

Today a copy of Cao Zhongda's visualization of Amitabha Accompanied by Fifty Bodhisattvas may be seen on the back wall of the Tang dynasty cave Wanfodong, dated to 680, at Longmen (FIG. 50).⁶⁰

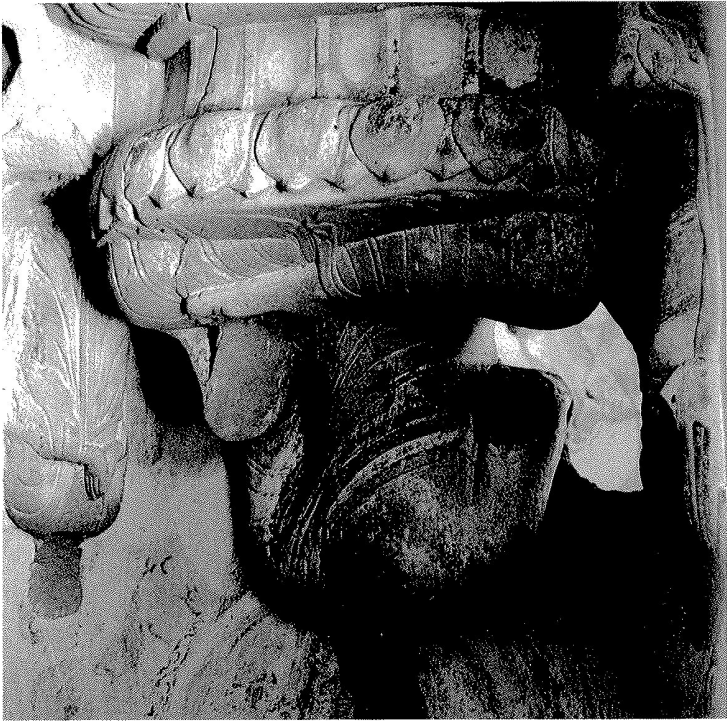
A rare early Tang dynasty dry lacquer seated Buddha (FIG. 51), now at the Metropolitan Museum, exemplifies how both naturalism and the transcendental qualities of the Buddha image were visualized in early seventh-century Buddhist art. It is a masterful statement of the human body at rest, the mind in *samadhi* (C: *sammet*) meditation, or in the "realm of formless" contemplation (*wusejie zhenqing*). Morphologically, the face of the early Tang Buddha has come a long way from the formal disregard for anatomy that characterized faces of archaic Buddhas at the Yungang caves (see FIGS. 10, 17): it presents clearly defined features whose underlying bone structure is integrated naturalistically into an organic whole. Instead of the ellipsoidal eyes (each formed by two simple opposing arcs) of the archaic linear schema, the eyelids are now shaped by undulating double curves that describe three-dimensionally the protrusion of the eyeballs from their sunken sockets. The curves of the eyelids and eye sockets echo those of the nostrils, the corners of the lips, and the cheeks and chin. The firmly articulated facial features center on the T-frame formed by the arching eyebrows and the crisply defined bridge of the nose, and within the borders formed by the gracefully modeled, extra-long earlobes. The artist has imbued his subject's corporeal, even sensual, flesh-and-bone structure with spiritual awareness. The lowered gaze of the all-seeing eyes, the faint smile of the full lips, the totally relaxed face, and the softly modeled body evoke in

the beholder a feeling of sublime peace and calm. The linear tension and anatomical abstraction that had contributed to the ethereal spiritual qualities of archaic Chinese Buddhist sculpture of the fifth through the early sixth century have disappeared. In their place is a firm and smoothly articulated body, its modeling at once natural, relaxed, and flexible. The drapery folds of the figure's outer garment rippling down from the left shoulder and elbow suggest the materiality of fabric. Illusionistic naturalism reaches its peak in an eighth-century sculpture of a Buddha (FIG. 52) at Tianlongshan, Shanxi. The garment wraps closely around the legs of the elegantly modeled figure in the Cao Zhongda style, described as "wet draperies emerging from water" (*Caoyi chushui*).

60 In Japan two early representations of Amitabha Accompanied by Fifty Bodhisattvas are found on the famous Tachibana Shrine of the late seventh century and on the now destroyed west wall mural at the Golden Hall, ca. 710, at the Hōryūji monastery in Kyoto; see also Fong, "Buddha in Heaven and on Earth," 38–61. For a reproduction, see Getty Images online, image #148727749 at www.gettyimages.com/detail/photo/buddha-statues-in-wanfodong-cave-in-dragon-high-res-stock-photography/148727749.

