76).⁵⁴ The characteristic diamond fist *mudrā* (*vajrahūṃkāra mudrā*) of this deity, in which both arms are bent at the elbow and the right hand is positioned at the center of the torso with the left hand below, at the hip, or placed against the thigh, is seen in other representations of Vajrasattva from Dunhuang, such as a ninth-century polychrome painting on silk in the Musée Guimet, which depicts Vajrasattva in the center of a group of four offering goddesses, an arrangement that appears to derive from the Six Types of Vajrasattva Ritual (fig. 77).⁵⁵

The clothing, jewelry, hair, and mandorla of Vajrasattva are nearly identical to those of Mahāvairocana on the opposite wall, visually reinforcing their rapport with one another (see figs. 73, 75). The central figure of Vajrasattva is flanked immediately by the four inner offering goddesses: Vajranṛtyā (upper left), Vajralāsyā (lower left), Vajragīti (upper right), and Vajramālā (lower right). Around them are an additional twelve offering deities holding items that range from food offerings, a floral garland, a bell, and musical instruments to an incense burner, lotus blossom, vase, conch shell, and trident. Their bodies are turned in three-quarter view as they face Vajrasattva, the focus of their

52 Giebel, *Two Esoteric Sutras*, 26–28; T18.865:208b10–c24. This painting of Vajrasattva previously was identified by Su Bai as a *vajra*-bearing Avalokiteśvara, and as Vajrapāṇi by Henrik Sørensen. See Sørensen, “Typology and Iconography,” 312, 337; and Su, “Dunhuang Mogao ku ... (shang),” 49. The deity has been identified as Vajrasattva by Liang Weiying and Peng Jinzhang. See Liang, “Xianmi zachen,” 179; and Peng, *Mijiao huaJuan*, 118.

53 Although some of the paint of the *ghaṇṭā* bell has flaked off, its outline can still be seen clearly. The five-pronged *vajra* here appears to have only three prongs due to the effects of foreshortening.

54 As Rob Linrothe explains, the *vajra* and *ghaṇṭā* stand for the three most important qualities of enlightenment in the esoteric Buddhist context, suggesting the unity of male (*vajra*) and female (*ghaṇṭā*) elements associated with compassion and emptiness, respectively, and therefore, a transcendence of duality. See Rob Linrothe, “Deity and Donor as Vajrasattva,” *History of Religions* 54.1 (2014): 5–33; 10.

55 Sørensen, “Typology and Iconography,” 311. The British Museum holds another painting of Vajrasattva on paper, in which the deity appears alone with one lay and one monk donor figure below. The cartouche identifies the deity as “Jin’gang pusa,” or “*Vajra* bodhisattva.” See Matsumoto, *Tonkōga no kenkyū*, 721–23 and plate 185.



FIGURE 76

Ghaṇṭā bell and vajra. *Ca. 18th century. Gilt-copper alloy and bell metal. Ghaṇṭā bell: H. 18.7 cm.; vajra: H. 12.7 cm. From Tibet. Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Southern Asian Art Council, M.2001.158.1–2. Artwork in the public domain. FROM HUNTINGTON AND BANGDEL, EDS., CIRCLE OF BLISS, 222, PLATE 59. PHOTOGRAPH BY STEVEN OLIVER. PHOTO © MUSEUM ASSOCIATES/ LACMA.*

FIGURE 77 ↓

Vajrasattva Maṇḍala. *Tibetan (786-848) or Guiyijun period (848-1036), 9th century. Ink and color on silk. 64 × 62.3 cm. From Dunhuang. MUSÉE DES ARTS ASIATIQUES—GUIMET, PARIS, EO.1167. © RMN-GRAND PALAIS / ART RESOURCE, NY.*



devotion. Again, as in the painting of Mahāvairocana, the figures are arranged in a circular fashion around Vajrasattva, to the extent that two figures are placed directly in front of the outer edges of the pedestal upon which Vajrasattva is seated.

The name Vajrasattva means “Adamantine (or Diamond-like) Being.” As such, this bodhisattva personifies an intermediate state of tantric perfection that is necessary for the attainment of awakening. Several aspects of Vajrasattva have been articulated in esoteric Buddhist ritual texts and commentaries across Asia, from the seventh century onward: a state identifiable with Buddhahood or enlightenment, a master teacher (*ācārya*), and a practitioner or disciple.⁵⁶ Importantly, Vajrasattva is the leader of the deities in the Vajradhātu Maṇḍala, and is the first bodhisattva to receive *abhiṣeka* from Mahāvairocana.⁵⁷ Vajrasattva also plays an important role as the primary interlocutor in the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra*. The mirror-image effect of the two paintings, as demonstrated in the general placement and number of bodhisattvas or offering goddesses, reinforces the master-disciple relationship between Mahāvairocana and Vajrasattva that is present in the *Vajraśekhara* and *Mahāvairocana Sūtras*.⁵⁸ The association of the two deities is cemented further by the manifestation in the paintings of the full range of inner and outer offering goddesses from the Vajradhātu Maṇḍala, which links together Mahāvairocana and Vajrasattva and reaffirms a visual dialectic between the north and south walls of Mogao Cave 14.

The interest in the Maṇḍala of Eight Great Bodhisattvas continued under the period of the Cao clan, which assumed control of the Return to Allegiance Army from the Zhang clan in 914 and ruled Dunhuang and Anxi until 1006. The Cao were active patrons of cave construction at both the Mogao and Yulin sites, establishing a painting workshop in the process. The clan sought to consolidate its political authority through intermarriages with the Uyghurs and Khotanese. Even a century after the ouster of the Tibetans, the dedicatory text on woodblock-printed Avalokiteśvara prayer sheets described the role of the Cao Guiyijun in the suppression of the Tibetans.⁵⁹

Yulin Caves 20 and 38 demonstrate the interest exhibited by the Cao clan in the Maṇḍala of Eight Great Bodhisattvas, and the dialogue between Tang and Tibetan painting styles shows further development from the stylistic bilingualism of the cave shrines constructed under the Zhang clan. Each cave contains

⁵⁶ Linrothe, “Deity and Donor as Vajrasattva,” 13–16.

⁵⁷ Abé, *Weaving of Mantra*, 144.

⁵⁸ This master-disciple relationship is discussed in Abé, *Weaving of Mantra*, 131–33.

⁵⁹ Fraser, *Performing the Visual*, 171.

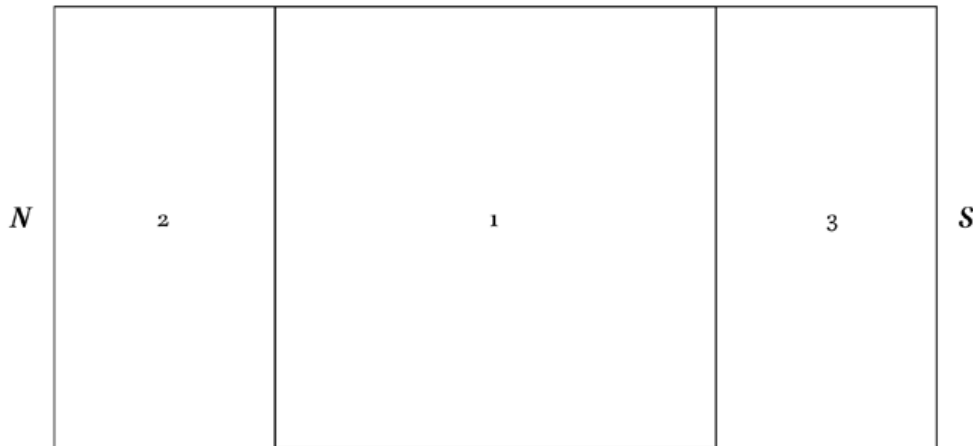


FIGURE 78 Plan of east wall, main chamber of Yulin Cave 20. (1) Bhaiṣajyaguru tableau, (2) Maṇḍala of Eight Great Bodhisattvas (Maitreya), (3) Maṇḍala of Eight Great Bodhisattvas (crowned Mahāvairocana). DRAWING BY ERNEST BARONI.

the large donor images characteristic of the Cao clan in the corridor to the main chamber.⁶⁰ Yulin Cave 20 is located on the east side of the Yulin River. On the north and south sides of the east (or rear) wall of the cave are two paintings of the Maṇḍala of Eight Great Bodhisattvas (fig. 78), both featuring a central Buddha flanked by bodhisattvas and offering goddesses in two vertical columns. In the center of the two maṇḍalas is an image of the pure land of Bhaiṣajyaguru. The central Buddha of the painting on the south side (see fig. 28) is the crowned Mahāvairocana with hands in *dhyāna mudrā*, seated on a lion throne, his body rendered in the elongated Tibetan style. On the north side (see fig. 29), the central Buddha is Maitreya, seated with legs pendent and hands in the *dharmacakra mudrā*; the body is robust and stocky in the Tang style. Despite the differences in iconography, the inscriptions accompanying both Buddhas identify them as “the pure *dharmakāya* Vairocana Buddha” (*qingjing fashen Piluzhena fo* 清淨法身毘盧遮那佛).⁶¹ The Buddha in each

60 From a comparison with other Cao-clan donor images in the Mogao and Yulin cave shrines, and reconstruction of the donor inscriptions, Luo Yao argues that the patrons of Yulin Cave 20 were Cao Yanlu 曹延祿 and his wife, née Yin 陰. See Luo Yao 羅瑤, “Yulinku di 20 ku xin faxian ‘gongyangren xiang’ kao” 榆林窟第20窟新發現“供養人像”考, *Dunhuang yanjiu* 敦煌研究 2004.2:19-22. The conclusions presented here regarding the Cao patronage of Yulin Cave 38 stem from the author’s observations on a field visit to the site. Perhaps demonstrating the interest that the Cao clan had in the Maṇḍala of Eight Great Bodhisattvas, they undertook renovations to Yulin Cave 25 in the tenth century. On the renovations, see Kapstein, “Treaty Temple of the Turquoise Grove,” 57.

61 Liu, “Dunhuang shiku ... (shang),” 21.

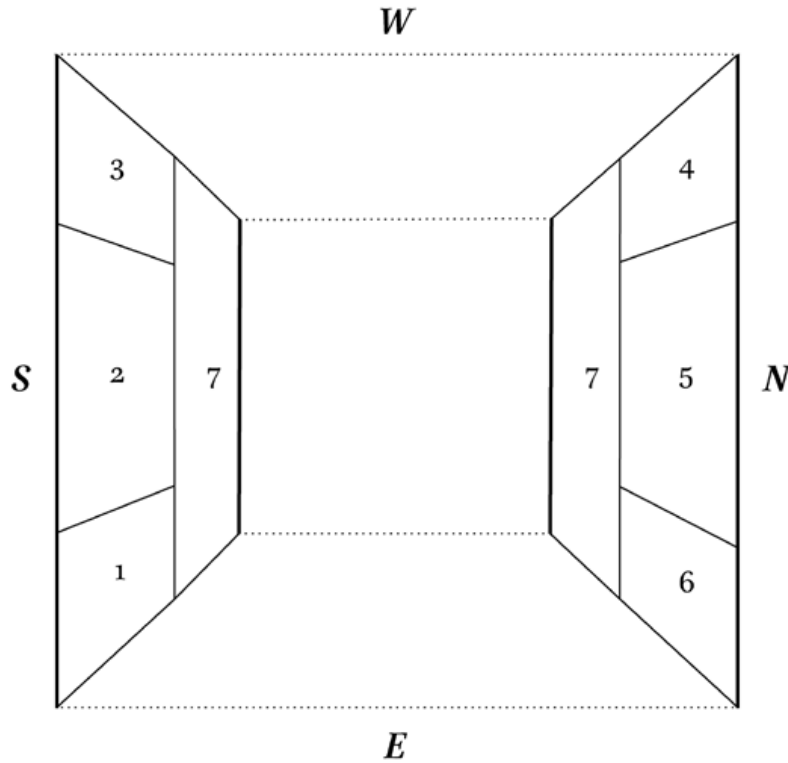


FIGURE 79 *Plan of north and south walls, main chamber of Yulin Cave 38.*

(1) Maṇḍala of Eight Great Bodhisattvas (crowned Mahāvairocana), (2) Bhaiṣajyaguru tableau, (3) Questions of Viśeṣacintibrahma tableau, (4) Questioning Devas tableau, (5) Amitābha tableau, (6) Maṇḍala of Eight Great Bodhisattvas (Śākyamuni), (7) male and female donors. DRAWING BY ERNEST BARONI.

painting is attended by four bodhisattvas in the outer corners and four offering goddesses in the middle; the two paintings jointly exhibit the full range of eight bodhisattvas and eight offering goddesses (four inner and four outer), almost as if the Maṇḍala of Eight Great Bodhisattvas had been divided between two individual paintings.⁶²

A similar pairing of Mahāvairocana with another Buddha is evident in two examples of the Maṇḍala of Eight Great Bodhisattvas painted on the north and south walls of Yulin Cave 38, located on the west side of the Yulin River. The maṇḍala is the easternmost of three paintings on each wall (fig. 79). On the south wall is a maṇḍala that takes the crowned Mahāvairocana, executed in the Tibetan style and assuming the *dhyāna mudrā*, as the central Buddha (fig. 80); opposite is a maṇḍala with Śākyamuni Buddha, painted in the Tang style

62 See the iconographic chart in Liu, “Dunhuang shiku ... (shang),” 22.



FIGURE 80
Maṇḍala of Eight Great Bodhisattvas. *Guiyijun* period (848-1036). Mural painting. South wall, Yulin Cave 38, Anxi, Gansu Province. FROM LIU, "DUNHUANG SHIKU BADA PUSA MANTULUO TUXIANG JIESHUO (XIA)," PLATE 5.



FIGURE 81
Maṇḍala of Eight Great Bodhisattvas. *Guiyijun* period (848-1036). Mural painting. North wall, Yulin Cave 38, Anxi, Gansu Province. FROM PENG, ED., *DUNHUANG SHIKU QUANJI* 10: *MIJIAO HUAJUAN*, 182, PLATE 162.

with hand raised in the *abhaya mudrā*, as the main deity (fig. 81). Each is flanked by a total of eighteen attendant figures lacking identifying inscriptions in a circular pattern.⁶³ These are the sun and moon bodhisattvas, four Wisdom Kings, eight bodhisattvas, and four offering goddesses. The bodhisattvas attending Śākyamuni may be identified as all eight great bodhisattvas of the maṇḍala, whereas those surrounding Mahāvairocana bear more generic attributes.

The pairing of two images of the Maṇḍala of Eight Great Bodhisattvas represents a new innovation under the Cao clan at the Yulin cave shrines. At the same time, earlier elements seen in Mogao Cave 14, including the incorporation of specifically esoteric deities (such as the offering goddesses and Wisdom Kings) and appropriation of Tang and Tibetan artistic styles, are preserved. While the insertion of Śākyamuni and Maitreya into the maṇḍala in this manner is a puzzling development that demands further attention, this might speak yet again to the fluidity of the maṇḍala template.

Amoghavajra and the Vajradhātu Maṇḍala

The *Vajraśekhara Sūtra*, which is the basis for the Vajradhātu Maṇḍala, was transmitted to China by the Indian monk-translator Vajrabodhi in 723; portions were translated by Vajrabodhi and later by his disciple Amoghavajra. The partial translation undertaken by Vajrabodhi and Yixing is entitled *Sūtra of the Vajra Peak Yoga Abbreviated Recitation* (*Jin'gangding yujia zhonglüechu niansong jing* 金剛頂瑜伽中略出念誦經).⁶⁴ Vajrabodhi's biography in *Extended History of Eminent Monks* (*Xu Gaoseng zhuan* 續高僧傳) states that he constructed maṇḍalas for the performance of *abhiṣeka* ceremonies, but does not elaborate on whether or not they were connected with the Vajradhātu Maṇḍala.⁶⁵

Amoghavajra's biographies fill in some of these blanks by providing details of his own *abhiṣeka* ceremony, performed by Vajrabodhi, and the instruction

63 For the iconography of Yulin Cave 38, see Liu Yongzeng 劉永增, "Dunhuang shiku bada pusa mantuluo tuxiang jieshuo (xia)" 敦煌石窟八大菩薩曼荼羅圖像解說 (下), *Dunhuang yanjiu* 敦煌研究 2009.5:8-17; 12-13.

64 *Jin'gangding yujia zhonglüechu niansong jing* is T866. In addition to T865 (Amoghavajra's translation) and T866, a translation was produced by Dānapāla (Shihu 施護) in 1015 (T882). See Orzech, "Esoteric Buddhism in the Tang," 279.

65 Chou, "Tantrism in China," 275, 280. *Xu Gaoseng zhuan* is T50.2060; it was compiled by the monk Daoxuan 道宣 (596-667).

that he received.⁶⁶ In these sources, the numerological systems associated with the Vajradhātu Maṇḍala appear frequently, cementing Amoghavajra's association with the ritual systems of the maṇḍala rather than with the paired maṇḍalas of the Shingon tradition. The *Vajraśekhara Sūtra* is based upon the system of Five Families or Five Buddhas (*pañcatathāgata*) – also known as the aforementioned Five Jinas – characteristic of the yoga tantras, one of the categories of Buddhist literature and ritual practice. The Five Families, also called the Five Divisions (*wubu* 五部), are *tathāgata*, *vajra*, *padma* (lotus), *ratna* (jewel), and *karma* (action), represented by Mahāvairocana at the center surrounded by Akṣobhya, Amitābha, Ratnaśāmbhava, and Amoghasiddhi (fig. 82).⁶⁷ These five Buddhas, along with their sixteen great bodhisattva attendants, eight offering goddesses, four *pāramitās* (perfection bodhisattvas), and four gatekeepers, comprise the thirty-seven chief deities of the Vajradhātu Maṇḍala.⁶⁸

Amoghavajra became Vajrabodhi's disciple as a teenager, taking the tonsure at the age of fifteen and becoming fully ordained at twenty. He received the mind of *bodhi* precepts (*putixin jie* 菩提心戒) when Vajrabodhi led him to the Vajradhātu Maṇḍala and had him throw a flower upon it, observing upon which deity it fell.⁶⁹ After Vajrabodhi's death in 741, Amoghavajra undertook further study in the kingdom of Anurādhapura in what is now present-day Śrī

66 A good introduction to the life of Amoghavajra, including a list of his translations, is Martin Lehnert, "Amoghavajra: His Role in and Influence on the Development of Buddhism," in Charles D. Orzech, Henrik H. Sørensen, and Richard K. Payne, eds., *Esoteric Buddhism and the Tantras in East Asia* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2011), 351–59.

67 Buswell and Lopez, *Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism*, 617. As Steven Weinberger points out, the *Vajraśekhara Sūtra* is the source of many distinctive features that characterize later tantric texts, such as deity yoga and the five-part maṇḍalic structure. As he states, the sūtra "represents the moment when mature Buddhist tantra emerges in India; that it, the Compendium of Principles is the decisive moment of the revolution that is Buddhist tantra." See Steven Neal Weinberger, "The Significance of Yoga Tantra and the Compendium of Principles (*Tattvasaṃgraha Tantra*) within Tantric Buddhism in India and Tibet" (Ph.D. diss., University of Virginia, 2003), 2–3, 13. The author is grateful to Rob Linrothe for this reference.

68 Giebel, *Two Esoteric Sutras*, 12–14. See also ten Grotenhuis, *Japanese Mandalas*, 40–42.

69 *Account of Conduct* (*Da Tang gu dade zeng sikong dabian zhengguangzhi Bukong sanzang xingzhuang* 大唐故大德贈司空大辨正廣智不空三藏行狀, T2056), as translated in Raffaello Orlando, "A Study of Chinese Documents Concerning the Life of the Tantric Buddhist Patriarch Amoghavajra (A.D. 705–774)" (Ph.D. diss., Princeton University, 1981), 136; T50.2056:292b28–29. The *Account of Conduct* was authored by Zhao Qian 趙遷 (active 8th century), who was a lay disciple of Amoghavajra for nine years; see Charles D. Orzech, "After Amoghavajra: Esoteric Buddhism in the Late Tang," in Charles D. Orzech, Henrik H.

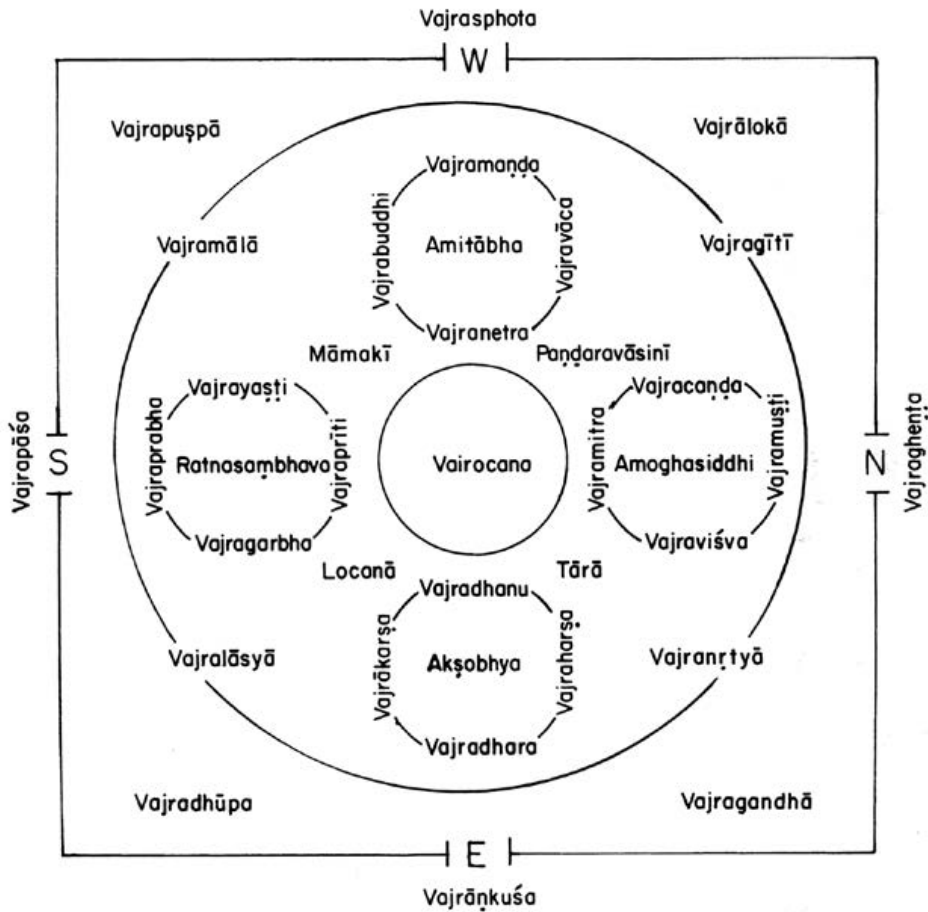


FIGURE 82 *Diagram of the core thirty-seven deities of the Vajradhātu Maṇḍala. From ten Grotenhuis, Japanese Mandalas, 35, fig. 15. DRAWING BY LINDA Z. ARDREY AFTER DAVID L. SNELGROVE IN KLIMBURG-SALTER, SILK ROUTE AND THE DIAMOND PATH, 71, FIG. III.2.*

Laṅkā.⁷⁰ Before departing on his journey, Amoghavajra was entreated by the local governor, Liu Julin 劉巨鱗 of Nanhaijun 南海郡 (where the boat was to

Sørensen, and Richard K. Payne, eds., *Esoteric Buddhism and the Tantras in East Asia* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2011), 315-35; 317-18. See also Chou, "Tantrism in China," 286.

⁷⁰ Although traditional biographies state that Amoghavajra also wished to study in India, the scarcity of evidence suggests that his travels were limited to Śrī Laṅkā. The significance of Southeast Asia to the development of esoteric Buddhism in China is also demonstrated by the likelihood that Amoghavajra's first meeting with Vajrabodhi took place in Java. See Jeffrey Sundberg in collaboration with Rolf Giebel, "The Life of the Tang Court Monk Vajrabodhi as Chronicled by Lü Xiang (呂向): South Indian and Śrī Laṅkā Antecedents to the Arrival of the Buddhist Vajrayāna in Eighth-Century Java and China," *Pacific World* 3rd series 13 (2011): 129-222; 148-53. Amoghavajra likely traveled to Śrī Laṅkā

depart), for *abhiṣeka*. Amoghavajra obliged, “using the vajra and the Three Secrets as support.” The mention of the *vajra* suggests that, like Vajrabodhi, Amoghavajra also conducted *abhiṣeka* by means of the Vajradhātu Maṇḍala. Indeed, the number of monks that accompanied him on board the ship was thirty-seven, the same as the number of core deities in the Vajradhātu Maṇḍala.⁷¹

Once in Śrī Laṅkā, Amoghavajra sought out the *ācārya* Samantabhadra for instruction in the yoga doctrine of the *Vajraśekhara Sūtra* and the *abhiṣeka* of the Five Divisions. He also received instruction on how to construct the Garbhadhātu Maṇḍala of the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra*.⁷² Despite his tutelage in the Garbhadhātu Maṇḍala, it is crucial to note that all available evidence indicates that Amoghavajra stressed the Vajradhātu Maṇḍala, not the Garbhadhātu Maṇḍala or the pairing of the two maṇḍalas (as in the Japanese Two Realms Maṇḍala).⁷³ Following the period of time that he spent in Śrī Laṅkā, Amoghavajra went to India and subsequently returned to Chang’an in 746.

The Vajradhātu Maṇḍala, represented by the Five Divisions, continued to merit attention in Amoghavajra’s biographies for their use during the *abhiṣeka* ceremony. In 747, Amoghavajra was asked to construct a maṇḍala inside the palace for the performance of the *abhiṣeka* of the Five Divisions for Emperor Xuanzong 玄宗 (r. 712-56).⁷⁴ In 754 or 755, Amoghavajra was sent by imperial order to the Hexi Corridor to serve the military governor, Geshu Han 哥舒翰 (d. 757). Geshu, too, received the *abhiṣeka* of the Five Divisions and was instructed in the Vajradhātu Maṇḍala, as were his subordinates. All in all, sev-

as a member of a diplomatic envoy sent by Emperor Xuanzong 玄宗 (r. 712-56); see Goble, “Chinese Esoteric Buddhism,” 69-71.

71 *Account of Conduct*, in Orlando, “Study of Chinese Documents,” 139; T50.2056:292c15-21.

72 *Account of Conduct*, in Orlando, “Study of Chinese Documents,” 141; T50.2056:293a7-9; and *Stele Inscription* (*Datang gu dage kaifuyitongsansi shihongluqing Su guogong Daxing-shansi daguangzhi sanzang heshang zhi bei* 大唐故大德開府儀同三司試鴻臚卿肅國公大興善寺大廣智三藏和上之碑), in Orlando, “Study of Chinese Documents,” 163; T52.2120:848c10-14. The *Stele Inscription* was authored by Amoghavajra’s disciple Feixi 飛錫 (active 8th century) and compiled by another disciple, Yuanzhao 圓照 (active second half of 8th century), in the *Memorials and Edicts* (*Daizongchao zeng sikong dabian zheng-guangzhi sanzang heshang biaozi ji* 代宗朝贈司空大辨正廣智三藏和上表制集, T2120); see Orlando, “Study of Chinese Documents,” 159. See also Chou, “Tantrism in China,” 291.

73 Orzech, *Politics and Transcendent Wisdom*, 149-50.

74 *Account of Conduct*, in Orlando, “Study of Chinese Documents,” 142; T50.2056:293a19-20; and *Stele Inscription*, in Orlando, “Study of Chinese Documents,” 164; T52.2120:848c19-20.

eral thousand laypeople were instructed in the method of the Five Divisions.⁷⁵ Finally, in 768, Amoghavajra performed *abhiṣeka* on a grand scale at the monastery Daxingshansi 大興善寺 in Chang'an for the ministers, army commanders, and eunuchs of Emperor Daizong, with more than five thousand monks and laypeople in attendance.⁷⁶ From these records, it is apparent that the *abhiṣeka* of the Five Divisions was a critical aspect of Amoghavajra's clerical activities, both in Chang'an and Wuwei 武威.

The continued significance of the Vajradhātu Maṇḍala and its five-part structure to Amoghavajra can be demonstrated by its integration into new monastery construction, sūtra translations, and ritual manuals. The first example of such a project is the construction of the monastery Jin'gesi 金閣寺 on Mount Wutai, located in Shanxi Province. Long considered the abode of the bodhisattva Mañjuśrī, the mountain's name is translated literally as the "five-terrace mountain," lending itself to associations with the five-part structure of the Vajradhātu Maṇḍala. Furthermore, Mañjuśrī is associated with a five-syllable Mañjuśrī mantra. The Five-Syllable Mañjuśrī seated on a lion was installed as the main icon on the first floor of Jin'gesi. The iconographic program that stretched across the three floors of the structure incorporated many of the deities from the Vajradhātu Maṇḍala, including the offering goddesses and Five Buddhas (fig. 83).⁷⁷

The second example is the "esotericization" of the *Sūtra for Humane Kings*, a process comparable to the introduction of maṇḍalas into the ritual manuals based upon the *Revered and Victorious Dhāraṇī* analyzed earlier.⁷⁸ This sūtra, in turn, was the basis for the maṇḍala appropriated by Kūkai in the planning of the lecture hall at Tōji in Kyoto (fig. 84).⁷⁹ The *Perfect Wisdom Sūtra for Humane Kings Who Wish to Protect Their States* was first translated into Chinese by Kumārajīva (Jiumoluoshen 鳩摩羅什, 334-413); the translation undertaken by Amoghavajra was commissioned by Emperor Daizong in 765 and completed one year later. The historical backdrop for the initiation of the retranslation

75 *Account of Conduct*, in Orlando, "Study of Chinese Documents," 144; T50.2056:293b2-6; and *Stele Inscription*, in Orlando, "Study of Chinese Documents," 165; T52.2120:848c25-27. See also Chou, "Tantrism in China," 294.

76 *Account of Conduct*, in Orlando, "Study of Chinese Documents," 147; T50.2056:293b25-26. This passage does not state specifically that the *abhiṣeka* performed at Daxingshansi was of the Five Divisions, but given the pattern of earlier *abhiṣeka* ceremonies conducted by Amoghavajra, it does not seem unreasonable to think that it might have been.

77 See Wei-cheng Lin, *Building a Sacred Mountain: The Buddhist Architecture of China's Mount Wutai* (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 2014), 143-53.

78 Orzech, *Politics and Transcendent Wisdom*, 149.

79 Bogel, *With a Single Glance*, 80.

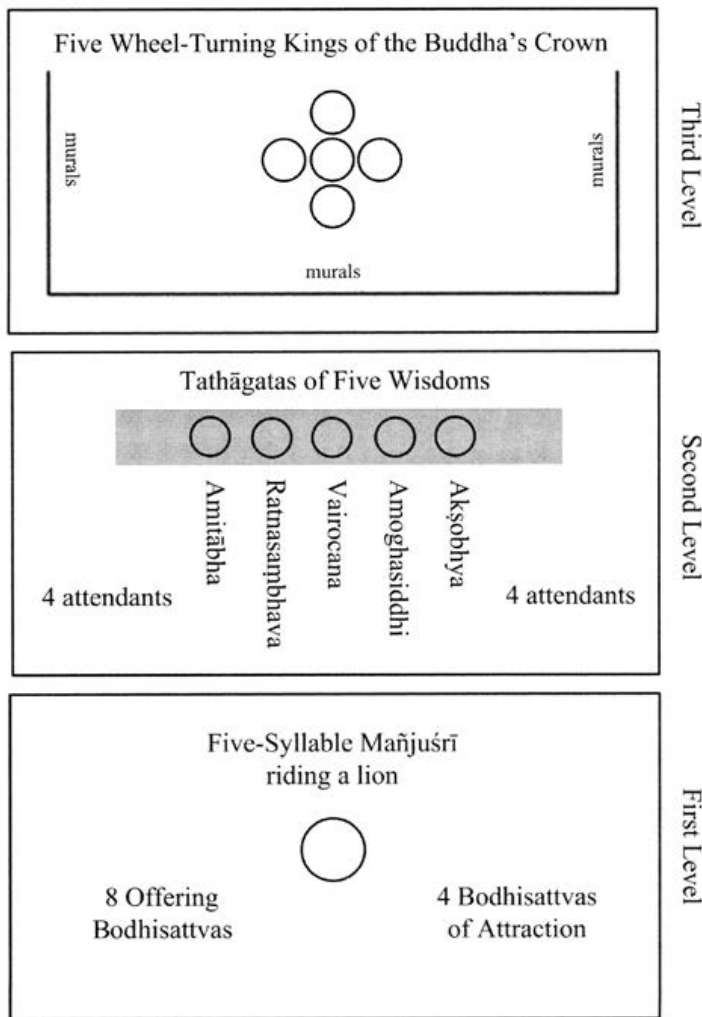


FIGURE 83
Iconographic program
of Jin'gesi, Mount Wutai,
Shanxi Province. Tang
dynasty (618-907), 8th
century. FROM LIN,
*BUILDING A SACRED
MOUNTAIN*, 146, FIG. 5.3.

project was the aftermath of the An Lushan rebellion and the threat of Tibetan invasion; the sūtra is intimately concerned with state protection.⁸⁰ The structure of the Vajradhātu Maṇḍala was woven into the new translation and its devotional practices, and after the completion of the translation, thirty-seven monks were ordained by imperial edict to chant the *Sūtra for Humane Kings* and perform the rituals on Mount Wutai.⁸¹

80 Orzech, *Politics and Transcendent Wisdom*, 160. Kumārajīva's translation of the sūtra is T245; Amoghavajra's translation is T246.

81 Orzech, *Politics and Transcendent Wisdom*, 161.

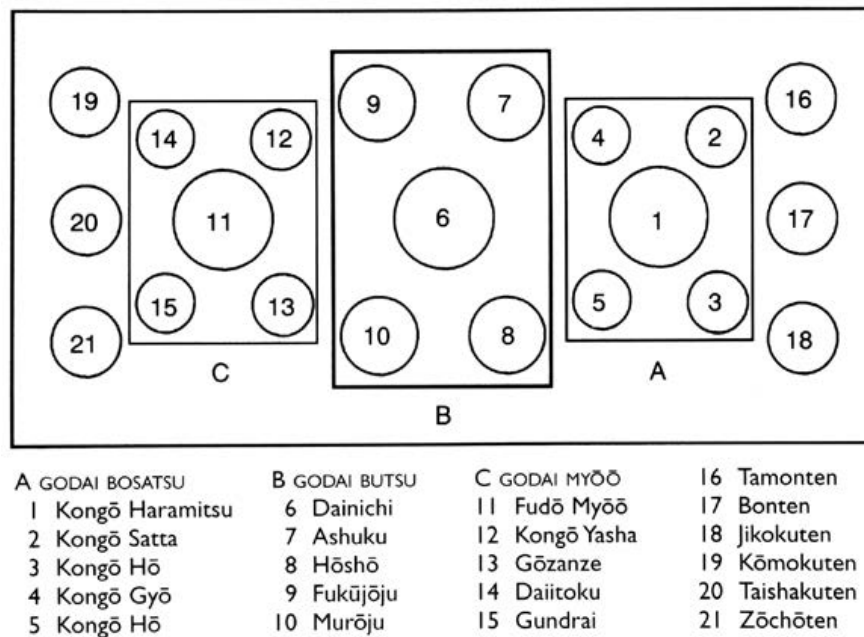


FIGURE 84 *Diagram of the altar in the Lecture Hall of Tōji, Kyoto, Japan. Heian period (794-1185), ca. 839. MASON, PENELOPE, HISTORY OF JAPANESE ART, 2ND ED., 130, FIG. 157 © 2005. REPRINTED BY PERMISSION OF PEARSON EDUCATION, INC., NEW YORK, NEW YORK.*

Maṇḍalas and Ritual Space

At Dunhuang, and indeed, in all of China, no representations of the full Vajradhātu Maṇḍala with its characteristic grid-like structure, as seen in the Japanese Shingon tradition, are extant. Rather, surviving examples are focused on either the thirty-seven core deities or the Five Buddhas. One unusual Tibetan example in the Musée Guimet contains a variation on the thirty-seven-deity Vajradhātu Maṇḍala in the Tibetan style (fig. 85). Due to the number of deities, this painting is commonly known as the *Maṇḍala of the Forty-two Peaceful Deities*.⁸² As one distinctive feature, the Five Buddhas appear

82 Tanaka Kimiaki suggests that the painting represents an older version of the Maṇḍala of the Forty-two Peaceful Deities related to the Nyingma school, which is still in use in Tibet; Tanaka, *Tonkō*, 100-102. According to Karl Debreczeny, this painting, with Akṣobhya at the center, reflects elements from the Guhyasamāja (gSang ba 'dus pa) tantra as well; see his "Mandala of the Forty-two Peaceful Deities," in Martin Brauen, *Mandala: Sacred Circle in Tibetan Buddhism* (Stuttgart: Arnoldsche Art Publishers, 2009), 82-83; 82. This painting and the *Maṇḍala of the Five Buddhas* (fig. 88) analyzed later in this chapter are both discussed in terms of Tibetan style and iconography in Lilla Russell-Smith, *Uyghur Patronage*



FIGURE 85 Maṇḍala of the Forty-two Peaceful Deities. *Tibetan (786-848) or Guiyijun (848-1036) period. Ink and color on silk. 66 × 68,5 cm. From Dunhuang. MUSÉE DES ARTS ASIATIQUES-GUIMET, PARIS, EO.1148. PHOTO: RAVAUX. © RMN-GRAND PALAIS / ART RESOURCE, NY.*

with their female consorts enclosed within lunar disks. In each lunar disk, the Buddha appears on the left with the consort placed on the right. At the very center of the composition, Akṣobhya appears with his consort. Mahāvairocana appears in the lunar disk on the left, and proceeding clockwise, Ratnasambhava appears in the next lunar disk, followed by Amitābha on the right and finally

in Dunhuang: Regional Art Centres on the Northern Silk Road in the Tenth and Eleventh Centuries (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2005), 180-89.

