

The Character of Yün-kang 雲岡 Buddhism

—A look at the emergence of a State-supported religion
in China under the Northern Wei—

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FOREWORD:

When one speaks of the Buddhism of the Northern Wei as having the character of a 'State (or "statified") religion', it is necessary to apprehend the concept from three aspects.

1. First is that of the control of the Buddhist religious community by the State. This is symbolized principally, by the institutions of the monastic officialdom and of the regulation of ordinations.

2. Second is that of the inner content of a Buddhist religion whose monastic community was, at the time, favoured by conditions that led to its growth. It is a question, in other words, of how the latter proposed to use its doctrine as a means of serving the State to which it owed much of its prosperity.

3. Third is that of how the general population, through the use of the Buddhist church as a vehicle, came to be incorporated into the State's control structure.

The three issues are, to be sure, so intertwined as to be inseparable. At any rate, the present study will take up the phenomenon of Yün-kang Buddhism in terms of its involvement with the second of the three.

The present writer has already, in his 'Study of Iconic Inscriptions in North China' (*Hokuchō zōzō meikō* 北朝造像銘考),⁽¹⁾ looked into the character of Chinese Buddhism as manifested in the iconic inscriptions made under the Northern Dynasties. As a premise for his perception of the problem, he has singled out, for the present study, those issues that affect the latter. They are the following:

1. Under the Northern Wei, iconography and associated acts of piety were sponsored by a broad social layer ranging from as high as emperors to as low as commoners, including women, who had neither rank nor office.
2. The efflorescence of iconography under the Northern Wei followed, in a sense, the unfolding of metropolitan Buddhism in the sequence Yün-kang → Lung-men 龍門 → statuary, the last-named referring to the spread

(1) Chisui SATŌ 佐藤智水, 'Hokuchō Zōzō Meikō, 北朝造像銘考, in *Shigaku Zasshi* 史學雜誌 (*Journal of the Study of History*), Vol. 86, No. 10, 1977.

- of specifically stone statuary.
3. Within the framework of this metropolitan Buddhism under the Northern Wei, faith in Śākyamuni (Gautama) and in Maitreya constitute the main stream, while the 'Buddha of Boundless Life' (*Wu-liang-shou* 無量壽, i.e., Amitāyus) and Avalokiteśvara (*Kuan-yin* 觀音) do not particularly strike the eye.
 4. The religious community dispatched teacher-monks on missions to promote the propagation of the Faith among the general population. As a result, in every region there was organized a fellowship of lay believers called 'village faithful' (*yi-yi* 邑義). These teaching monks guided the population toward the creation of Gautama figures and Maitreya figures 'for the Emperor' and 'for the country'.
 5. The above points lead one to conclude that, under the Northern Wei, faith in Gautama and in Maitreya was connected with emperor-worship and the preservation of the State.

All the same, the above mentioned connection between iconography and emperor-worship was not particularly evident before the first religious proscription, becoming explicit only with the Buddhist caves at Yün-kang. In view of the above, one is presumably entitled to say that Yün-kang marks an epoch in the history of Buddhism under the Northern Wei.

The present writer is of the opinion that the development of Buddhism in the North China of the time may be divided chronologically into three periods as follows:

1. First Period, namely, from the establishment of the Northern Wei until the first proscription (386-452);
2. Second Period, from the religious restoration until the transfer of the capital to Lo-yang 洛陽 (452-494);
3. Third Period, from the transfer of the capital until the division of the realm into eastern and western halves (494-534).

The Yün-kang caves fall entirely within the second of the above periods, which coincides with the triumph of Buddhism at P'ing-ch'eng 平城, the then capital of the Northern Wei. The author's present aim, by designating as 'Yün-kang Buddhism' the metropolitan religion of the second above-mentioned period, the one that gave birth to the Yün-kang caves, is to distinguish it, albeit only provisionally, from those of the first and third periods, on the one hand, and from the religion of the countryside on the other. Somewhat differently phrased, it is the intention of this study to scrutinize the character of Yün-kang Buddhism, by studying the process of the original excavation of the caves and the details of their accoutrement, and thus to analyze the relationship between State and Church in that time and place.