FIGURE 51 Seated Buddha, early Tang dynasty, ca. 620. Hollow dry lacquer with traces of gilt and polychrome pigments; height 57.1 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Rogers Fund, 1919 (19.186)

FIGURE 52 Buddha, 8th century, Stone, West niche of Cave 16, Tianlongshan, Taiyuan, Shanxi province



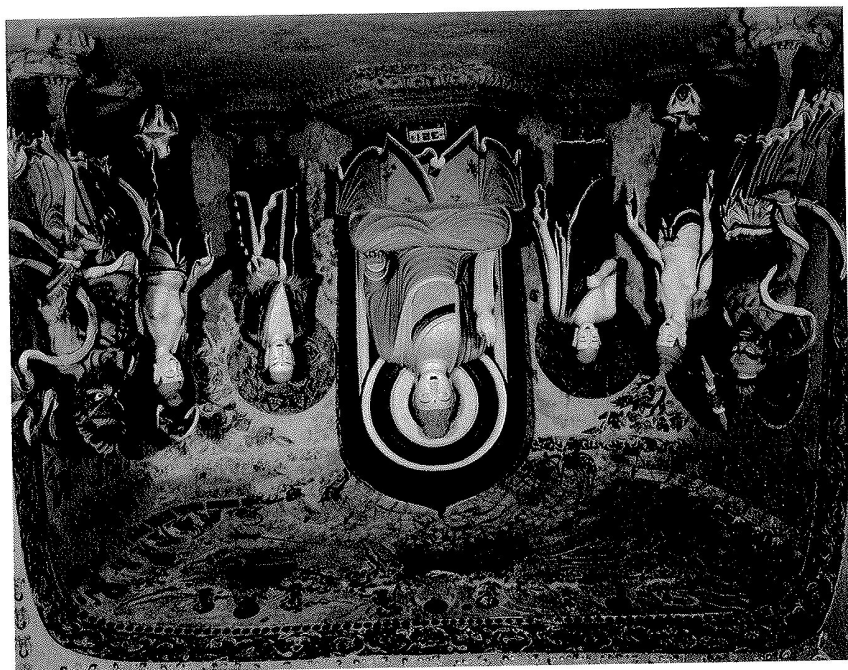
In Dunhuang Cave 321, dating to the early eighth century (FIG. 53), a trompe l'oeil tableau of both sculpted and painted paradise images, in the niche of the west wall, causes viewers to "cease distracted thoughts" and "meditate" (*Zhiyi's zhiguan*) on the Buddhist heavenly assemblage before them. From the domed ceiling above, celestial beings as vivid as any painted by Tiepolo peer down from a projecting balcony in beautifully foreshortened perspective. The painted corbelled tiles of the balcony curve around the niche, creating a division between the niche wall and the niche ceiling depicted as an azure blue sky. The tip of the aureole of the seated Buddha in the center of the niche is painted on the wall behind it; as the aureole rises past the curving balcony, a pair of painted celestials flanking the aureole on the viewer's left, their draperies whirling around them, reach down toward the sculpted Buddha. In the center of the domed ceiling appear three more painted Buddha groups — a seated Buddha attended by two bodhisattvas — hovering over multicolored clouds in the Buddhist heaven. In another trompe-l'oeil paradise representation, in Cave 45, dating from the mid-eighth century, a well-preserved sculpture of a bodhisattva perfectly illustrates the Buddhist teachings of mercy, compassion, and love (FIG. 54). A gentle and thoughtful expression marks the sensitive face; the fleshy and voluptuous body is in slight contraposto (*S: tribhanga*). Such physical characteristics of a bodhisattva were considered neither feminine nor masculine; as divinities, they were genderless. The elegant and sophisticated forms of Tang Buddhist art bespeak the worldly, integrated manner of an international style that extended over centuries, from Dunhuang to Korea and Japan.

The depiction of an imperial donor in the illustration of the Vimalakirti Sutra in Cave 220, dated 642 (FIG. 55), calls to mind the powerful portrait of Emperor Wu of the Northern Zhou in the famous scroll *Thirteen Emperors* (FIG. 56), now in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, attributed to the early Tang master painter Yan Liben.⁶¹ The faces among the admiring crowd standing behind the imperial donor are expressed in simple, powerful brushlines.

Dunhuang affords ample evidence that by the early Tang period Chinese painters had begun to utilize pure line drawings to convey mimetic realism in three-dimensional space. In an early seventh-century

61 Zhang Yanyuan, *Lidai minghua ji*, juan 9: 104. In 626 Yan Liben had painted for the Prince of Qin, the future Tang Taizong (r. 627–649), *Portraits of Eighteen Scholars of the Palace of Qin*. And in the seventeenth year of Taizong's Zhenguan reign period (643) Yan also painted *Commemorative Portraits of Twenty-four Meritorious Officials* for the Lingyan Memorial Hall. Two other comparable details found in Dunhuang Cave 335, dated to 686, and in Cave 103, dated to the eighth century, are illustrated in Chen Pao-chen, "Painting as History," 56–92, figs. 14, 15.

FIGURE 53 Detail of the Buddhist Assemblage in the niche ceiling and overall view of the niche on the west wall of Mogao Cave 321, early 8th century, Dunhuang, Gansu province. Courtesy of the Dunhuang Academy



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FIGURE 54 *Bodhisattva*,
8th century. Stucco statue
in central niche on the
west wall, Mogao Cave 45,
Dunhuang, Gansu province.
Courtesy of the Lo Archive



FIGURE 55 *Imperial Donor*
attending the debate between
Manjusri and Vimalakirti,
dated 642. Detail from the
east wall, Mogao Cave 220,
Dunhuang, Gansu
province. Courtesy of the
Dunhuang Academy