Amoghasiddhi at the bottom. The bodies of all Buddhas are gold and therefore undifferentiated, but the implements serve to identify the figures: the *vajra* of Akṣobhya, the wheel of Mahāvairocana, the lotus blossom of Amitābha, the sword of Amoghasiddhi, and the jewel of Ratnasambhava.

This maṇḍala also incorporates the eight great bodhisattvas, indicating the continued importance of this iconographic grouping in Tibetan Buddhism. Accompanied by the eight offering goddesses, these bodhisattvas appear in the smaller lunar disks placed immediately above and below the larger disks containing Mahāvairocana on the left and Amitābha on the right. As with the Buddhas, the bodhisattvas appear on the left and the offering goddesses are on the right.⁸³ Flame-enclosed guardian deities occupy the four corners of the painting.

As opposed to complex images such as the *Maṇḍala of the Forty-two Peaceful Deities*, the Vajradhātu Maṇḍala was more frequently reflected at Dunhuang in the grouping of the Five Buddhas. The Five Jinas are associated not only with the cardinal directions but also with the five wisdoms (*wuzhi* 五智), which are reflected, in turn, in the aforementioned Five Families of *tathāgata*, *vajra*, *padma*, *ratna*, and *karma*. Because of their concurrent associations with the cardinal directions, the five types of wisdom, and the Five Families, the system of the Five Buddhas is also known as the Five Divisions, a term referenced repeatedly in biographical sources concerning Amoghavajra.

Returning to the *Maṇḍala of the Forty-two Peaceful Deities*, the lunar disks that encircle the bodies of the Buddhas and bodhisattvas affirm the practice of meditative visualization. A common formula for the eidetic visualization of deities begins with the generation of a lunar disk, a practice that appears to have originated with the use of clay disks called *kaśiṇa* as meditative props.⁸⁴ Importantly, we can see the red outlines of a square altar and four gates opening to the cardinal directions, as well as offerings and lamps. These are visual cues that the painting not only represents a maṇḍala, but documents the visu-

83 In the lunar disks above Mahāvairocana are Maitreya in the lunar disk on the left, and Sarvanivāraṇaviṣkambhin in the lunar disk on the right. Below Mahāvairocana are Mañjuśrī on the left, and Avalokiteśvara on the right. In the lunar disks above Amitābha are Kṣitigarbha on the left, and Vajrapāṇi on the right. Finally, below Amitābha are Samantabhadra on the left, and Ākāśagarbha on the right, completing the sequence of eight great bodhisattvas. Tanaka, *Tonkō*, 101. See also Giès, *Les Arts de l'Asie Centrale*, 330-32.

84 Paul Copp, "Visualization and Contemplation," in Charles D. Orzech, Henrik H. Sørensen, and Richard K. Payne, eds., *Esoteric Buddhism and the Tantras in East Asia* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2011), 141-45, 144; Sharf, "Visualization and Mandala," 154-55.

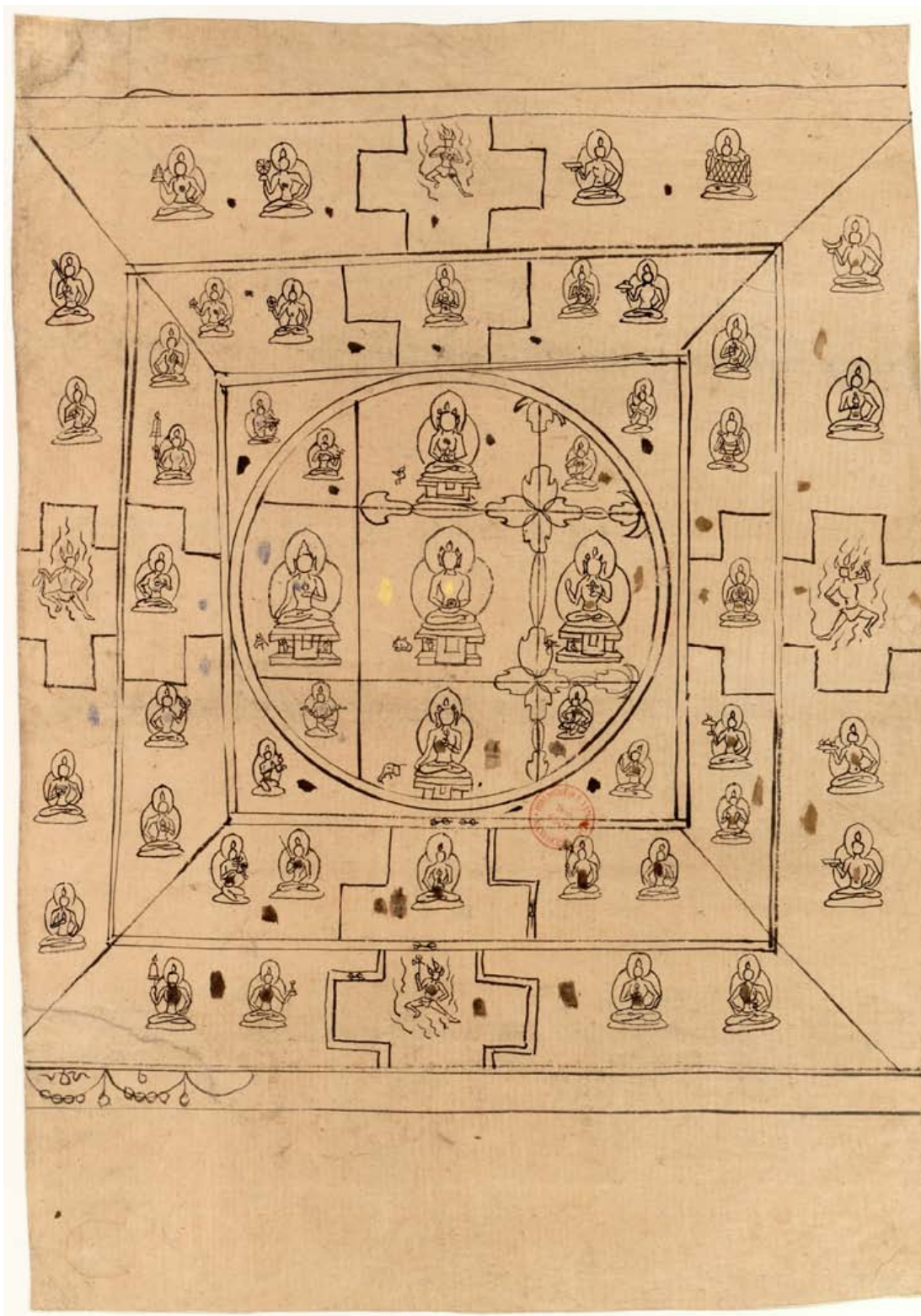


FIGURE 86 *Diagram of Vajra Realm Maṇḍala. Guiyijun period (848-1036), 10th century. Ink on paper. 43.6 × 30.5 cm. From Dunhuang. BIBLIOTHÈQUE NATIONALE DE FRANCE, PARIS, P.4518 (33). COURTESY OF THE BIBLIOTHÈQUE NATIONALE DE FRANCE.*

alization of the deities of the maṇḍala atop a square altar, in a process akin to those analyzed previously with regard to ritual manuals.

Two monochrome ink diagrams, one in the Bibliothèque nationale de France (fig. 86) and the other in the Stein Collection of the British Museum (fig. 87), provide further visual evidence for the mapping of the Vajradhātu Maṇḍala onto the square outlines of an altar. In turn, this mapping practice speaks to the possible uses to which such images were put. The painting of maṇḍalas onto altars in order to show the visualized deities to their proper positions, as well as the use of diagrams as a basis for more formal painted maṇḍalas, have been discussed previously. The body of monochrome ink diagrams and polychrome painted maṇḍalas pertaining to the Vajradhātu Maṇḍala from Dunhuang is extremely limited. Nevertheless, the homology between altars and maṇḍalas is important to bear in mind as we look at maṇḍalic images in which the deities are located inside and outside the bounded confines of the altar, and consider the reasons for these placements.

Drawn within the outlines of a square altar with gates opening to the cardinal directions, the two monochrome ink diagrams are comparable in their design. Wrathful deities enclosed in flames guard the gates in both diagrams. The remaining deities are represented similarly in their anthropomorphic forms, in varying levels of detail. A crowned Mahāvairocana occupies the center of both maṇḍala diagrams with hands assuming the *dhyāna mudrā*, reinforcing the aforementioned enlightenment narrative centered upon his coronation in Akaniṣṭha Heaven. Where the two images differ is in the number of deities, the manner in which they are arranged in the innermost precinct of the maṇḍala, and the presence or absence of indications for the colors associated with each quadrant of the maṇḍala.

In the Bibliothèque nationale image (see fig. 86), the Five Buddhas are enclosed within the innermost circle of the composition, alternating with the four inner offering goddesses; the four outer offering goddesses are located outside the circular border. A small drawing to the side of each Buddha represents the animal that should appear in that deity's throne: the lion of Mahāvairocana, the elephant of Akṣobhya, the horse of Ratnasambhava, the peacocks of Amitābha, and the *garuda* (a mythical bird-like creature) of Amoghasiddhi. Each Buddha assumes the appropriate *mudrā* and attribute. Dabs of color on the paper ground indicate the colors associated with each quadrant, beginning with yellow for Mahāvairocana, although the color associations are not precisely correct.⁸⁵ Amitābha of the western quadrant, located

85 Sarah Fraser has suggested that this diagram was used for making paintings or sand maṇḍalas. See Fraser, *Performing the Visual*, 152–53.

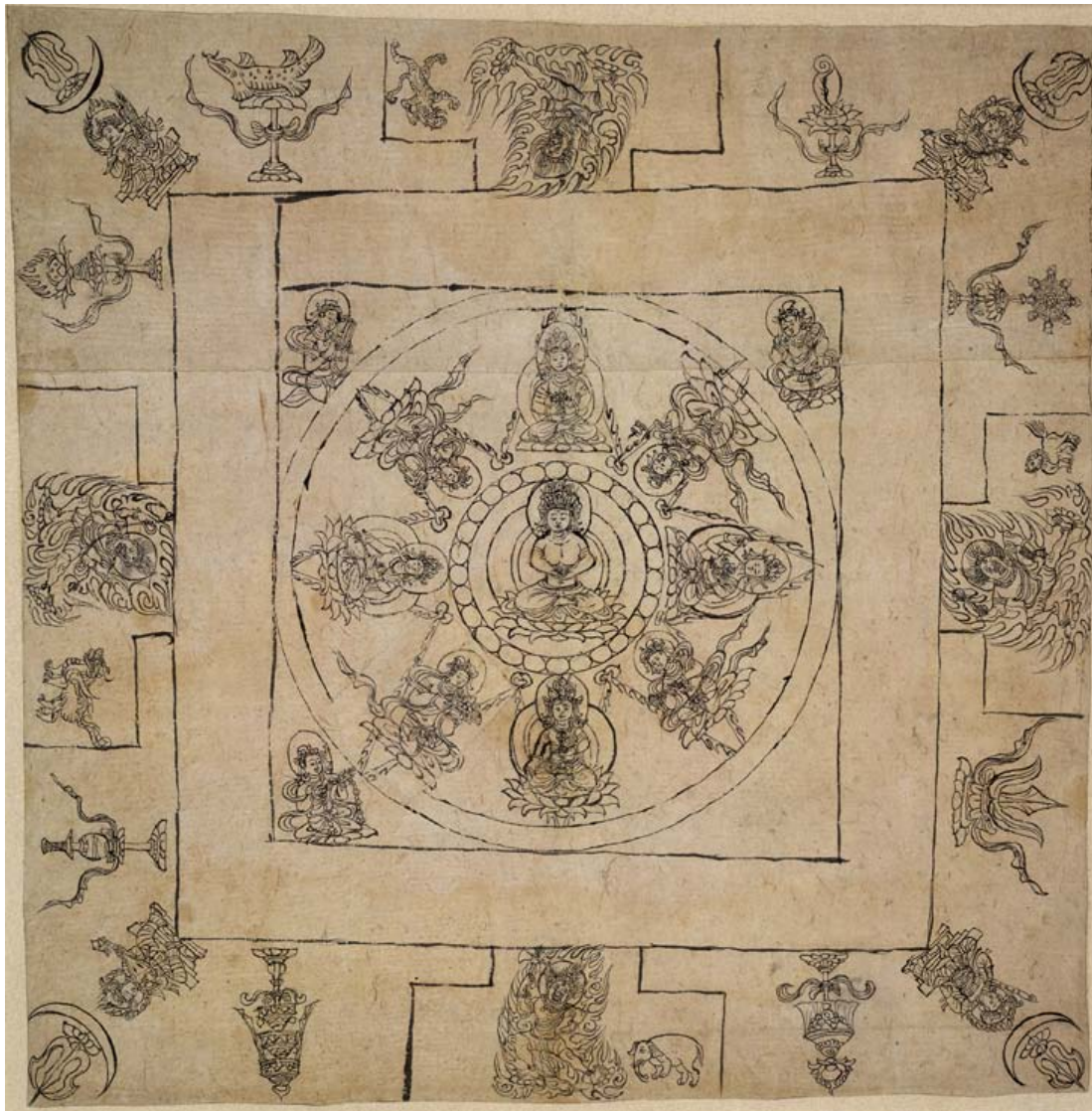


FIGURE 87 *Diagram of Maṇḍala of Five Jina Buddhas. Guiyijun period (848-1036), late 9th century. Ink on paper. 44.8 × 43.2 cm. From Dunhuang. BRITISH MUSEUM, LONDON, 1919,0101,0.173 (CH.00428). © THE TRUSTEES OF THE BRITISH MUSEUM.*

at the top, displays the *dhyāna mudrā* and holds a lotus blossom; Amoghasiddhi assumes the *abhaya mudrā* and holds a *vajra*; Akṣobhya holds a *vajra* and displays the *bhūmisparśa mudrā*; and Ratnasambhava holds a jewel and also displays the *bhūmisparśa mudrā*.

In the Stein Collection diagram (see fig. 87), the Buddhas are distributed in a more systematic fashion into four of the eight wheel spokes surrounding the central figure of the crowned Mahāvairocana in *dhyāna mudrā*, who is seated upon a lotus pedestal. On the other four wheel spokes are the four inner offering goddesses. As for the Buddhas surrounding Mahāvairocana, Amitābha is at

the top, oriented toward the west, with hands in the *dhyāna mudrā* and holding a lotus blossom. On the right is Amoghasiddhi in the northern quadrant, holding a *vajra* with hands in the fear-not gesture. On the bottom is Akṣobhya in the eastern quadrant, holding a *vajra* and with right hand in the *bhūmisparśa mudrā*. Lastly, Ratnasambhava is situated to the left in the southern quadrant, holding a jewel and with right hand forming the *bhūmisparśa mudrā*.

It has been hypothesized that monochrome ink diagrams such as these two examples could have been used as visualization aids or for painting production.⁸⁶ Polychrome paintings depicting solely the Five Buddhas do not exist at Dunhuang, despite the longevity of the motif in central Tibet.⁸⁷ Importantly, polychrome paintings that depict the Five Buddhas of the Vajradhātu Maṇḍala only take the form of compositions in which these Buddhas are joined with a nine-part maṇḍala, a maṇḍala in which the central figure is surrounded by eight attendant deities. In these paintings, the Buddhas are not depicted inside an altar, as they are in the *Maṇḍala of the Forty-two Peaceful Deities* or the ink diagrams in the Bibliothèque nationale and the Stein Collection.⁸⁸ Given the close association between maṇḍalas, altars, and meditative visualization, the question, then, is why aren't they?

In a maṇḍala on silk in the Musée Guimet (fig. 88), titled *Maṇḍala of the Five Buddhas*, the crowned Mahāvairocana in *dhyāna mudrā* occupies the center of a Five-Buddha configuration that encompasses two-thirds of the pictorial space. Along the diagonal axes, as if delineating the four corners of a square around Mahāvairocana, are the figures of the four remaining Buddhas, all now assuming the *dhyāna mudrā*. In the upper left corner is Ratnasambhava, the Buddha of the south, holding a jewel, with blue skin and blue horses in his

86 See Fraser, *Performing the Visual*, 149-54.

87 Christian Luczanits, "On the Iconography of Tibetan Scroll Paintings (*Thang Ka*) Dedicated to the Five Tathāgatas," in Erberto F. LoBue, ed., *Art in Tibet: Issues in Traditional Tibetan Art from the Seventh to the Twentieth Century: PIATS 2003: Tibetan Studies: Proceedings of the Tenth Seminar of the International Association for Tibetan Studies, Oxford, 2003* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2011), 37-51. According to Tanaka Kimiaki, the presence of iconography at Dunhuang based upon the Five Buddhas coincides with Tibetan-language manuscripts at Dunhuang; see Tanaka, *Tonkō*, 9. While the Five Buddhas are equally present in Chinese-language manuscripts (discussed in Chapter Four), it is clear that Tibetan interest in the Vajradhātu Maṇḍala was present at Dunhuang.

88 Christian Luczanits has referred to such a composition (without an altar) as a "horizontal maṇḍala," in reference to the paintings of Himalayan Buddhist temples. The term refers to paintings in which the attendant deities are arranged around the central Buddha, but lacking the spatial template of the palace, or any clear enclosures altogether. See his *Buddhist Sculpture in Clay*, 73.

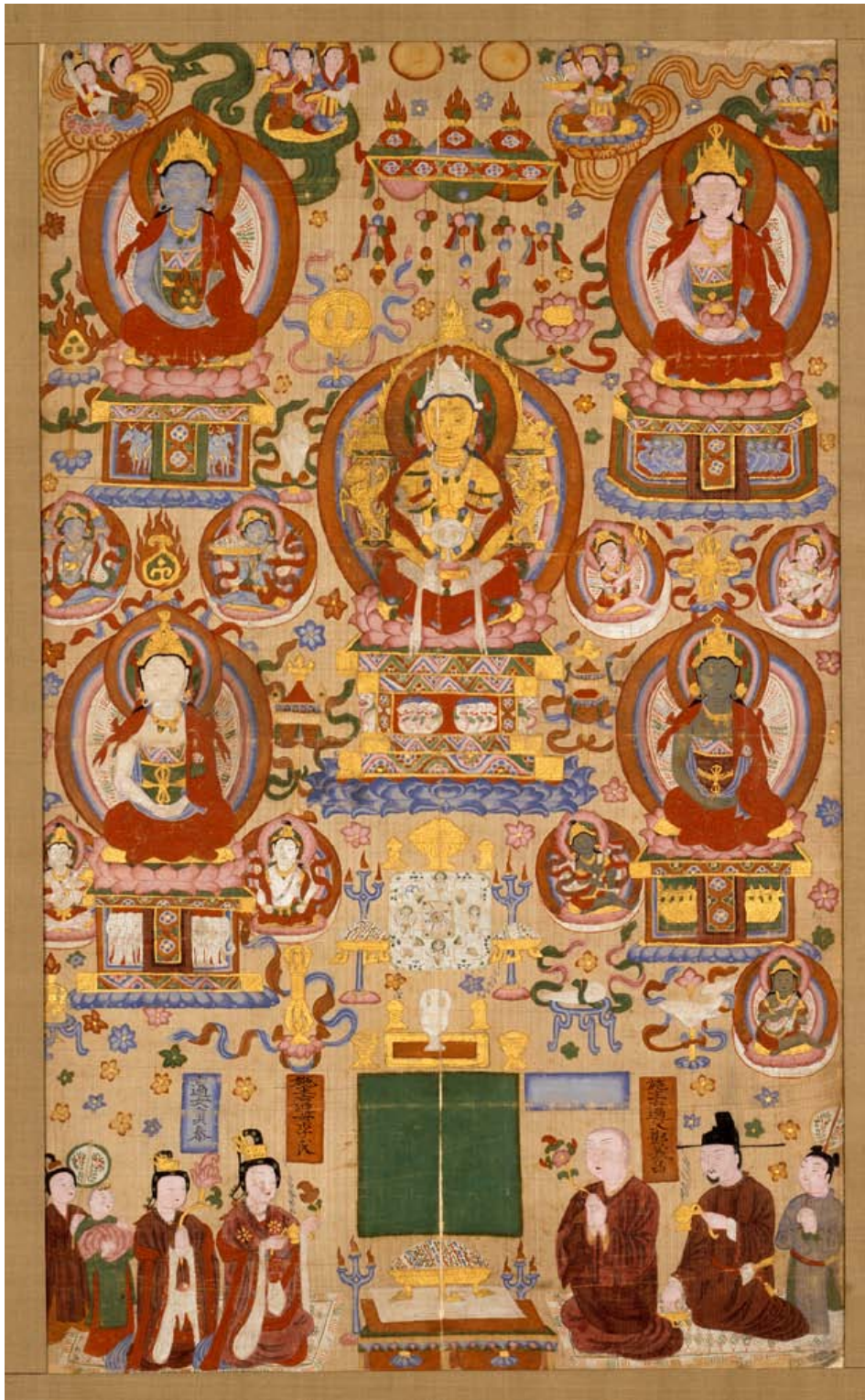


FIGURE 88 Maṇḍala of the Five Buddhas. *Guiyijun* period (848-1036), second half of 10th century. Ink and color on silk. 101.5 × 61 cm. From Dunhuang. MUSÉE DES ARTS ASIATIQUES—GUIMET, PARIS, MG.17780. PHOTO BY RICHARD LAMBERT. © RMN-GRAND PALAIS / ART RESOURCE, NY.

throne. In the upper right corner is Amitābha, the Buddha of the west, holding a lotus blossom, with red skin and peacocks in the throne. In the lower right corner is Amoghasiddhi, Buddha of the north, holding a *vajra*, with green skin and *garudas* in the throne. Finally, in the lower left corner is Akṣobhya, Buddha of the east, holding a *vajra*, with white skin and elephants in his throne.⁸⁹

Below or next to each of the thrones of the four Buddhas in the corners is a pair of offering goddesses, altogether representing the full retinue of eight inner and outer offering goddesses of the Vajradhātu Maṇḍala. Below Ratna-saṃbhava are Vajrapuṣpā (Adamantine Flower; Jin'gang hua 金剛華) holding a dish of flowers, and Vajramālā holding a garland. Below Amitābha are Vajralokā (Adamantine Lamp; Jin'gang deng 金剛燈) holding a lamp, and Vajragīti playing a musical instrument. Below Amoghasiddhi are Vajranṛtyā dancing, and Vajragandhā (Adamantine Perfume; Jin'gang tuxiang 金剛塗香). Finally, next to Akṣobhya's throne are Vajralāsyā with both fists on her thighs, and Vajradhūpā (Adamantine Incense; Jin'gang xiang 金剛香) holding an incense burner. Each pair of offering goddesses contains one inner and one outer offering goddess, and their placement by each of the four Buddhas corresponds roughly to their correct order in the Vajradhātu Maṇḍala.⁹⁰

Curiously, the deities of the maṇḍala are depicted neither in lunar disks nor within an altar. Rather, they appear to be suspended uneasily in a void. The foreshortening of their thrones further adds to the viewer's sense of disorientation as the perspectival effects compete with the unnatural spatial arrangement of the figures. The space that is inhabited by the Buddhas is quite distinct from that occupied by the donor figures below; the former float free from the forces of gravity, while the latter are planted firmly on the ground.

In the lower third of the painting are images of four donors flanked by attendants and divided according to gender, with females to the left and males to the right (fig. 89). The bodies of these figures, too, are foreshortened, although here they are anchored firmly to the ground plane of the painting. One of the male donors is a monk, who may have played an important role in the ritual that is commemorated by this painting. The male donor behind the monk is identified by the Chinese inscription as "Deng Yichang, deceased father of the donor" (*shizhu wangguofu Deng Yichang* 施主亡過父鄧義昌). The female donor figures, in turn, represent Lady Li 李氏, the deceased mother of the donor, and Yuntai 員泰, their deceased daughter. The living donor, son of Deng Yichang and Lady Li, must have sponsored a mortuary ritual for his

89 Jacques Giès, ed., Hero Friesen, trans., *The Arts of Central Asia: The Pelliot Collection in the Musée Guimet* (London: Serindia Publications, 1996), 69.

90 Giès, ed., *Arts of Central Asia*, 69.



FIGURE 89 ↑
Detail of donor figures,
 Maṇḍala of the Five
 Buddhas (*fig. 88*). MUSÉE
 DES ARTS ASIATIQUES—
 GUIMET. PHOTO BY
 RICHARD LAMBERT.
 © RMN-GRAND PALAIS /
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FIGURE 90
Detail of altar, Maṇḍala
 of the Five Buddhas
 (*fig. 88*). MUSÉE DES
 ARTS ASIATIQUES—
 GUIMET. PHOTO BY
 RICHARD LAMBERT.
 © RMN-GRAND PALAIS /
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family members, perhaps one that was celebrated by the monk pictured next to Deng Yichang.⁹¹

Between the two sets of donors is an altar, suggesting that the devotees are coming together for the performance of a ritual, even in death. Here, the human work of ritual is presented as being separate and distinct from the realm of the Buddhas above, the separateness conveyed through differing perspectival effects. The altar just above the donors' space, transitioning into the Buddhas' realm (fig. 90), is painted with a maṇḍala diagram consisting of a square design, four gates oriented to the cardinal directions guarded by wrathful deities, and an eight-petaled lotus blossom in the center, representing the nine-part maṇḍala form. Lamps, incense burners, a vase of water, and offerings are arranged along the perimeter of the altar.

The painting prompts a sequence of viewing from the bottom up, beginning with the deceased donors, then the altar as a receptacle for visualized deities, and finally the deities themselves. Subtle shifts in perspective serve to demarcate the foreshortened ritual space at the bottom of the painting from the bird's-eye view of the maṇḍala altar as a receptacle for visualized deities, to the frontal images of the Five Buddhas – moving between the human and deified realms. The Five Buddhas might represent deities in the process of being visualized on the surface of the altar, or they may act as a broad signifier for a ritual system based upon the Vajradhātu Maṇḍala. In either case, the choice to depict the Buddhas outside the maṇḍala altar, even when one is clearly visible below, seems significant.

Another polychrome painting that pairs the Five Buddhas with a nine-part maṇḍala is also found in the Musée Guimet (fig. 91).⁹² In the uppermost

91 For documents recording rituals performed by Dunhuang monks on behalf of lay patrons, see Hao Chunwen 郝春文, *Tang houqi Wudai Songchu Dunhuang sengnide shehui shenghuo* 唐後期五代宋初敦煌僧尼的社會生活 (Gaoxiong xian Dashu xiang: Foguangshan wenjiao jijinhui, 2001), 274-77. Lilla Russell-Smith compares stylistic elements that appear in this painting, such as the use of gold leaf, to those seen in Uyghur Manichaean art. She finds similar Uyghur Manichaean stylistic elements in the *Maṇḍala of the Forty-two Peaceful Deities* as well. Based on this and comparisons to Turfan painting fragments, she argues that the donors of the *Maṇḍala of the Five Buddhas* might have been female Uyghur devotees; see Russell-Smith, *Uyghur Patronage in Dunhuang*, 189-208. The names Deng Yichang and Yuantai appear in two Chinese manuscripts from Dunhuang dating to the late tenth century that are now in the Pelliot Collection. See Giès, *Les Arts de l'Asie Centrale*, 331.

92 A stylistically comparable painting from Dunhuang representing fragments from an Avalokiteśvara maṇḍala is in the collection of the National Museum in New Delhi. See Klimburg-Salter, *Silk Route and the Diamond Path*, plates 62, 63.



FIGURE 91 Maṇḍala of Amoghapāśa. Guiyijun period (848-1036), 10th century. Ink and color on silk. 115 × 65 cm. From Dunhuang. MUSÉE DES ARTS ASIATIQUES-GUIMET, PARIS, EO.3579. © RMN-GRAND PALAIS / ART RESOURCE, NY.



FIGURE 92 Detail of *Five Buddhas*, Maṇḍala of Amoghapaśa (fig. 91). MUSÉE DES ARTS ASIATIQUES–GUIMET. © RMN-GRAND PALAIS / ART RESOURCE, NY.

register of this work, titled *Maṇḍala of Amoghapāśa*, the Five Buddhas are depicted with the crowned Mahāvairocana in the center, seated on a lion throne under a canopy and with hands in the *dhyāna mudrā* (fig. 92). Along the diagonal axes are the remaining four Buddhas. In the upper left corner is Akṣobhya, in the upper right corner is Amitābha, in the lower right corner is Amoghasiddhi, and in the lower left corner is Ratnasambhava. The color scheme and disposition of the Buddhas is identical to those in the previous example from the Musée Guimet, suggesting conceptual links between the two paintings. Another commonality lies in artistic style: the Buddhas of *Maṇḍala of the Five Buddhas* display a Kashmiri style akin to that of the Nelson-Atkins shrine (see fig. 21), and the deities of *Maṇḍala of Amoghapāśa* manifest the taut Tibetan figural style of the mural paintings in Yulin Cave 25 and Mogao Cave 14.

On the left and right of the Buddhas are two bodhisattvas, both forms of Avalokiteśvara: Cintāmaṇicakra with six arms on the left, and the Thousand-Armed Avalokiteśvara on the right. More forms of Avalokiteśvara are visible in the maṇḍala at the center of the painting, which takes Amoghapāśa as the main deity and arranges the remaining eight deities on the eight spokes of the wheel (fig. 93). Four guardian deities encased in flames occupy the four gates of the maṇḍala. The inner circle of the maṇḍala is enclosed within a border of *vajras*. On the four spokes oriented toward the gates are different forms of Avalokiteśvara: Hayagrīva and the four-armed Avalokiteśvara.⁹³ On the four intermediate wheel spokes are the four inner offering goddesses; directly outside the circle of *vajras* are the four outer offering goddesses.

The inclusion of the inner and outer offering goddesses indicates that this maṇḍala adapted certain elements from the Vajradhātu Maṇḍala, which is referenced by the Five Buddhas at the top of the composition. Yet it is the bodhisattvas that are arranged inside the maṇḍala, rather than the Buddhas. The reason for this may lie in a textual source that most likely is associated with this painting: the *Sarvadurgatipariśodhana tantra*, one of the most important sources for Vairocana in Tibetan Buddhism.⁹⁴ The earlier of the two versions of this tantra was translated by the Indian monk Śāntigarbha, who was also responsible for the consecration of Samye.⁹⁵ The circulation of the *Sarvadurgatipariśodhana tantra* in Tibet may be credited to the eighth-century Indian

93 Nicole Vandier-Nicolas, *Bannières et peintures de Touen-Houang conservées au Musée Guimet*, vol. 14 (Paris: l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres, 1974-76), 219-20. Klimburg-Salter, *Silk Route and the Diamond Path*, 136, provides a detailed summary of the painting's iconography.

94 Kapstein, *Tibetan Assimilation of Buddhism*, 62-63.

95 Weinberger, "Significance of Yoga Tantra," 140.



FIGURE 93 *Detail of maṇḍala*, Maṇḍala of Amoghapaśa (fig. 91). MUSÉE DES ARTS ASI-ATIQUES-GUIMET. © RMN-GRAND PALAIS / ART RESOURCE, NY.

monk Buddhagupta, who composed commentaries on the tantra at the Tibetan court under Tri Songdetsen.⁹⁶ Some of the writings of Buddhagupta have been found among the Tibetan manuscripts from Dunhuang. The basic narrative of the *Sarvadurgatipariśodhana tantra* mirrors that of the Chinese-language *Sūtra of the Revered and Victorious Dhāraṇī of the Buddha's Uṣṇīṣa*. In the opening sequence, Indra questions the Buddha regarding the fate of the deity

96 Weinberger, "Significance of Yoga Tantra," 141. It is not clear, however, from the Dalton and van Schaik index to Tibetan tantric manuscripts (*Tibetan Tantric Manuscripts from Dunhuang*) whether any of the copies of the *Sarvadurgatipariśodhana tantra* or ritual manuals are attributed to Buddhagupta.



FIGURE 94 Detail of donor figures, Maṇḍala of Amoghapāśa (fig. 91). MUSÉE DES ARTS ASIATIQUES–GUIMET. © RMN-GRAND PALAIS / ART RESOURCE, NY.

Vimalamaṇiprabha, who had died, departing from Trāyastriṃśa Heaven. The Buddha reveals that Vimalamaṇiprabha has been reborn in Avīci Hell, where he is doomed to suffer for tens of thousands of years. The assembled deities then implore the Buddha to save Vimalamaṇiprabha from this suffering, whereupon Indra circumambulates the Buddha, who enters into a state of *samādhi* and reveals the incantation of the Buddha Sarvadurgatipariśodhanarāja. This incantation, it is said, has the power to save devotees from untimely deaths and evil destinies.⁹⁷

For this reason, the *Sarvadurgatipariśodhana tantra* was associated with Tibetan mortuary rituals. This fits the probable ritual function of the *Maṇḍala of the Five Buddhas*, which commemorates the deceased family members of the donor. Although the cartouches of the *Maṇḍala of Amoghapāśa* have been left blank (fig. 94), the arrangement of donor figures, including a monk, is comparable to those in the *Maṇḍala of the Five Buddhas*. Therefore, it is possible that the *Maṇḍala of Amoghapāśa* also may have been commissioned for the commemoration of mortuary rites. Moreover, the directional color scheme of the Five Buddhas in both paintings is the same as that presented in the *Sarvadurgatipariśodhana tantra*.⁹⁸

The *Sarvadurgatipariśodhana tantra* originally contained a total of eleven maṇḍalas; the primary maṇḍala is comprised of thirty-seven deities, like the

97 Skorupski, *Sarvadurgatipariśodhana tantra*, 4-10.

98 Michelle McCoy, "Maṇḍala of Avalokiteśvara of the Unfailing Lasso (Amoghapāśa)," in Neville Agnew, Marcia Reed, and Tevvy Ball, eds., *Cave Temples of Dunhuang: Buddhist Art of China's Silk Road* (Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Trust, 2016), 236-39; 237. The directional color scheme is presented in Skorupski, *Sarvadurgatipariśodhana tantra*, 27-28.

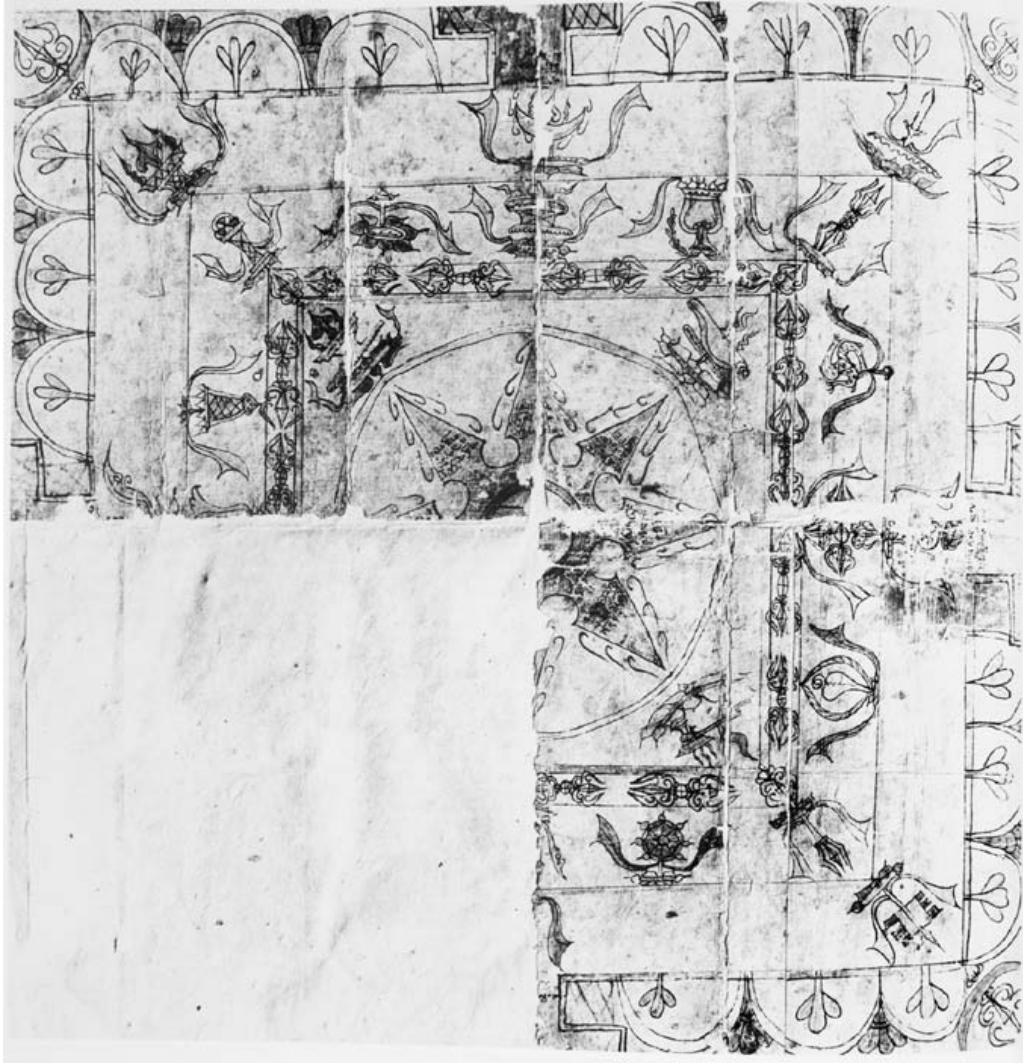


FIGURE 95 *Diagram of Sarvadurgatipariśodhana tantra maṇḍala. Tibetan (786-848) or Guiyijun (848-1036) period. Ink on paper. 57.7 × 55.8 cm. From Dunhuang. NATIONAL MUSEUM OF INDIA, NEW DELHI, CH.00398. FROM KLIMBURG-SALTER, SILK ROUTE AND THE DIAMOND PATH, 148, PLATE 73.*

Vajradhātu Maṇḍala, although the deities are not exactly the same.⁹⁹ This is no accident, as this text and the *Vajraśekhara Sūtra* may have been composed in India at around the same time.¹⁰⁰ The *Sarvadurgatipariśodhana tantra* may be

99 Both versions A (circulated in the late eighth century) and B (circulated in the thirteenth century) of the tantra, upon which Skorupski's translation is based, are the same in this respect. The primary maṇḍala, which is taught in Chapter One of the tantra, is named the Sarvatathāgata Sarvadurgatipariśodhanatejorāja maṇḍala. See Skorupski, *Sarvadurgatipariśodhana tantra*, 11-34.