I. The Yün-kang caves

A. T'an-yao's Five Caves 曇曜五窟

The person who petitioned for the original excavation of the Yün-kang caves, and who supervised the accoutrement of them, was a monk named T'an-yao. We will now give a *résumé* of his personal history, including the process that led to the original excavation.⁽²⁾

T'an-yao's place of origin is not known, but by the 430's he was already renowned throughout the territories of the Northern Liang 北涼 for his adeptness at meditation, so much so that he was instructing CHANG T'an 張潭, senior tutor (*t'ai-fu* 太傅) to the dynasty. In T'ai-yen 太延 5 (439), when Emperor T'ai-wu 太武帝 of the Northern Wei put an end to the Northern Liang, moving more than thirty thousand households from Liang-chou 涼州 to the capital in P'ing-ch'eng, T'an-yao, along with three other monks, Hsüan-ko 玄高, Shih-hsien 師賢 and Hui-ch'ung 慧崇, as well as some others, appears to have been part of the move. At P'ing-ch'eng, these eminent monks from Liang-chou were well treated by a devoutly Buddhist officialdom. Hsüan-ko was assigned as tutor to the heir apparent, Prince Huang 晃, while Hui-ch'ung was invited to instruct the household of HAN Wan-te 韓萬德, who held the rank of *shang-shu* 尚書, and T'an-yao, for his part as well, got preferential treatment from the crown prince. However, when in T'ai-p'ing-chen-chün 太平真君 7 (446), Emperor T'ai-wu promulgated his edict of proscription, monasteries were put to the torch, scripture and statuary were destroyed, monks and nuns were forcibly secularized, the fugitives decapitated and their heads impaled. For a time Buddhism disappeared from the surface, at least, of the society of the Northern Wei. At this time, T'an-yao went into hiding, taking his vestments and his other accoutrements with him, into the area of the Middle Mountains (Chung-shan 中山, near Ting-hsien in what is now Hopei Province 河北省定縣). In the tenth month of Hsing-an 興安 1 (452), the new emperor, Wen-ch'eng 文成帝 (son of the above-mentioned Prince Huang, by now deceased), acceded to the throne. In the twelfth month of the same year an edict of religious toleration was promulgated, and the next year T'an-yao was received with the honours reserved for a teacher. For a period of about eight years following the restoration, Shih-hsien was in charge of the monastic community under the title of 'Comptroller of Religious' (lit., of 'men of the

(2) Cf. *Shih-lao-chih* 釋老志 (Notice on Buddhism and Taoism) in the *Wei-shu* 魏書; Biography of T'an-yao 曇曜傳 in the *Hsü Kao-seng-chuan* 續高僧傳 (*The Sequel to the Lives of Eminent Monks*), *chüan* 1; Biography of Hsüan-ko 玄高傳 in the *Kao-seng-chuan* 高僧傳 (*The Lives of Eminent Monks*), *chüan* 11; Biography of T'an-shih 曇始傳 in the *Kao-seng-chuan*, *chüan* 10. There is a detailed account of T'an-yao by Zenryū TSUKAMOTO 塚本善隆, 'Shamon-tō Don-yō to sono Jidai' 沙門統曇曜とその時代 (T'an-yao, the Comptroller of Śramaṇāḥ, and His Times) in his *Shina Bukkyō-shi Kenkyū Hokugi-hen* 支那佛教史研究北魏篇 (*Studies in the History of Chinese Buddhism—Northern Wei Volume*).

Way', *tao-jen-t'ung* 道人續). When, early in Ho-p'ing 和平 (a period that extended from 460 to 465), Shih-hsien died, T'an-yao replaced him in the leadership of the religious community, the title also changing to that of 'Comptroller of *śramaṇas*' 沙門統. The very first task to which T'an-yao, in his new post as Comptroller of *śramaṇas*, addressed himself was the excavation of five caves at Yün-kang.

Now, in those five caves, great stone Buddhas were carved as principal objects of worship. It is the accepted view that the five great Buddhas were erected for five emperors, beginning with Tao-wu 道武帝.⁽³⁾ This is deduced by reading between the lines of the two following notices, cited from the Notice on Buddhism and Taoism 釋老志.

1. This year (452), the officials were commanded by imperial edict to have made a stone likeness of the Emperor's person. When it was finished, on both the face and the soles of the feet were black pebbles, which mysteriously resembled the moles on the upper and lower parts of the Emperor's body. Those who discussed this thought that it was in response to his pure sincerity. 是年, 詔有司, 爲石像令如帝身. 既成. 顏上足下, 各有黑石, 冥同帝體上下黑子. 論者以爲純誠所感.
2. In the autumn of the first year of Hsing-kuang 興光 (454), the officials were commanded by imperial edict to cast within the great five-storeyed monastery, for the sake of the five emperors beginning with T'ai-tsu (Tao-wu-ti), five standing Śākya figures, each of one rod and six feet in length. Together there were used twenty-five thousand catties of copper. 興光元年秋, 敕有司, 於五級大寺內, 爲太祖已下五帝, 鑄釋迦立像五. 各長一丈六尺. 都用赤金二萬五千斤.