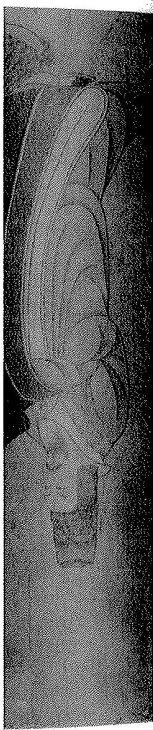


FIGURE 56 Attribute
Yan Liben (ca. 600-
Imperial Wu of the Li
Dynasty from the *Ti*
Imperors scroll, ink and
Handscroll, ink and
silk, 51.3 x 531 cm. M
Fine Arts, Boston. I
Waldo Ross Collecti



FIGURE 56 Attributed to
Yan Liben (ca. 600–673).
Imperor Wu of the Late Zhou
Dynasty from the Thirteen
Emperors scroll. Detail.
Handscroll; ink and color on
silk, 51.3 x 531 cm. Museum of
Fine Arts, Boston, Denman
Waldo Ross Collection (31.643)



FIGURE 57 Central bodhi-
sativa, "Explaining the Law,"
early 7th century. Detail of
south wall, Mogao Cave 57,
Dunhuang, Gansu province

FIGURE 58 Illustration of
The Lotus Sutra, early 8th
century. South wall, Mogao
Cave 217, Dunhuang, Gansu
province. Courtesy of the
Dunhuang Academy

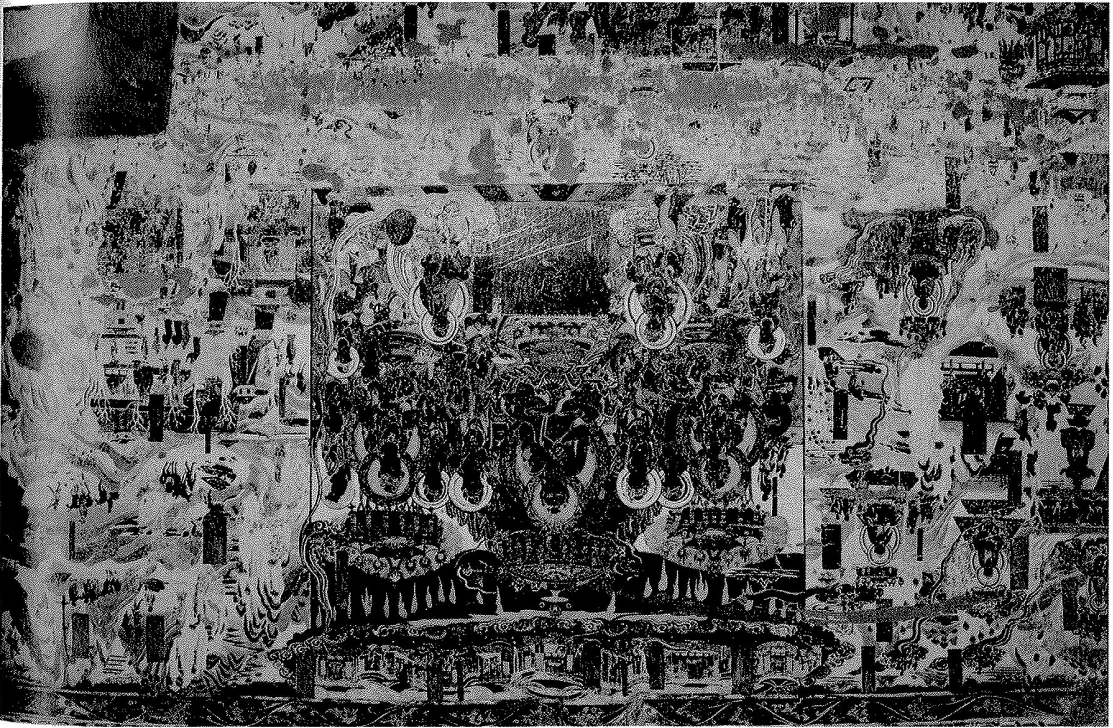
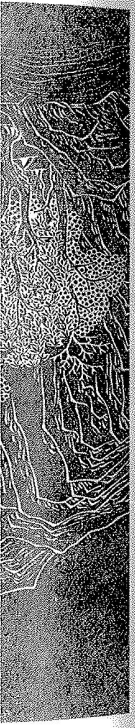


FIGURE 59 After Yang
(701-761). Wang J
Handscroll: ink on
paper, image 30.c
Date of stone engraving
by Shen Guohua,
1977). Princeton U
Museum, Far East
Collection (2002-