100 Weinberger, "Significance of Yoga Tantra," 141.

ascribed to the Vajraśekhara class of yoga tantras, and the two share similarities in iconography.¹⁰¹ The deities surrounding the central Buddha are not the four directional Buddhas but rather the eight Uṣṇīṣas (Buddha peaks), as seen in an ink diagram from Dunhuang in the National Museum of India (fig. 95).¹⁰² The composition consists of an eight-spoked wheel in the center, with the names of five of the eight Uṣṇīṣas written in Tibetan on the spokes.¹⁰³ Despite this difference in iconography, the Five Families figure prominently in the *Sarvadurgatipariśodhana tantra*, as the practitioner performs repentance in the presence of the deities of the *tathāgata*, *vajra*, *padma*, *ratna*, and *karma* families.¹⁰⁴

Therefore, although the Five Buddhas are not the deities visualized in the maṇḍala of the *Sarvadurgatipariśodhana tantra*, they nonetheless form a crucial part of its ritual framework. This could explain why the Five Buddhas in the *Maṇḍala of the Five Buddhas* and the *Maṇḍala of Amoghapāśa* are suspended above the maṇḍala altar, rather than located inside it. While the deities of the maṇḍala in the tantra are not depicted, the maṇḍala of the latter work takes Amoghapāśa as its main deity. Reflecting the iconographic program of this painting, a particular Tibetan manuscript from Dunhuang describes an Amoghapāśa maṇḍala. Furthermore, the remaining maṇḍalas mentioned in the manuscript pertain to the *Sarvadurgatipariśodhana tantra*, pointing to conceptual associations between the tantra and Amoghapāśa.¹⁰⁵

The spatial orientation of the Five Buddhas in the two paintings in the Musée Guimet is echoed in the painting on the uppermost surface of the truncated pyramidal ceiling of Mogao Cave 14 (fig. 96). The ceiling slopes and flat

101 Tanaka, *Tonkō*, 72. Furthermore, the versions of the seven-lion throne of Mahāvairocana as represented in the Vajradhātu and *Sarvadurgatipariśodhana tantra* maṇḍalas are similar to one another; see Pak Hyōng-kuk 樸亨國, *Vairōchanabutsu no zuzōgaku teki kenkyū* ヱアイローチャナ佛の圖象學的研究 (Kyoto: Hōzōkan, 2001), 349–50. Pak suggests that this may be related to Śubhakarasiṃha's Vajra Realm method.

102 The term *uṣṇīṣa*, referring literally to the cranial protuberance or peak on top of the Buddha's head, also refers to a set of deities that represent personifications of the Buddha's wisdom. Among the deities in the Hall of Śākyamuni of the Garbhadhātu Maṇḍala is a set of the eight Uṣṇīṣas.

103 Klimburg-Salter, *Silk Route and the Diamond Path*, 149. It is worth noting that the Śubhakarasiṃha ritual manual for the *Revered and Victorious Dhāraṇī* describes eight Uṣṇīṣa Wheel-Turning Kings; however, it is clear that they are intended to be painted within lunar disks and not upon the spokes of a wheel. Steven Weinberger argues for the possibility that the *Revered and Victorious Dhāraṇī* texts represent “proto-versions” of the *Sarvadurgatipariśodhana tantra*; see Weinberger, “Significance of Yoga Tantra,” 142–45.

104 Skorupski, *Sarvadurgatipariśodhana tantra*, 14.

105 Van Schaik, “Tibetan Avalokiteśvara Cult,” 61. The Tibetan manuscript is IOL Tib J 384.



FIGURE 96 Crossed Vajras (*viśvavajra*) and the Buddhas of the Four Directions. *Guiyijun* period (848-1036), second half of 9th century. Mural painting. Ceiling, Mogao Cave 14, Dunhuang, Gansu Province. COURTESY OF THE DUNHUANG ACADEMY.

recessed surface are divided by a combination of intricate floral and geometric borders, and the perimeter of the entire composition is ringed by the fringes of a painted canopy. The *viśvavajra* in the center of the ceiling surface originally was painted in gold before being scratched away. Nevertheless, it is clearly comparable to the *viśvavajra* below the pedestal of Mahāvairocana on the south wall, in the Maṇḍala of Eight Great Bodhisattvas (see fig. 73). Thus, although a figure of Mahāvairocana is absent from the composition on the ceiling of Mogao Cave 14, his presence at the center of this composition is implied, and accordingly, emphasis is placed upon the Buddha's awakening.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁶ In later Tibetan art, the *viśvavajra* is often associated with Amoghasiddhi. At this time, however, no independent cult of Amoghasiddhi with such iconographic characteristics

Within each of the trapezoids that form the quadrants of the ceiling surface is a seated Buddha surrounded by bodhisattvas and other attendants, which arguably represent each of the four directional Buddhas and their retinues. Together with the implied presence of Mahāvairocana, these deities comprise the Five Buddhas of the Vajradhātu Maṇḍala.¹⁰⁷ While a group of five Buddhas is present at the center of the Garbhadhātu Maṇḍala, the four directional Buddhas are interspersed with four bodhisattvas for a total of eight deities surrounding Mahāvairocana, rather than four. Therefore, despite the complete fading of the identifying inscriptions originally brushed in the vertical cartouches below each Buddha on the ceiling of Mogao Cave 14, the grouping of five Buddhas alone must be understood to represent the Vajradhātu Maṇḍala.

Each trapezoid follows the same compositional formula. A Buddha is seated at the center of the composition flanked on either side by two bodhisattvas, with their bodies turned toward the Buddha. In the corners of the trapezoid are two groups of smaller bodhisattvas, all with their hands joined together reverently. Finally, a number of offering bodhisattvas in front of the Buddha prostrate themselves and make offerings. The number of deities depicted on the ceiling panel totals sixty-three in all. As stated previously, the core number of deities in the Vajradhātu Maṇḍala is thirty-seven. The numbers and types of deities in the maṇḍala, and their iconographic characteristics, do not correspond exactly to the deities on the ceiling of Mogao Cave 14. Nevertheless, with the presence of the *viśvavajra* in the center, it is reasonable to make this identification for the Mogao Cave 14 ceiling paintings. In this case, the size and placement of the deities have been predetermined by the shape of the ceiling panel, rather than the boundaries of a square altar.

According to Tanaka Kimiaki, the presence at Dunhuang of iconography based on the Five Buddhas coincides with Tibetan-language manuscripts

existed at Dunhuang. In Mogao Cave 465, which dates to the Yuan dynasty (1279-1368), Amoghasiddhi occupies the north ceiling slope; here, he does not bear a *viśvavajra*. Mogao Cave 465 also exhibits a markedly different treatment of the Five Buddhas on the ceiling slopes and central panel. These figures display a greater sense of individuation than those in Mogao Cave 14; Mahāvairocana Buddha in the central panel is represented in anthropomorphic fashion, with a white body in *dharmacakra mudrā* and his head facing toward the east. The Tibetan-period Mogao Cave 361 also displays a *viśvavajra* on the central ceiling panel, and the ceiling slopes bear the Thousand Buddhas and preaching Buddha motifs. Furthermore, like Mogao Cave 14, Mogao Cave 361 also contains a pairing of the Thousand-Armed Mañjuśrī and Thousand-Armed Avalokiteśvara.

107 This identification is also made in Liang, "Xianmi zachen," 40-57; and Peng, *Mijiao huajuan*, 127.

found there.¹⁰⁸ Indeed, among the Tibetan-language documents from Dunhuang are several that relate to the Vajradhātu Maṇḍala or the *Vajraśekhara Sūtra*.¹⁰⁹ Yet Tibetan manuscripts alone cannot account for the presence of, or interest in, the Vajradhātu Maṇḍala at Dunhuang, and diagrams lacking inscriptions speak neither Tibetan nor Chinese. The multicultural and multilingual population of Dunhuang at the time also defies easy categorization. Equally important was the received local impact of Amoghavajra, who was instrumental in introducing the *abhiṣeka* of the Five Divisions and Vajradhātu Maṇḍala to the Hexi Corridor.

¹⁰⁸ Tanaka, *Tonkō*, 9.

¹⁰⁹ IOL Tib J 417/1 contains a ritual manual associated with the *Vajraśekhara Sūtra*; the second part, IOL Tib J 417/2, also contains a ritual manual based upon the sūtra. IOL Tib J 448/1, which also contains a ritual manual associated with the *Sarvatathāgatatattvasaṃgraha*, may be compared with IOL Tib J 417/1. IOL Tib J 447/1 contains a commentary on a ritual manual relating to the Vajradhātu Maṇḍala, and is associated with the *Vajraśekhara Sūtra*. IOL Tib J 576/3 is a ritual manual that contains instructions for generating a Vajradhātu Maṇḍala. Two other portions of the same manuscript, IOL Tib J 576/1 and IOL Tib J 576/5, also contain content related to the *Vajraśekhara Sūtra*. See Dalton and van Schaik, *Tibetan Tantric Manuscripts*, 153-55, 189, 191-92, 275-78.

Maṇḍalas, Repentance, and Vision

During the Guiyijun era, the spatial template of the Vajradhātu Maṇḍala was intertwined in new ways with pre-existing repentance rites (*chanfa* 懺法) and the conferral of bodhisattva precepts. As this chapter will demonstrate, an important connecting thread between the maṇḍala and these rites was the mediation of soteriology by visions and visionary experience. This conceptual framework was then mapped onto the architectural space of Mogao Cave 14. Furthermore, an examination of little-studied Dunhuang manuscripts in conjunction with the mural paintings of this cave will reveal how new forms of repentance and bodhisattva ordination mutually reinforced the visual program of the cave shrine.

In medieval China, repentance and bodhisattva ordination were closely related practices. Repentance refers to the elimination of the negative karma of one's sins in daily practice or in ceremonies that could last between seven days and several months or even years.¹ The primary means of repentance fell into three main categories: visualization, a single practitioner facing a single icon, and public repentance.² Other instructions stipulated that repentance be practiced within an isolated sanctuary.³ As we will see, certain templates for repentance ceremonies, including those shaped by the spatial forms and pantheons of maṇḍalas, circulated throughout Buddhist Asia.

Repentance could be practiced for its own merits, or as a preliminary step before the conferral of bodhisattva precepts, which were established in China during the fifth century.⁴ To accept the bodhisattva precepts entailed seeking awakening for others as well as for oneself, just as a bodhisattva does. The bodhisattva ordination developed from the infusion of the standard ordination

1 See Hao, *Tang houqi Wudai Songchu Dunhuang*, 202-24 and Daniel B. Stevenson, "The Four Kinds of Samādhi in Early T'ien-t'ai Buddhism," in Peter N. Gregory, ed., *Traditions of Meditation in Chinese Buddhism* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1986), 45-97.

2 On the monk Daoxuan's classification of repentance rites, see Kuo Li-ying, *Confession et contrition dans le bouddhisme chinois du Ve au Xe siècle* (Paris: École française d'Extrême-Orient, 1994), 29-30.

3 Stevenson, "Four Kinds of Samādhi," 48.

4 For a regional overview of the Buddhist precepts, including bodhisattva precepts, see Tōru Funayama, "The Acceptance of Buddhist Precepts by the Chinese in the Fifth Century," *Journal of Asian History* 38.2 (2004): 97-120, especially 104-6. The author thanks Amanda Goodman for this reference.

ceremonies for monks and nuns with the language of the bodhisattva path. In the resulting bodhisattva ordination ceremonies, monastics and laypeople alike undertook the bodhisattva precepts, which also could be conferred as a solitary practice.⁵

The successful completion of a bodhisattva ordination ceremony often was marked by the attainment of visions. This was especially the case in self-ordination rites that could be carried out directly in the presence of Buddha and bodhisattva icons, without the intervention of a monk. According to the *Brahma's Net Sutra*, an important source for the bodhisattva precepts, the practitioner repents for seven days. If, after this period, he sees auspicious signs such as the Buddhas coming to rub his head, as well as lights, flowers, and other portents, these are understood to confirm the successful achievement of repentance and conferral of the bodhisattva precepts.⁶ In this sense, vision serves as a direct intermediary between deity and devotee.

Such visionary experience is subjective in that the ability of a practitioner to see is related to his or her level of spiritual attainment. By applying the cognitive framework of the Vajradhātu Maṇḍala to the standard repentance practice and bodhisattva ordination ceremony, however, an entirely new concern is introduced: the subjective nature of vision. This is to say that visions no longer originate solely from the practitioner's level of spiritual perfection, but importantly, now coincide with the visions seen by Mahāvairocana of the Vajradhātu Maṇḍala. Therefore, by visualizing the deities of the Vajradhātu Maṇḍala, the practitioner is able to see, in essence, as Mahāvairocana sees, marking the progression of the path to Buddhahood. As will be shown, the spatialization of the subjective nature of vision was a driving force behind the visual program of Mogao Cave 14.

The Vajra Realm in Ritual Manuals from Dunhuang

As mentioned previously, Amoghavajra's sojourn in the Hexi Corridor during the mid-eighth century was marked by his conferral of the *abhiṣeka* of the Five Divisions on the military governor of Hexi, Geshu Han, a commander of Turkish ancestry who had led the Tang forces against the Tibetans. By Tang imperial order, Amoghavajra was sent to Geshu's military headquarters in

5 Davidson, "Initiation," 375; Funayama, "Acceptance of Buddhist Precepts," 106.

6 Nobuyoshi Yamabe, "Visionary Repentance and Visionary Ordination in the Brahmā Net Sūtra," in William M. Bodiford, ed., *Going Forth: Essays Presented in Honor of Professor Stanley Weinstein* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2005), 17-39; 18-19.

Wuwei in 754 or 755, where he translated the *Vajraśekhara Sūtra* and other esoteric Buddhist texts before he was recalled back to the Tang capital by Emperor Xuanzong in 756.⁷ As demonstrated by Chinese-language manuscripts from Dunhuang representing the Vajraśekhara corpus, Amoghavajra's legacy, or his perceived legacy, continued to be felt in the local Buddhism of Dunhuang as much as two centuries later. Of particular interest to our discussion are two ritual manuals that were copied onto P.3920, a Chinese-style *pothī* (palm-leaf manuscript) consisting of 219 sheets, now held in the Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris.⁸ The Chinese *pothī* is indebted to the Indian *pothī*, in which pieces of dried palm leaf that had been trimmed into rectangular sheets were bound together with a hole punched through the middle of each sheet and protected by covers made of wood. Whereas the Indian *pothī* are oriented horizontally, however, with script written from left to right, P.3920 is oriented vertically, with script written in vertical columns from right to left. The fusion of an Indian manuscript format with the norms of written Chinese is further material evidence for the rich cross-cultural interactions of this region.⁹

7 Geoffrey Goble, "The Politics of Esoteric Buddhism: Amoghavajra and the Tang State," in Andrea Acri, ed., *Esoteric Buddhism in Mediaeval Maritime Asia: Networks of Masters, Texts, Icons* (Singapore: ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute, 2016), 123-39; 131-32. Goble characterizes this period as a turning point in the "adoption" of esoteric Buddhism in Tang China. See also Goble, "Chinese Esoteric Buddhism," 151, 184-89.

8 P.3920 is available from the International Dunhuang Project (<<http://idp.bl.uk/>>) and Gallica (<<http://gallica.bnf.fr/>>) websites (last accessed 5.28.2016). According to the information provided by the IDP, some overlaps are found between P.3920 and T874 (*Jin'gangding yiqie rulai zhenshi she dacheng xianzheng dajiaowang jing* 金剛頂一切如來真實攝大乘現證大教王經), also attributed to Amoghavajra; nevertheless, T874 is absent from both the list of sūtras presented by Amoghavajra to Emperor Daizong (T52.2120.839a26-840a11) and the list of sūtras translated by Amoghavajra in the catalogues (T55.2156:748c22-749c19, T55.2157:879a28-881a7) compiled by his disciple Yuanzhao. The opening passages of the two are identical; what differentiates the two texts is the repentance sequence of P.3920d. T874 primarily consists of a series of contemplations and *mudrās*.

9 For this particular manuscript format, see <<http://idp.bl.uk/education/bookbinding/bookbinding.a4d>> (last accessed 2.17.2015). No extant copies of the *Vajraśekhara Sūtra* are represented in the Chinese-language manuscripts at Dunhuang. Amanda Goodman identifies nine texts from thirty manuscripts that comprise what she terms a "local constellation or 'lineage'" of related texts at Dunhuang. See Goodman, "Ritual Instructions for Altar Methods," 29 n. 72. Of these, P.3920d, P.3920e, and P.3913 are analyzed in the context of their relevance to Mogao Cave 14. Hou Chong characterizes these manuscripts as "manifestations of the sinicization of esoteric Buddhism" (*mijiao Zhongguohuade biao-xian*

The manuals are titled *Profound and Subtle Vajradhātu Mahāsamaya Cultivating Yoga Invocation of All Tathāgatas of the Vajrasekhara Sūtra* (*Jin'gangding jing yiqie rulai shenmiao mimi jin'gangjie da sanmeiye xiuxi yuqie yingqing* 金剛頂經一切如來深妙秘密金剛界大三昧耶修習瑜伽迎請, S.4510v, P.3920d) and *Profound and Subtle Vajradhātu Mahāsamaya Cultivating Yoga Ritual Commentary of the Vajrasekhara Sūtra, Compendium of Principles of all the Tathāgatas* (*Jin'gangding jing yiqie rulai zhenshi she dacheng xianzheng dajiaowang jing shenmiao mimi jin'gangjie dasanmeiye xiuxi yuqie yingqingyi* 金剛頂經一切如來真實攝大乘現證大教王經深妙秘密金剛界大三昧耶修習瑜伽迎請儀, P.3920e).¹⁰ Particularly noteworthy is the fact that the same manuscript also includes the following four *dhāraṇī* sūtras that pertain to certain deities of the iconographic program of Mogao Cave 14: *Preface to the Dhāraṇī Sūtra of the Thousand-Armed and Thousand-Eyed Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva* (*Qianyan qianbi Guanshiyin pusa tuoluoni shenzhou jing xu* 千眼千臂觀世音菩薩陀羅尼神咒經序), *Dhāraṇī Sūtra of Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva of the Thousand Hands and Eyes, and Vast, Complete, Unobstructed Great Compassionate Heart* (*Qian-shou qianyan Guanshiyin pusa guangda yuanman wu'ai dabeixin tuoluoni jing* 千手千眼觀世音菩薩廣大圓滿無礙大悲心陀羅尼經), *Dhāraṇī Sūtra of the Thousand-Eyed and Thousand-Armed Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva* (*Qianyan qianbi Guanshiyin pusa tuoluoni shenzhou jing* 千眼千臂觀世音菩薩陀羅尼神咒經), and *Dhāraṇī Sūtra of Cintāmaṇicakra* (*Ruyilun tuoluoni jing* 如意輪陀羅尼經).¹¹

密教中國化的表現) and points to their localized nature (*difang tese* “*minjian zongjiao*” 地方特色的“民間宗教”), as they appear only in the Dunhuang manuscripts. Hou similarly notes the intersections between P.3920d, P.3920e, and P.3913, particularly in regard to the “small characters” (*xiaozi* 小字) in the former two (discussed later in this chapter) and how they correlate to content in the latter, although he does not elaborate on the characteristics of the altars. See Hou Chong 侯沖, “Mijiao Zhongguo-huade jingdian fenxi: Yi Dunhuang ben ‘Jin'gangding yingqingyi,’ ‘Jin'gangding xiuxi yuqieyi’ he ‘Tanfa yize’ weiqie rudian” 密教中國化的經典分析：以敦煌本《金剛頂迎請儀》、《金剛頂修習瑜伽儀》和《坦法儀則》為切入點, *Yuanguang foxue xuebao* 圓光佛學學報 19 (2012): 141-72.

¹⁰ The first manual is P.3920d, 162r–176v; the second is P.3920e, 177r–200v. The notation system used for individual texts within this manuscript (P.3920) follows Dunhuang yanjiuyuan 敦煌研究院, ed., *Dunhuang yishu zongmu suoyin xinbian* 敦煌遺書總目索引新編 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2000), 305.

¹¹ The Thousand-Armed Avalokiteśvara *dhāraṇī* sūtras correspond to the translation by Zhitong (T20.1057) and portions of the translation (T1060.20.106a-111c) by Bhagavadharma (Jiafandamo 伽梵達摩, active mid-7th century), respectively. The *Dhāraṇī Sūtra of Cintāmaṇicakra* corresponds to the full translation (T20.1080) by Bodhiruci (Putiliuzhi 菩提流志, 6th century). See Goodman, “Ritual Instructions for Altar Methods,” 33 n. 83. Goodman compares the texts of these sūtras to those in other Dunhuang manuscripts as

Dated to the tenth century, P.3920d and P.3920e are ascribed to Amoghavajra, who is cited as “Amoghavajra, Great Expansive Wisdom Tripiṭaka Master of Daxingshansi” (*Da Xingshansi sanzang shamen daguangzhi Bukong* 大興善寺三藏沙門大廣智不空).¹² The title “Great Expansive Wisdom” was imperially conferred upon Amoghavajra in 765, a full decade after his period of residence in the Hexi Corridor.¹³ An additional problem is that neither manual appears in the list of translated works that he presented to Emperor Daizong in 771, or in the catalogues of his translations compiled by his disciple Yuanzhao 圓照 (active second half of 8th century). Therefore, the attribution of these texts to Amoghavajra must be considered questionable.¹⁴ Nevertheless, the manuals provide valuable insight into the manner in which the conceptual template of the Vajradhātu Maṇḍala was put into practice in Dunhuang.

These two manuals provide instructions for repentance and *abhiṣeka* rituals that contain multiple references to the deities of the Vajradhātu Maṇḍala, demonstrating the esotericization of these standard Buddhist rites. Furthermore, they also reflect the practice of meditative visualization or

well. Manuscripts containing such seemingly unrelated groups of texts, often apocryphal, are termed “chain scriptures” (*lianxie jing* 連寫經) by Makita Tairyō, who dates them to the tenth century and argues that such manuscripts characterize the independent nature of Dunhuang Buddhism; see Makita Tairyō 牧田諦亮, *Gikyō kenkyū* 疑經研究 (Kyoto: Kyoto daigaku jinbun kagaku kenkyushō, 1976), 38-39. Neil Schmid notes that these compilations might “represent liturgical traditions”; see his “Dunhuang and Central Asia (With an Appendix on Dunhuang Manuscript Resources),” in Charles D. Orzech, Henrik H. Sørensen, and Richard K. Payne, eds., *Esoteric Buddhism and the Tantras in East Asia* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2011), 365-78; 368. Although P.3920 likely postdates the construction of Mogao Cave 14, the overlaps between such texts and the cave’s iconographic program must be kept in mind. On the large number of tenth century manuscripts from the library cave, see van Schaik and Galambos, *Manuscripts and Travellers*, 25.

12 For Amoghavajra’s titles, see P.3920d, 162r2 and P.3920e, 177r2. The Song-dynasty copyist for P.3920d was Vajradharma samaya (Fuluodama sanmoye 縛囉達麼參摩野), also known as Jin’gang Fading 金剛法定. See P.3920d, 176v5. The name of the copyist for P.3920e is not provided. Nevertheless, due to similarities in calligraphic style, it is possible that the texts were brushed by the same hand.

13 In P.3920e (177r2), Amoghavajra is referred to additionally as “Especially Advanced,” or *tejin* 特近, a title also conferred upon him in the year 765.

14 For these lists of Amoghavajra’s translations, see note 8 above. As Amanda Goodman points out, the attribution of such texts to Amoghavajra may have been a way of clarifying their ritual systems as well as lending them prestige, on account of Amoghavajra’s close association with the *Vajraśekhara Sūtra* and with imperial and other important political patrons in Chang’an and the Hexi Corridor. See Goodman, “Ritual Instructions for Altar Methods,” 3. The exalted status and prestige of Amoghavajra is a major argument of Goble, “Chinese Esoteric Buddhism.”

contemplation. The visualizations are both external – seeing the descent of the deities and the presentation of offerings, for example – and internal, a process by which the practitioner’s body undergoes varied transformations and becomes one with certain deities. As we will see, both types of contemplation had the potential to act as a gateway to the practitioner’s embodiment of subjective experience. Finally, the two manuals reference the Five Buddhas and eight bodhisattvas at crucial moments, reflecting shared concerns with the visual program of Mogao Cave 14, which contains mural paintings of maṇḍalas centered upon the Five Buddhas and eight bodhisattvas on the ceiling and south wall, respectively.¹⁵

The ritual actions prescribed in the two manuals are distinct from one another in their complexity, length, and sequence. The most obvious overlap lies in a repentance sequence nominally based upon the five-fold repentance ritual formulated by the master Zhiyi 智顗 (538-597) of the Tiantai 天台 school, most developed in P.3920d. Over the course of the ritual, the practitioner follows the standard five-fold repentance that appears in Zhiyi’s *Rites for the Lotus Samādhi Repentance* (*Fahua sanmei chanyi* 法華三昧懺儀), *Methods of Worship* (*Jingli fa* 敬禮法), and *Great Calming and Contemplation* (*Mohe zhiguan* 摩訶止觀). The five stages consist of repentance (*chanhui* 懺悔), solicitation (*quanqing* 勸請), sympathetic rejoicing (*suixi* 隨喜), dedication (*huixiang* 迴向), and making a vow (*fayuan* 發願).¹⁶ At the conclusion of each stage, the practitioner pays homage to the great king of tantras, the great compassionate Mahāvairocana (*Dajiaowang dabeixin da Piluzhenafu* 大教王大悲心大毘盧遮那佛).¹⁷ As Daniel Stevenson notes, in Mahāyāna practice, the “idealized image of the omniscient bodhisattva and buddha came to represent the confessor par excellence.”¹⁸ The invocation of Mahāvairocana as the confessor

15 Xie Jisheng notes that the eight bodhisattvas are members of the assembly of the Five Buddhas; see his “Chuan-Qing-Zang,” 141.

16 Daniel Bruce Stevenson, “The T’ien-t’ai Four Forms of Samādhi and Late North-South Dynasties, Sui, and Early T’ang Buddhist Devotionalism” (Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 1987), 421.

17 For the five stages of repentance, see P.3920d, 166r–168r. The order of the five stages in P.3920d, however, does not seem to coincide exactly with the order as formulated by Zhiyi. At the end of the repentance ritual is a notation in small script that reads, “eight *vajras* eight bodhisattvas” (*ba jin’gang ba pusa* 八金剛八菩薩), which likely refers to the eight inner and outer offering goddesses of the Vajradhātu Maṇḍala and the eight great bodhisattvas. An abbreviated repentance rite based upon the five stages is also evident in P.3920e, 180r–181r.

18 Stevenson, “T’ien-t’ai Four Forms of Samādhi,” 401.

thus represents an esoteric appropriation of the standard Mahāyāna repentance ritual.

The five-fold repentance ritual, including much of its phrasing, is comparable to the repentance ritual found in another Chinese-language manuscript from Dunhuang, B.3451 (水2), titled *Yoga Homage to the Buddha* (*Yuqie foli 瑜伽佛禮*).¹⁹ This manuscript shares commonalities in language and ritual structure with two other texts attributed to Amoghavajra.²⁰ Of these two, only the text titled *Rite of the Thirty-seven Honored Ones of the Vajraśekhara Yoga* (*Jin'gangding yuqie sanshiqizun li 金剛頂瑜伽三十七尊禮*) appears on the list of sūtras presented by Amoghavajra to Emperor Daizong and in Yuanzhao's catalogues, substantiating its connection to its putative translator.²¹ *Rite of the Thirty-seven Honored Ones of the Vajraśekhara Yoga* shares with B.3451 (水2) a series of devotions to the thirty-seven deities of the Vajradhātu Maṇḍala, starting with the Five Buddhas, followed by a brief repentance sequence that is distinct from the five-fold repentance of Zhiyi.²² This text provides important evidence for Amoghavajra's own esoteric conceptualization of repentance, which also must have resonated at Dunhuang at the time. In contrast, B.3451 (水2) does not follow Amoghavajra's formula in a straightforward manner, being comprised instead of a combination of two modular units: the five-fold repentance of Zhiyi and the assembly of deities in the Vajradhātu Maṇḍala. P.3920d and P.3920e likewise bring together these two seemingly dissimilar elements in the ritual actions that they prescribe. In this combination we may observe that the repentance ritual, like the Maṇḍala of Eight Great Bodhisattvas, fluidly transcended conventional demarcations between exoteric and esoteric praxis.

A shared element of the two manuals is the language of the bodhisattva precepts, oftentimes cloaked in the ritual structure of the Vajradhātu Maṇḍala. For example, P.3920e opens with the practitioner revering the three jewels of Buddha, dharma, and *saṃgha* (*xian yingli sanbao 先應禮三寶*).²³ Conversely, P.3920d closes with a sequence in which the practitioner takes refuge in the three jewels of Buddhism, now couched against the backdrop of the Vajradhātu Maṇḍala:

19 This manuscript is analyzed in Wang Juan 汪娟, *Tang Song guyi Fojiao chanyi yanjiu* 唐宋古逸佛教儀儀研究 (Taipei: Wenjin chubanshe, 2008), 113-38. The manuscript is in the collection of the Beijing Library; this particular text is located on the verso.

20 Wang, *Tang Song guyi Fojiao chanyi yanjiu*, 127-29. The two texts are T878 and T879.

21 T52.2120:839c29, T55.2156:749c6, T55.2157:880a20. *Vajraśekhara Yoga Rites of the Thirty-seven Honored Ones* is T879.

22 T18.879.337a29-338a17, T18.879.338a21-b4.

23 P.3920e, 177r3.

Taking refuge in the Tathāgatas, the Buddhas with their five wisdoms and ten bodies; together with all sentient beings, [I] enter into the Vajra Realm

Taking refuge in the unsurpassed vehicle, [which is] the esoteric teaching of yoga; together with all sentient beings, [I] enter into the Vajra Realm

Taking refuge in the *saṃgha* of bodhisattvas of great compassion, beyond all retrogression; together with all sentient beings, [I] enter into the Vajra Realm

The taking of refuge in the three treasures [thus being] complete, I donate to all sentient beings all the merit [accrued by that refuge-taking, that they] may all together attain awakening.²⁴

In fact, the spatial template of the Vajradhātu Maṇḍala, as cited in the passage above, permeates both manuals. To begin, the stated goal of P.3920d is the “accomplishment of the five wheels of liberation and thirty-seven wisdom bodies” (*cheng wu jietuolun sanshiqi zhishen* 成五解脫輪三十七智身), both of which are references to the Vajradhātu Maṇḍala, the core maṇḍala consisting of thirty-seven deities, including the five main Buddhas.²⁵ Before the repentance, the sequence of the Five Buddhas is given, beginning with praise to the “great compassionate Mahāvairocana Buddha of the Vajradhātu [Maṇḍala]” (*Jin’gangjie dabei da Piluzhenafu* 金剛界大悲大毗盧遮那佛). Following Mahāvairocana, the practitioner reveres (*li* 禮) each of the remaining four Buddhas of the Vajradhātu Maṇḍala in turn. Wielding a *vajra* at the top of the head or at the heart, the practitioner performs contemplations of his or her own body and recites the appropriate mantra, honoring Akṣobhya in the east, Ratna-saṃbhava in the south, Amitābha in the west, and Amoghasiddhi in the north.²⁶ In P.3920e, before the repentance rite begins, the practitioner enacts a series of visualized transformations focused on the body in a yoga method (*yuqie fa* 瑜伽法); the ritual accoutrements include a *vajra* and a Five-Buddhas crown (*wufo guan* 五佛冠).²⁷ Furthermore, P.3920e contains a series of complex visualizations of the deities of the Vajradhātu Maṇḍala.

As was the case in conventional repentance and ordination rites, an altar or platform is the main focus of ritual activity. In a conventional ordination, those who were to receive the bodhisattva precepts ascended a platform (*tan* 壇)

24 P.3920d, 176v2-5. The author thanks Michael Radich for his reading of this passage.

25 P.3920d, 162r4.

26 P.3920d, 163v4-165r2.

27 P.3920e, 177r3-179r5.

that was viewed as a sacred, bounded space.²⁸ In P.3920e, however, it is clear that the platform or altar also is intended as a space for the deities of the maṇḍala rather than solely for the initiates. The process of envisioning the Vajradhātu Maṇḍala in this manual begins with purifying the realm and securing the altar.²⁹ The practitioner envisions a *vajra* on a lunar disk, then his body as a *vajra*, and finally his own body as the main deity, which is Mahāvairocana.³⁰ The following sequence of actions focuses on the four directional Buddhas of the Vajradhātu Maṇḍala. The practitioner binds the *mudrās* of the four Buddhas by using their mantras (*cijie sirulai sanmeiye yinqi geyi ben zhenyan* 次結四如來 三昧耶印契 個以本真言).³¹ Next, for the conferral of *abhiṣeka*, the Five-Buddhas seal is stamped with the position of Mahāvairocana over the top of the initiate's head, the position of Akṣobhya over the forehead, Ratnasambhava on the right side of the head, Amitābha on the back of the head, and Amoghasiddhi on the left side of the head (*ciying shou guanding wu rulai yinqi geru sanmeiye bianzhao guan yuding Budongfo yu'e Baoshengzun dingyou Wuliangshou dinghou Bukongchengjiufo yingzai ding zhizuo* 次應授灌頂 五如來印契 各如三昧耶 遍照灌於頂 不動佛於額 寶生尊頂右 無量壽頂後 不空成就佛 應在頂之左).³²

After the *abhiṣeka* is performed, the practitioner envisions a jeweled pavilion rising from the altar.³³ The practitioner then visualizes opening the gates to the maṇḍala and assumes the *vajra*-fist *mudrā*, reciting a mantra before each

28 On ordination platforms, see Tōru Funayama, "Guṇavarman and Some of the Earliest Examples of Ordination Platforms (*jietan*) in China," in Jinhua Chen, James A. Benn, and James Robson, eds., *Images, Relics, and Legends: The Formation and Transformation of Buddhist Sacred Sites* (Oakville, Ontario: Mosaic Press, 2012), 21-45; and Huaiyu Chen, *The Revival of Buddhist Monasticism in Medieval China* (New York; Washington, DC/Baltimore: Peter Lang, 2007). In 2003, the remains of what might have been an ordination platform were discovered in Anxi County, Gansu Province. The structure is comprised of circular and rectangular platforms inside circular and square enclosures, the latter of which measures 142 meters on each side; see Zhang Baoxi 張寶璽, "Anxi faxian mijiao tanchang yizhi" 安西發現密教壇場遺址, *Dunhuang yanjiu* 敦煌研究 2005.5:7-9. For the construction of *fangdeng* 方等 repentance platforms on temple grounds, see Hao, *Tang houqi Wudai Songchu Dunhuang*, 26-40.

29 P.3920e, 181r4-183v5.

30 P.3920e, 187r5-v4.

31 P.3920e, 187v5-188r3.

32 P.3920e, 188r4-5. A similar *abhiṣeka* ceremony using a seal stamped on the initiate's body was described by the seventh-century master Daoxuan. See Eugene Y. Wang, "Buddha Seal," in Annette L. Juliano et al., *Buddhist Sculpture from China: Selections from the Xi'an Beilin Museum, Fifth through Ninth Centuries* (New York: China Institute Gallery, 2007), 118-22; 118.