These two undertakings were presumably initiated, under the leadership and control of Shih-hsien, Comptroller of Religious, immediately after the religious restoration. The most notable thing about 1 is the construction of an icon to resemble the person of the emperor, something unknown until then. Fa-kuo 法果, first Comptroller of Religious during T'ai-tsu's regn, is renowned for having said, 'T'ai-tsu is enlightened and loves the Way. He is in his very person the Thus Come One. *Śramaṇas* must and should pay him all homage.' 太祖明叡好道, 卽是當今如來, 沙門宜應盡禮.⁽⁴⁾ This image, executed on the model of Emperor Wen-ch'eng, may be called a concretization of this notorious statement. The five images mentioned in 2 represent an attempt to extend the spirit evidenced in 1 to a whole series of emperors. It is particularly important that the five sovereigns beginning with T'ai-tsu (i.e., Emperors Tao-wu; Ming-yüan 明元; T'ai-wu; Ching-mu 景穆 who did not actually accede to the throne; and Wen-ch'eng) include the reigning Emperor. As for

(3) Cf. TSUKAMOTO, *ibid.*, specifically the chapter entitled 'Unkō Sansoku' 雲岡三則 (Three Cardinal Rules at Yün-kang). Cf. also Chart 2, accompanying the present article.

(4) *Shih-lao-chih* in the *Wei-shu*.

T'an-yao's five caves, one may presume that, succeeding to the notion of the five Buddhas indicated in 2, they involved themselves in the same project, but on a larger scale. In T'an-yao's five caves, the principal object was the carving of the Great Buddhas who were the central objects of worship, while the wall paintings were no more than secondary, which means that they had, so to speak, the structure of caves to house holy images,⁽⁵⁾ sufficient proof of the possibility that the said caves were executed as offerings in commemoration of those five emperors.

Still, there is a clear discrepancy between the Five Buddhas of the great five-storeyed monastery and T'an-yao's five caves. That is to say, whereas the former are all standing images of Gautama, there are evident variations in the images of the latter. T'an-yao's five caves, in terms of the present over-all numeration, are nos. 16 through 20. In terms principally of their respective central objects of worship, the arrangement of the five caves would be as follows:

- Cave 16. 1 standing Buddha-figure, arms raised, ca. 14 m. in height, surrounded by walls with a thousand Buddhas;
- Cave 17. 3 images of Bodhisattvas with legs crossed, ca. 16.3 m. in height, attended on the left by a Buddha seated with palms joined, on the right by a Buddha standing with arms raised;
- Cave 18. 5 standing Buddha-images, arms raised, ca. 15.6 m. in height, attended on the left by a Buddha standing with arms raised and by a standing Bodhisattva; on the right by the same; with ten great disciples depicted on a wall to the side;
- Cave 19. 1 seated Buddha-figure, arms raised, ca. 16.5 m. in height, attended by 6 reclining Buddhas, 3 to the right, 3 to the left, and surrounded by a wall with a thousand Buddhas;
- Cave 20. 3 seated Buddha-images, palms joined, ca. 13.4 m. in height, attended to both left and right by a standing Buddha, arms joined.

The five central figures in T'an-yao's five caves, in terms of form and of form alone, are two standing Buddha-figures with arms raised,⁽⁶⁾ one seated Buddha-figure with arms raised, one seated Buddha-figure with palms joined, one Bodhisattva-figure with legs crossed. By looking at the attendant figures and the other accoutrements, one feels entitled to say that each cave is an independent expression of something. The present writer would like to imagine that these five caves are a symbolic expression of the inner content

(5) Toshio NAGAIRO 長廣敏雄, *Unkō Sekkutsu 雲岡石窟 (The Yün-kang Caves)*, Sekai Bunkasha 世界文化社, p. 50.

(6) In the iconographical terminology the present writer follows S. MIZUNO 水野清一 and T. NAGAIRO 長廣敏雄, *Unkō Sekkutsu 雲岡石窟 (The Yün-kang Caves)*, published by Kyoto University's Institute of Humanistic Studies (hereinafter to be referred to as *Yün-kang*), specifically its volumes 8 and 9 entitled *Unkō Zuzō-gaku 雲岡圖像學 (Yün-kang Iconography)*.

of a Buddhist idea that is the object of an attempted reconstruction after the anguish of religious proscription has been overcome. Attention is called to the following facts:

1. The central objects of worship in all five caves have no match prior to the proscription.
2. The five images are not a set of five identical figures, for each has its own unique characteristics.
3. Each of the five was executed for one particular emperor, beginning with T'ai-tsu, each possibly modelled on the likeness of that emperor himself.