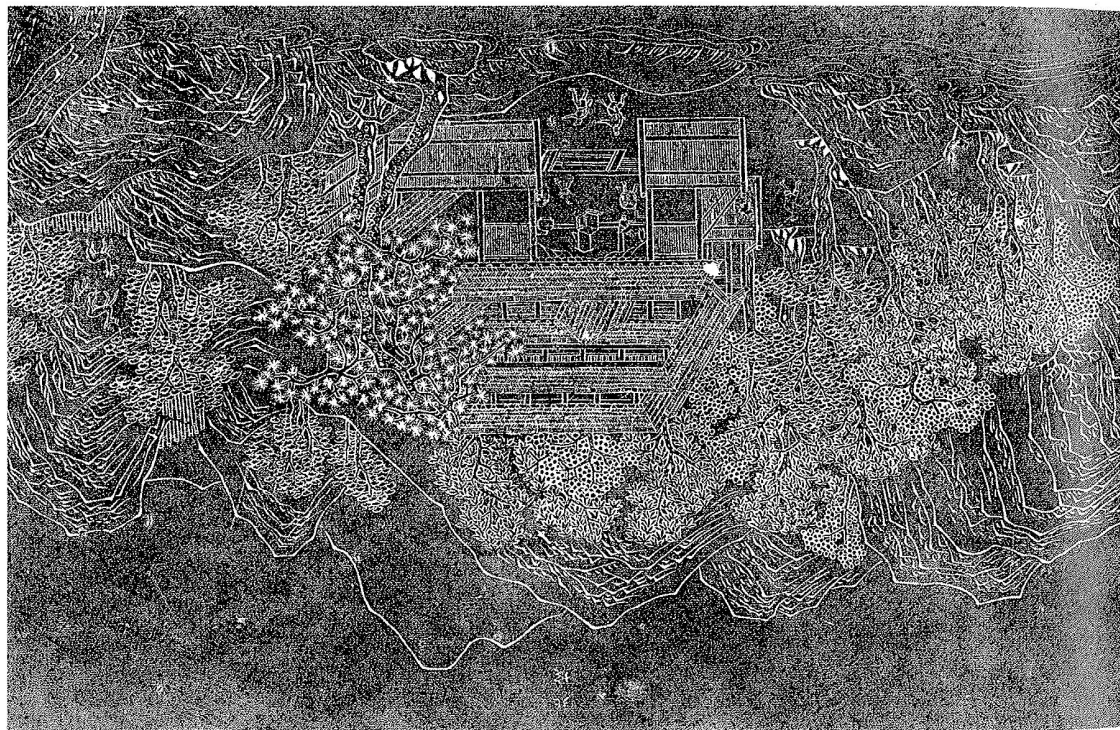


FIGURE 59 After Wang Wei
(701-761). Wang River Villa.
Handscroll; ink rubbing on
paper, image 30.0 x 496.7 cm.
Date of stone engraving, 1617,
by Shen Guohua, after engrav-
ing by Guo Zhongshu (910-
977). Princeton University Art
Museum, Far Eastern Seminar
Collection (2002.350)

standing bodhisattva in Cave 57 (FIG. 57), for example, the softly undulating lines of eyelids and eye sockets, nostrils and lips, recall the serenely alive, three-dimensional sculpture of the Metropolitan Museum's early Tang seated Buddha (see FIG. 51). The backgrounds painted in the niche of Cave 57 effect an uncanny magic of visualizing three-dimensionally what we "see" with our mind's eye.

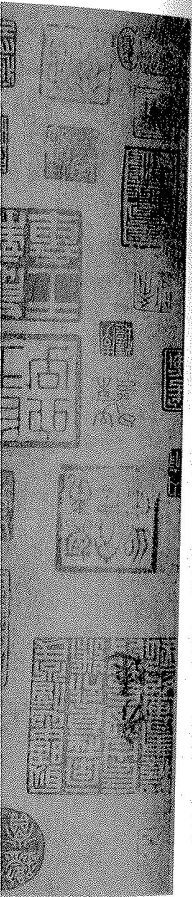
Three-dimensional figural representations in eighth-century Tang painting are closely related to the development of landscape art during time. In Dunhuang Cave 217, dating from the early eighth century, scenes illustrating the *Lotus Sutra* (FIG. 58) are placed against unified topographical landscape or architectural parallelogram settings. Compared with the schematic space cells of the *Lotus Sutra* tableau on the back of the Wanto Si stele of the early sixth century (see FIG. 48), the receding mountain peaks in Cave 217, modeled in shades of green, now show illusionistic depth and spatial recession. As part narrative painting and part illuminated map, the space-cell composition brings to mind the famous mid-Tang landscape composition *Wangchuan Villa* attributed to Wang Wei (701–761), preserved in a rubbing from the seventeenth century (FIG. 59).