33 P.3920e, 190v2-4.

gate.³⁴ Next, he binds the invocation *mudrā* and visualizes the assembly of Buddha realms gathering like clouds.³⁵ After this, the eulogy of one hundred and eight names is recited, beginning with the sixteen *vajra* bodhisattvas (Jin'gang pusa 金剛菩薩) that attend the four directional Buddhas of the Vajradhātu Maṇḍala in each of its quadrants.³⁶ At the end of this passage of the text, the words “altar of Mahāvairocana and the thirty-seven worthies” (*da pilu sanshiqizun tan* 大毘盧三十七尊壇) appear as an interlinear notation in small script.³⁷ Purified water is offered and the consecration site for the deities is created, culminating in the binding of the sixteen great bodhisattvas and eight offering goddesses of the Vajradhātu Maṇḍala, and offerings of flowers and incense.³⁸

Two elements in P.3920d and P.3920e pertain specifically to the visual program of Mogao Cave 14. The first of these is the Five-Buddhas, eight-bodhisattvas altar, which is reflected in the conjunction of the painted motifs of the Five Buddhas and Maṇḍala of Eight Great Bodhisattvas on the ceiling and south wall, respectively (see figs. 73, 96). Interlinear notations to such altars are made in both texts. In P.3920d, the practitioner first develops *bodhicitta*, or the thought of awakening, and entreats the *ācārya* to administer *abhiṣeka* (*xianfa putixin qiushi shou guanding* 先發菩提心求師授灌頂). Reciting a *gāthā* (verse), the practitioner circumambulates the altar (*songci jiata yourao tanchang* 誦此伽他右遶坦場) inside the ritual space (*daochang* 道場). At this point in the text, the characters “Five Buddhas eight bodhisattvas” (*wufo ba pusa* 五佛八菩薩) appear in small script, before the *gāthā* is given, suggesting that the altar to be circumambulated should be of the Five-Buddhas, eight-bodhisattvas variety (fig. 97).³⁹ The characters “Five Buddhas eight bodhisattvas” appear again in small script after the prostrations to the four Buddhas and before the five-stage repentance, further suggesting the presence of a Five-Buddhas, eight-bodhisattvas altar (fig. 98).⁴⁰ Finally, one of the last portions of the ritual is labeled, in small script, the “eight-bodhisattvas *abhiṣeka*” (*ba pusa guanding* 八菩薩灌頂), appearing right after the recollection of the main deity and recitation of the five-offerings mantra; the names of the bodhisattvas, however, are not provided (fig. 99).⁴¹ The practitioner circumambulates the maṇḍala and binds the four inner offering goddesses by assuming *mudrās* and reciting man-

34 P.3920e, 191r2-4.

35 P.3920e, 191r5-v5.

36 P.3920e, 192r1-195r2.

37 P.3920e, 195r2.

38 P.3920e, 195r3-198v5.

39 P.3920d, 162v4.

40 P.3920d, 165r2.

41 P.3920d, 173v5.

tras.⁴² Next is a series of incense and flower offerings, the offering of bottles of perfumed water, and further mantras.⁴³

The association between repentance rites and a Five-Buddhas, eight-bodhisattvas altar is made even more explicit in P.3920e. The repentance rite commences when the practitioner kneels on the right knee before the altar and joins his palms above his head.⁴⁴ The characters for “Five-Buddhas, eight-bodhisattvas repentance altar” (*wufo ba pusa chanhui zhi tan* 五佛八菩薩懺悔之壇) are written in small script, suggesting that this is the altar at which the repentance is carried out (fig. 100).⁴⁵ Toward the end of the manual is another mention of an altar of the Five Buddhas and eight bodhisattvas; in small script are the characters “the altar for receiving the teachings and precepts is that of Five Buddhas and eight bodhisattvas” (*shou fajie zhi tan wufo ba pusa* 受法戒之壇五佛八菩薩; fig. 101).⁴⁶

The second element reflected in the visual program of Mogao Cave 14 is the wrathful deity guarding a jeweled pavilion. After the conclusion of the repentance rite in P.3920d is the binding of the altar and envisioning of a wrathful eight-armed, four-faced guardian (*shenxiang jinuwang babei ersimian* 身想急怒王八臂二四面) with a frightening appearance – Trailokyavijaya (Jiangsanshi mingwang 降三世明王), one of the five Wisdom Kings – and the dispelling of sins as if materialized in a black cloud taking the form of a ghost.⁴⁷ This commences a series of *mudrās*, mantras, and contemplations in which the practitioner then visualizes himself as Trailokyavijaya (*dang guan zishenxiang biancheng Jiangsanshi* 當觀自身相變成降三世), purifies karmic obstructions (*ci yingjing yezhang* 次應淨業障), and envisions a jeweled pavilion rising from the altar (*shangxiang baolouge* 上想寶樓閣).⁴⁸ After this sequence, the practitioner opens the gates of what is now a three-dimensional maṇḍala by making a *vajra* fist, and then faces each of the four gates, beginning from the east; a mantra is recited for each gate, the whole process reinforcing the directionality of the four Buddhas.⁴⁹ Next, the practitioner invokes the *tathāgatas* by reciting

42 P.3920d, 173v5-174r4. A small notation indicating the four or eight (?) offering bodhisattvas (*bajin sigang pusa* 八金四剛菩薩) appears on P.3920d, 174r1. Interestingly, of the four inner offering goddesses, Adamantine Song (Vajragīti) is repeated twice, and Adamantine Garland (Vajramālā) is omitted entirely from the sequence.

43 P.3920d, 174r5-v5.

44 P.3920e, 179v1-4.

45 P.3920e, 179v4.

46 P.3920e, 200r2.

47 P.3920d, 168v2-169v1. The deity described adheres closely to the iconography of Hayagrīva, who represents the horse-headed, wrathful manifestation of Avalokiteśvara.

48 P.3920d, 169v2-170v2.

49 P.3920d, 171r1-4.

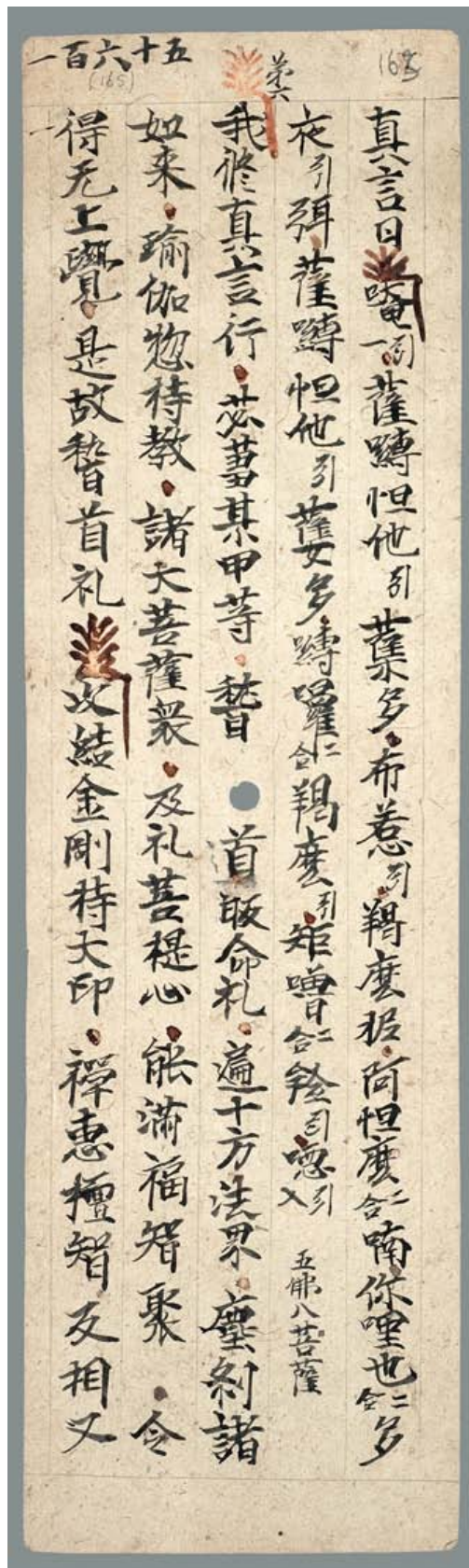


FIGURE 98

P.3920d, 165r. Guifyun period (848-1036), 10th century. Chinese-style pothi; ink on paper.

28.8 × 8.4 cm. From Dunhuang. BIBLIOTHÈQUE NATIONALE DE FRANCE, PARIS. COURTESY OF THE BIBLIOTHÈQUE NATIONALE DE FRANCE.

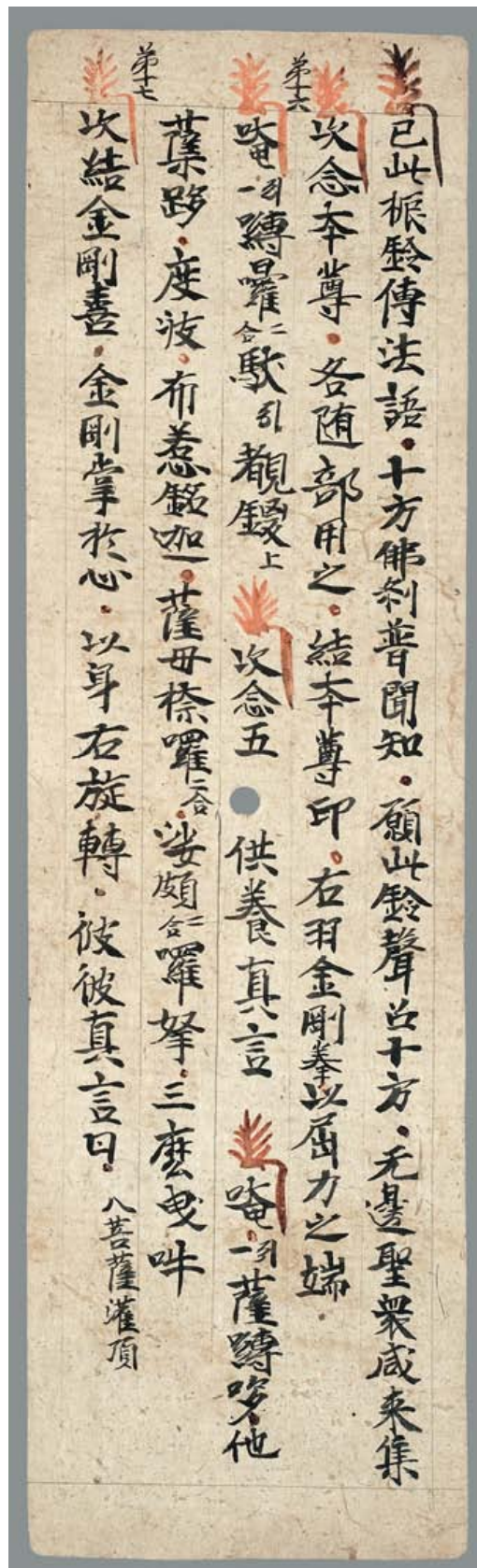


FIGURE 99

P.3920d, 173v. Guiyijun period (848-1036), 10th century. Chinese-style pothi; ink on paper.

28.8 × 8.4 cm. From Dunhuang. BIBLIOTHÈQUE NATIONALE DE FRANCE, PARIS. COURTESY OF THE BIBLIOTHÈQUE NATIONALE DE FRANCE.

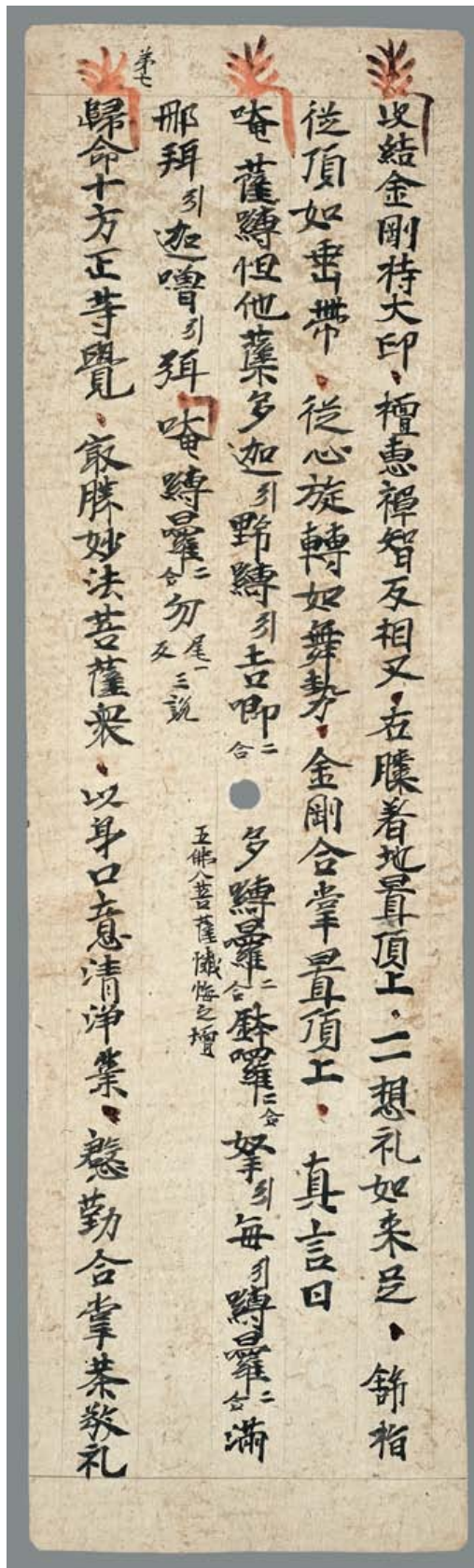


FIGURE 100

P.3920e, 179v. Guiyijun period (848-1036), 10th century. Chinese-style pothi; ink on paper.

28.8 × 8.4 cm. From Dunhuang. BIBLIOTHÈQUE NATIONALE DE FRANCE, PARIS. COURTESY OF THE BIBLIOTHÈQUE NATIONALE DE FRANCE.

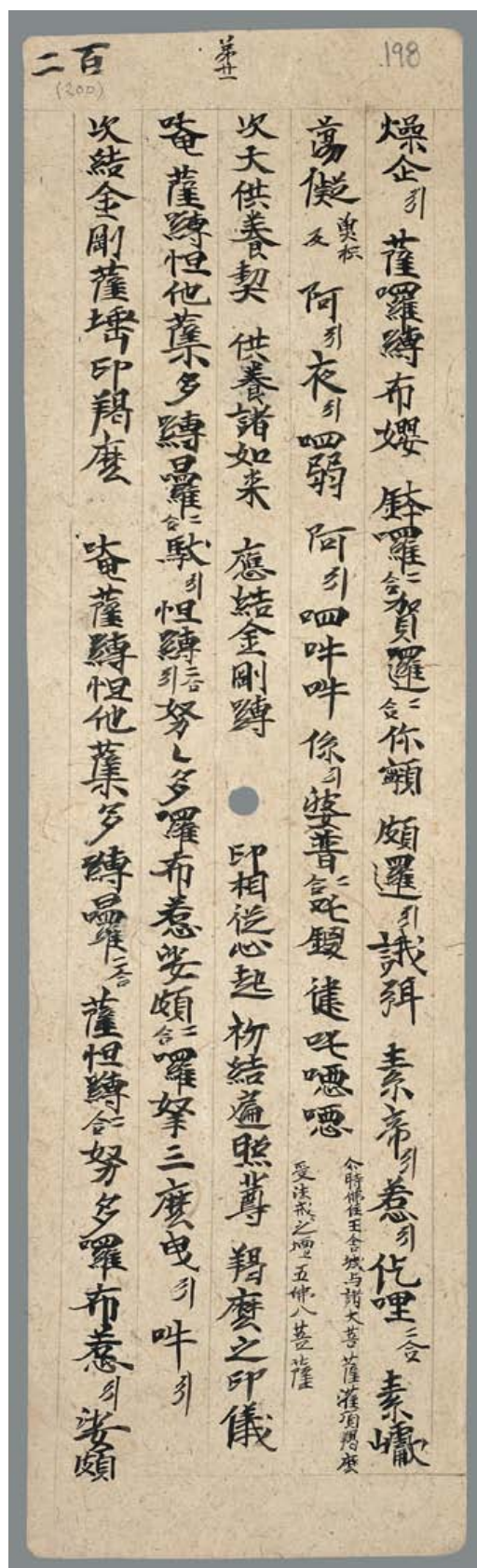


FIGURE 101

P.3920e, 200r. Guiyijun period (848-1036), 10th century. Chinese-style pothi; ink on paper.

28.8 × 8.4 cm. From Dunhuang. BIBLIOTHÈQUE NATIONALE DE FRANCE, PARIS. COURTESY OF THE BIBLIOTHÈQUE NATIONALE DE FRANCE.

a *gāthā*, and envisions the Buddha realms gathering like clouds.⁵⁰ The practitioner next attains a *vajra* body like Vajrasattva, after which, using perfumed water, he imagines himself bathing the assembled *tathāgatas* at the consecration site, and realizes the *dharmakāya* of the *tathāgatas*.⁵¹

The conjunction of Trailokyavijaya and the jeweled pavilion might go a long way toward interpreting a puzzling motif painted above the central niche of Mogao Cave 14: an ornately jeweled structure that rises upward on the west ceiling slope (fig. 102). Although much of the painting has suffered damage, a heavily muscled and menacing figure may be seen standing resolutely in frontal view (fig. 103). This figure might represent Trailokyavijaya, and the jeweled structure may stand for the jeweled pavilion that rises, quite literally, from the altar of Mogao Cave 14. In medieval China, Trailokyavijaya was not represented as an independent figure but rather as one of a larger pantheon of deities, either in the retinue of the Thousand-Armed Avalokiteśvara or in the maṇḍala associated with the *Sūtra for Humane Kings*.⁵² Although the frontal view of the central figure standing in front of the jeweled pavilion does not accord precisely with other portrayals of Trailokyavijaya, in which the deity is represented in three-quarter view, his position in this tableaux may have necessitated adjustments to the standard iconography.⁵³ The trailing clouds of the Buddha

50 P. 3920d, 171r5-172r1.

51 P. 3920d, 172r5-v5.

52 According to the curator's comments, Trailokyavijaya is identified by a flaming halo and a cartouche at the bottom of a ninth-century painting of the Thousand-Armed Avalokiteśvara from the Stein Collection in the British Museum (1919,0101,0.35); see <http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_object_details.aspx?assetId=309673001&objectId=6584&partId=1> (last accessed 6.17.2016). A sculpture of Trailokyavijaya, known in Japanese as Gōzanze Myōō, was part of the karma maṇḍala based on the *Sūtra for Humane Kings* in the Lecture Hall at Tōji; see Bogel, *With a Single Glance*, 278-337. Established by Kūkai, this maṇḍala may have reflected Chinese antecedents; see Bogel, *With a Single Glance*, 303. A Tang-dynasty sculpture from the Beilin Museum has been identified by certain scholars as Trailokyavijaya; see Annette L. Juliano et al., *Buddhist Sculpture from China: Selections from the Xi'an Beilin Museum, Fifth through Ninth Centuries* (New York: China Institute Gallery, 2007), 116-17. For a review of the exhibition in which this work was shown, especially a critique of the exhibition's presentation of esoteric material, see Angela F. Howard, Rob Linrothe, and Amy McNair, "Exhibition Review: Buddhist Sculpture from China: Selections from the Xi'an Beilin Museum, Fifth through Ninth Centuries, China Institute Gallery, 2007," *Archives of Asian Art* 60 (2010): 89-94. Jacob Dalton discusses the resonance of Trailokyavijaya to the *Vajraśekhara Sūtra* in his *Taming of the Demons*, 32.

53 The textual description of Trailokyavijaya with four wrathful heads and eight arms seems to have been standardized in Buddhist texts of the eighth century; see Robert N. Linrothe,



FIGURE 102 Jeweled pavilion and deity assemblies on trailing clouds. Guiyijun period (848-1036). Mural painting. West slope of ceiling, Mogao Cave 14, Dunhuang, Gansu Province. FROM LIANG, ED., *DUNHUANG SHIKU YISHU: MOGAO KU DI SHISI KU* (WAN TANG), 66, PLATE 33.



FIGURE 103
Detail of Trailokyavijaya(?),
 Jeweled pavilion and deity
 assemblies on trailing
 clouds (fig. 102). *Mogao*
Cave 14. FROM LIANG, ED.,
DUNHUANG SHIKU YISHU:
MOGAO KU DI SHISI KU
 (WAN TANG), 67, PLATE 34.

assemblies descending on either side of the jeweled pavilion further correlate to the ritual sequence outlined in P.3920d.

Ruthless Compassion: Wrathful Deities in Early Indo-Tibetan Esoteric Buddhist Art (Boston: Shambhala, 1999), 188-90. As demonstrated by the iconographic drawings in Bogel, *With a Single Glance*, 304-12, however, and by sculptures and paintings illustrated in Linrothe, *Ruthless Compassion*, 194-213, little stability is found in representations of Trailokyavijaya across Asia. Therefore, although the figure in front of the jeweled pavilion in Mogao Cave 14 does not exhibit the most common iconographic elements of Trailokyavijaya in East Asia, it is not outside the realm of possibility that the figure is intended to represent Trailokyavijaya or, at the very least, a wrathful deity in this context. Yet another possibility is that this figure represents Vajrapāṇi, often depicted in painted banners from Dunhuang as a heavily muscled, single-headed and two-armed figure, although the deity is not mentioned in this context in P.3920d. For two examples, see Agnew, Reed, and Ball, eds., *Cave Temples of Dunhuang*, 270-71; similarities include the exaggerated musculature, bulging eyes, and lavish adornments.

The possibility that P.3920d and P.3920e postdate the construction of Mogao Cave 14 must be acknowledged. Moreover, the mural paintings in Mogao Cave 14 are not a straightforward translation of the iconographic configurations cited in the manuals. For example, sixty-three deities appear on the ceiling panel, rather than the standard thirty-seven core deities of the Vajradhātu Maṇḍala. Therefore, it is more fitting to view the manuals and cave shrine as exhibiting shared conceptual and ritual concerns than to assume that one was modeled after the other. Furthermore, when taking into account the small size of the cave shrine, it appears highly unlikely that actual rituals could have been convened within the available space. This does not rule out entirely the possibility for personal religious practice, especially considering the precedence given to self-ordination rites.⁵⁴ In any case, the simultaneous appearance of certain motifs in the cave shrine and ritual manuals cannot be brushed aside. A final intriguing link is a seal of the *viśvavajra* motif impressed in red ink throughout P.3920d and P.3920e (fig. 104).⁵⁵ As noted earlier, the *viśvavajra* not only represents collectively the Five Buddhas, but also stands for awakening by referencing the *vajrāsana*, or seat of enlightenment at Bodhgayā.

The last point is crucial, because by envisioning the deities of the Vajradhātu Maṇḍala, the practitioner, in essence, is able to see what the Buddha sees. According to the *Vajraśekhara Sūtra*, the thirty-seven deities of the maṇḍala are envisioned by Mahāvairocana while in a state of *samādhi*. Immediately after his awakening, Mahāvairocana is seated on the lion throne in a pavilion on the summit of Mount Sumeru, and the four other Buddhas arrange themselves in the cardinal directions.⁵⁶ After this, he enters into an adamantine (or *vajra*-like) state of *samādhi* and begins generating the deities of the Vajradhātu Maṇḍala by conferring *abhiṣekha* upon them and granting them adamantine

54 As Sarah Fraser has pointed out, certain Mogao cave shrines were called “temples” (*si* 寺), which reinforces that these caves served as spaces for religious praxis. Moreover, paintings of gate guardians in the antechambers of cave shrines – similar to the installation of sculptures of gate guardians at the entrances to temples – suggest that cave shrines were in fact conceptualized as “mini temples.” The author is grateful to Sarah Fraser for these insights (personal communication, 4.26.17).

55 These and other notations have been analyzed by Goodman, “Ritual Instructions for Altar Methods.”

56 Giebel, *Two Esoteric Sutras*, 25; T18:865.208b. Geoffrey Goble notes that “the maṇḍala is a graphic representation of another world or realm. In the case of the Diamond Realm Maṇḍala, the maṇḍala is a representation of the Diamond Realm in its layout and inhabitants.” Goble also points out the structural similarity between the Vajradhātu Maṇḍala and the altars used for indigenous official and Daoist rites; see his “Chinese Esoteric Buddhism,” 114-16.

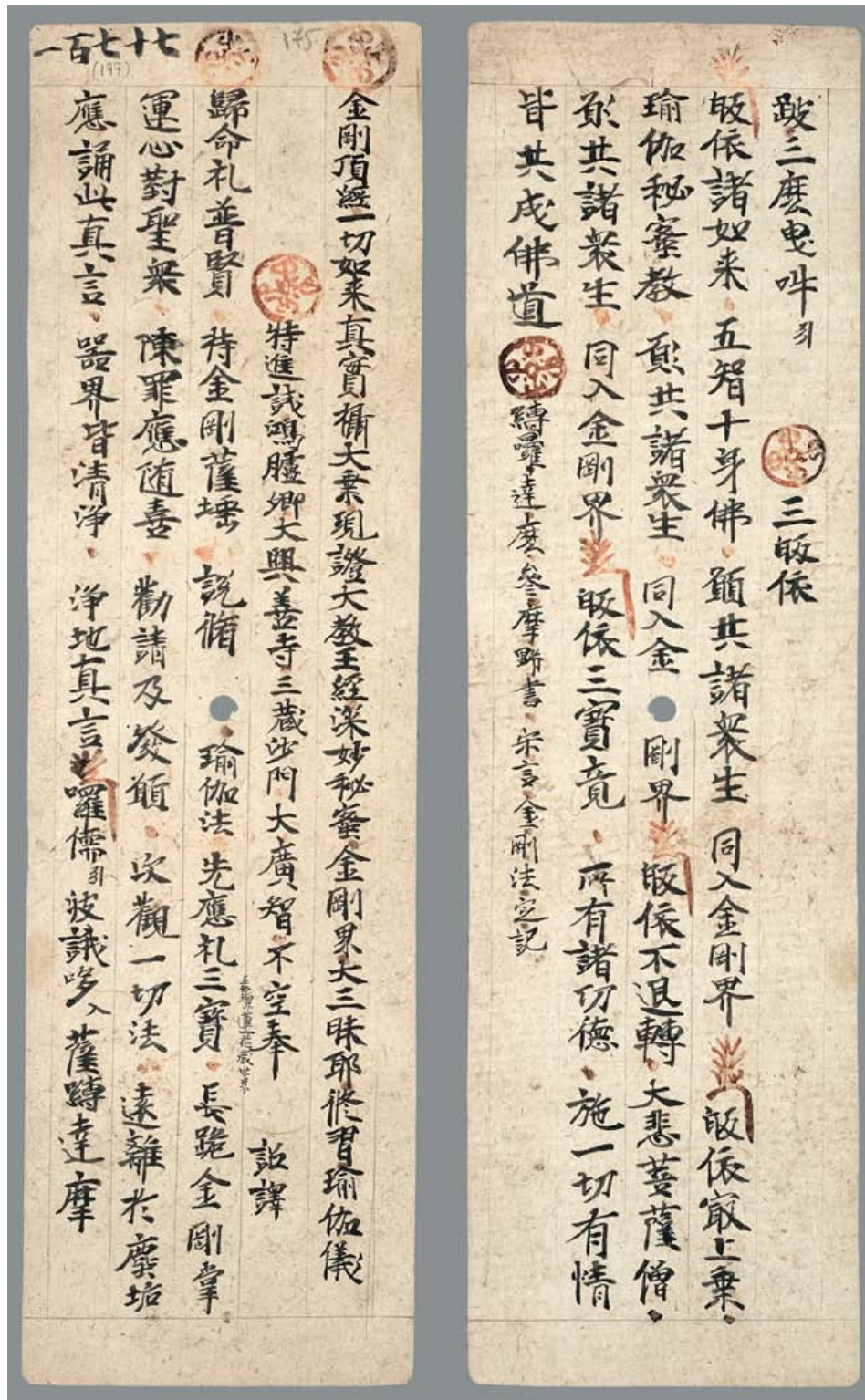


FIGURE 104 Viśvavajra impressions, P.3920, 176v–177r. Guiyijun period (848–1036), 10th century. Chinese-style pothi; ink on paper. 28.8 × 8.4 cm. From Dunhuang. BIBLIOTHÈQUE NATIONALE DE FRANCE, PARIS. COURTESY OF THE BIBLIOTHÈQUE NATIONALE DE FRANCE.

names, starting with the sixteen great bodhisattvas that act as attendants to the four Buddhas and ending with the gate guardians.⁵⁷ The process of generating the maṇḍala is one of intense and lavishly narrated visual spectacle. Except for the recitation of mantras, Mahāvairocana does not speak to the gathered assembly. It is only after he has completed the generation of the Vajradhātu Maṇḍala that Vajrasattva's verbal instruction on the maṇḍala commences.⁵⁸

In the titles of the ritual manuals, the word “yoga” (*yuqie* 瑜伽) figures prominently, as it does in several of the texts attributed to Amoghavajra.⁵⁹ By definition, yoga refers to the union between a practitioner and a deity, in which the distinctions between the internal and external are dissolved. Here, yoga should be understood as referring not only to deity yoga, or the envisioning of oneself as a deity (particularly a Buddha), but also to achieving the vision or perception of a Buddha, and therefore being able to perceive what the Buddha perceives. The importance of vision in repentance thus lies not only in confirming the success of the rite, but also in being able to see as the Buddha sees.

From this brief analysis of P.3920d and P.3920e, several preliminary conclusions can be drawn. First, the Vajradhātu Maṇḍala, with its focus on the Five Buddhas, sixteen *vajra* bodhisattvas, and eight offering goddesses, was a prominent feature of certain repentance and *abhiṣeka* rituals that were focused upon Mahāvairocana Buddha. Looking at the Five Buddhas and eight bodhisattvas in tandem, references to this composite group in the manuscripts suggest that these deities jointly constituted a ritual system focused on repentance and precepts. This group of deities, in turn, resonates with certain aspects of the visual program of Mogao Cave 14, namely the joining of the five Buddha assemblies on the ceiling, representing the core thirty-seven deities of the Vajradhātu Maṇḍala, with the Maṇḍala of Eight Great Bodhisattvas on the south wall. Furthermore, the visualization of the jeweled pavilion corresponds to the painting of such a structure that extends above the central niche of the cave shrine, guarded by the Wisdom King Trailokyavijaya, around which Buddha assemblies descend on clouds.

Maṇḍalas associated with the newly esotericized *Sūtra for Humane Kings* similarly bear the imprint of the five-fold structure of the Vajradhātu Maṇ-

57 Giebel, *Two Esoteric Sutras*, 26-64; T18:865.208b-216c.

58 Giebel, *Two Esoteric Sutras*, 68-71; T18.865:216c21-217b15.

59 The term “yoga teaching” (*yuqie jiao* 瑜伽教) also appears in works attributed to Amoghavajra, suggesting its importance as a ritual technology; see Orzech, “The ‘Great Teaching of Yoga,’” 47-48.

ḍala.⁶⁰ Concrete evidence of this connection exists in an altar with twenty-one sculptures arranged in a maṇḍala based upon the sūtra, which was produced according to Kūkai's design for installation in the Lecture Hall of Tōji around 839 (see fig. 84).⁶¹ What sets Mogao Cave 14 apart from the Tōji altar is that the cave shrine represents a fully architectural realization of the sort of ritual sequence set forth in these two tenth-century ritual manuals. While maṇḍalas generally are understood to represent idealized palaces, the plotting of maṇḍalas onto the real architectural space of a cave shrine rather than the flat surface of an altar must have meant something.⁶² For our purposes, it is sufficient to note that architectural space enabled the communication of relational thinking about different ritual systems that could not be conveyed by text alone.

The Five Buddhas and Repentance Altars

In order to more fully comprehend the impact of the Five Buddhas and eight bodhisattvas on Buddhist visuality and ritual space, it is important to understand not only what the altars referred to in P.3920d and P.3920e may have looked like, but also the nature of the source material. Unlike the ritual commentaries associated with the *Revered and Victorious Dhāraṇī*, these two texts provide little information regarding the physical construction of altars, focusing instead on the intersections between visualization, *mudrās*, and mantras. Furthermore, the *pothī* is completely devoid of illustrations or diagrams that might aid the practitioner in carrying out the prescribed actions. Here, it is useful to reflect upon the functional distinctions between different manuscript formats that were in circulation at Dunhuang.⁶³ As stated previously, P.3920d and P.3920e appear in a Chinese-style *pothī* in which each leaf is scored and inscribed with five columns of text. Measuring 28.8 by 8.4 centimeters, the size

60 Orzech, *Politics and Transcendent Wisdom*, 174-80.

61 Bogel, *With a Single Glance*, 278-337. Bogel has asserted that a cache of Tang-dynasty sculptures from Anguosi in Xi'an belonged to a maṇḍala for the performance of state protection rites associated with the *Sūtra for Humane Kings*; see Bogel, *With a Single Glance*, 78-88.

62 On the palace metaphor and the feudal context for maṇḍalas in India, see Davidson, *Indian Esoteric Buddhism*, 139-40.

63 On a performative approach to liturgical collections, see Stephen F. Teiser, "A Codicological Study of Liturgical Manuscripts from Dunhuang," in Irina Popova and Liu Yi, eds., *Dunhuang Studies: Prospects and Problems for the Coming Second Century of Research* (St. Petersburg: Slavia, 2012), 251-56.

of the *pothī* is comparable to that of a modern-day notebook, and its binding style of a string threaded through each page enables easy access to its contents.

A similar manuscript format is the booklet, in which individual sheets are bound along the spine. One example that combines elements of both the booklet and *pothī* is P.3913; previously considered a late-ninth-century work, this Chinese-language manuscript more recently has been reattributed to the tenth century (fig. 105).⁶⁴ This eighty-seven-page booklet, also held by the Bibliothèque nationale de France, consists of what were originally eleven booklets of four sheets folded in half, with six columns of text to a page and a hole for a *pothī*-style binding punched through each sheet.⁶⁵ What P.3920 and P.3913 have in common is the portability of the manuscript and its conceptual associations; P.3913 measures 28.5 by 10.1 centimeters and likewise is attributed to Amoghavajra. Commonly known by the abbreviated title *Rules for Altar Methods* (*Tanfa yize* 壇法儀則), the text is divided into thirty-five sequentially numbered sections.⁶⁶

64 According to Kuo Liying, P.3913 is dated 899; see her “Dessins de *maṇḍala* à Dunhuang: le manuscrit Pelliot chinois 2012,” in Jean-Pierre Drège, ed., *La Sérinde, Terred’échanges: Art, Religion, Commerce du Ier au Xe siècle* (Paris: La Documentation Française, 2000), 49–78; 68, citing P.3913, f.75 r^o5. Based upon codicological and other evidence, however, Hou Chong and Amanda Goodman date the manuscript to the tenth century, placing it firmly in the Guiyijun period. See Hou, “Mijiao Zhongguohuade jingdian fenxi,” 19–20; and Goodman, “Ritual Instructions for Altar Methods,” 26–41.

65 The metadata is from the IDP website; see <http://idp.bl.uk/database/oo_scroll_h.a4d?uid=2477407378;recnum=61355;index=1> (last accessed 6.5.2016). Images of the manuscript are available both from the IDP and Gallica websites; see <<http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b8300783h.r=pelliot%20chinois%203913?rk=21459;2>> (last accessed 6.5.2016).