In the light of the above, it is scarcely likely that the thought in T'an-yao's mind when he saw to these excavations was, or even could be, totally divorced from a particular vision, one that attempted to see a relationship comprising the Buddha on the one hand, the Emperor on the other.

Even so, the names to be attached to these five images, apart from the identification of the crosslegged Bodhisattva of Cave 17 as Maitreya, are very uncertain.⁽⁷⁾ Leaving aside, for the moment, the identity of the Four Great Buddhas, the present writer regards as particularly noteworthy the point that even one of the five figures executed for an emperor should be a Maitreya.

1. Why were not all five statues fashioned in the same Buddha likeness? 2. Why was one, and one alone, made to look like a Bodhisattva? 3. Why, finally, among numerous Bodhisattvas, was Maitreya chosen? The significance of the principal object of worship in Cave 17 seems very great indeed. On the other hand, in the matter of making a crosslegged Maitreya the central object of worship in a stone cave, Messrs. Seiichi MIZUNO 水野清一 and Toshio NAGAIRO 長廣敏雄 have a theory, expressed in the following statement in that great publication *Unkō Sekkutsu* 雲岡石窟 which is the fruit of their collaborative efforts: 'The crosslegged Bodhisattva image in Cave 17 is, of course, Maitreya. However, it is no ordinary Maitreya. This, we believe, is because at that very time variety was being sought in the excavation of the caves and the execution of the statuary.' (Emphasis not in the original SC).⁽⁸⁾ Also, in a more recent work, similarly entitled *Unkō sekkutsu* 雲岡

(7) Where the identification of the principal objects of worship in T'an-yao's five caves is concerned, there is no basis of certainty for the standing Buddha in Cave 16, but a majority of opinion leans towards Gautama. As for the standing Buddha-figure in Cave 18, one theory has it that it represents Vairocana. (Cf. Eiichi MATSUMOTO 松本榮一, *Tonkō-ga no Kenkyū Zuzō-hen* 燉煌畫の研究圖像篇 (*A Study of Tun-huang Paintings—Iconographical Volume*); Satoshi YOSHIMURA 吉村 怜, 'Rushana Hokkai Ninchū-zō no Kenkyū, 盧舍那法界人中像の研究 (*A Study of the Human Figures in the Representations of the Vairocanadharmadhātu*), in *Bijutsu Kenkyū* 美術研究 (Studies in Art), No. 203. The view is a very interesting one, but it is not generally accepted. Messrs. MIZUNO and NAGAIRO regard it as a Gautama figure. (Cf. *Yün-kang*). They do not identify in so many words the figures in Caves 16, 19 and 20, but the line of reasoning in their work as a whole leads one to conclude that they regarded them too as Gautama figures.

(8) Cf. *Yün-kang*, Vol. 12, p. 40.

石窟 Mr. NAGAIRO says, 'There is no example in Yün-kang of the construction of a single crosslegged Bodhisattva image. It usually accompanies a seated or reclining Buddha figure. A seated Buddha figure represents Gautama, while a crosslegged Bodhisattva image is an image pointing to the future, namely, Maitreya, and the two are inseparable. . . . The presence in Cave 17, one of T'an-yao's five, of a crosslegged image can be understood only in connection with the presence of great Buddha images in the other four caves. Similarly, the presence of a crosslegged image as the principal object of worship in Cave 10 can be understood only in terms of the presence of a reclining image as the principal object of worship in Cave 9. Examples of this sort are innumerable.⁽⁹⁾ What is being said here, and with emphasis, is that crosslegged images, for all that there was a widespread faith underlying them, were produced from an iconographic viewpoint. This writer, however, feels some doubt about an interpretation that places all of its weight on the iconographic viewpoint where the crosslegged image, as the principal object of worship in Cave 17, is concerned. As Mr. NAGAIRO says, the cases in which crosslegged images at Yün-kang were carved in sets with seated or reclining Buddha figures are very numerous. In those cases, however, the matching cave or niche is fairly self-evident, so that, as in the case of the crosslegged principal object of worship in Cave 10 and the reclining one in Cave 9, the twin of Cave 10, there is a clearly noticeable dual relationship. However, among T'an-yao's five caves, it is extremely nuclear with which of the five one is to match no. 17. Even if one holds that all five constitute a set, one can scarcely say that the structure is well balanced. If the sole purpose was to introduce variety, surely a reclining Buddha would have done quite as well as a crosslegged Bodhisattva, or else there could have been a pair of crosslegged images, or, again, a standing Avalokiteśvara would have served the purpose. The present writer, while not denying that there was an iconographic viewpoint much at work in the excavation and accoutrement of the Yün-kang caves, is of the opinion that there is still a need to concern oneself a bit more with the ideas that gave birth to that viewpoint and that sustained it.