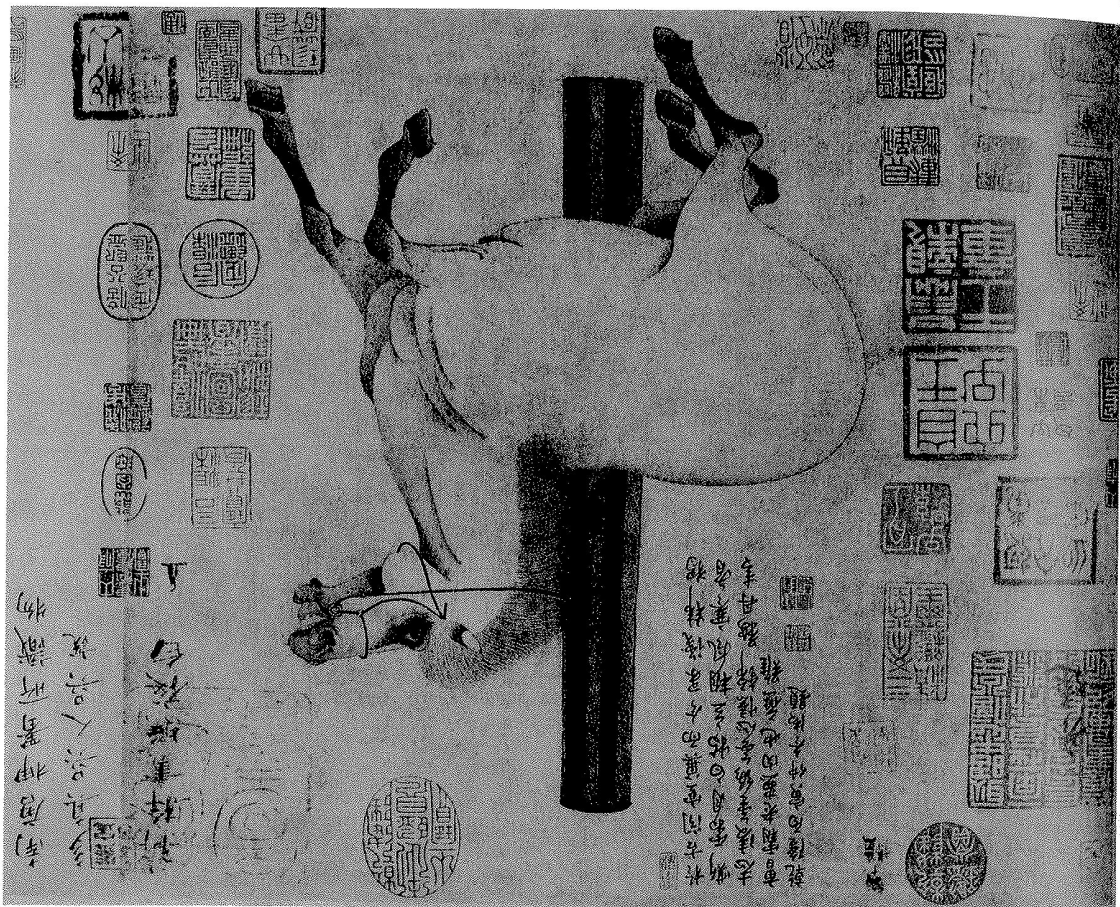
The miracle of representation at Dunhuang is apparent in depictions of animals and birds as well. Caves 285 and 249, dating from the early sixth century, contain the pure line drawings known as *baihua*, or white paintings. In Caves 286, 296, and 428, dated to the third quarter of the sixth century, a favorite motif is a white and a black horse galloping side by side. Han Gan (active ca. 742–ca. 756), the most famous horse painter of the Tang period, rose to the challenge of mastering representation with minimal means by, in David Rosand's words, "a correspondence between the form of motion in nature and the motion of his hand in drawing."⁶² In *Night-Shining White* (FIG. 60) Han proves himself a master of linear definition and movement. Tethered to a post, the fiery-tempered warhorse with wild eyes, flaring nostrils, and rebellious hooves radiates a supernatural energy, dramatically embodying the assertive spirit of the age. The elegant brush line, rarely shaded, makes tangible the quivering musculature of the horse's powerful body. For Han Gan, seeing and matching were simultaneous acts.

An outstanding portrait of Vimalakirti (FIG. 61) in Dunhuang Cave 103, dating from the mid-eighth century, employs the famous thickening-and-thinning brush technique of the most famous of all Tang

⁶² See Rosand, *Meaning of the Mark*, 30.

FIGURE 60 Han Gan (active ca. 742–ca. 756). *Night-Shining White*. Handscroll; ink on paper, 30.8 x 34 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Purchase, The Dillon Fund Gift, 1977 (1977.78)





master painters, Wu Daozi (active mid-eighth century).⁶³ Using neither color nor shading, the artist freely draws brush lines of varying thickness, weight, speed, and movement, creating a formidable seated figure who leans forward "as if bursting through the wall" (*ru tuobu*).⁶⁴ We see the pull of the drape along the figure's right arm, which balances the tension of the right leg tucked underneath the body and is countered by the relaxed flow of the drapey hanging from the figure's left shoulder. The weight and drape of the robes are graphically expressed by the rhythmic folds overhanging the edge of the canopy bed on which Vimalakirti sits.

The End of Art History?

We pause here with the eighth-century Vimalakirti portrait in Dunhuang Cave 103 to consider Zhang Yanyuan's view of Chinese painting as the transmission of teachings and schools from Gu Kaizhi through Zhang Sengyuan to Wu Daozi.⁶⁵ Rather than regarding mimetic realism as a natural "end" in painting, he envisioned the history of Chinese painting as a lineage, which by the time of his *Record of Painters of Renown from Successive Eras* in 847 had progressed from the archaic hairline brush drawing of Gu Kaizhi in the fourth century to the dramatically expressive calligraphic brushwork of Wu Daozi in the eighth century. In likening Gu's threadlike brush drawing to Eastern Han calligraphy by Zhong You (151–230), Zhang Sengyuan's hacking-and-sweeping to Lady Wei's (272–349) description of fine calligraphy in *Diagram of the Battle Formation of the Brush* (*Bizhen tu*),⁶⁶ and Wu Daozi's vivid thickening-and-thinning lines to the wild cursive script of the "mad calligrapher" Zhang Xu (active ca. 700–750), Zhang Yanyuan conjured up a pattern of successive generations of dazzling artists who absorbed ideas from their predecessors and their coevals into their own uniquely individualistic brush manners.⁶⁷ Thus he wrote: "The wonders of Zhang [Sengyuan] and Wu [Daozi] lie in their ability to capture images with only one or two abbreviated brushstrokes.... Although their delineation may be incomplete, the ideas they express are perfectly realized."⁶⁸ Zhang

concluded:

- 63 Shih Shou-chien, "Tangdai wenxian lide 'bailhua,'" 26–28.
 64 Shih Shou-chien, "Tangdai wenxian lide 'bailhua,'" 26.
 65 For the genealogical transmission of ancient styles, see Zhang Yanyuan, *Lidai mingshua ji*, *Juan* 2: 19–21; Acker, *Some Tang and Pre-Tang Texts* 1: 160–76.
 66 See Jin Weinuo, "Cao jia yang yu Yang Zhihua fengge," 37–51; see also Jin Weinuo, "Artistic Achievements of Buddhist Sculpture," 377–96.
 67 Acker, *Some Tang and Pre-Tang Texts* 1: 176.
 68 Acker, *Some Tang and Pre-Tang Texts* 1: 184.

FIGURE 61 Vimalakirti, mid-8th century. Detail of the east wall, Mogao Cave 103, Dunhuang, Gansu province. Courtesy of the Dunhuang Academy



The paintings of high antiquity were simple in technique yet refined in execution, as exemplified by the works of Gu [Kaizhi].... The paintings of middle antiquity were detailed and brilliantly executed.... When we look at the work of Wu Daozi, we see that all Six Laws [of painting] have been brought to completion.... It is as though someone divine has borrowed Wu's hand, so brilliantly does his work capture Creation itself!⁶⁹

In *Art and Illusion*, Gombrich bases his explanation of the development of mimesis in Western art on the inventions of science.⁷⁰ Although his idea of schema-and-correction (or making-before-matching) proves useful for reconstructing the history of mimetic representation in early Chinese art, Gombrich's positivist view of art history cannot account for the remarkable continuity of Chinese art and culture, in which the artistic process of replication parallels the societal concept of genealogy. In his

last book, *The Preference for the Primitive: Episodes in the History of Western Taste and Art* (2002), Gombrich asserts that "what requires explanation is not the absence of mimesis but its invention," arguing that "[in] the field of image-making... there is a law of gravitation here which pulls the untutored artist away from the higher zones of mimetic relationships towards the piecemeal and schematic, towards the base line."⁷¹ In Chinese painting history, after the "authentic stylistic sequence" of mimetic realism had reached a natural end in the eighth century (the High Tang period), post-Tang artists turned to successive *fugu* (return to the primitive), seeking radical renewals through individual calligraphic self-expression.⁷² In my 1976 article "Archaism as a 'Primitive' Style," I discussed how Chinese figure and landscape paintings shared a common pattern of return to the primitive in Chinese art history.⁷³ Although High Tang art at Dunhuang of the mid-eighth century had ended abruptly with the Tibetan occupation of the region from 781 to 848, when the Uighurs established themselves as masters of the oasis, Dunhuang artists of the later Five

FIGURE 62 Sixteen Luohans, Western Xia dynasty (Xi Xia), early 10th century. Detail from upper portion of the north wall, Mogao Cave 97, Dunhuang, Gansu province

FIGURE 63 Attributed to Guanxin (832–912), *Vajraputra* from the set of Sixteen Luohans, 10th century. Hanging scroll, ink and color on silk, 92 × 43 cm. Imperial Household Museum, Tokyo

69 Zhang Yanyuan, *Lidai minghua*, juan 1: 15 in Huashi congshu 1: 19; cf. Acker, *Some Tang and*

Pre-Tang Texts 1: 149, 151.

70 Gombrich, *Art and Illusion*, 34.

71 See Gombrich, *Preference for the Primitive*, 280–85.

72 Earlier we explored the values of the Chinese "genealogical" paradigm through which later artists and writers viewed "change" in history. In modern scholarship considerable energy has been devoted to recording the changes in China's cultural past according to periods. First, Fung Yulan, *Zhongguo zhexue shi*, divided the history of Chinese thought into two mega-eras: the Period of the Philosophers (5th century BCE–ca. 100 BCE) followed by the Period of Classical Learnings (ca. 100 BCE–20th century CE). This evolutionary pattern was later developed by Guo Shaoyu, in his *Zhongguo wenxue piping shi*, into a three-stage Growth-Revival-Synthesis narrative.