66 The full title of P.3913 is *The Vajra Peak, the Vajra Pinnacle: The Wondrous Secret of all the Tathāgatas and the Great Samaya of the Vajradhātu, the Scripture on the Practice of the Forty-two Types of Altar Methods, Being Instructions for Conducting these Majestic Rites, Mahāvairocana’s Vajra Mind-Ground Dharma Gate, the Ritual Instructions for the Altar Methods of the Secret Dharma Precepts* (*Jin’gangjunjing jingangding yiqie rulai shenmiao bimi jingangjie dasanmeiye xiuxing sishierzhong tanfa jing zuoyong weiyi faze, Dapiluzhenafu jingang xindi famen mifa jietanfa yize* 金剛峻經金剛頂一切如來深妙祕密金剛界大三昧耶修行四十二種壇法經作用威儀法則大毘盧遮那佛金剛心地法門祕法戒壇法儀則); see Goodman, “Ritual Instructions for Altar Methods,” 44. This title is absent from the list of sūtras presented by Amoghavajra to Emperor Daizong, and the catalogues of Amoghavajra’s translations compiled by Yuanzhao (see note 8 above). Kuo Liying notes the sections pertaining to the Five Buddhas and eight bodhisattvas in her “Dessins de *maṇḍala* à Dunhuang,” 70, providing references to another Dunhuang manuscript, *dong* 74, as well. Goodman, who has completed the most authoritative study of this text to date, also makes note of these sections; see her “Ritual Instructions for Altar Methods,” 9 n. 24. Importantly, the lineage account at the end of the manuscript refers not to

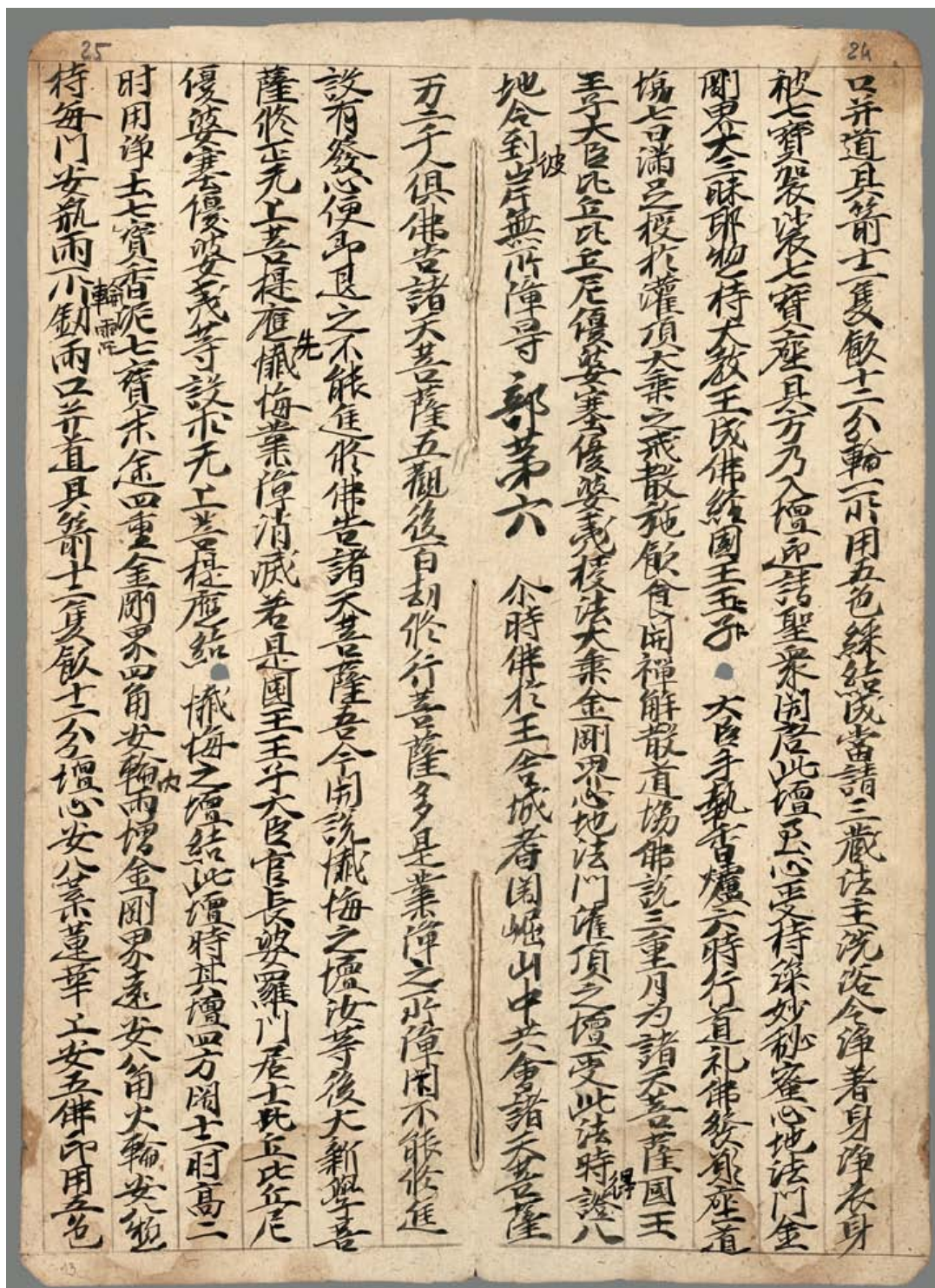


FIGURE 105 P.3913, 24-25. Guiyijun period (848-1036), 899. Booklet with pothi-style binding; ink on paper. 28.5 × 10.1 cm. From Dunhuang. BIBLIOTHÈQUE NATIONALE DE FRANCE, PARIS. COURTESY OF THE BIBLIOTHÈQUE NATIONALE DE FRANCE.

Certain sections provide instructions for different types of altars, from the dimensions, materials, and shape to the orientation and attributes of deities. Relying on detailed descriptions that are recorded as sermons from the Buddha, the manuscript is devoid of explanatory diagrams or illustrations. Several altars pertain to the Five Buddhas, eight bodhisattvas, and repentance. Generally speaking, the altars described below are square, are made of good or pure soil (*haotu* 好土, *jingtu* 淨土) and fragrant earth (*xiangni* 香泥), and measure about twelve *hastas* (*zhou* 肘), or between one and two *zhang* 丈, in width and two to three *hastas* in height (or slightly more than five meters wide, and approximately one meter high).⁶⁷ Ritual paraphernalia including water bottles, arrows, swords, and hooks are placed at the gates; lamps and incense burners are also used. Before entering the ritual space, the practitioner is instructed to bathe and don clean clothing.

The description of the “repentance altar” (*chanhui zhi tan* 懺悔之壇) in Section 6 details an altar composed of a four-layered Vajra Realm (*sichong jin'gangjie* 四重金剛界).⁶⁸ In the middle of the altar is an eight-petaled blossom upon which is placed a seal of the Five Buddhas (*tanxin an baye lianhua shang an wufu yin* 壇心安八葉連華上安五佛印).⁶⁹ A bronze seal dated 797 from the Beilin Museum offers a tantalizing glimpse of what such an object might have looked like (fig. 106). The spatial arrangement of the composition assumes an omniscient aerial view in which the eight bodhisattvas are arrayed along the outer perimeter of the circle, surrounding the Five Buddhas with Amitābha located in the center. In between the eight bodhisattvas and Buddhas

the esoteric masters such as Amoghavajra, but rather to the Chan (Zen) patriarchs. The synthesis between esoteric Buddhism and Chan is apparent in both the Chinese and Tibetan manuscripts from Dunhuang. See Hirai Yūkei 平井宥慶, “Tonkō shutsudo gigikyō bunken yori mita Mikkyō to Zen 敦煌出土偽疑經文獻よりみた密教と禪,” in Bukkyō minzoku gakkai 佛教民族學會, ed., *Bukkyō to girei: Katō Shōichi sensei kokikinen rombunshū* 佛教と儀: 加藤章一先生古稀記念論文集 (Tokyo: Kokusho kankōkai, 1974), 139-62; Kenneth M. Eastman, “Mahāyoga Texts at Tun-huang,” *Bulletin of Institute of Buddhist Cultural Studies (Ryukoku University)* 22 (1983): 42-60; Sam van Schaik and Jacob Dalton, “Where Chan and Tantra Meet: Tibetan Syncretism in Dunhuang,” in Susan Whitfield, ed., *The Silk Road: Trade, Travel, War and Faith* (Chicago: Serindia Publications, Inc. with the British Library, 2004), 63-71; and Goodman, “Ritual Instructions for Altar Methods,” 1-5, 51-58.

67 In Sections 7 and 15, the Chinese *zhang* is used in conjunction with the Indian *hasta*. One *zhang* measures ten Chinese feet, or approximately 3 1/3 meters; one *hasta* (literally, “elbow”) measures around 43 centimeters. Therefore, twelve *hastas* measures between one and two *zhang*.

68 P.3913, 25.5. Section 6 as a whole is 24.6-27.2.

69 P.3913, 25.6.



FIGURE 106 *Seal. Tang dynasty (618-907), 797. Bronze. Diam. 18.6 cm. BEILIN MUSEUM, XI'AN. COURTESY OF THE BEILIN MUSEUM, XI'AN.*

are numerous other bodhisattvas, further relating the seal to the auspicious motif of Amitābha and the fifty bodhisattvas.⁷⁰

Next, Section 7 of P.3913 provides instructions for the construction of a “Five-Buddhas, eight-bodhisattvas altar” (*wufo bapusa zhi tan* 五佛八菩薩之壇), including the offerings to be made, but the identities and placement of the

⁷⁰ The seal bears an inscription on the reverse: “A composition of Amitābha [and/amid] the eight bodhisattvas”; it was sponsored by the imperial eunuch He Jingxian 何敬仙. See Wang, “Buddha Seal,” 118-22.

deities are not indicated.⁷¹ Section 15 contains instructions for a “Five-Buddhas altar” (*wufo zhi tan* 五佛之壇).⁷² In the center of the altar is a lotus flower arrayed with the Five Buddhas (*wufo zhi lian* 五佛之蓮).⁷³ The names, colors, and locations of deities are listed, beginning with a group of four bodhisattvas whose names correspond to the types and sequence of ritual actions taken in the preparation of an altar: the blue-bodied bodhisattva of purifying the precepts (*jingjie pusa qingse* 淨戒菩薩青色), the white-bodied bodhisattva of purifying the ground (*jingdi pusa baise* 淨地菩薩白色), the red-bodied bodhisattva of repentance (*chanhui pusa chise* 懺悔菩薩赤色), and the green-bodied bodhisattva of binding the realm (*jiejie pusa lüse* 結界菩薩綠色).⁷⁴ Next are the eight offering goddesses, whose names are not given, and then the four wrathful gate guardians: at the east gate, *vajra* of great mercy (*dongmen daci jin'gang* 東門大慈金剛); at the south gate, *vajra* of great compassion (*nanmen dabeijin'gang* 南門大悲金剛); at the west gate, *vajra* of great happiness (*ximen daxi jin'gang* 西門大喜金剛); and at the north gate, *vajra* of great charity (*beimen dashe jin'gang* 北門大捨金剛).⁷⁵ Finally, the Five Buddhas are indicated: Akṣobhya with a white body at the east gate (*dongmen Achufo baise* 東門阿閼佛白色), Ratnasambhava with a blue body at the south gate (*nanmen Baoshengfo qingse* 南門寶生佛青色), Amitābha with a red body at the west gate (*ximen Amitufo chise* 西門阿彌陀佛赤色), Amoghasiddhi with a green body at the north gate (*beimen Bukongchengjiufo lüse* 北門不空成就佛綠色), and Śākyamuni at the center of the altar (*tanxin Shijiafo* 檀心釋迦佛).⁷⁶ These correspond with four of the Five Buddhas of the Vajradhātu Maṇḍala, the only exception being the inclusion of Śākyamuni at the center instead of Mahāvairocana.

Finally, instructions for the “Five-Buddhas, eight-bodhisattvas repentance altar” (*wufo ba pusa chanhui zhi tan* 五佛八菩薩懺悔之壇) appear in Section 16.⁷⁷ The description of the Five Buddhas is nearly the same as that for the earlier Five-Buddhas altar: Akṣobhya with a white body at the east gate, Ratnasambhava with a blue body at the south gate, Amitābha with a red body at the west gate, and Amoghasiddhi with a green body at the north gate; the

71 P.3913, 28.5. Section 7 as a whole is 27.2-30.5.

72 P.3913, 49.6. Section 15 as a whole is 49.4-51.6.

73 P.3913, 50.5.

74 P.3913, 51.1-2. The character 綠 (green) is written as 錄. Kuo analyzes the relevance of these bodhisattvas' names to ritual actions in her “Dessins de *maṇḍala* à Dunhuang,” 64-65, 68-69.

75 P.3913, 51.2-3.

76 P.3913, 52.3-4. The character 綠 is again written as 錄.

77 P.3913, 52.3. Section 16 as a whole is 52.1-55.5.

main deity of the altar maṇḍala is not given, although presumably it should be Mahāvairocana.⁷⁸ As in Section 15, the names of the eight bodhisattvas correspond to ritual actions rather than the Eight Great Bodhisattvas; they include the blue-bodied bodhisattva of purifying the precepts (*jingjie pusa qingse* 淨戒菩薩青色), the white-bodied bodhisattva of repentance (*chanhui pusa baise* 懺悔菩薩白色), the red-bodied bodhisattva of purifying the ground (*jingdi pusa chise* 淨地菩薩赤色), the green-bodied bodhisattva of binding the realm (*jiejie pusa lüse* 結界菩薩綠色), the blue-bodied bodhisattva of the palm of the hand (*boni pusa qingse* 播尼菩薩青色), and the yellow-bodied bodhisattva of repentance (*chanhui pusa huangse* 懺悔菩薩黃色).⁷⁹ Next, the names, positions, and colors of the four wrathful gate guardians are provided: at the east gate, the white *vajra* of great mercy (*dongmen daci jin'gang baise* 東門大慈金剛白色); at the south gate, the blue *vajra* of great compassion (*nanmen dabeijin'gang qingse* 南門大悲金剛青色); at the west gate, the red *vajra* of great happiness (*ximen daxi jin'gang chise* 西門大喜金剛赤色); and at the north gate, the green *vajra* of great charity (*beimen sheda jin'gang lü* 北門捨大金剛綠).⁸⁰ Finally, the eight inner and outer offering goddesses (*ba gongyang* 八供養) are mentioned, although not listed by name.⁸¹

These two manuscripts, P.3920 and P.3913, are only fully legible when considered alongside another set of manuscripts that appear in the handscroll format, in which text and images are read or viewed continuously from right to left. Unlike the *pothi* or booklet, which permits unencumbered access to specific pages, a handscroll must be read or viewed in sequence, a fact that has bearing on its function. Because of its continuous surface, the handscroll

78 P.3913, 54.4-5. The character 綠 is again written as 錄. Note that the three-character Chinese rendering of Amoghasiddhi in this passage differs from the usual (Bukongchengjiufo 不空成就佛); the last two characters are *mafo* 麼佛, and the first character is unclear.

79 P.3913, 54.2-4, for the entire sequence. The second character in 播尼, the transliteration of the Sanskrit *pāṇi* (palm of the hand), is given as 拈. Two of the eight bodhisattvas' names, in the third column of P.3913, 54, are difficult to make out and therefore are omitted from this list.

80 P.3913, 54.5-6. Several characters are written as interlinear additions or placed adjacent to other characters, suggesting corrections made after the initial composition of the manuscript. For example, "white-colored" (*baise* 白色) is written to the right of "south" (*nan* 南); "color" (*se* 色) is brushed in between "blue" (*qing* 青) and "west" (*xi* 西); "great" (*da* 大) is brushed next to "gold" (*jin* 金) as a substitute character; another character before "red" (*chi* 赤) has been crossed out; in between "red" (*chi* 赤) and "north" (*bei* 北), "color" (*se* 色) has been brushed; and the characters for "great charity" (*dashe* 大捨) have been transposed.

81 P.3913, 54.6.

allows for experimentation in ritual formulae and the unfolding of a temporal sequence, providing a medium for ritual pedagogy. The *pothī* or booklet, in contrast, permits the reader or viewer to skip around its contents at will, functioning as a ritual handbook.

Some of the gaps in P.3920d, P.3920e, and P.3913 are filled in by P.2012, a long handscroll on paper measuring between 29.4 and 30 centimeters in height by 513.7 centimeters in width. The handscroll, another manuscript in the Bibliothèque nationale de France, contains four schematic diagrams of maṇḍalas on the recto that incorporate many of the same deities as P.3913.⁸² As Kuo Liying has demonstrated, P.2012 pertains to repentance rites structured around the Vajradhātu Maṇḍala.⁸³ Just as P.2012 provides some of the information missing from P.3920 and P.3913, we may assume that certain gaps in P.2012 may have been filled in by the information contained in a *pothī* or booklet manuscript such as P.3920d, P.3920e, or P.3913. Considerable overlap is found in the names of bodhisattvas, and the names of the gate guardians in all four maṇḍalas of P.2012 are identical with those in Section 15 of P.3913. Furthermore, formal similarities may be observed between the maṇḍalas depicted in P.2012 and other maṇḍala diagrams and portable paintings.

What distinguishes the maṇḍalas of P.2012, however, is that the deities are drawn outside the boundaries of the maṇḍala in a distinctly linear formation, evoking the “unfolded maṇḍalas” of Ellora in western India, in which the bodhisattvas are arranged horizontally on either side of the central Buddha.⁸⁴ Their positions inside the maṇḍalas are indicated by lotus pedestals and *vajras*. In the maṇḍala diagrams analyzed in the previous chapter, deities are repre-

82 The metadata is from the IDP website, <<http://idp.bl.uk>>; see <http://idp.bl.uk/database/oo_scroll_h.a4d?uid=1540401938;recnum=59053;index=1> (last accessed 7.2.2016). Images of the manuscript are available both from the IDP and Gallica websites; see <<http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b83015671.r=pelliot%20chinois%202012?rk=21459;2>> (last accessed 7.2.2016). Kuo Liying discusses these overlaps in her “Dessins de *maṇḍala* à Dunhuang,” 68-69.

83 Kuo, “Dessins de *maṇḍala* à Dunhuang.” This article provides a complete transcription of all of the inscriptions of deities’ names from the scroll, in addition to a study of its relevance for repentance rites. The appearance of the maṇḍalas in P.2012, in particular the rendering of deities on wheel spokes, corresponds with the structure of certain maṇḍalas in the *Sarvadurgatipariśodhana tantra*, suggesting yet another connection, although the deities of the maṇḍalas differ. See Skorupski, *Sarvadurgatipariśodhana tantra*. Sha Wutian 沙武田 transcribes the inscriptions and describes the structure of each diagram in P.2012 in his *Dunhuang huagao yanjiu* 敦煌畫稿研究 (Beijing: Minzu chubanshe, 2006), 421-24, but does not hypothesize on their function or ritual system.

84 Geri Malandra’s term is borrowed here; see her *Unfolding a Maṇḍala*.

sented inside the maṇḍala but are not identified, nor are their attributes, such as body color, indicated in a systematic manner. As we will see, the incorporation of these details heightens the pedagogic aspects of P.2012.⁸⁵

Overlaps between the maṇḍala diagrams of P.2012 and other diagrams and paintings demonstrate shared iconographic templates at Dunhuang, despite variations in ritual praxis ranging from mortuary rites to repentance and *abhiṣeka*. Previously, Sarah Fraser has observed that the drawings in P.2012 “reflect a set of rules applied for religious practice diagrams. These instructions are for visualization,” rather than sketches for finished paintings.⁸⁶ Taking her argument a step further, we can witness distinct temporal processes at work in these drawings. First, the inscriptions accompanying the diagrams indicate not only the placement and iconographic attributes of deities, but also their proper sequence. For this reason, the diagrams are concerned not only with space – the main prerogative of the altar instructions in P.3913 – but also with time. The sequential aspect of the diagrams is also carried through in the arrangement of the diagrams themselves, one after the other. Second, the sketch-like and incomplete nature of the diagrams might be attributed to the working through of iconographic or ritual formulae, another temporal process. It is also intriguing to speculate on whether the incomplete nature of some of the motifs – for example, the lack of deities inside the maṇḍalas – might have been related to pedagogy or visualization in the sense that only enough information was provided to prompt the practitioner to fill in the rest of the picture mentally.

The first maṇḍala is composed of an eight-petalled lotus blossom enclosed inside a set of three superimposed eight-spoked wheels (fig. 107). Ritual implements are placed at the gates, and lotus pedestals and *vajras* indicate the positions of deities; in the central lotus blossom are the *vajra*, jewel, lotus, and *viśvavajra* indicating the position of the Five Buddhas. The drawing is incomplete, with only one quadrant containing all elements, another nearly finished,

85 Christian Luczanits also points to the “instructional function” of P.2012 on account of the gestures and postures, and notes the incomplete quality of the diagrams. Yet he does not believe that the scroll pertains to visualization. See Christian Luczanits, “Ritual, Instruction, and Experiment: Esoteric Drawings from Dunhuang,” in Anupa Pande and Mandira Sharma, eds., *The Art of Central Asia and the Indian Subcontinent in Cross-Cultural Perspective* (New Delhi: National Museum Institute and Aryan Books International, 2009), 142–46. While the pedagogic (or “instructional”) function of the diagrams seems apparent, their possible use as instructional aids for visualization cannot be ruled out entirely, especially given the evidence presented in Chapter One regarding the use of a painting during visualization in Śubhakarasiṃha’s ritual manual for the *Revered and Victorious Dhāraṇī*.

86 Fraser, *Performing the Visual*, 152.



FIGURE 107 First maṇḍala, P.2012, recto. Guityijun period (848-1036). Handscroll; ink on paper 29.4 to 30 × 53.7 cm. From Dunhuang. BIBLIOTHÈQUE NATIONALE DE FRANCE, PARIS. COURTESY OF THE BIBLIOTHÈQUE NATIONALE DE FRANCE.

and the remaining two empty. An image such as the diagram of the *Vajra Realm Maṇḍala* (see fig. 86) gives us a sense of what the original placement of deities might have been, although their actual numbers do not coincide. The unfinished quality noted in the P.2012 diagram carries over to the drawings of deities and accompanying cartouches or inscriptions that follow it, which, judging from the number of lotus pedestals and *vajras* in the diagram, cannot account for the entire retinue of deities in the maṇḍala.⁸⁷

On the right side of the diagram are two vertical cartouches, accompanied by two more columns of inscriptions on the left side and drawings of deities.⁸⁸ Unlike the diagram of the *Vajra Realm Maṇḍala*, P.2012 separates the deities from the maṇḍala, and in the process, places special emphasis on two groups of deities. These two classes of deities, offering bodhisattvas and gate guardians, are unique to the Vajradhātu Maṇḍala and likely were accentuated for this reason. The inscriptions provide the sequence and positions of the offering bodhisattvas and guardians, along with what items they hold, starting from the east gate and ending with the north gate. Although these figures are not drawn inside the maṇḍala, the placement of the gate guardians on the perimeter of the composition adjacent to the offering bodhisattvas mirrors the logic of their actual locations within the maṇḍala. As in the diagram of the *Vajra Realm Maṇḍala*, color indications are provided in areas of the maṇḍala, although by text notation rather than dabs of pigment. Here, the concern is not with the colors of the bodies of the deities, but rather with the colors of the maṇḍala itself. The use of blue for the borders and green for the gates matches the color scheme of the lower maṇḍala in the *Maṇḍala of Amoghapāśa* (see fig. 93). An identical color scheme is preserved in the Tibetan-language manuscript Stein tib. 473.⁸⁹

87 This point contradicts Sarah Fraser, who writes that the diagrams contain the “requisite number of deities”; see her *Performing the Visual*, 152. A similar unfinished quality can be noted in the altar diagrams in the *Tangben liqū mantuluo* 唐本理趣曼荼羅 section of the iconographic volumes of the Taishō canon, which were brushed in the fifth year of the Xiantong 咸通 era (865) of the Tang dynasty. For example, the details of *vajras* in between the bodies of deities and in the borders of the maṇḍalas are omitted. See Takakusu Junjirō 高楠須次郎 and Watanabe Kaigyoku 渡邊海旭, eds., *Taishō shinshū Daizokiyō zuzō* 大正新脩大藏經圖像, vol. 12 (Tokyo: Taishō Shinshū Daizōkyō Kankōkai, 1960-79), 953-72.

88 Kuo Liying notes that the opening portion of the scroll is missing; see her “Dessins de maṇḍala à Dunhuang,” 53.

89 Kuo, “Dessins de maṇḍala à Dunhuang,” 66-67. Stein tib. 473 probably refers to 10L Tib J 473, which is held in the British Library. See Dalton and van Schaik, *Tibetan Tantric Manuscripts from Dunhuang*, 217-18.

Like the first maṇḍala, the rest also bear formal resemblances to other maṇḍala diagrams and paintings from Dunhuang. For example, the second maṇḍala (fig. 108) takes the form of an eight-petalled lotus blossom inside a square, which is then situated within an eight-spoked wheel inside a series of three square borders. The placement of deities on the spokes of a wheel is also observed in the diagram of the *Maṇḍala of Five Jina Buddhas* (see fig. 87) and again in the lower maṇḍala of the *Maṇḍala of Amoghapāśa* (see fig. 93). The demarcation of distinct colors for each gate and for the borders and ground of each layer of the maṇḍala is also similar to the latter painting.⁹⁰ As opposed to the other three maṇḍalas in the handscroll, this drawing is complete in that each side of the maṇḍala contains the same number of motifs as the other three sides.

As before, four offering bodhisattvas and four gate guardians receive emphasis, as they are indicated by drawings and cartouches. The five meditating Buddhas on either side, on the other hand, are not labelled; the inscription next to one of them states that the body is yellow and that it wears a Five-Buddhas crown. By virtue of body color, this figure likely represents Mahāvairocana. Unlike the other figures, which depict different deities, Mahāvairocana is drawn ten times. It is only on the verso and adjacent to the fourth maṇḍala that the names, locations, and body colors of the Five Buddhas are provided; they are identical to the Five Buddhas of the Five-Buddhas altar in Section 15 and the Five-Buddhas, eight-bodhisattvas repentance altar in Section 16 of P.3913.

The third maṇḍala (fig. 109) exhibits the most complex structure, consisting of an eight-petalled lotus blossom inside, successively, a square, a circular border, two eight-spoked wheels, and another circular border. Unlike the first two, this maṇḍala does not include indications for the colors of the layers, and the *vajras* drawn inside the circular borders are incomplete. The combination of the circular border within the square perimeter of the altar and the eight-spoked wheel in the center calls to mind the composition of the diagram of the *Maṇḍala of Five Jina Buddhas*. Finally, the fourth maṇḍala (fig. 110) is a four-tiered structure composed of a central square with three concentric halls emanating from it. The concentric structure of this maṇḍala calls to mind the maṇḍala altar of the *Maṇḍala of the Five Buddhas* (see fig. 90). As in the third maṇḍala, the *vajras* in the borders between each hall have not been drawn in

90 For the gates, the color indications are white for the east, blue for the south, red for the west, and green for the north. In addition, other inscriptions indicate the color of each layer of the maṇḍala: yellow for the inner layer, then green, blue, white, red, (unclear), green, and blue.



FIGURE 108 Second maṇḍala, P.2012, recto. Guījijun period (848-1036). Handscroll; ink on paper. 29.4 to 30 × 53.7 cm. From Dunhuang. BIBLIOTHÈQUE NATIONALE DE FRANCE, PARIS. COURTESY OF THE BIBLIOTHÈQUE NATIONALE DE FRANCE.



FIGURE 109 *Third maṇḍala, P.2012, recto. Guiyijun period (848-1036). Handscroll, ink on paper. 29.4 to 30 × 513.7 cm. From Dunhuang. BIBLIOTHÈQUE NATIONALE DE FRANCE, PARIS. COURTESY OF THE BIBLIOTHÈQUE NATIONALE DE FRANCE.*



FIGURE 110 *Fourth mandala, P2012, recto. Guiyijun period (848-1036). Handscroll; ink on paper. 29.4 to 30 × 513.7 cm. From Dunhuang. BIBLIOTHÈQUE NATIONALE DE FRANCE, PARIS. COURTESY OF THE BIBLIOTHÈQUE NATIONALE DE FRANCE.*



FIGURE 111 Detail of patch with offering goddess, diagram of Maṇḍala of Five Jina Buddhas (fig. 87). BRITISH MUSEUM. © THE TRUSTEES OF THE BRITISH MUSEUM.

completely, and the diagram lacks color indications. The names of the bodhisattvas in the cartouches to the left of the diagram have been crossed out and replaced with the names of Buddhas. The Five Buddhas are not only named in inscriptions and represented in drawings, they are also repeated on each side of the diagram for a total of ten Buddhas.⁹¹

The diagrams of P.2012 point to a kind of temporal thinking that is not apparent in other relevant images and ritual manuals. The polychrome *Maṇḍala of Amoghapāśa* and the monochrome diagrams of the *Vajra Realm Maṇḍala* and *Maṇḍala of Five Jina Buddhas* depict the deities within the confines of the maṇḍala in their anthropomorphic forms, albeit in varying levels of detail. In so doing, they aspire to capture the culmination of the practitioner's visualization of the deities. P.2012, on the other hand, treats the deities of the maṇḍalas very differently. The maṇḍala diagrams and accompanying nota-

⁹¹ Kuo, "Dessins de *maṇḍala* à Dunhuang," 62.

tions and drawings are concerned with the proper sequence in which the deities are meant to be visualized, as well as their proper placement within the maṇḍala and their iconographic attributes. This information is conveyed in more elaborate detail in manuscripts produced in the *pothī* or booklet format, namely P.3920d, P.3920e, and P.3913. Furthermore, the incomplete quality of the diagrams in P.2012 and changes made in the cartouches accompanying the fourth maṇḍala attest in a visible manner to the very human processes of thinking, documenting, and thinking yet again. Unlike the matter-of-fact treatment of “mistakes” in P.2012, a visible patch covers what originally had been an error in the drawing of an offering goddess in the lower left corner of the central configuration in the *Maṇḍala of Five Jina Buddhas* (fig. 111).⁹² The diagrams of P.2012 are very much images in action, registering both the thought process of the *ācārya* who drew the diagrams as well as the visualization process of the practitioner and the sequence of ritual actions.

From our discussion in the previous and current chapter, we can infer that elements of the Vajradhātu Maṇḍala were adapted to mortuary rituals in the Tibetan context, as well as to repentance and *abhiṣeka* rites that had been preserved in Chinese-language manuscripts. This observation speaks to the general interest in maṇḍalas and altars as ritual paraphernalia and praxis during the Guiyijun era within a culturally and ethnically diverse environment. In particular, the maṇḍalas and altars described in P.3920d, P.3920e, P.3913, and P.2012 were associated with one set of visionary practices centered upon repentance and *abhiṣeka*. As we will see, yet another system of repentance, focused upon bodhisattvas and their names, also came to bear on the visual program of Mogao Cave 14.

92 Fraser, *Performing the Visual*, 150.

Beyond the Maṇḍala

Taking the bodhisattva precepts necessitated a commitment to the proper conduct of a bodhisattva, which entailed seeking awakening for others as well as for oneself. Perhaps no more familiar figure of the seeker of the bodhisattva path may be found than the boy pilgrim Sudhana, protagonist of the Gaṇḍavyūha chapter of the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra*. In this final chapter of the sūtra, Sudhana journeys to meet fifty-three *kalyāṇamitras* in order to learn the proper conduct of a bodhisattva. Beginning in the Tang dynasty, the Gaṇḍavyūha narrative was treated in mural paintings of the Mogao cave shrines that illustrated Sudhana's meetings with the *kalyāṇamitras*. Importantly, it also provided the conceptual framework for articulating a system of Buddhist pedagogy and lineage in the imperially mandated dharma colleges that were established throughout the Tibetan empire.¹

Much like the incorporation of the Five Buddhas of the Vajradhātu Maṇḍala into ritual, the narrative structure of the Gaṇḍavyūha text also was intertwined with repentance rites. In particular, the Bhadracarī (Vow of Good Conduct), which is imparted by Samantabhadra to Sudhana at the conclusion of the narrative, was an important source for a seven-stage repentance ritual that circulated in India and Tibet. A Chinese translation of the Bhadracarī by Amoghavajra elaborates upon the standard formula for such vows by including ten stanzas of praise to the bodhisattvas of the Maṇḍala of Eight Great Bodhisattvas.

Accordingly, an important connecting thread between these different systems of repentance was the Maṇḍala of Eight Great Bodhisattvas. This conceptual framework was then mapped onto the architectural design of the Guiyijun-era Mogao Cave 14 in a tripartite arrangement, beginning with the bodhisattva-centered motifs on the walls and culminating in the manifold Buddhas on the ceiling. Viewed in temporal and geographic contexts, the ascent to the dharma realm was a shared concern also exhibited in the archi-

¹ Helga Uebach writes that thirty dharma colleges had been established by the time of Tri Songdetsen; see her "On Dharma-Colleges and their Teachers in the Ninth Century Tibetan Empire," in Paolo Daffinà, ed., *Indo-Sino-Tibetica: Studi in Onore di Luciano Petech* (Rome: Bardi Editori, 1990), 393-418. For the lineage of *kalyāṇamitras*, see also Marcelle Lalou, "Document tibétain sur l'expansion du Dhyāna chinois," *Journal Asiatique* 231 (1939): 505-23.

tectural plans and visual programs of contemporaneous Buddhist sites in Southeast Asia and the Himalayas.

Bodhisattvas and Repentance

Beneath the paintings of the Maṇḍala of Eight Great Bodhisattvas, Vajrasattva, and other deities on the north and south walls of Mogao Cave 14 are images of a series of figures standing in three-quarter view enclosed within multipaneled screens delineated by plain borders (see figs. 71, 72). The divine status of these figures is indicated by jeweled canopies, haloes, and lotus pedestals, and they are attired alternately in monks' garb or flowing robes and scarves, the latter type adorned lavishly with jewelry. Such multipaneled screens had been a feature of the visual programs of Mogao cave shrines during the Tang dynasty, and the earlier scholarship on them primarily has emphasized those appearing in the niches of the west walls of the caves.²

Less attention has been paid to the multipaneled screens that appear on the walls of the main chambers, and their embodiment of religious experience. In those screens, the most common motif consists of narrative details set in landscapes. One example is found on the south wall of Mogao Cave 159, beneath three large transformation tableaux separated by floral textile borders (fig. 112). A nine-paneled screen is located just below the larger paintings, with three panels distributed evenly beneath each. The paintings in the panels, in turn, pertain directly to the larger paintings above, serving to individuate the formulaic compositions of the transformation tableaux. The middle painting features Amitābha Buddha of the Western Pure Land, and of the three panels below,

2 Multipaneled screens painted in the west wall niche appear in twenty-eight of the fifty-five newly built and forty-four renovated cave shrines of the Tibbetan period; see Zhao Qinglan 趙青蘭, "Mogaoku Tubo shiqi dongku kannei pingfeng yanjiu" 莫高窟吐蕃時期洞窟龕內屏風研究, *Dunhuang yanjiu* 敦煌研究 1994.3:49-61; 49-50. Ping Foong and Neil Schmid have analyzed the multipaneled screens from the perspective of their illusionistic qualities, focusing as well on the painted screens in the west wall niche. See Ping Foong, "Multipanel Landscape Screens as Spatial Simulacra at the Mogao Caves, Dunhuang," in Jerome Silbergeld, Dora C.Y. Ching, Judith G. Smith, and Alfreda Murck, eds., *Bridges to Heaven: Essays on East Asian Art in Honor of Professor Wen C. Fong* (Princeton, NJ: P.Y. and Kinmay W. Tang Center for East Asian Art in association with Princeton University Press, 2011), 533-56; and D. Neil Schmid, "The Material Culture of Exegesis and Liturgy and a Change in the Artistic Representations in Dunhuang Caves, ca. 700-1000," *Asia Major* third series 19.1/2 (2006): 171-210. For the materiality of the screen motif, see Winston Kyan, "Family Space: Buddhist Materiality and Ancestral Fashioning in Mogao Cave 231," *Art Bulletin* 92.1-2 (2010): 61-82.

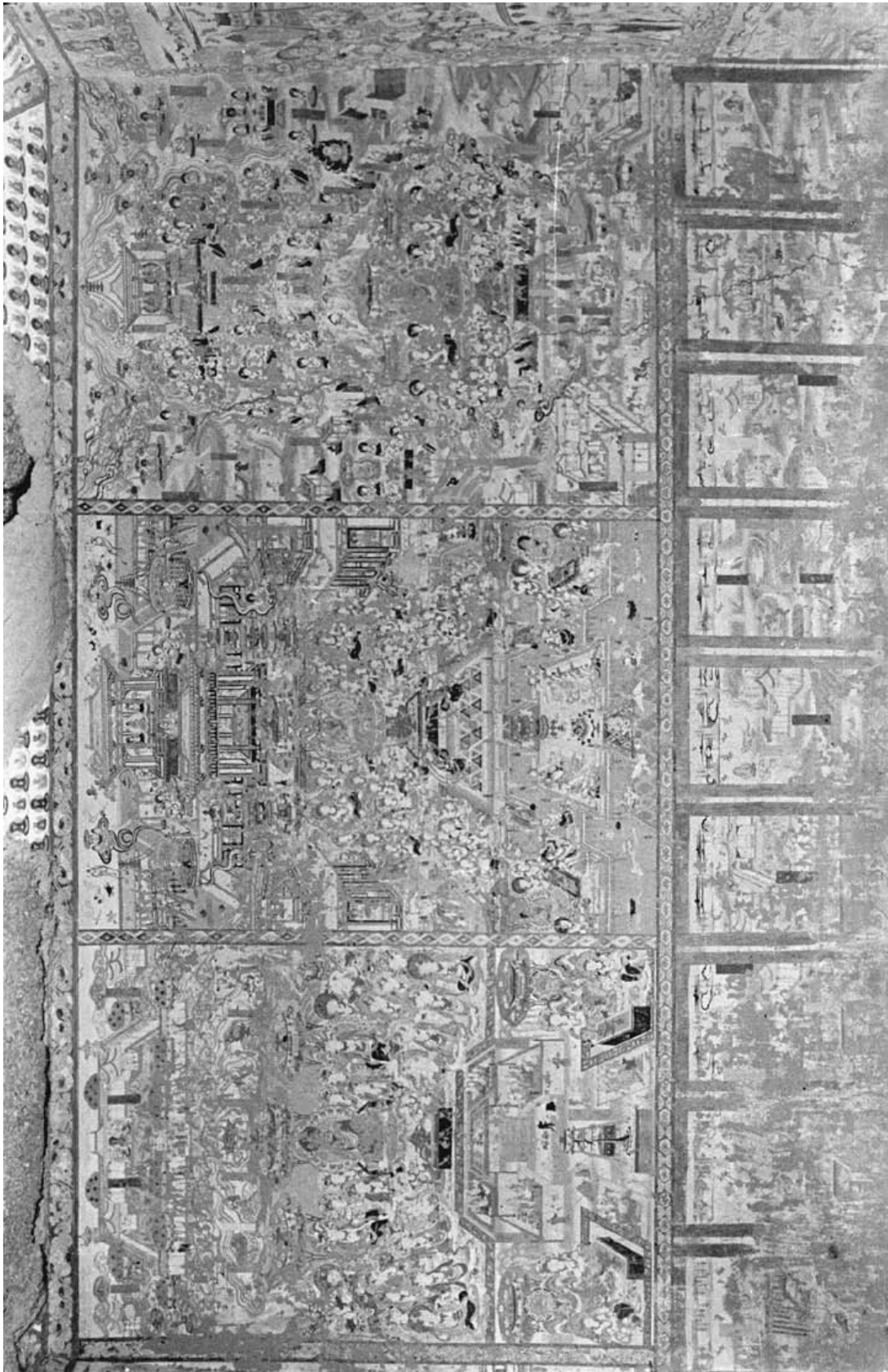


FIGURE 112 South wall, Mogao Cave 159, Tibetan period (786-848), Mural painting, Dunhuang, Gansu Province, LO ARCHIVE #159-17. © THE LO ARCHIVE.

two depict the unjust imprisonment of King Bimbisāra of Magadha by his son, the wicked prince Ajātaśatru. The third panel frames a sequence of the sixteen contemplations of Queen Vaidehī, by which she was able to attain a vision of the Western Pure Land with Amitābha Buddha, depicted in its entirety in the tableaux above. Along the four walls are distributed twenty-eight panels in total.³ The function of the multipaneled screen as a framing device, however, is quite distinct in Mogao Cave 14, as each panel contains a sole figure rather than narrative scenes set in landscapes.

Framed as they are within screens, the sequence of these divine figures – all bodhisattvas – appears less like a continuous procession than as a snapshot of individual Buddhist exemplars.⁴ The manipulation of the figures' bodies in varied poses gives a naturalistic sense of volume. Arranged along the lowermost register of the walls of the main chamber, eight figures are depicted on the east wall, sixteen each on the north and south walls, and eleven figures on the west wall. The Chinese inscriptions in the cartouches have remained unstudied until now.⁵ Brought to light, they provide crucial information concerning the identities of the figures and their role in religious praxis. Due to exposure, only the inscriptions on the west wall, which is shielded by the central pillar, are still legible, in addition to one on the south wall. The inscriptions follow a standard formula of praise: *namo* (*nanwu* 南無), meaning “obeisance,” after which appears the name of a bodhisattva (fig. 113). A match for the sixth inscription on the west wall, “Obeisance to the Bodhisattva Universal Mark of Radiance” (*nanwu Puxiangguangming pusa* 南無普相光明菩薩), can be found in the eleventh fascicle of the thirty-fascicle *Sūtra on the Names of the Buddha* (*Foshuo Foming jing* 佛說佛名經).⁶ In this fascicle, the names of the bodhisattvas of the ten directions are given after the titles of the twelve divisions of sūtras and the names of the Buddhas. Seventeen bodhisattvas' names out of forty begin with the character for “universal” (*pu* 普), which is the standard

3 Foong, “Multipanel Landscape Screens,” 536. As Neil Schmid notes, the paintings of the lowermost register show “the workings of karma.” See Schmid, “Material Culture of Exegesis,” 199–200.

4 The effect of the Mogao Cave 14 bodhisattvas framed within individual screens is distinct, for example, from the clockwise circumambulation of the monk patriarchs carved in low relief in Kanjingsi 看經寺 at the Longmen Caves near Luoyang, Henan Province. Karil Kucera notes that Tang-dynasty texts on painting record similar depictions of circumambulating monks. See her “Recontextualizing Kanjingsi: Finding Meaning in the Emptiness at Longmen,” *Archives of Asian Art* 56 (2006): 61–80; 72.

5 The accompanying inscriptions were never recorded in the standard index of donor inscriptions, precisely because they are the names of bodhisattvas rather than of donors. For the standard index, see Dunhuang yanjiuyuan, ed., *Dunhuang Mogaoku gongyangren tiji*.

6 T14:441.228a24. This sūtra is T441. Kuo Li-ying analyzes the structure of the *Sūtra on the Names of the Buddha*; see her *Confession et Contrition*, 128–31.

West wall (from south to north):	
2-22:	南無普□海□菩薩
2-23:	南無普光照菩薩
2-24:	unclear
2-25:	南無普□□□菩薩
2-26:	南無普□□□□□
2-27:	南無普相光明菩薩
2-28:	unclear
2-29:	unclear
2-30:	unclear
2-31:	南無□寶□菩薩
2-32:	unclear
South wall (at corner of west wall):	
2-21:	南無普□寶集菩薩

FIGURE 113

Bodhisattva names contained in inscriptions in Mogao Cave 14. Numbers correspond to those brushed in black adjacent to the individual bodhisattvas. COMPILED BY THE AUTHOR AND FORMATTED BY ERNEST BARONI.

formula of the inscriptions still legible in Mogao Cave 14, further confirming the *Sūtra on the Names of the Buddha* as a possible source.⁷

The *Sūtra on the Names of the Buddha* played a crucial role in repentance rites, particularly those involving *buddhānusmṛti*, or recollection of the Buddhas. In fact, it may be said that repentance is a unifying feature of Mogao Cave 14, joining the motifs on the four walls with those on the ceiling. The recollection of the names of Buddhas of the past and present was carried out through recitation of their names and meditative visualization of their forms. One common formula for *buddhānusmṛti*, from the *Pratyutpanna Samādhi Sūtra* (*Foshuo shoulengyan sanmeijing* 佛說首楞嚴三昧經), translated by Lokakṣema (Jiumoluoshi 支婁迦讖) in 179 CE, requires that the practitioner sit in a quiet place, face the particular direction in which the Buddha serving as the focus of repentance resides, then visualize the Buddha preaching to an assembly.⁸ The Buddha is visualized further by contemplating the thirty-two marks of a great man. If the practice is carried out successfully, then at the end of seven days and seven nights, the practitioner will receive a vision of the Buddha.⁹ Rather than seated practice, a continuous walking practice or circumambulation for

7 T14:441.228a16-24. According to Dunhuang yanjiuyuan, ed., *Dunhuang yishu zongmu suoyin xinbian*, more than five hundred Chinese-language manuscript copies of the *Sūtra on the Names of the Buddha* from Dunhuang are extant, attesting to its popularity.

8 This sūtra is T642.

9 Paul Harrison, "Commemoration and Identification in *Buddhanusmṛti*," in Janet Gyatso, ed., *The Mirror of Memory: Reflections of Mindfulness and Remembrance in Indian and Tibetan Buddhism* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1992), 215-38; 220-21.

periods lasting seven or ninety days is described in accounts from the sixth and seventh centuries of *samādhi* based on the *Pratyutpanna Samādhi Sūtra*.¹⁰ In addition to its connection to such rites, the *Sūtra on the Names of the Buddha* has been recognized by scholars for its association with the Thousand Buddhas (*qianfo* 千佛) motif consisting of a repeating pattern of painted or low-relief sculptures of seated Buddhas, which appears in the Mogao cave shrines from the Northern and Southern dynasties onward (fig. 114).¹¹

In Mogao Cave 14, however, it is the bodhisattvas from the *Sūtra on the Names of the Buddha* that receive special emphasis, rather than the Buddhas. Furthermore, in contrast to the relatively small size of the Thousand Buddhas, each of which might range between 25 and 30 centimeters in height, the fifty-one bodhisattvas in Mogao Cave 14 are nearly life-sized at roughly 105 centimeters in height (fig. 115).¹² Located as they are in the lowermost register of paintings on all four walls of the main chamber of the cave shrine, they more closely approximate the size and circumambulatory movement of human devotees than do the small Thousand Buddhas. Similar bodhisattvas in other cave shrines are even taller; the Guiyijun-period Mogao Cave 196 (fig. 116), for example, contains thirty bodhisattvas, each enclosed within an individual screen, that are around 125 centimeters in height. The bodhisattvas in Mogao Cave 196 similarly are associated with repentance; two bodhisattvas' names provided in the cartouches are among those included in the *Repentance Method of the Compassionate Ritual Space* (*Cibei daochang chanfa* 慈悲道場懺法), a ritual manual commissioned by Emperor Wu 梁武帝 (r. 502-49) of the Liang dynasty (502-87).¹³ With the bodhisattvas anchored to the ground level of the cave

10 Stevenson, "T'ien-t'ai Four Forms of Samādhi," 169-73.

11 See, for example, Liang Xiaopeng 梁曉鵬, *Dunhuang Mogaoku qianfo tuxiang yanjiu* 敦煌莫高窟千佛圖像研究 (Beijing: Minzu chubanshe, 2006); and Stanley K. Abe, "Art and Practice in a Fifth-Century Chinese Buddhist Cave Temple," *Ars Orientalis* 20 (1990): 1-31.

12 For the size of the Thousand Buddhas in the Mogao cave shrines, see Ning Qiang 寧強 and Hu Tongqing 胡同慶, "Dunhuang Mogaoku di 254 ku qianfo hua yanjiu" 敦煌莫高窟第254窟千佛畫研究, *Dunhuang yanjiu* 敦煌研究 1986.4:22-36; 30-32.

13 *Cibei daochang chanfa* is T1909. The inscriptions accompanying the first and third bodhisattvas on the south wall of Mogao Cave 196 read, "Obeisance to Mahāsthāmaprāpta Bodhisattva" (*nanwu Dashizhi pusa* 南無大勢至菩薩) and "Obeisance to Bodhisattva Constant Effort" (*nanwu Changjingjin pusa* 南無常精進菩薩), respectively. These passages appear in T45.1909:946b19. For the *Repentance Method of the Compassionate Ritual Space*, see Kuo, *Confession et Contrition*, 13. A few of the bodhisattvas are accompanied by donor figures, whose names also must have originally been inscribed in the second, smaller cartouche within the same screen. According to *Dunhuang yishu zongmu*, no

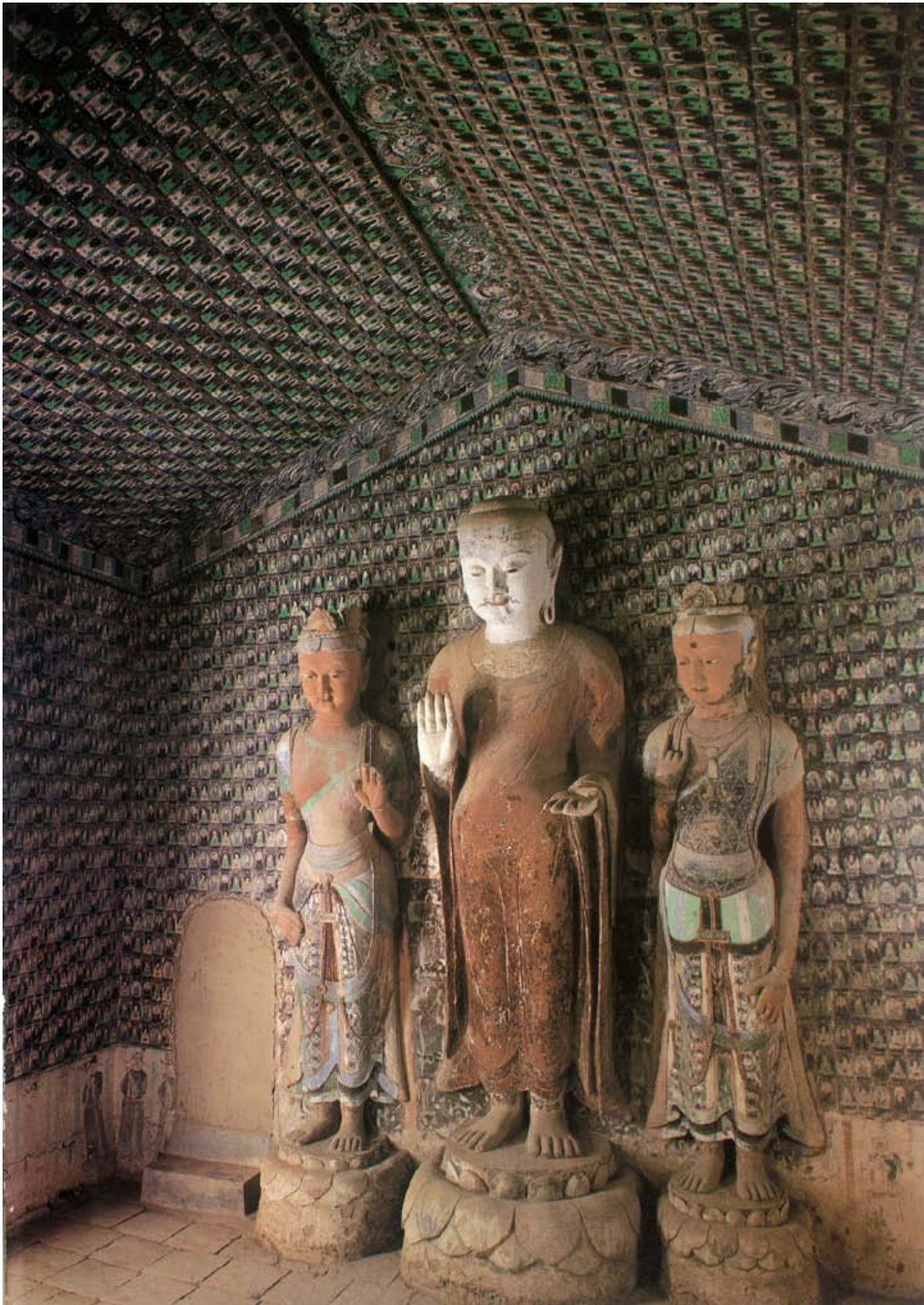


FIGURE 114 *Thousand Buddhas motif (in background). Sui dynasty (589-618). Mural painting. West wall, Mogao Cave 427, Dunhuang, Gansu Province. FROM DUNHUANG WENWU YANJIUSUO, ED., ZHONGGUO SHIKU: DUNHUANG SHIKU, VOL. 2, PLATE 52.*



FIGURE 115 Eight from a group of fifty-one bodhisattvas. Guiyijun period (848-1036), second half of 9th century. Mural painting. North wall, Mogao Cave 14, Dunhuang, Gansu Province. FROM LIANG, ED., *DUNHUANG SHIKU YISHU: MOGAO KU DI SHISI KU (WAN TANG)*, 195, PLATE 199.



FIGURE 116 Mahāsthāmaprāpta bodhisattva and donor figure. *Guiyijun period (848-1036), second half of 9th–early 10th century. Mural painting. South wall, Mogao Cave 196, Dunhuang, Gansu Province.* FROM MEI, ED., *DUNHUANG SHIKU YISHU: MOGAOKU DI 85 KU, FU DI 196 KU (WAN TANG)*, 185, PLATE 167.

shrine, the devotees' engagement with them takes on a greater immediacy than their engagement with the manifold Buddhas on the ceiling panels. As spiritual exemplars, bodhisattvas are believed to reside in the human realm; they therefore remain accessible to human devotees. An emphasis on the bodhisattva path was also evident in early Tibet, where the *kalyāṇamītras* of the Gaṇḍavyūha text no longer were viewed merely as abstract figures from a Buddhist narrative set largely in India, but rather as spiritual mentors in the here and now.

The *Kalyāṇamītras* as Embodied Experience

Previous chapters of this book have emphasized Vairocana in the context of the Maṇḍala of Eight Great Bodhisattvas as a visual expression of diplomatic negotiations between the Tang and Tibetan empires as well as a symbol of kingship, in addition to the continued resonance of this visual template during the Guiyijun period at Dunhuang. Epigraphic and manuscript evidence reveals yet another model for early Tibetan kingship, particularly during the eighth-century reign of Tri Songdetsen: the bodhisattva king. During the Tibetan empire, Tri Songdetsen was described as a bodhisattva, or a devotee on the path toward enlightenment.¹⁴ Identifications of the emperor as such are implied in a number of inscriptions. For example, the inscription from the temple bell at Samye preserves a prayer for Tri Songdetsen to “attain supreme enlightenment,” and the inscription on the pillar near his burial mound in the Chonggye (’Phyogs rgyas) valley notes that he was a religious king responsible for leading his subjects to enlightenment, fulfilling the expectation of a bodhisattva who selflessly aids other sentient beings in their spiritual quest.¹⁵

The bodhisattva path is a core principle of the Gaṇḍavyūha chapter of the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra*.¹⁶ The young protagonist Sudhana embarks on a journey

Chinese-language manuscript copies of this text from Dunhuang are extant, raising questions about what the local source for the bodhisattvas' names might have been.

14 Lewis Doney, “Early Bodhisattva-Kingship in Tibet: The Case of Tri Songdetsen,” *Cahiers d'Extrême-Asie* 24 (2015): 29–47; 29–31.

15 Doney, “Early Bodhisattva-Kingship in Tibet,” 34.

16 The larger *Avataṃsaka Sūtra*, one of the longest of the Mahāyāna sūtras, exists in two Chinese translations; see Chapter Two, note 135. A forty-fascicle translation dating from around 800 (T293), consisting of only the Gaṇḍavyūha portion, was completed by Prajñā (Bore 般若, active late 8th century). In addition to the two Chinese translations, a Tibetan translation of around 800 was completed by the Indian translators Jinamitra and Surendrabodhi, and the Tibetan scholar Yeshe De (Ye shes sde); see Imre Hamar, “The History

throughout India and the Buddhist cosmos, sometimes described as the Pilgrim's Progress of Buddhism, to seek out individual teachings from the fifty-three *kalyāṇamitras* on the proper conduct of a bodhisattva.¹⁷ The story of Sudhana begins with a gathering in the Jeta Grove with the Buddha and five thousand bodhisattvas, led by Mañjuśrī and Samantabhadra, five hundred voice-hearers, and world rulers. When entreated to show the gathered assembly the Buddha's past accomplishments and his path of bodhisattvahood, the Buddha enters into a state of *samādhi* called the "lion's yawn."¹⁸ As he enters *samādhi*, the physical location of the Jeta Grove undergoes a vast transformation, seen only by the bodhisattvas; the pavilion in which the Buddha is seated becomes infinitely expansive, and the ground is strewn with the finest and most splendid of gems, pillars, and banners. The Jeta Grove and the Buddha lands become one and the same, illustrating the principle of interpenetration that comprises a central theme not only of the Gaṇḍavyūha text, but also of the larger *Avataṃsaka Sūtra*.¹⁹

Not only do the Jeta Grove and the Buddha lands become coextensive, but the Buddha further interpenetrates all Buddha lands with his one body, causing each land to be transformed into a Buddha field in the same way as the Jeta Grove. All Buddha lands are displayed within the one body of the Buddha, and all phenomena may be reflected in a single pore. The Jeta Grove and all worlds in the ten directions are purified as a Buddha field, altogether manifesting ornaments of jewels, flowers, banners, and more.²⁰ Upon this series of transformations, bodhisattvas from the ten directions arrive in turn with their

of the Buddhāvataṃsaka Sūtra: Shorter and Larger Texts," in Imre Hamar, ed., *Reflecting Mirrors: Perspectives on Huayan Buddhism* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2007), 139-67; 153-55. The Gaṇḍavyūha narrative likely was composed in India no later than the second half of the third century CE, and had been translated before its incorporation into the larger *Avataṃsaka Sūtra*. It continued to circulate independently in India even after its incorporation into the sūtra; for example, the basis for Prajñā's translation was a Sanskrit manuscript from the King of Orissa. See Gifford, *Buddhist Practice and Visual Culture*, 7-8; and Hamar, "History of the Buddhāvataṃsaka Sūtra," 146-47.

17 The term "Pilgrim's Progress of Buddhism" is found in Jan Fontein, *The Pilgrimage of Sudhana: A Study of Gandavyūha Illustrations in China, Japan, and Java* (The Hague and Paris: Mouton & Co., 1967), 1.

18 Cleary, *Flower Ornament Scripture*, 1138; T10.279:320a10-12. The author thanks Douglas Osto for this reading of the passage.

19 Cleary, *Flower Ornament Scripture*, 1138; T10.279:320a13-25.

20 Cleary, *Flower Ornament Scripture*, 1139; T10.279:320b3-c13.

retinue to pay their respects to the Buddha, bringing with them even more precious items as offerings and assuming their seats on jeweled thrones.²¹

This opening sequence serves to emphasize the authority of Vairocana and importance of the bodhisattva path. The spectacular transformation of the Jeta Grove and the visual display of interpenetration is witnessed only by the bodhisattvas. This stands in sharp contrast to the Buddha's disciples, who are unable to see the miraculous transformations in the Jeta Grove, having been excluded from this experience because they lack the same root of goodness as that cultivated by the bodhisattvas (*yi shangen butong gu* 以善根不同故).²² Moreover, the bodhisattvas gathered in the Jeta Grove are able to witness the projections of the Buddha all throughout the cosmos.²³ These bodhisattvas then attain an even greater capacity for guiding sentient beings, themselves gaining the ability to appear to all sentient beings throughout the cosmos in the manner best received, all without ever leaving the assembly in the Jeta Grove.²⁴

At this point, the story turns to the initial meeting of Sudhana with the bodhisattva Mañjuśrī. Recognizing the boy's determination to follow the path of enlightenment and the practice of bodhisattvas, Mañjuśrī urges Sudhana to seek out spiritual teachers in order to learn the conduct of bodhisattvas, sending him first to the monk Meghaśrī.²⁵ In such a manner, Sudhana journeys from one *kalyāṇamitra* to the next, finally returning to Mañjuśrī before his visit to the last of the fifty-three *kalyāṇamitras*, Samantabhadra.

The important role played by the *kalyāṇamitras* in the Gaṇḍavyūha text is mirrored in the identification, by the same term, of Buddhist teachers associated with the Tibetan court in certain Dunhuang manuscripts that address the Buddhist establishment and Tibetan imperial history. For example, Ch.0021 and IOL Tib J 689/2 provide a list of the *kalyāṇamitras* residing at Samye and other temples. The role played by these so-called *kalyāṇamitras*, as imperially appointed teachers in dharma colleges established at temples throughout Tibet, was crucial for the transmission of Buddhism and monastic training.²⁶

21 Cleary, *Flower Ornament Scripture*, 1139-45; T10.279:320c14-322b20.

22 Cleary, *Flower Ornament Scripture*, 1145-1151; T10.279:322b21-324a25. For the quote, see T10.279:323a3.

23 Cleary, *Flower Ornament Scripture*, 1161-66; T10.279:327b14-329b24.

24 Cleary, *Flower Ornament Scripture*, 1168-69; T10.279:329c24-330b28.

25 Cleary, *Flower Ornament Scripture*, 1173-80; T10.279:332a26-334a15.

26 Helga Uebach analyzes the lineages of *kalyāṇamitras* from their Indian predecessors as listed in certain Dunhuang manuscripts; for an analysis of Ch.0021, see her "On Dharma-Colleges," 407-13. For IOL Tib J 689/2, see Lewis Doney, "Narrative Transformations: The Spiritual Friends of Khri Srong lde brtsan," in Eva Allinger, Frantz Grenet, Christian

A variation of the Gaṇḍavyūha story is found in Pelliot tibétain 149, which dates to the tenth century. Opening with a condensed retelling of the Gaṇḍavyūha narrative, the manuscript describes 102 *kalyāṇamitras* whom Sudhana meets in the course of his spiritual quest and his attainment of the Bhadracarī from Samantabhadra.²⁷ The next part of the text details the translation of this prayer into Tibetan, and provides instructions for its ritual practice. Departing from the usual number of fifty-three *kalyāṇamitras*, Pelliot tibétain 149 clearly reflects a local variant of the Gaṇḍavyūha narrative in circulation during the ninth and tenth centuries, perhaps influenced by Chinese or Khotanese versions of the tale.²⁸ The text also describes Tri Songdetsen as a spiritual teacher, suggesting that he might have been characterized as a *kalyāṇamitra* by this time.²⁹ The association between Tri Songdetsen and the ideal of the bodhi-sattva path articulated in the Gaṇḍavyūha narrative would not necessarily have been at odds with his identification as Vairocana, for a good number of the *kalyāṇamitras* were themselves kings and queens, drawing parallels between worldly and spiritual power.³⁰ Interestingly, the emperor himself was later considered an emanation of Mañjuśrī, the first among the *kalyāṇamitras* of the Gaṇḍavyūha story.³¹

The material instantiation of the *kalyāṇamitras* in the religious landscape of early Tibet also may be demonstrated by a textual account in the *Testament of Ba* concerning a painted frieze depicting the 102 *kalyāṇamitras* that was installed in the courtyard of Samye, which was founded by Tri Songdetsen. Although no physical evidence of these paintings survives (thus making it

Jahoda, Maria-Katharina Lang, and Anne Vergati, eds., *Interaction in the Himalayas and Central Asia: Processes of Transfer, Translation and Transformation in Art, Archaeology, Religion and Polity* (Vienna: Austrian Academy of Sciences Press, 2017), 311-20; 314.

27 On the Bhadracarī, see Bart Dessein, "The Glow of the Vow of the Teacher Samantabhadra 'Puxian Pusa Xingyuan Zan' (T.297) Samantabhadrācāryapraṇidhānarāja," *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 56.2/4 (2003): 317-38. The Bhadracarī is also known as the Samantabhadrācāryapraṇidhānarāja or Ārya Samantabhadrācāryāpraṇidhānarāja.

28 Sam van Schaik and Lewis Doney, "The Prayer, the Priest, and the Tsenpo: An Early Buddhist Narrative from Dunhuang," *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 30.1-2 (2007): 175-217; 187-90.

29 Doney, "Narrative Transformations," 314. Both David McMahan and Douglas Osto note the metaphor of kingship in the Gaṇḍavyūha; see McMahan, *Empty Vision: Metaphor and Visionary Imagery in Mahāyāna Buddhism* (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2002), 118; and Osto, *Power, Wealth, and Women in Indian Mahāyāna Buddhism: The Gaṇḍavyūha-sūtra* (London: Routledge, 2012), 71-72.

30 For a close reading of the conceptualization of worldly and spiritual power in the Gaṇḍavyūha text, see Osto, *Power, Wealth, and Women*, 48-72.

31 Doney, "Narrative Transformations," 318.

difficult to verify their existence), similar portrayals of the *kalyāṇamitras* from Sudhana's pilgrimage are preserved in other settings, suggesting the longevity and circulation of this motif.³²

Perhaps reflecting the interest in the Gaṇḍavyūha narrative and Bhadracarī as related above, during the Tibetan period mural paintings of Mañjuśrī and Samantabhadra frequently were paired on either side of the west wall niche of the main chamber of the Mogao cave shrines, or flanking the east wall entrance; such an arrangement is seen in more than one hundred cave shrines from the Tang dynasty onward. These two bodhisattvas are accorded a prominent position in the Gaṇḍavyūha text as the figures who lead the five thousand bodhisattvas into the Jeta Grove in order to receive the Buddha's teachings. They appear as well on either side of the east wall entrance of Mogao Cave 14, adding two more figures to the sequence of fifty-one bodhisattvas along the four walls. If the paintings of Mañjuśrī and Samantabhadra (fig. 117) are added to this group, the total number of bodhisattvas amounts to fifty-three, coinciding with the number of *kalyāṇamitras* in the Gaṇḍavyūha narrative.

This choice must have been significant, as similar groups of bodhisattvas in other Mogao cave shrines represent only a fraction of this number. The closest number of such bodhisattvas is seen in the Song-dynasty Mogao Cave 204, with thirty-seven bodhisattvas, followed by the Guiyijun-period Mogao Cave 196, with thirty.³³ Bodhisattvas of this type began to appear during the Sui dynasty (581-618), with most dating from the Tibetan, Guiyijun, Song, and Xixia (1038-1227) periods.³⁴ By and large, they appear on the north and south walls of

32 Van Schaik and Doney, "Prayer, the Priest, and the Tsenpo," 187-89. Amy Heller notes that Sudhana's meetings with the *kalyāṇamitras* are among the motifs carved in the wooden panels of the Jokhang Temple in Lhasa; see Heller, "The Lhasa gtsug lag khang: Observations on the Ancient Wood Carvings," *Tibet Journal* 29/3 (2004): 3-24. See also <<http://www.asianart.com/articles/heller2/>> (last accessed 6.17.2017).

33 Data collated from Dunhuang yanjiuyuan, ed., *Dunhuang shiku neirong zonglu*.

34 Commonly named as "offering bodhisattvas" (*gongyang pusa* 供養菩薩), presumably due to the offerings of flowers and incense that many hold in their hands, the relevance of these motifs to repentance has not been explored. In studying Dunhuang yanjiuyuan, ed., *Dunhuang shiku neirong zonglu*, it appears that the earliest cave shrine bearing this motif is the Sui-dynasty Mogao Cave 427. The bodhisattvas then appear in a number of early-Tang cave shrines, but the greatest number of cave shrines with this motif dates to the Guiyijun period and later. Not all of the cartouches are filled in with the names of bodhisattvas. Around nineteen caves in total contain paintings of the bodhisattvas, as revealed by a survey of the individual cave entries found in Dunhuang yanjiuyuan, ed., *Dunhuang shiku neirong zonglu*.



FIGURE 117 Mañjuśrī and Samantabhadra. *Guanyin period* (848-1036), second half of 9th century. Mural painting. East wall, Mogao Cave 14, Dunhuang, Gansu Province. COURTESY OF THE DUNHUANG ACADEMY.

the main chamber; therefore, their expansion to all four walls of Mogao Cave 14 is noteworthy.

The placement of the bodhisattvas in between Mañjuśrī and Samantabhadra is particularly intriguing if we consider that the two are the first and last *kalyāṇamitras* with whom Sudhana meets. While the repetition of generic figural types among the group of fifty-one rules out the possibility that they are visual representations of individual *kalyāṇamitras*, the number of bodhisattvas might have been patterned after or designed to echo the number of *kalyāṇamitras* in the Gaṇḍavyūha text.³⁵ Given this connection, by entering the cave and circumambulating the pillar (an unusual architectural feature in cave shrines of this period), the devotee is able to performatively retrace Sudhana's journey to each *kalyāṇamitra*. The circumambulatory motion of the devotee around the pillar is also implied by the painting on the western end of the north wall, in which the tilt of Vajrasattva's head toward the right seems to reinforce visually the clockwise circumambulation of the devotee (see fig. 71). Admittedly, the placement in Mogao Cave 14 of Mañjuśrī on the north side of the entrance and Samantabhadra on the south does not lend itself easily to such a reading, for the circumambulating devotee would encounter Samantabhadra first and Mañjuśrī last. Yet this deviation from the standard narrative of the Gaṇḍavyūha text might be explained by the fact that this placement represents the prevailing spatial orientation of the two bodhisattvas in Mogao cave shrines.³⁶ Thus two competing spatial paradigms are found.

At Dunhuang, Sudhana's pilgrimage generally is not treated as an independent motif isolated from the larger *Avataṃsaka Sūtra*.³⁷ In fact, it would not be until the Song dynasty that the subject came into its own as a visual motif in woodblock-printed books.³⁸ Therefore, the possible association of the *kalyāṇamitras* with the bodhisattvas in Mogao Cave 14 is significant. Sudhana's pilgrimage is incorporated as a minor motif alongside transformation tableaux

35 Significantly, female figures are conspicuously absent, despite their prominent representation among the *kalyāṇamitras*. On the prominence of female characters, and female devotees as a target audience for the Gaṇḍavyūha text, see Osto, *Power, Wealth and Women*, 88-122.

36 Given the common use of artists' pounces and sketches at the Mogao site, it is interesting to speculate on whether such tools might have dictated the placement of the bodhisattvas, although no extant examples of these items for the type of Mañjuśrī and Samantabhadra compositions that we commonly see flanking the east wall entrances of the Mogao cave shrines have been found. On the use of artists' pounces and sketches, see Fraser, *Performing the Visual*.

37 Stevenson, "T'ien-t'ai Four Forms of Samādhi," 452.

38 See Fontein, *Pilgrimage of Sudhana*, especially 23-77.

at Dunhuang, often appearing on either side of the main composition or directly below, enclosed within paneled screens. The illustrations typically feature Sudhana, seated or on bended knee, facing a *kalyāṇamitra* with hands brought together in a gesture of reverence. Rather than depicting the full cycle of fifty-three *kalyāṇamitras*, only a small sampling of these encounters are selected for inclusion alongside the larger composition, and with few identifying details, the identities of specific *kalyāṇamitras* are difficult to ascertain but for the intervention of an accompanying cartouche in which text may or may not be clearly legible.

Paintings related to the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra* first appeared in the Tang dynasty during the eighth century and continued into the Song dynasty with little variation in major motifs, depicting the Seven Locations and Nine Assemblies – the main subject of the transformation tableaux – in a grid-like fashion. The Seven Locations refer to the places where Śākyamuni appeared to preach to devotees in the period of time after he had attained enlightenment at Bodhgayā. Immediately after his awakening, Śākyamuni entered a state of *samādhi* that lasted for several weeks; while in this state, he was able to manifest himself in earthly and heavenly realms to eight or nine assemblies of devotees.³⁹ Each vignette replicates the pictorial formula of the standard Buddha preaching scene found in Dunhuang transformation tableaux, and the composition as a whole vividly expresses the totality of *Avataṃsaka* cosmology.

The *kalyāṇamitra* vignettes depicted on the north ceiling slope of Mogao Cave 85 (fig. 118) are noteworthy for their rather high degree of clarity and pictorial detail. They appear to the right of the central Seven Locations and Nine Assemblies tableaux; on the left are scenes from the Universal Gateway chapter of the *Lotus Sūtra*. Altogether, roughly twelve *kalyāṇamitras* are presented. The meeting between Sudhana and Mañjuśrī as the penultimate *kalyāṇamitra* is recorded in the accompanying cartouche (fig. 119).⁴⁰ Mañjuśrī stands with his hand outstretched to touch the head of Sudhana before sending him to meet Samantabhadra. This formula is repeated in a relief carving dating to the Southern Song dynasty (1127-1279) of Sudhana's meeting with Mañjuśrī from the Many Treasures Pagoda in Dazu, Sichuan Province (fig. 120). The prayerful, lowered posture of Sudhana in these images recalls the position of the donor or devotee depicted with Mahāsthāmaprāpta in Mogao Cave 196 (see fig. 116).

39 Dorothy Wong, "The Huayan/Kegon/Hwaōm Paintings in East Asia," in Imre Hamar, ed., *Reflecting Mirrors: Perspectives on Huayan Buddhism* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2007), 337-84; 339. The number of assemblies changes according to the particular translation of the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra*.

40 Wong, "Huayan/Kegon/Hwaōm Paintings," 342.



FIGURE 118 Seven Locations and Nine Assemblies tableau. *Guýijun period (848-1036), 862-67. Mural painting, North ceiling slope, Mogao Cave 85, Dunhuang, Gansu Province. FROM MEI, ED., DUNHUANG SHIKU YISHU: MOGAOKU DI 85 KU, FU DI 196 KU (WAN TANG), 53, PLATE 28.*



FIGURE 119 *Detail of Sudhana's meeting with Mañjuśrī (bottom), Seven Locations and Nine Assemblies tableau (fig. 118). Guiyijun period (848-1036), 862-67. Mural painting. North ceiling slope, Mogao Cave 85, Dunhuang, Gansu Province. FROM MEI, ED., DUNHUANG SHIKU YISHU: MOGAOKU DI 85 KU, FU DI 196 KU (WAN TANG), 58, PLATE 32.*

In Mogao Cave 14, the fifty-three bodhisattvas offer yet another possibility for the pictorial treatment of Sudhana's pilgrimage that privileges somatic experience over visual narrative. The absence of Sudhana from the bodhisattva paintings, like the absence of a figural Mahāvairocana from the ceiling panel, allows the practitioner to quite literally insert himself or herself into the picture.

At this point, a few observations should be made in order to further reinforce the association of the fifty-three figures in Mogao Cave 14 with the *kalyāṇamitras*. First, the emphasis placed on bodhisattvas in these paintings conceptually links them to the Gaṇḍavyūha text, which emphasizes the bodhisattva path. The *kalyāṇamitras* could be understood as projections of bodhisattvas: according to the principle of expedient means (*upāya*), bodhisattvas are able to manifest themselves in the form most effective for relaying



FIGURE 120 *Sudhana's meeting with Mañjuśrī. Southern Song dynasty (1127-1279). Stone carving. Many Treasures Pagoda, Dazu, Sichuan Province. FROM CHONGQING DAZU SHIKE YISHU BOWUGUAN AND CHONGQING CHUBANSHE, EDS., DAZU SHIKE DIAOSU QUANJI 1: BEISHAN SHIKU JUAN, 152, PLATE 165.*

Buddhist instruction.⁴¹ The role of the *kalyāṇamitras* as religious teachers already had been stressed in early Tibet, and the visual motif clearly persisted in the mural paintings of Dunhuang. Second, as we will see, Sudhana's attainment of the Bhadracarī from Samantabhadra represents the culmination of the boy pilgrim's quest for the bodhisattva path, and the appropriation of these vows in repentance rites reinforces the general focus on repentance as a unifying practice in Mogao Cave 14. Furthermore, Amoghavajra's translation of the Bhadracarī contains eulogies to the bodhisattvas of the Maṇḍala of Eight Great Bodhisattvas, yet another conceptual link to the visual program of Mogao Cave 14.

The Vows of Samantabhadra

After traveling through one hundred and ten cities, Sudhana comes to Suma-nāmukha, where he meditates upon and yearns to see Mañjuśrī, who appears to the boy. Stretching his hand over those one hundred and ten cities, the bodhisattva then places his hand upon Sudhana's head. Instructing Sudhana on the necessity of possessing the proper faith and roots of goodness, Mañjuśrī then "caused [him] to plunge into the maṇḍala of the course of conduct of Samantabhadra, and installed Sudhana in his own place" (*lingru Puxian xing daochang, jizhi Shancai zisuo zhu chu* 令入普賢行道場，及置善財自所住處).⁴²

This encounter with Mañjuśrī and Sudhana's subsequent meeting with Samantabhadra depart from the standard script of the Gaṇḍavyūha text, which is characterized by a repetitive sequence of Sudhana approaching and questioning a *kalyāṇamitra* regarding the proper conduct of a bodhisattva; the delivery of instruction, followed by the *kalyāṇamitra*'s subsequent declaration

⁴¹ On the illusory appearances of bodhisattvas in the Gaṇḍavyūha narrative, see McMahan, *Empty Vision*, 115. According to Julie Gifford, it is implied that the bodhisattvas in the Jeta Grove manifest themselves as the *kalyāṇamitras* whom Sudhana later meets; see Gifford, *Buddhist Practice and Visual Culture*, 170. For the centrality of the *kalyāṇamitras* and their status as manifestations of bodhisattvas, see Osto, *Power, Wealth, and Women*, 26-27. On the illusionism of the Gaṇḍavyūha text, see Luis O. Gómez, "The Bodhisattva as Wonderworker," in Lewis Lancaster, ed., *Prajñāpāramitā and Related Systems: Studies in Honor of Edward Conze* (Berkeley, CA: Berkeley Buddhist Studies Series, 1977), 221-61.