73 Fong, "Archaism as a 'Primitive' Style," 89–109.



Dynasties (907–960) and Western Xia (Xixia, 1038–1227) periods successfully absorbed waves of primitivist revivals from artistic centers in imperial China. As a consequence, late tenth-century Chinese painting history shows a striking similarity to the twentieth-century Western discourse on the end of art history, specifically in the writings of Hans Belting and Arthur Danto.⁷⁴ To quote Danto, "There is no longer any reason to think of art as having a progressive history; there simply is not the possibility of a development sequence with the concept of expression as there is with the concept of mimetic representation."⁷⁵

Guanxiu's Sixteen Luohans in Dunhuang Caves 76 and 117

Sometime before the fifth century a group of sixteen arhats (or luohans) — direct disciples of Buddha — were designated the guardian saints of Mahayana, deputized by the Buddha to remain in the world and await the advent of the Future Buddha Maitreya. The names and abodes of these sixteen arhats are given in the canonical work *Record on the Duration of the Law, Spoken by the Great Arhat Nandimitra* (*Fazhuji*), which was translated into Chinese by the celebrated pilgrim Xuanzang (602–664) in 654.⁷⁶ A set of images in Dunhuang Cave 97, dating from the early tenth century and depicting sixteen seated luohans (FIG. 62), reflects the famous grotesqueries of the ninth-century Chan Buddhist monk-painter Guanxiu's (832–912) *Sixteen Luohans* (FIG. 63).⁷⁷

At the temple Shengyin Si in Hangzhou, Zhejiang, is a similar set of Guanxiu's luohan images, incised on stone panels in the eighteenth century by order of the Qianlong emperor (r. 1736–1795) and bearing long commemorative inscriptions dating from 1764.⁷⁸ In the lower right corner of the eleventh image is a four-line inscription written in archaic seal script, purportedly by Guanxiu himself:

"*Sixteen Luohans* at Xinzhou, Huaiyu Mountain."⁷⁹ Early in the Year of Guangming [880], ten images were created first at the Huian [temple] in Denggao. Xiyue Seng [Monk from the Western Hills] Guanxiu made these images. Then, in the first winter of

74 See Belting, *Das Ende der Kunstgeschichte*; also Danto, *Philosophical Disenfranchisement of Art*.
75 Danto, "The End of Art?", 24.
76 See Fong, "Five Hundred Lohans," 26, 35–36.
77 The best surviving copies, known as the Takahashi set, are now in the Imperial Household Museum in Tokyo.
78 For a detailed study of Guanxiu's *Sixteen Luohans*, see Fong, "Five Hundred Lohans," 30–76.
79 Xinzhou Huaiyushan is situated about 140 li north of the city Yushan, Jiangxi province.

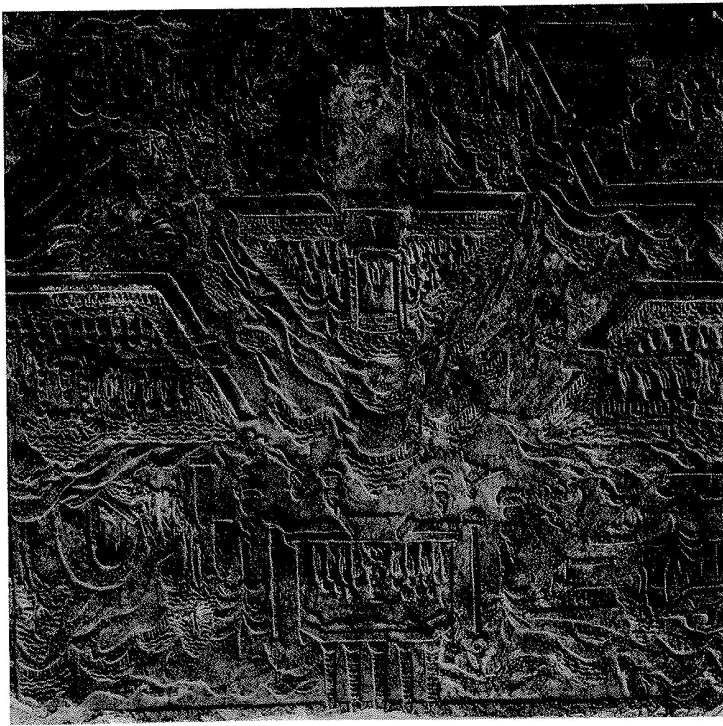
seated colossus of the historical Buddha Śākyamuni (see FIG. 17) was originally attended by two standing Buddhas and two standing bodhisattvas, of which only one attending Buddha remains. According to the studies by Mizuno Seiichi and Nagahiro Toshio of the Longmen cave temples outside the Northern Wei capital of Luoyang, a new five-figure group, consisting of a seated Buddha flanked by two standing bodhisattvas and two standing arhats, appeared in the early years of the Yongping reign period (commencing in 508) and predominated thereafter.⁵² This new quintet, forming one Great Vehicle embracing both the bodhisattva and the arhat vehicles, is exemplified by the *Vairocana Buddha* (FIG. 46), completed in 675, at Fengxian Si, Cave 19, at Longmen — and it is emblematic of the growing maturity of Chinese Buddhism under the influence of the preeminent Mahayana *Lotus Sutra*.⁵³ An even more expansive illustration of the *Lotus Sutra's* "One Vehicle incorporating all Three Vehicles" is found in the Sui dynasty gilt-bronze altarpiece, dated 593, in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, composed of a central, seated Buddha flanked by two standing bodhisattvas, two pratyeka-buddhas (wearing conical caps), and two arhats (FIG. 47).⁵⁴ Judging from the dedicatory inscriptions at the cave temples of Longmen, the focus of Chinese Buddhist worship from the late fifth century onward shifted steadily away from the historical Buddha Śākyamuni, first to Bodhisattva Maitreya, the Buddha of the Future, then to Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara (C: Guanyin) and Buddha Amitābha (C: Amitūfo), who, according to the *Lotus Sutra*, resided in the Western Pure Land paradise.⁵⁵