⁴² Cleary, *Flower Ornament Scripture*, 1502; T10.279:439b6-23. The quoted passage is T10.279:439b22. Douglas Osto further notes that the phrase "maṇḍala of the course of conduct of Samantabhadra" also may be translated as "maṇḍala of the universally good course of conduct"; see *Power, Wealth, and Women*, 147 n. 98.

of attainment and confession of ignorance; and Sudhana being sent to the next *kalyāṇamitra* to seek further teachings.⁴³ Sudhana asks no questions of Mañjuśrī, and unlike their first meeting at the beginning of Sudhana's journey, Mañjuśrī does not send Sudhana onward to another *kalyāṇamitra*; he merely sets Sudhana in his "own place."

Yearning to see Samantabhadra, who embodies the conduct of the bodhisattva, Sudhana seats himself on a lotus seat opposite the Buddha's lion throne at the site of enlightenment.⁴⁴ There, he is witness to a spectacular display of the ten signs purifying all Buddha lands and ten great lights illuminating the multitudes of jewels, offerings of flowers and incense, and emanations of the Buddhas and bodhisattvas, all of which foreshadow the appearance of Samantabhadra.⁴⁵ Following this spectacle, Sudhana sees Samantabhadra seated on a lion throne in front of Vairocana, and witnesses the bodhisattva emanating all of time and space from every pore of his body.⁴⁶ Placing his right hand upon Sudhana's head, Samantabhadra enables Sudhana to achieve *samādhis* equal to the numbers of atoms in all Buddha lands.⁴⁷

The final stage of Sudhana's encounter with Samantabhadra represents the most striking departure from his earlier encounters with *kalyāṇamitras*, which are characterized by instruction communicated solely through verbal or visual means. Samantabhadra displays the purity of his body to Sudhana; Sudhana, contemplating this purity, sees all Buddha lands, Buddhas, and bodhisattvas leading others toward enlightenment. With the realization of this vision, Sudhana enters into Samantabhadra's body, traveling through each of the Buddha lands and practicing the conduct of a bodhisattva by assisting sentient beings in their attainment of supreme perfect enlightenment.⁴⁸ No longer is Sudhana merely a passive recipient of the "show-and-tell"-style teachings of the *kalyāṇamitras*; having attained union with Samantabhadra, he now actively partakes in the conduct of the bodhisattva. This sets the stage for Samantabhadra's utterance of the Bhadracarī.

43 Osto, *Power, Wealth, and Women*, 44-47, with slight adjustments to what Osto calls the "five stock formulas" of the Gaṇḍavyūha text.

44 Cleary, *Flower Ornament Scripture*, 1503; T10.279:439c11-12. Douglas Osto points out that the meaning of his "own place" is unclear, and suggests one possible reading as Sudhana's placement in the assembly of Samantabhadra, a convincing interpretation; Osto, *Power, Wealth, and Women*, 147 n. 99.

45 Cleary, *Flower Ornament Scripture*, 1503-4; T10.279:439c13-440a19.

46 Cleary, *Flower Ornament Scripture*, 1505-7; T10.279:440a28-441a13.

47 Cleary, *Flower Ornament Scripture*, 1508-10; T10.279:441a27-442a25.

48 Cleary, *Flower Ornament Scripture*, 1510-11; T10.279:442a25-b26.

Originally composed in Sanskrit or Prakrit before the fifth century, the Bhadracarī was appended to the Gaṇḍavyūha narrative between the late seventh and late eighth century.⁴⁹ In addition to the Tibetan-language translation of the Bhadracarī in Pelliot tibétain 149 from Dunhuang, this text also circulated in Chinese-language translations by Buddhahadra (Fotuobatuoluo 佛陀跋陀羅, 359-429), Amoghavajra, and Prajñā (Bore 般若, active late 8th century).⁵⁰ The attention paid to these verses by Buddhahadra and Prajñā, responsible for translations of the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra* and Gaṇḍavyūha text, respectively, demonstrates the Bhadracarī's encapsulation of the Huayan articulation of the bodhisattva ideal. Buddhahadra's translation takes the form of a separate text, while Prajñā's translation is incorporated into his independent translation of the Gaṇḍavyūha narrative dating to the late eighth century. During the second half of the Tang dynasty, the Prajñā translation was particularly revered among Huayan devotees, and formed the basis for devotional exercises associated with the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra*, especially the recitation of the Bhadracarī.⁵¹ Spoken by Samantabhadra in the first person, the verses eulogize the Buddhas and extoll the conduct of the bodhisattva (notably, the conduct of Mañjuśrī and Samantabhadra); other themes include the confession of sins, the overcoming of Marā and attainment of enlightenment under the *bodhi* tree, and the sight of Amitābha on one's death bed and ascendance to his Western Pure Land.⁵²

49 Osto, *Power, Wealth, and Women*, 69. For a detailed textual history of the Bhadracarī, see Douglas Osto, "A New Translation of the Sanskrit *Bhadracarī* with Introduction and Notes," *New Zealand Journal of Asian Studies* 12.2 (2010): 1-21; 2-7. For the vows of bodhisattvas and an enumeration of Samantabhadra's vows according to the Prajñā translation, see Luis Oscar Gómez, "Selected Verses from the Gaṇḍavyūha: Text, Critical Apparatus and Translation" (Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 1967), 61-62.

50 These translations are T296, T297, and T293, respectively. The Bhadracarī is absent from the Śikṣānanda translation of the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra*; despite this, the text appears in Thomas Cleary's English-language translation of the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra*, which is based on the Śikṣānanda translation; see Cleary, *Flower Ornament Scripture*, 1511-18. On other Tibetan-language manuscripts concerning the Bhadracarī from Dunhuang, see Suo Nan 索南, "Yingcang Dunhuang zangwen wenxian 'Puxian xingyuan wang jing' ji xiangguan wenti yanjiu" 英藏敦煌藏文文獻《普賢行願王經》及相關問題研究, *Xizang yanjiu* 西藏研究 2013.6:58-65. Nearly twenty Chinese-manuscript copies of the Bhadracarī from Dunhuang are extant; see Dunhuang yanjiuyuan, ed., *Dunhuang yishu*, 126.

51 Stevenson, "T'ien-t'ai Four Forms of Samādhi," 452. Douglas Osto has remarked upon the *dhāraṇī*-like quality of the Bhadracarī, in which the power of the verses derives from their talismanic qualities; see Osto, "New Translation of the Sanskrit *Bhadracarī*," 7-8.

52 Here, the translation from the Sanskrit by Douglas Osto is followed; see Osto, "New Translation of the Sanskrit *Bhadracarī*," 8-19. What comprises the original text of Cleary's

Distinct from the aforementioned five-fold repentance sequence developed by Zhiyi, the repentance rite based upon the Bhadracarī unfolds in seven stages.⁵³ The seven-fold repentance sequence, or “seven-fold rite of offering” (*sapta puṣṭā*), represents another paradigmatic structure for repentance rituals. This sequence consists of salutations (*vandanā*), offerings (*puja*), the confession of sins (*pāpadeśanā*), sympathetic rejoicing in the merits [of others] (*puṇyānumodanā*), solicitation [of the Buddhas’ instruction] (*adhyeśāṇa*), exhortation [of the Buddhas to remain in the world] (*yācana*), and transference of merit (*puṇyapariṇāmanā*). The seven-fold ritual remained significant in Indian and Tibetan Buddhism, and appeared in rituals associated with both the exoteric and esoteric Buddhist traditions.⁵⁴

In light of this dual usage, the translation by Amoghavajra is particularly intriguing, as it appends a eulogy to the deities of a maṇḍala. Titled “Eulogy on the Vows of the Bodhisattva Samantabhadra” (*Puxian pusa xingyuan zan* 普賢菩薩行願讚), the translation was likely completed between 756 and 774, after Amoghavajra’s return from the Hexi Corridor and the commencement of his residence at Daxingshansi in Chang’an.⁵⁵ The significance of this eulogy to Amoghavajra is demonstrated by his exhortation of his pupils to recite these verses from memory.⁵⁶ The eulogy’s importance to Amoghavajra is further signaled at the beginning of the *Account of Conduct* (*Da Tang gu dade zeng sikong dabian zhengguangzhi Bukong sanzang xingzhuang* 大唐故大德贈司空大辨正廣智不空三藏行狀), which states that “by means of the vows of Samantabhadra,

translation of the Bhadracarī is unclear, but it does not appear to be the Amoghavajra version. Osto analyzes the “awkward marriage” between the Bhadracarī and the Gaṇḍavyūha text, characterizing it as a “marriage of an inspirational text to a liturgical text,” and also unpacks the references to Amitābha; see Osto, “New Translation of the Sanskrit *Bhadracarī*,” 5-7.

53 Stevenson, “T’ien-t’ai Four Forms of Samādhi,” 451-52. The seven stages are present in the versions by Buddhābhaddra and Amoghavajra; Prajñā extended this sequence to ten.

54 These stages are taken from the Bhadracarī; other sources may list different stages or sequences. See Stevenson, “T’ien-t’ai Four Forms of Samādhi,” 442. On the incorporation of the seven-fold repentance into esoteric contexts, Stevenson points to the *Sādhnamālā*, a ritual compendium from the eleventh or twelfth century. See also Osto, “New Translation of the Sanskrit *Bhadracarī*,” 8.

55 Dessein, “Glow of the Vow,” 318-19. Dessein hypothesizes that the emphasis on Samantabhadra may have held symbolism for the emperor, and that the insertion of Samantabhadra into the Bhadracarī, which initially stressed Mañjuśrī, was Amoghavajra’s contribution. *Puxian pusa xingyuan zan* is T297.

56 Iwasaki Hideo 岩崎日出男, “Fukū sanzō to ‘Fugenbosatsugyōgansan’” 不空三藏と『普賢菩薩行願讚』, in Kamata Shigeo hakushi kokikinenkai 鎌田茂雄博士古稀記念会, ed., *Kegongaku ronshū* 華嚴学論集 (Tokyo: Daizō Shuppan, 1997), 365-78, especially 366-67.

[Amoghavajra] transmitted the great mind of enlightenment and the seal of adamantine wisdom” (*yi Puxian xingyuan chuan da puti xin jin'gangzhi yin* 以普賢行願傳大菩提心金剛智印).⁵⁷

The text of Amoghavajra's translation is divided into four main parts. The first part, consisting of a eulogy on the Buddhas and Samantabhadra, Mañjuśrī, and Amitābha, also appears in the Buddhahadra and Prajñā translations.⁵⁸ The second, third, and fourth parts are unique to the Amoghavajra version. The second part is comprised of a eulogy on the eight bodhisattvas of the Maṇḍala of Eight Great Bodhisattvas (rendered as *Bada pusa zan* 八大菩薩讚): the practitioner prostrates himself (*dingli* 頂禮) to Avalokiteśvara (here Padmapāṇi, or Lianhuashou 蓮花手), Maitreya (Cishizun 慈氏尊), Ākāśagarbha (Xukongzang 虛空藏), Samantabhadra (Puxian 普賢), Vajrapāṇi (Jin'gangshou 金剛手), Mañjuśrī (Miaojixiang 妙吉祥), Sarvanivāraṇaśāmbhin (Chugaizhang 除蓋障), and Kṣitigarbha (Dizang 地藏), in turn.⁵⁹

These deities are the same bodhisattvas included in Amoghavajra's *Sūtra of the Maṇḍala of Eight Great Bodhisattvas*, as well as in the Maṇḍala of Eight Great Bodhisattvas on the north wall of Mogao Cave 14. The eulogy to the bodhisattvas is followed by the third and fourth parts, consisting of a *dhāraṇī* and an exhortation to chant the *dhāraṇī* daily after reciting the Bhadracarī, which will completely fulfill the vow of Samantabhadra (*Puxian xingyuan xijie yuanman* 普賢行願悉皆圓滿).⁶⁰ Here, it is the recitation of the *dhāraṇī* that definitively assures or augments the efficacy of the Bhadracarī.

57 T50.2056:292b8-9. In probing the connections between Amoghavajra's esoteric Buddhism and the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra*, Iwasaki points out that Vajrasattva is the esoteric form of Samantabhadra; see his “Fukū sanzō,” 369. Furthermore, the list of eight bodhisattvas also appears in Amoghavajra's translation of the *Dhāraṇī of the Birth of the Infinite Portal* (T1009); see Iwasaki, “Fukū sanzō,” 367-68. Rolf Giebel notes a passage in the *Indications of the Goals of the Eighteen Assemblies of the Yoga of the Adamantine Pinnacle Sūtra* (*Jin'gangding jing yuqie shibahui zhigui* 金剛頂經瑜伽十八會指歸; T869), attributed to Amoghavajra, in which references are made to the concept of interpenetration and to Indra's net, both of which are core concepts of Huayan Buddhism; see Rolf W. Giebel, “The *Chin-kang-ting ching yu-ch'ieh shih-pa-hui chih-kuei*: An Annotated Translation,” *Naritasan Bukkyō kenkyūjo kiyō* 成田山佛教研究所紀要 18 (1995): 107-201; 200, 201 n. 251.

58 Dessein, “Glow of the Vow,” 319-24.

59 T10.297:881b17-c8. See also Dessein, “Glow of the Vow,” 332. Dessein mistakenly replaces Sarvanivāraṇaśāmbhin with Acalanātha, the Immovable Wisdom King. Could the conjunction of the eight bodhisattvas and Western Pure Land in the Bhadracarī have been responsible for the iconography of the Tibetan period *Maṇḍala of Eight Great Bodhisattvas* in the British Museum (fig. 2), in which the foreground closely resembles imagery associated with the Western Pure Land of Amitābha?

60 T10.297:881c9-17.

The insertion of the bodhisattvas of the Maṇḍala of Eight Great Bodhisattvas into the Bhadracarī, so closely associated with the Gaṇḍavyūha text and the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra*, is curious indeed. One link between these texts may have been the emphasis placed on bodhisattvas; the eulogy on the eight great bodhisattvas in the context of Amoghavajra's translation of the Bhadracarī pointedly omits the central Buddha of the maṇḍala.⁶¹ The pattern of eight bodhisattvas might echo the aforementioned earlier arrangement of the eight goddesses – seated adjacent to one another in the Buddha's circle – among the fifty-three *kalyāṇamitras* at Bodhgayā, in a manner that strongly implies the structure of the Maṇḍala of Eight Great Bodhisattvas. Yet another connection between the Huayan and esoteric traditions may be the shared emphasis upon Vairocana or Mahāvairocana, as well as on visions and visualization; the emphasis on the latter has prompted some scholars to hypothesize that the Gaṇḍavyūha text might have played a role in the development of esoteric Buddhism.⁶² Additionally, the reciprocity between the Huayan and esoteric traditions is demonstrated by the insertion of references to the Five Divisions and thirty-seven worthies in the Huayan commentarial literature authored by the fourth Huayan patriarch, Chengguan 澄觀 (738-839).⁶³

61 Geoffrey Goble points out Amoghavajra's elevation of the bodhisattva and emphasis given to Mañjuśrī; see his "Chinese Esoteric Buddhism," 278.

62 Orzech, "Mahāvairocana," 5607. The conflation of the two Buddhas is addressed in Chapter Two. Dan Martin states that Japanese scholars have demonstrated how the Gaṇḍavyūha text informed the composition of the *Mahāvairocana* and *Vajraśekhara Sūtras*, though without providing references. See Dan Martin, "Illusion Web – Locating the *Guhyagarbha Tantra* in Buddhist Intellectual History," in Christopher I. Beckwith, ed., *Silver on Lapis: Tibetan Literary Culture and History* (Bloomington, IN: The Tibetan Society, 1987), 175-209; 190. See also Osto, "'Proto-Tantric' Elements"; and David L. McMahan, "Transpositions of Metaphor and Imagery in the *Gaṇḍavyūha* and Tantric Buddhist Practice," *Pacific World* 3.6 (2004): 181-94. Paul Harrison writes that visualization practices associated with *buddhānusr̥ti* must have been the "matrix" for tantric deity yoga; see his "Commemoration and Identification in *Buddhanusr̥ti*," 225. On Kūkai's engagement with Kegon thought, and the flourishing of Kegon Buddhism during his time, see Fujii Jun 藤井淳, *Kūkai no shisōteki tenkai no kenkyū* 空海の思想的展開の研究 (Tokyo: Toransubiyū, 2008), 82-85; and Takemura Makio, trans. Iyanaga Nobumi, "Kūkai's Esotericism and Avataṃsaka Thought," in Robert Gimello, Frédéric Girard, and Imre Hamar, eds., *Avataṃsaka Buddhism in East Asia: Origins and Adaptation of a Visual Culture* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2012), 339-76.

63 See Kamata Shigeo 鎌田茂雄, "Kegon to mikkyō" 華嚴と密教, *Chisan gakuho* 智山學報 49 (2000): 1-29, especially 3-9. Chengguan was particularly known for his harmonization of Huayan with other traditions.

The Ascent to the Dharma Realm

The Maṇḍala of Eight Great Bodhisattvas, as described by Amoghavajra or in manuscripts attributed to him, bridged conventionally Huayan and esoteric traditions, in particular those concerned with repentance and the bodhisattva precepts. Additionally, the iconography of the crowned Buddha in *dhyāna mudrā* reflects a conflation of Śākyamuni and Mahāvairocana.⁶⁴ How, then, might the affinity between Buddha bodies have been meaningfully mapped onto the architectural space of a cave shrine?

As discussed previously, the visual program of Mogao Cave 14 adheres to overlapping notions of space: the dialectic between the north and south walls and the implied circumambulatory motion of the devotee. Yet another important spatial paradigm is the hierarchical arrangement of the mural paintings into three horizontal registers, by which the devotee ascends through the *trikāya*, or the realms of the *nirmāṇakāya*, represented by the bodhisattvas on the lower and upper sections of the walls; the *sambhogakāya*, represented by the Maṇḍala of Eight Great Bodhisattvas with crowned Buddha on the upper wall; and the *dharmakāya*, represented by the transcendent Buddhas on the ceiling.⁶⁵ The progression through the three realms therefore prompts a reading of the cave as a soteriological guide from the bodhisattva path to Buddhahood, as well as the concurrence of the *trikāya*.⁶⁶

A similar upward progression through the three realms is apparent at Borobudur, a Buddhist monument dating to the late eighth through mid-ninth century located in central Java, Indonesia.⁶⁷ The patrons of Borobudur were

64 On the Shingon distinction between Śākyamuni and Mahāvairocana, see Sharf, “On Esoteric Buddhism in China,” 276-77.

65 While the original main sculptural icon of Mogao Cave 14 is no longer extant, altars of similar shape in the Mogao caves typically take Śākyamuni as the main icon, flanked by his disciples, bodhisattvas, and heavenly kings. If the original main icon was in fact Śākyamuni, this would fit the identification of the “middle zone” of the cave shrine as corresponding to the *nirmāṇakāya*.

66 Importantly, Eugene Wang notes a similar process of transformation from bodhisattva to dharma body in the related motifs of Cintāmaṇicakra and Vairocana on the fifth reliquary from the eight-reliquary set at Famensi. See Wang, “Of the True Body,” 104-8.

67 Although a full examination of esoteric Buddhism within Southeast Asia and cultural intersections beyond its borders lies outside the scope of this book, an excellent treatment of the topic is Andrea Acri, ed., *Esoteric Buddhism in Mediaeval Maritime Asia: Networks of Masters, Texts, Icons* (Singapore: ISEAS Yusof Ishak Institute, 2016); see especially the articles by Iain Sinclair, “Coronation and Liberation According to a Javanese Monk in China: Bianhong’s Manual on the *abhiṣeka* of a *cakravartin*,” 29-66; and Hudaya

the rulers of the Śailendra dynasty, which dominated this region during the same period. Built of stone blocks atop a natural hill, Borobudur similarly is characterized by three main levels: a hidden plinth featuring relief carvings of tales of cause and effect, four square terraces installed with relief carvings drawn overwhelmingly from the Gaṇḍhavyūha text, and three circular terraces with Buddha sculptures housed within latticework stupas (figs. 121, 122). On each side, a staircase extends from the base to the pinnacle of the structure, permitting the devotee to ascend the monument physically.⁶⁸

The reliefs on the square terraces lead the devotee through a progression from the Buddha's past to present lives, representing the *nirmāṇakāya* realm; from the second to fourth square terrace, imagery from the Gaṇḍhavyūha narrative, representing the *saṃbhogakāya* realm, becomes prominent. On the fourth terrace, themes concerning the Bhadracarī receive special emphasis (fig. 123).⁶⁹ Above the square terraces lie three circular terraces, completely devoid of narrative imagery but installed instead with seventy-two openwork stupas, each housing a Buddha (fig. 124). This level marks a transition from the relief carvings of the lower terraces to fully three-dimensional forms.⁷⁰ The pinnacle of Borobudur is marked by the presence of a now-empty stupa. The circular terraces may be characterized as a *dharmakāya* realm of emptiness congruent with the final stage of *buddhānusmṛti*, in which the practitioner attains visions of the profusion of Buddhas of the ten directions.⁷¹

Kandahjaya, "Saṅ Hyaṅ Kamahāyānikan, Borobudur, and the Origins of Esoteric Buddhism in Indonesia," 67-112. Deborah E. Klimburg-Salter also notes a comparable tripartite spatial arrangement in three stories at Samye; see her *Tabo, a Lamp for the Kingdom: Early Indo-Tibetan Buddhist Art in the Western Himalaya* (Milan: Skira, 1997), 105-6.

68 Julie Gifford advances a theory that the staircases of Borobudur may have been the setting for a ritual in which the practitioner descended from the *dharmakāya* down through the *saṃbhogakāya* and *nirmāṇakāya* realms in order to carry out the practice of a bodhisattva by returning to the world to assist sentient beings; see her *Buddhist Practice and Visual Culture*, 164-68. For the Borobudur reliefs, see also Jan Fontein, *Entering the Dharmadhātu: A Study of the Gandavyūha Reliefs of Borobudur* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2012).

69 For an extended treatment of the Bhadracarī reliefs, see Fontein, *Entering the Dharmadhātu*, 171-207. Fontein also provides an overview of earlier scholarship on these reliefs and their interpretation.

70 Gifford, *Buddhist Practice and Visual Culture*, 151.

71 Gifford, *Buddhist Practice and Visual Culture*, 148-49, 155-56. This visual effect may have been heightened by the gilding that Hiram Woodward hypothesizes was originally applied to the openwork stupas; Hiram W. Woodward, Jr., "Barabudur as a Stūpa," in Luis Gómez and Hiram J. Woodward, eds., *Barabudur: History and Significance of a Buddhist Monument* (Berkeley, CA: Asian Humanities Press, 1981), 121-38; 128-29. Woodward's article



FIGURE 121 *Borobudur. Śailendra dynasty (mid-8th–mid-9th century), ca. 775–850. Volcanic rock. Yogyakarta, Java, Indonesia. PHOTO BY JOHN C. HUNTINGTON.*

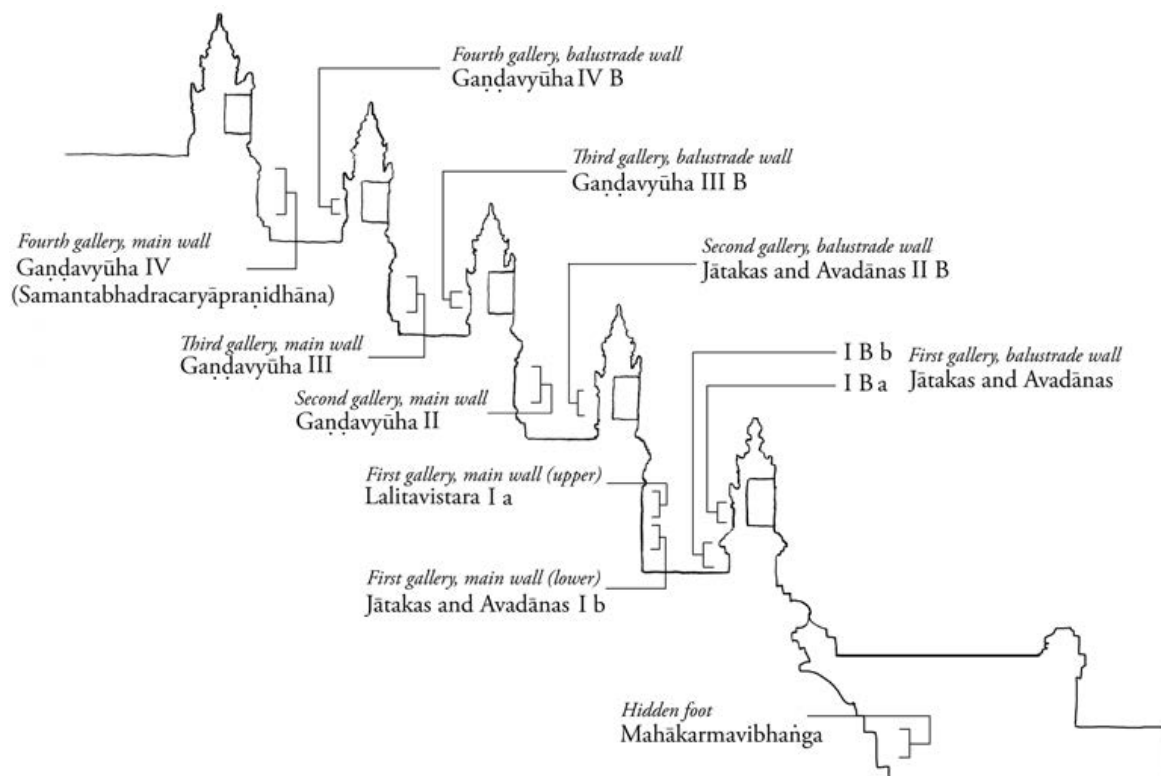


FIGURE 122 *Borobudur cross-section. DRAWING BY RICHARD POLT, COURTESY OF JULIE A. GIFFORD AND RICHARD POLT, BASED ON A DIAGRAM IN KROM AND ERP, BESCHRIJVING VAN BOROBUDUR, VOL. 1. ORIGINAL SOURCE IS IN THE PUBLIC DOMAIN. DRAWING PREVIOUSLY PUBLISHED IN GIFFORD, BUDDHIST PRACTICE AND VISUAL CULTURE, 6, FIG. 0.3.*



FIGURE 123 *Sudhana's meeting with Mañjuśrī. Śailendra dynasty (mid-8th–mid-9th century), ca. 775–850. Volcanic rock. Fourth level, Borobudur, Yogyakarta, Java, Indonesia. PHOTO BY JOHN C. HUNTINGTON.*



FIGURE 124 *Openwork stupas. Śailendra dynasty (mid-8th–mid-9th century), ca. 775–850. Volcanic rock. Circular terraces, Borobudur, Yogyakarta, Java, Indonesia. PHOTO BY JOHN C. HUNTINGTON.*

Here, the Thousand Buddhas on the ceiling slopes of Mogao Cave 14 come into play. Framed against the mosaic-like effect of the Thousand Buddhas on the north, east, and south slopes is a Buddha of larger size seated within a pavilion (fig. 125). According to the aforementioned *Sūtra on the Names of the Buddha*, the practitioner is instructed to take refuge in the Buddhas, dharma, and monks of the ten directions.⁷² Following this, the practitioner takes refuge in, and prostrates him- or herself to, the Buddhas of the four directions: Akṣobhya Buddha of the east, Ratnasambhava Buddha of the south, Amitābha Buddha of the west, and Amoghasiddhi Buddha of the north.⁷³ The contrast between the smaller and larger Buddhas might pertain to the Buddhas of the ten directions and four quadrants as articulated in this sūtra.

A later program of the three realms is preserved in the tenth-century Tabo Main Temple (figs. 126, 127), located in the lower Spiti Valley of Himachal Pradesh, India. According to an inscribed painting in the Entry Hall, the founder of Tabo was the aforementioned monk and king Yeshe O, a descendant of the central Tibetan monarchy who established the Purang-Guge kingdom (10th–11th century) in the Western Himalayas in the mid-tenth century. Among the notable features of the Assembly Hall are the life-sized clay sculptures of the deities of the Vajradhātu Maṇḍala, which line the four walls of the hall (fig. 128). In an arrangement similar to that seen at Mogao Cave 14 and Borobudur, above the sculptures are murals of the Buddhas of the ten directions, and below is a cycle of mural paintings depicting the journey of Sudhana to the fifty-three *kalyāṇamitras*, accompanied by inscriptions containing extensive passages from the Gaṇḍhavyūha text based on an early-tenth-century Tibetan translation (figs. 129, 130).⁷⁴ A series of mural paintings in the same register depicts the life of Śākyamuni.

represents one of the prevailing theories surrounding the architectural plan of Borobudur; another theory is that Borobudur, due to its geometric layout and manifold Buddhas, was built as a maṇḍala. In the same volume, see Alex Wayman, “Reflections on the Theory of Barabudur as a Maṇḍala,” 139–72. On esoteric Buddhism at Borobudur, see Hiram Woodward, “Bianhong, Mastermind of Borobudur?,” *Pacific World* 3rd series, 11 (2009): 25–60.

72 T14.441:300c19–20.

73 T14.441:300c20–21. Amoghasiddhi’s name is rendered as 妙勝佛 (Miaosheng fo).

74 Luczanits, *Buddhist Sculpture in Clay*, 25–27, 34. For a study of the Sudhana paintings and inscriptions, see Laxman X. Thakur, *Visualizing a Buddhist Sutra: Text and Figure in Himalayan Art* (New Delhi and New York: Oxford University Press, 2006); and Ernst Steinkellner, *Sudhana’s Miraculous Journey in the Temple of the Ta pho: The Inscriptional Text of the Tibetan Gaṇḍavyūhasūtra Edited with Introductory Remarks* (Roma: Istituto italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente, 1995).



FIGURE 125 Ceiling slopes, Mogao Cave 14. Guiyijun period (848-1036), second half of 9th century. Mural painting. Dunhuang, Gansu Province. FROM LIANG, ED., *DUNHUANG SHIKU YISHU: MOGAO KU DI SHI SI KU* (WAN TANG), 36-37, PLATE 5.

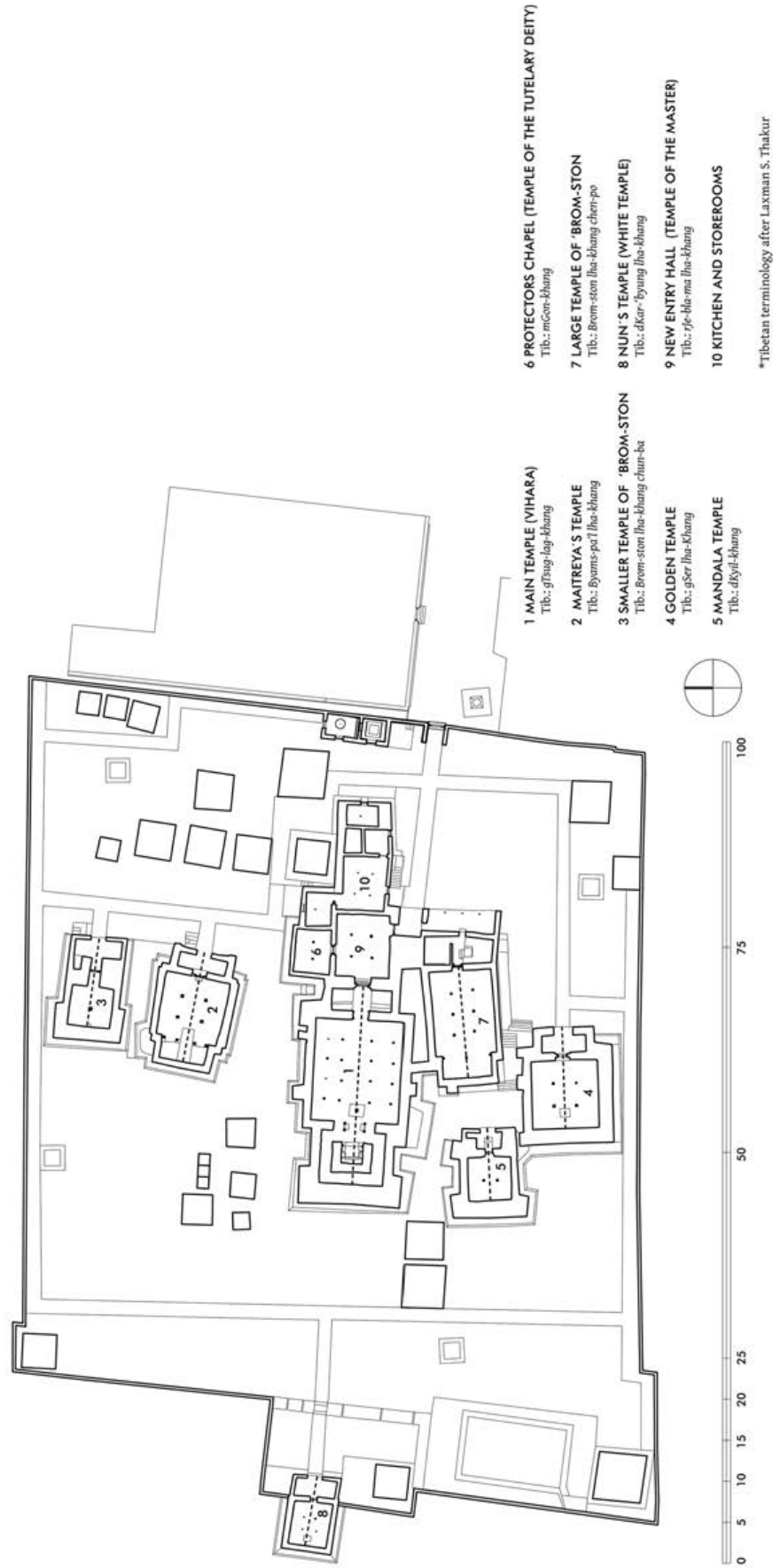


FIGURE 126 Plan of Tabo Temple grounds, Himachal Pradesh, India. MODIFIED FROM A DRAWING BY NEUWIRTH/AUER TU GRAZ 2017 <<http://www.archresearch.tugraz.at/>>.

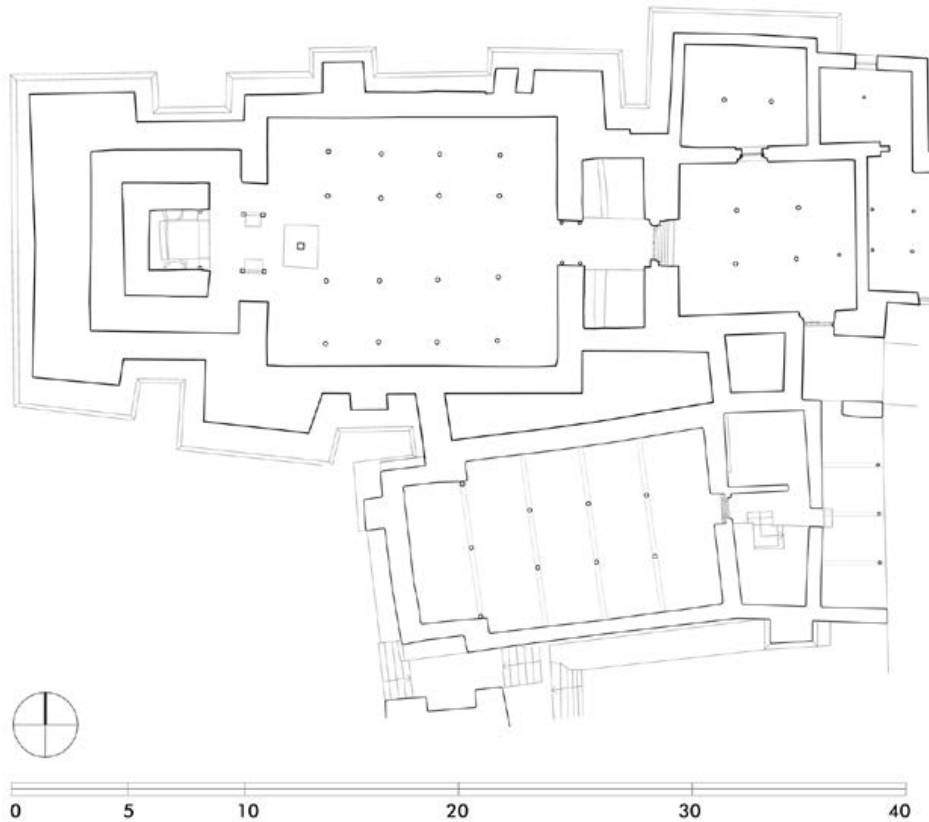


FIGURE 127 *Plan of Tabo Main Temple showing the Entry Hall, Assembly Hall, Cella, and Ambulatory, Himachal Pradesh, India. MODIFIED FROM A DRAWING BY NEUWIRTH/AUER TU GRAZ 2017 <<http://www.archresearch.tugraz.at>>.*

The main activity of lay believers is hypothesized to have been circumambulation, as signaled by the ambulatory path circling the cella of the Assembly Hall.⁷⁵ By circumambulating the Assembly Hall three times, the devotee advances in higher stages through the *trikāya*, identifying first with the *nirmāṇakāya*, represented by Śākyamuni and Sudhana; then with the *saṃbhogakāya* of the maṇḍala; and finally with the *dharmakāya*, represented by the Buddhas of the ten directions.⁷⁶

75 Klimburg-Salter, *Tabo, a Lamp for the Kingdom*, 74. In the case of Tabo Main Temple, Klimburg-Salter discusses the notion of circumambulation through the Vajradhātu Maṇḍala, which she further relates to Samye Monastery and Borobudur. See Klimburg-Salter, *Tabo, a Lamp for the Kingdom*, 108. The donors of Tabo Main Temple were in fact laypeople, and their donor images appear adjacent to the Cella.

76 Klimburg-Salter, *Tabo, a Lamp for the Kingdom*, 108. The practitioner also circumambulates the statue of Vairocana in the Cella, which is flanked by images of Avalokiteśvara and Vajrasattva, and is now painted red in the manner of Amitābha. Such an assembly usually

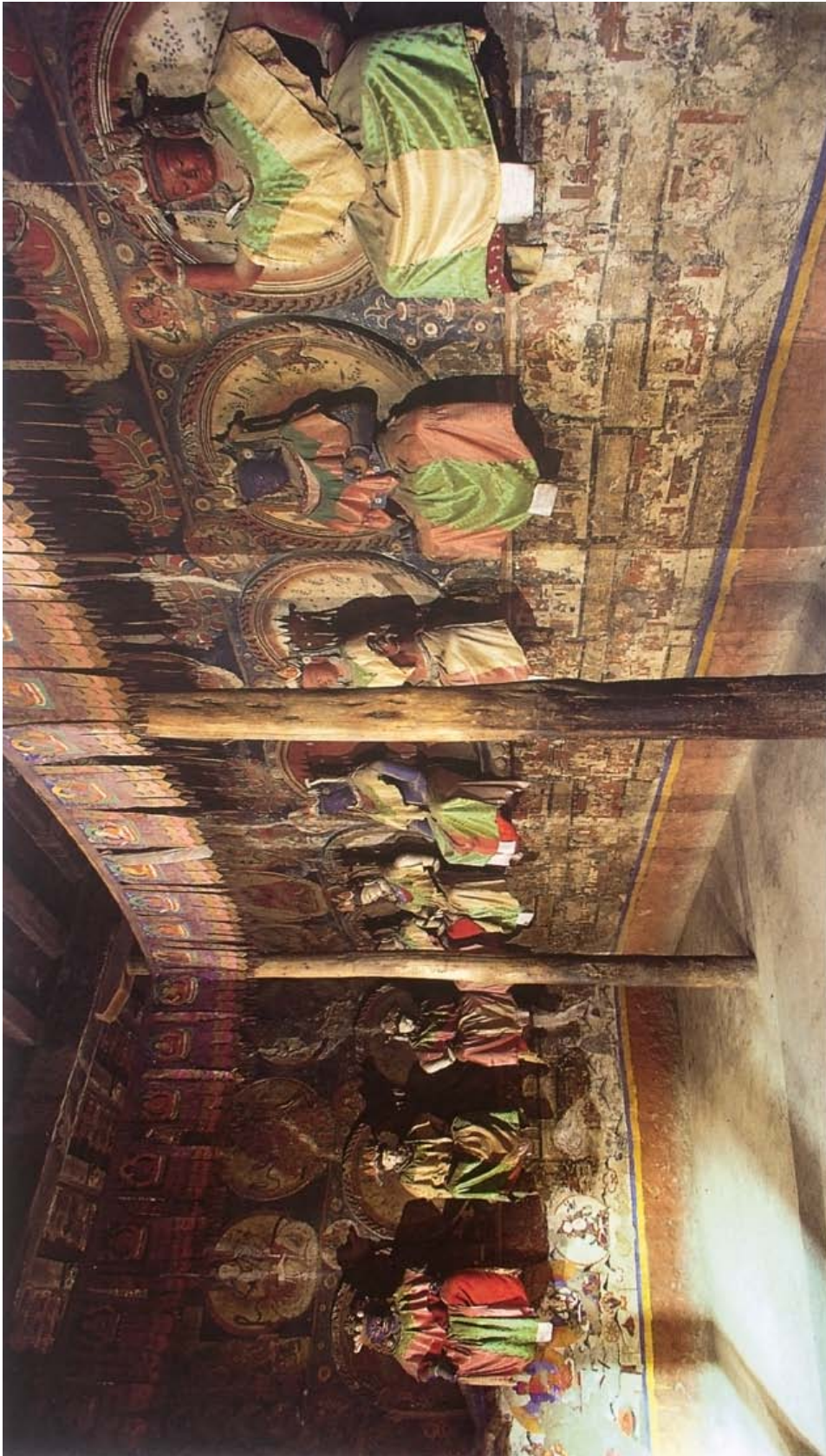


FIGURE 128 Sculptures of the Vajradhātu Maṇḍala and mural paintings of Sudhana's journey. 11th century. East and south walls, Assembly Hall, Tabo Main Temple, Himachal Pradesh, India. FROM KLIMBURG-SALTER, TABO, A LAMP FOR THE KINGDOM, 93, FIG. 54. PHOTOGRAPH BY JAROSLAV PONCAR.

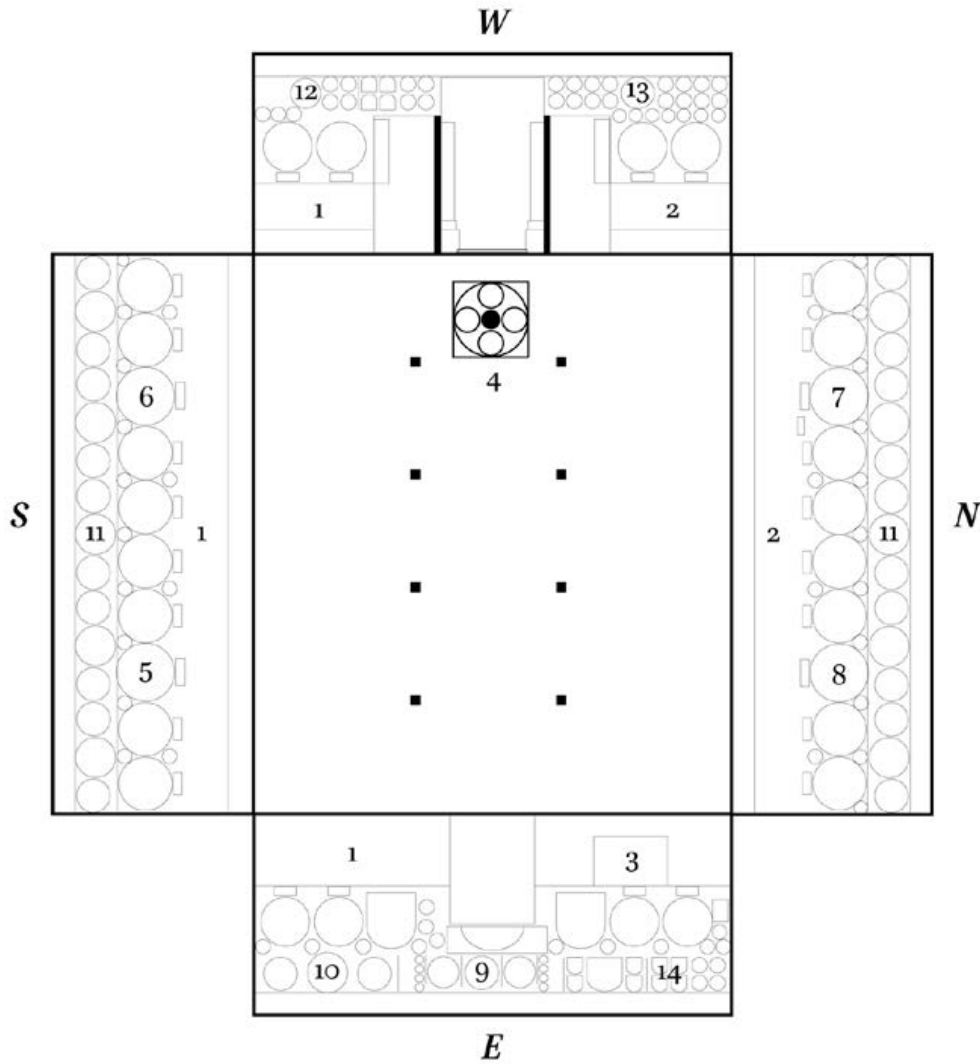


FIGURE 129 *Iconographic program of the Assembly Hall, Tabo Main Temple, Himachal Pradesh, India.* (1) Pilgrimage of Sudhana, (2) Life of Śākyamuni, (3) donor images, (4) Vairocana, (5) Akṣobhya, (6) Ratnasambhava, (7) Amitābha, (8) Amoghasiddhi, (9) Buddha triad, (10) three protector bodhisattvas, (11) Buddhas of the Ten Directions, (12) Śākyamuni maṇḍala(?), (13) Mañjuśrī maṇḍala, (14) Maṇḍala(?) of wrathful deities. MODIFIED FROM A DRAWING BY CHRISTIAN LUCZANITS. ORIGINAL DRAWING PREVIOUSLY PUBLISHED IN LUCZANITS, *BUDDHIST SCULPTURE IN CLAY*, 49, FIG. 39.

The ascent toward the transcendent realm of the Buddhas comprises a shared concern of certain Buddhist sites dating from the eighth through tenth

refers to the Three-Family configuration, with Vairocana as head of the Buddha family, Avalokiteśvara as head of the lotus family, and Vajrasattva as head of the *vajra* family; see Luczanits, *Buddhist Sculpture in Clay*, 37.



FIGURE 130 *Sudhana's meeting with Mañjuśrī, 11th century. Tabo Main Temple, Himachal Pradesh, India. PHOTOGRAPH BY JAROSLAV PONCAR (2001). © WESTERN HIMALAYA ARCHIVE VIENNA.*

century in Asia, in which the bodhisattva path, represented by the pilgrimage of Sudhana, is treated visually and conceptually as a crucial staging point. The tripartite construction of these sites permits the embodiment of different subjectivities and the conjunction of the somatic and the visionary.⁷⁷ Furthermore, the upward progression in Mogao Cave 14 may be tied to different programs of repentance, a unifying theme. While practices connected to the *Sūtra on the Names of the Buddha* were prevalent at Dunhuang from the Northern and Southern dynasties onward, repentance rites based upon the Vajradhātu Maṇḍala and Bhadracarī were new developments of the Tibetan and Guiyijun periods. The union of older and newer forms of repentance practice bridging the esoteric and exoteric traditions is a defining characteristic of the soteriological program of Mogao Cave 14, and importantly, of esoteric Buddhism at Dunhuang.

77 For the production of the tantric subject in ritual, see Charles D. Orzech, "Tantric Subjects: Liturgy and Vision in Chinese Esoteric Ritual Manuals," in Yael Bentor and Meir Shahar, eds., *Chinese and Tibetan Esoteric Buddhism* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2017), 17–40, especially 28.

Epilogue

This very restricted nature of Tibetan influence in the art of Tun-huang is confirmed also by another observation. I mean the gratifying total absence in the paintings and frescoes of the Thousand Buddhas of those Tantric extravagances and monstrous obscenities which are so prevalent in the pictorial representations of the later Lamaistic art of Tibet and the regions it has influenced northward ... sober Chinese taste and decorum never took kindly to these fantastic aberrations.

AUREL STEIN, *Serindia* (1921)¹



Shaped by the colonial milieu of the early twentieth century, the words of the Hungarian-British archaeologist and explorer Aurel Stein (1862-1943) articulate the impossibility of Tibetan influence upon the religion and art of the “sober” Chinese. From the late nineteenth century onward, Western-language treatises on South Asian religions had fixated upon the debased, ritualistic, and idolatrous character of Buddhism as represented in the tantric literature. Such fears regarding the perceived transgressiveness of a strand of Buddhism so seemingly antithetical to Christianity, combined with the mystery surrounding Tibet, the unreachable land of snows, reached fever pitch in the writings of the explorer and Tibetologist L. Austine Waddell (1854-1938), who declared tantrism to be a “parasite” that had corrupted the purity of Buddhism.² Stein and Waddell were contemporaries; in fact, it was at Stein’s urging that Waddell embarked on an ambitious plan to collect thousands of Tibetan books by any means necessary during the Younghusband Mission to Tibet in 1903-4.³

This book has offered an alternate view to that articulated by Stein above, demonstrating instead the profound dialogue between the Chinese and Tibetan communities at Dunhuang during the eighth through tenth centuries that resulted in reciprocal developments in Buddhist visual and material culture,

1 Aurel Stein, *Serindia: Detailed Report of Explorations in Central Asia and Westernmost China*, Vol. 2, *Text* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1921), 840.

2 Urban, *Tantra*, 46-54.

3 Clare E. Harris, *The Museum on the Roof of the World: Art, Politics, and the Representation of Tibet* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2014), 64-65.

particularly in the adoption and circulation of maṇḍalas. The Maṇḍala of Eight Great Bodhisattvas, which appeared as an expression of Tibetan imperial authority, came to be appropriated by the post-Tibetan rulers of Dunhuang, attesting to the longevity of this iconographic formula under successive political regimes. Employed differently from the prescribed use of maṇḍalas within the monastic context of Shingon Buddhism, the Dunhuang maṇḍalas analyzed in this book circulated within a primarily lay environment and formed the basis of the ritual technology for mortuary and repentance rites. Exhibiting ritual templates based upon the Five Buddhas and maṇḍalas of eight deities, these maṇḍalas showed how the Vajraśekhara corpus of texts and the *Sarvadurgatipariśodhana tantra* were put into practice at Dunhuang.

Beginning with a corrective to standard accounts of esoteric Buddhism and Buddhist maṇḍalas in East Asia, particularly those informed by Japanese Shingon Buddhism, this book ends with a reflection on space. By now, it has become commonplace to think of maṇḍalas as visual encapsulations of sacred realms. It is possible, however, to conceptualize space in the context of the Dunhuang maṇḍalas in yet more expansive terms: What type of a space – or place – was Dunhuang? How did Buddhist maṇḍalas shape the spatial intelligence of Buddhist practice? Finally, in what ways did Buddhist maṇḍalas transform the creation of space in devotional paintings and cave shrines?

To begin, we must recognize Dunhuang's multicultural nature. Dunhuang was never purely a Chinese or Tibetan space, and much more can be said regarding the interactions of Dunhuang's residents with the Khotanese, Uyghurs, and others. Particularly in the post-Tibetan setting of the Guiyijun period, the concept of the "Third Space" proves apt. The Third Space is one in which the "hierarchical claims to the inherent originality or 'purity' of cultures" are disrupted.⁴ The hybridity of an "in-between" reality speaks well to the multicultural and multilingual environment of Guiyijun-period Dunhuang.⁵ As analyzed in Chapters Two and Three, the bilingual character of certain Dunhuang manuscripts, and the continued use of written Tibetan during the Guiyijun period by monastic practitioners and lay devotees alike, are echoed visually in the dialogue between the Tang and Tibetan painting styles observed in portable paintings and cave shrines. The purposeful juxtaposition of the two styles speaks volumes, and undercuts the standard historical narrative about the return of Dunhuang to Tang China following the expulsion of the Tibetans. In the maṇḍalas of Mogao Cave 14 and Yulin Caves 25, 20, and 38, the Tang and

4 Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (1994; reprint, London and New York: Routledge, 2004), 54–55.

5 Bhabha, *Location of Culture*, 19.

Tibetan styles were contrasted with one another. Moreover, the cartouches on the east wall of Yulin Cave 25 were oriented vertically and horizontally in order to accommodate Chinese and Tibetan script (see fig. 45). In other cases, such as ink-monochrome diagrams of the *Vajra Realm Maṇḍala* (see fig. 86) or *Maṇḍala of Five Jina Buddhas* (see fig. 87) that lack inscriptions completely, such material defies easy binary distinctions between “Chinese” and “Tibetan.”

The circulation of maṇḍalas presented new technologies to pre-existing Chinese Buddhist praxis, especially in the devotion to *dhāraṇīs* and the performance of repentance rituals. Whereas the efficacy of a *dhāraṇī* or repentance ritual previously had rested upon a specific deity, now the attributes of a multitude of deities could be marshalled for even more effective ends. Moreover, the introduction of maṇḍalas presented the notion of a purified and bounded ritual space, as demonstrated in Chapter One. This ritual space was conceptualized variously as an altar for deities or as a platform for initiates. Insofar as space gains subjectivity by its orientation toward a specific perspective, we may think of maṇḍalas as embodying the subjectivity of the Buddha, concepts explored in Chapters Two and Four.⁶ The iconography of the crowned Buddha in *dhyāna mudrā* in the context of the Maṇḍala of Eight Great Bodhisattvas may be understood as the moment of the Buddha’s awakening as he was crowned in Akaniṣṭha Heaven by the Buddhas of the ten directions and recognized as the cosmic Buddha Mahāvairocana. Similarly, the Vajradhātu Maṇḍala was generated by Mahāvairocana immediately after his awakening, as he entered into a state of adamant *samādhi* and gave rise to the deities of the maṇḍala in a specific order. Not only did maṇḍalas bring new ritual technologies and templates to Buddhist praxis, but they also formed the basis for alternative narratives of the Buddha’s enlightenment, distinct from his awakening under the *bodhi* tree at Bodhgayā.

Shaped by their immediate cultural and religious environment, the maṇḍalas addressed in this book affected this environment profoundly in turn. The impact of maṇḍalas in Dunhuang was felt not only in Buddhist praxis but also in Buddhist visual and material culture: in the production of manuscripts of various formats, diagrams, portable paintings, and architectural sites. This constituted an entirely new body of material that hitherto had not existed at Dunhuang. Chapters Three, Four, and Five unpacked the hierarchical arrangement of cosmological, ritual, and human space as portrayed in portable paintings and architectural sites. The *Maṇḍala of the Five Buddhas* (see fig. 88) and *Maṇḍala of Amoghapāśa* (see fig. 91) depict the Five Buddhas in the uppermost

6 Yi-Fu Tuan, *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience* (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1977), 122–23.

register of each painting, separate from the ritual space of the maṇḍala and the human devotees below. The Guiyijun-period Mogao Cave 14 preserves an analogous disposition of space. The Five Buddhas appear on the ceiling panel (see fig. 96), above the Maṇḍala of Eight Great Bodhisattvas on the south wall (see fig. 73) and bodhisattvas lining the four walls of the cave shrine. In this manner, the practitioner was prompted to enact an ascent from the mundane world toward the transcendent realm of the Five Buddhas in a progression through the *trikāya*, a journey that reverberated in other contemporaneous Buddhist sites as well.

In short, the maṇḍalization of Dunhuang in the eighth through tenth centuries left an indelible mark on the visual and material culture of Buddhism, and forged meaningful new correspondences between Buddhist praxis, ritual space, and visual representation. Formed in the unique local character of the Tibetan and Guiyijun periods, the maṇḍalas of Dunhuang represent one important trajectory for the maṇḍala in East Asian Buddhism.

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Index

- Abé, Ryūichi 66-67, 73-74
abhiṣeka 11, 164
 and Buddha's enlightenment 61, 66-69
 in Dunhuang manuscripts 203-4, 216, 225, 233
 in visual art 71-74, 76
 performed by Amoghavajra 168-72, 196-97
age of fragmentation 5, 8
Akaniṣṭha Heaven
 and Buddha's enlightenment 21, 63, 178
 textual sources for 60, 65-70
Ākāśagarbha 66
 in pictorial art 97-98, 129-35, 157-58
 See also eight bodhisattvas
altar
 and maṇḍala 15, 20, 33-34, 41, 47, 49-50, 172, 176-78, 180, 202-3, 217
 construction of 31-32, 35, 46, 218-23
 diagrams of 44, 49, 178-80, 224-33
 in paintings 182, 184, 191
 See also Five-Buddhas, eight-bodhisattvas altar
Amitābha
 and Bhadracarī 256, 258
 and Maṇḍala of Eight Great Bodhisattvas 18, 111-12
 in pictorial art 89, 107, 235-37
 See also Five Buddhas; Five-Buddhas, eight-bodhisattvas altar; Five Buddhas seal
Amoghapāśa
 in pictorial art 103, 129, 137, 139, 155
 maṇḍala of 184-87, 191, 227-28, 232
Amoghavajra 6, 7, 18
 and Vajradhātu Maṇḍala 168-73
 Dunhuang manuscripts attributed to 197-99, 218
 ritual manual for *Revered and Victorious Dhāraṇī* 47-50
 translation of Bhadracarī 256-59
Anguosi 14-15
Anxi
 See Yulin caves
Avalokiteśvara
 Chinese devotion to 138-39
 Chinese-Tibetan translations by Wu Facheng 137n23
 paired and grouped images 127-29, 139-42, 145, 150-55
 Tibetan devotion to 141-42
 See also eight bodhisattvas; Thousand-armed Avalokiteśvara
Avataṃsaka Sūtra 70, 86, 109-11, 120
 See also Bhadracarī; Gaṇḍavyūha; *kalyāṇamitras*; Seven Locations and Nine Assemblies
Bhadracarī 234, 246, 255-59
Bhaiṣajyaguru
 in pictorial art 99-103, 107
bilingualism
 in painting inscriptions 103
 in painting styles 98-104, 107, 127-35, 145-50, 156-58, 165-68
 in Dunhuang manuscripts 6, 104-6, 135-36
 See also T-shaped cartouche
Bimda (Bis mda) 57, 91, 108
bodhi image 34-39, 48-50
bodhimaṇḍa 48, 65-66
 See also vajrasāna
bodhisattva ordination 73, 195-96, 202, 214
 See also repentance ritual
bodhisattva precepts 35, 73, 195-96, 201-2, 205, 216, 234
 See also repentance ritual
Bogel, Cynthia 15-16
Borobudur 260-61
Brahma's Net Sūtra 69-70, 83, 86-89, 109-10, 196
 See also Avataṃsaka Sūtra; bodhisattva ordination; bodhisattva precepts
Buddhaguhya 68, 118-19
Buddhagupta 118
buddhānusr̥ti 238-39, 261, 264
 See also Sūtra on the Names of the Buddha; Thousand Buddhas

- Buddhapālita 26, 29-31, 34
and *dhāraṇī* pillar 29
- Chan (Zen)
at Dunhuang 7n9, 218n66
- Chang'an 5, 7, 9, 14-15, 37, 56, 59, 122, 127,
171-72, 257
- Chengguan 259
- Cintāmaṇicakra
in pictorial art 103, 129, 137, 139, 155, 187
- crowned Buddha 60-61, 73, 78-79
in *dhyaṇa mudrā* 54-57, 69-70, 91, 112,
116-18, 156, 165-66, 178-80, 187
- Daizong 15, 172, 199, 201
- Dazu 250
- Dega Yutse (De ga g.yu tshal)
See Temple of the Treaty
- Demiéville, Paul 104
- Denma Drak (Ldan ma brag) 54-57, 78-79,
83, 89, 108
- dhāraṇī* 17, 23-25, 198, 258
"proto-tantric" character 19, 19n37, 24-25,
25n7
- dhāraṇī* pillar 27-31
- dharmakāya* 109-10, 165, 211
See also *trikāya*
- Divākara 31-35
and *bodhi* image 37, 39, 49-50
- Donaldson, Thomas 115-16
- donor figures 8, 137-38, 150-52, 155, 164-65,
165n60, 182-84, 189, 250, 267n75
- Drag Lhamo (Brag lha mo) 116-19
- Dunhuang
See Mogao caves
- Dunhuang manuscript formats
booklet 218, 223-24, 233
pothi 197, 217-18, 223-24, 233
scroll 105-106, 223-24, 233
- dusengtong* 5, 136
- eight bodhisattvas
in the Bhadracarī 258-59
in the Gaṇḍavyūha 120
in the Maṇḍala of Eight Great Bodhi-
sattvas 47, 60, 108, 111-12, 158, 158n47,
176, 176n83
in the *Vajrasekhara Sūtra* 120-21
- esoteric Buddhism
definitions of 16-19, 17n32, 17n33
- Facheng
See Wu Facheng
- Famensi 12-14
- Faure, Bernard 19
- Five Buddhas 172, 176, 178-82, 184-87, 189,
191-93, 202, 216, 225, 228
See also Five Buddhas altar; Five Buddhas
crown; Five-Buddhas, eight-bodhi-
sattvas altar; Five Buddhas seal; Five
Divisions; Vajradhātu Maṇḍala
- Five Buddhas altar 222, 232
- Five Buddhas crown 43, 66, 79, 91, 129, 135,
156, 165-66, 187, 202, 228
See also crowned Buddha
- Five-Buddhas, eight-bodhisattvas altar 21,
200, 204-5, 216, 220-23, 228
- Five Buddhas seal 203, 220-21
- Five Divisions 69, 169, 171-72, 176, 194, 196,
259
- Five Families
See Five Divisions
- Five Jinas
See Five Buddhas
- Fraser, Sarah 225
- Gaṇḍavyūha 120, 234, 243-46, 259, 259n62,
261, 264
See also Bhadracarī; eight bodhisattvas;
kalyāṇamitras; Mañjuśrī; Sudhana
- Garbhadhātu Maṇḍala 171
and Maṇḍala of Eight Great Bodhisattvas
21, 111-15, 112n148, 119
- Geshu Han 171, 196-97
- ghanṭā* bell 129, 162
- Go Chodrup ('Go Chos grub)
See Wu Facheng
- Guge kingdom 76, 264
See also Tabo
- Guiyijun 5, 8, 18-19, 21, 122-23
Cao clan 164-68
Zhang clan 142, 145, 150, 155, 155n43
See also Lady Song; Zhang Huaishen;
Zhang Yichao; Zhang Yitan
- Hayagrīva 129, 187

- Heller, Amy 60, 70
 Hexi Corridor 1, 30, 122, 135-36, 171, 194, 196
 Hongbian
 See Wu Hongbian
 Huiguo 6n7, 9

 Indra 26-27, 188-89
 Iwao Kazushi 105

 Jung, Carl 51

kalyāṇamitras
 in early Tibet 243, 245-47
 in the Gaṇḍavyūha 243-44, 254-55
 in visual art 234, 249-54, 261, 264
 Kapstein, Matthew 108
 Kashmiri style in art 56-57, 74, 76, 78-79, 83, 187
 Kūkai 9-11, 15, 172, 217

 Lady Song
 procession painting 126
 Lang Darma (Glang dar ma) 5, 122
 Lepkhog (Leb Khog) 116, 118
 Linrothe, Rob 74
 Liu Yongzeng 115
 Lo, James and Lucy 91
 Lo Photograph Archive 108
 Locana 83-89, 110n137
 in the Maṇḍala of Eight Great Bodhisattvas 109-10
 See also Vairocana
 Longxingsi 105-6
 Lotus Treasury Realm 70, 83, 86

 Mahābodhi Temple 36-37, 39
 Mahāvairocana 110
 and repentance rituals 200-202, 228
 in Akaniṣṭha Heaven 65-70
 in the Maṇḍala of Eight Great Bodhisattvas 159-60, 165-66
 See also Five Buddhas; Five Buddhas seal; Garbhadhātu Maṇḍala; Vajradhātu Maṇḍala
Mahāvairocana Sūtra 7, 67-68, 70, 114-19, 171
 Maitreya 36, 89, 107, 127, 165, 258
 See also eight bodhisattvas
 maṇḍala
 definitions of 23, 31-34, 48-50
 See also altar; Maṇḍala of Eight Great Bodhisattvas
 Maṇḍala of Eight Great Bodhisattvas
 imperial metaphor 5, 20-21, 89, 95, 121
 transmission of 1n1, 51
 See also eight bodhisattvas; *Sūtra of the Maṇḍala of Eight Great Bodhisattvas*; Temple of the Treaty
 Mañjuśrī 99, 103
 and the *Revered and Victorious Dhāraṇī of the Buddha's Uṣṇīṣa* 30
 in the Bhadracarī 256, 258
 in the Gaṇḍavyūha 244-50, 254-55
 in the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra* 120
 on Mount Wutai 172
 See also eight bodhisattvas
 Mogao caves 1, 7
 Cave 14 21, 150-64, 187, 191-93, 235-39, 247-50, 270
 Cave 156 123-35, 137-38, 150
 Cave 161 142-50
 Mount Sumeru 47, 66, 68-69, 83, 86, 214
 multipaneled screens 235-37, 239-43, 247-49

 Nepalese style in art
 impact on Tibetan style 95-97
nirmāṇakāya 52, 65, 260n65, 264, 267
 See also *trikāya*

 offering goddesses 145, 145n34, 162-64, 172, 187
 in the Five Buddhas maṇḍala 178-79, 182, 222
 in the Five-Buddhas, eight-bodhisattvas maṇḍala 223
 in the Maṇḍala of Eight Great Bodhisattvas 159-60, 165-68
 in the Vajradhātu Maṇḍala 169, 176
 Orissa
 sculpture 114-16
 Orzech, Charles 19

 Pak Hyōng-kuk 114-15
 Pal, Pratapaditya 76
 Peltsek (Dpal brtsegs) 119
 Pelyang (Dpal dbyangs) 103, 104
 platform
 See altar

- portable shrine 70, 74, 76
 Pugyal dynasty 53, 95
- recollection of the Buddhas
 See buddhānusmṛti
- Relpachen (Ral pa can) 5, 105-6, 108
- repentance ritual 21, 34, 195-96
 and Dunhuang manuscripts 196-233
 five-fold repentance ritual 200-201
 seven-fold repentance ritual 234, 256-57
 See also bodhisattva ordination; bodhi-
 sattva precepts; *buddhānusmṛti*; *Sūtra*
 on the Names of the Buddha
- Revered and Victorious Dhāraṇī of the*
Buddha's Uṣṇīṣa 20, 25-26, 25n9
 See also altar; Amoghavajra; Buddhapālita;
 dhāraṇī pillar; Mañjuśrī; Śākyamuni;
 samādhi; Shanzhu
- Richardson, H.E. 52
- Rinchen Zangpo (Rin chen bzang po) 53, 78
- Śākyamuni
 enlightenment narrative 36-37, 39-41,
 68-70, 120
 in the *Brahma's Net Sūtra* 83
 in the Five Buddhas altar 222
 in the Maṇḍala of Eight Great Bodhi-
 sattvas 18, 166-68
 in the *Revered and Victorious Dhāraṇī of*
 the Buddha's Uṣṇīṣa 25-26, 31, 44,
 48-50
 in the Seven Locations and Nine
 Assemblies 250
 See also *nirmāṇakāya*; *vajrasāna*
- samādhi*
 and repentance rituals 200, 238-39
 and the Buddha's enlightenment 65-66,
 68-69, 115, 250
 and the *Revered and Victorious Dhāraṇī of*
 the Buddha's Uṣṇīṣa 33
 and the Vajradhātu Maṇḍala 160, 214-16,
 273
 in the Gaṇḍavyūha 244, 255
 in the *Sarvadurgatipariśodhana tantra*
 189
- Samantabhadra 99, 103
 and the Bhadracarī 234, 256-58
 in the Gaṇḍavyūha 244-50, 254-55
 in the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra* 120
 See also eight bodhisattvas
- sambhogakāya* 111
 in Akaniṣṭha Heaven 68-69
 See also *trikāya*
- Samye (Bsam yas) 52, 59, 97, 187, 243, 245-46
- Śāntigarbha 187
- Sarvadurgatipariśodhana tantra* 187-91
 and mortuary rituals 189, 233
- Seven Locations and Nine Assemblies 250
- Sha Wutian 150
- Shanzhu 25-26
- Shingon 9, 18, 20, 31, 42, 272
- Śilendrabodhi 119
- Sino-Tibetan treaty 54-56, 61, 89, 106-7
- Songtsen Gampo (Srong btsan sgam po) 54,
 56, 142
- Stein, Aurel 271
- Stevenson, Daniel 200
- Stoddard, Heather 100-104
- Strickmann, Michel 23
- Śubhakarasiṃha 7, 18, 41, 68
 and maṇḍala ritual 42-46, 48-50, 191n103
- Sudhana
 in the Gaṇḍavyūha 120, 234, 243-45,
 254-55
 in visual art 249-52, 260-67
- Sūtra for Humane Kings* 172-73, 216-17
 and maṇḍala 15
- Sūtra of the Maṇḍala of Eight Great Bodhi-*
sattvas 59
- Sūtra on the Names of the Buddha* 21-22,
 237-39, 264
 See also *buddhānusmṛti*; Thousand
 Buddhas
- Tabo 264, 267
 See also Guge kingdom
- Taizō Dainichi 112-15
 See also Mahāvairocana
- Takata Tokio 104
- Tanaka Kimiaki 114, 193
- Tang style in art 98-100
- tantra 8, 271
- Temple of the Treaty 89, 108
- Testament of Ba* 52, 97, 246
- Third Space 272
- Thousand-armed Avalokiteśvara
 ceiling painting motif 127, 145

- Thousand-armed Avalokiteśvara (cont.)
dhāraṇī sūtra 23, 137, 198
 in pictorial art 98-99, 103, 139, 155
 Thousand Buddhas 239, 264
 See also *buddhānusmṛti*; *Sūtra on the Names of the Buddha*
- Three Family system 115-19
 three mysteries 16-17, 171
 Three Realms 63
 Tibetan occupation of Dunhuang 5, 54-56
 Tibetan style in art 21, 97-98, 107n128, 112, 187
 Tōji 15, 172, 216-17
 Trailokyavijaya 205, 211, 211n52, 211n53, 216
 Tri Desongtsen (Khri lde strong btsan) 108
 Tri Songdetsen (Khri strong lde btsan)
 and Samye (Bsam yas) 243, 246
 as bodhisattva king 243, 246
 cult of Vairocana 52, 54
 patron of monk-translators 118, 188
 Tri Tsugdetsen (Khri gtsug lde btsan)
 See Relpachen (Ral pa can)
 Triga (Khri ga) monastery 53, 59
trikāya 63-65, 110-11
 in architecture 260-70
trikula
 See Three Family system
 T-shaped cartouche 89, 108-9, 273
 Tucci, Giuseppe 51
Tuoluoni jijing 24
 Two Realms Maṇḍala 9, 11
 impact on scholarship 11-16
 See also Garbhadhātu Maṇḍala;
 Vajradhātu Maṇḍala
- Uṣṇīṣa* 26, 42-43, 190-91
Uṣṇīṣavijayā dhāraṇī
 See *Revered and Victorious Dhāraṇī of the Buddha's Uṣṇīṣa*
- Vairocana 109-10
 in early Tibet 6, 52-53, 59-61
 in the Maṇḍala of Eight Great Bodhisattvas 53-57, 70-73, 111, 165-66
 See also Locana; Three Family system
vajra 43, 66, 162, 171, 202-3, 205
vajra-bearing guardian deities 222-23
 See also *viśvavajra*
 Vajrabodhi 7, 18, 168-71
 Vajradhātu Maṇḍala 21, 66, 169, 214-16, 264
 and Amoghavajra 171-73
 and Maṇḍala of Eight Great Bodhisattvas 123
 and repentance rituals 195-96, 198-204, 224-33
 at Dunhuang 174-76, 178-79, 193-94, 214
 See also Five Buddhas; Five Divisions;
 offering goddesses
vajrasāna 37, 39-41, 48, 61-63, 156, 214
 Vajrasattva 129, 152, 157-58, 161-62, 164, 211, 216, 249
Vajraśekhara lineage texts 21, 196-224, 197n9
Vajraśekhara Sūtra 7, 15, 18, 20, 65-67, 69-70, 120-21, 159-62, 168-71, 189-90, 194, 197
 Vidyārāja
 See Wisdom Kings
 Vimalamañiprabha 188-89
 visualization 176
 and maṇḍalas 41-42, 44, 47-48, 214-16
 and repentance rituals 199-200, 202-11
 See also *buddhānusmṛti*, *samādhi*
viśvavajra 156, 192-93, 192n106, 214
 See also *vajra*
- Waddell, L. Austine 271
 Wang Huimin 150
 Wisdom Kings 145, 145n34, 168, 205
 See also Trailokyavijaya
 Wu Facheng 104, 136-37, 142-45, 150
 translations by 137, 137n23
 Wu Hongbian 5, 105, 145
- Yeshe O (Ye shes 'od) 5
 Yeshe Yang (Ye shes dbyangs) 53-54, 57
 Yixing 7, 168
 yoga 42-44, 171, 201-3, 216
 yoga tantras 69, 118n156, 169, 190-91
 Yoritomi Motohiro 114
 Yuanzhao 197n8, 199, 201
 Yulin caves 1, 91
 Cave 20 83, 164-66
 Cave 25 89-100, 107-11, 135, 150, 156-58, 187
 Cave 38 164, 166-68
- Zhang Huaishen 126-27, 142
 Zhang Yichao 5, 122, 126-27, 135-38, 142, 150
 procession painting 123
 Zhang Yitan 127
 Zhiyi 200-201