In the south, Bodhisattva Maitreya in Tusita Heaven (FIG. 48), depicted on the back of a stone stele excavated at Wanfo Si in Chengdu and dating from the first half of the sixth century, shows a visualization of the last rebirth of the messianic Buddha Maitreya, as recounted in the *Sutra Spoken by the Buddha on Visualizing the Ascension of Bodhisattva Maitreya to the Tusita Heaven* (*Foshuo guan mile pusa shangsheng doushuaitian jing*), a visualization sutra (*guan jing*) found in the Chinese *Triptaka*.⁵⁶ In the middle register, Bodhisattva Maitreya is represented three times seated in the

52 See Mizuno and Nagahiro, *Ryūmon sekutsu no kenkyū*, 136. The earliest extant five-figure image appears in a small niche on the north wall of the Guyang Cave at Longmen, dated ca. 505 by the date of the larger niche above. For an illustration, see Tokiwa and Sekino, *Shina bukkyō-shiseki*, plate 2–89, left. 53 For a transcription of the inscriptions relating to the Fengxian images, see Tokiwa and Sekino, *Buddhist Monuments in China*, text, part II, 91. 54 For other early examples of the septet grouping, see Mizuno and Nagahiro, *Buddhist Cave-Temples of Hsiang-T'ang-Ssu*, 381. 55 See Tsukamoto, "Ryūmon sekutsu ni arawaretaru Hokugi Bukkyō," 223–36. 56 See description in Howard, "Buddhist Art in China," 223–24, no. 126. Note that Maitreya was a theological concept rather than a historical figure like Śākyamuni. His paradise was located "in the east."

FIGURE 48 *Maitreya Paradise*, first half of the 6th century. Reverse of Stele 1. Sandstone; width 64 cm. Excavated in 1954 from Wanfo Si, Chengdu, Sichuan province, Sichuan Provincial Museum, Chengdu

FIGURE 49 *Amitābha Pure Land Paradise with secular landscape*, first half of the 6th century. Reverse of Stele 2. Sandstone; height 119 cm, width 64.5 cm, depth 24.8 cm. Excavated in 1954 from Wanfo Si, Chengdu, Sichuan province, Sichuan Provincial Museum, Chengdu



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lotus posture within a pavilion, as he preaches to the Three Assemblies in the mundane world of *Ketumati*, where he is reincarnated for the last time. In the upper right corner Mahakasyapa, Śākyamuni's eldest disciple, awaits Maitreya's coming in a cave dwelling. The artist uses the converging diagonal sides of his parallelograms to form a perspectival schema. At the apex of the large triangle in the center of the composition the future Buddha Maitreya, now wearing a crown and sitting with pendent crossed legs, is shown with attendants dwelling in Tusita Heaven.

In a second stone stele depicting Buddha Amitabha's Pure Land Paradise, also found at Wanfo Si and of about the same date, Amitabha's Pure Land Paradise is visualized as a lush garden lined with tropical palms bordered by fruit trees and musicians in echelon looking out on a lotus pond filled with souls newly born as bodhisattvas (fig. 49).⁵⁷ By pointing

the converging diagonal lines of his parallelograms toward a central vertical axis, the artist draws the beholder's attention inexorably toward the reigning Buddha meditating at the apex of the large triangle that dominates the image's perspectival schema. The main scripture used for visualizing the Amitabha paradise was the *Sutra Spoken by the Buddha on Visualizing the Buddha of Infinite Light* (*Amitayurdhya Sutra*; C: *Foshuo guan Wuliangshoufo jing*).⁵⁸

According to the early Tang vinaya master and biographer Daoxuan (596–667), it was the Northern Qi Sogdian painter Cao Zhongda who during the sixth century in north China first visualized, or painted, the Amitabha Pure Land tableau (*jingtu bianxiang*) as Amitabha Accompanied by Fifty [Newly Born] Bodhisattvas:

It is said that long ago the monk Kukutarama in India went to Amitabha's paradise and enquired as follows: "The beings of the world below long to be born in the Pure Land. But without images of the Buddha there is nothing for their strength of desire to operate by. Therefore, I beg your permission for [bestowing] such images."⁵⁹

57 Howard, "Buddhist Art in China," 221, no. 124. The most famous early representation of Amitabha's Pure Land Paradise (which was conceptually located "in the west") is *Amitabha Accompanied by Fifty [Newly Born] Bodhisattvas*, a trope that originated in Daoxuan, *Ji shenzhou sanbao gantonglu*, juan 2. For a translation of Daoxuan's account, see Naitō, *Wall Paintings of the Hōryūji*, 143–44. See also D. Wong, "Four Sichuan Buddhist Steles," 58–60. 58 *Amitayurdhya Sutra*, Taishō, vol. 12, no. 365, 340ff; also, Müller, *Sacred Books of the East*, vol. 49, pt. 2, 161–201. 59 See Daoxuan, *Ji shenzhou sanbao gantonglu*, juan 2. For a translation, see Naitō, *Wall Paintings of the Hōryūji*.

FIGURE 50 Seated Buddha with attendants, 680. View of the main wall in Wanfodong, Longmen. Luoyang, Henan province



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