The crosslegged Bodhisattva image was not, in fact, to be seen among purely Chinese icons from as far back as the introduction of Buddhism into China in the Latter Han; of extant icons, the central object of worship in Cave 17 at Yün-kang is the oldest. In other words, the icon in question appears to have been one such as virtually no Chinese had ever seen before. Thus, it seems to us that the question of why, in T'an-yao's five caves, a crosslegged Bodhisattva figure was adopted as one of the main images furnishes an important guide to an understanding of the nature of Yün-kang Buddhism. Let us first consider the nature of iconography before Yün-kang.

(9) T. NAGAIRO, *Unkō Sekkutsu*, p. 42.

B. Image and Imagery.

Now what sort of icons were produced before Yün-kang? Given the paucity, where Chinese Buddhist images prior to Yün-kang are concerned, of the objects themselves, the relation between the imagery and the names of the figures is also unknown.⁽¹⁰⁾ The present writer has drawn up a list (Fig. 1) of early Northern Wei statuary bearing dates earlier than Ho-p'ing (i.e., earlier than 460).

Incidentally, it is during Ho-p'ing, i.e. 460-5, that T'an-yao's work of excavation of the five caves began. While there are 13 items of mixed gold

Iconic Imagery of the Northern Dynasties

Imagery	Yün-kang/Lung-men	gold-copper image	single standing stone image
seated Buddha with arms raised	Gautama	Gautama	Gautama, <i>Maitreya</i>
seated Buddha with palms joined	Gautama, <i>Amitāyus</i>	Gautama, <i>Maitreya</i> , <i>Amitāyus</i>	Gautama, <i>Amitāyus</i>
standing Buddha	Gautama, <i>Dīpaṃkara</i>	<i>Maitreya</i> , <i>Amitāyus</i>	<i>Maitreya</i> , <i>Gautama</i> , <i>Dīpaṃkara</i>
standing Bodhisattva		Avalokiteśvara, <i>Maitreya</i>	Avalokiteśvara
standing Bodhisattva Padmapāṇi (i.e. holding a lotus in his hand)		Avalokiteśvara	Avalokiteśvara
crosslegged Buddha	<i>Maitreya</i>		
crosslegged Bodhisattva	<i>Maitreya</i>	<i>Maitreya</i>	<i>Maitreya</i>
reclining Buddha	Gautama		
reclining Bodhisattva		<i>Maitreya</i>	<i>Maitreya</i> , <i>Avalokiteśvara</i>
image seated in meditation, one leg on the other but not crossed (<i>pan-chia</i> 半跏)		Gautama when still a prince	Gautama when still a prince
two Buddhas seated side by side.	Prabhūtaratna	Prabhūtaratna	Prabhūtaratna

(N.B. Only central objects of worship are given above. Names in *italics* are of less than certain identification.)

(10) S. MIZUNO, 'Chūgoku ni okeru Butszō no hajimari' 中國における佛像のはじまり (The Beginnings of Buddhist Sculpture in China) and 'Chūgoku Butszō no Genryū 中國佛像の源流 (The Sources of Chinese Buddhist Statuary), both in *Chūgoku no Bukkyō Bijutsu* 中國の佛教美術 (*Chinese Buddhist Art*), hereinafter to be referred to simply as 'Mizuno'.

and bronze, as well as 9 single standing stone images,⁽¹¹⁾ needless to say, there are still no cave images. There are 8 images whose identification is certain, viz., 1 Gautama, 3 Maitreya, 2 Avalokiteśvara, 1 Amitāyus, 1 'stūpa' (*fou-t'u* 浮圖). However, distinct and distinguishing marks of imagery are not to be found on them. It is safe to say that this is a tendency common to the whole period of North-South Division. This is why it has always been said that there are no unified standards of imagery in the Buddhist statuary of the period, whether northern or southern. Still, the studies of Messrs. MIZUNO and NAGAIRO prove that, incomplete as they may be, there are fixed features of imagery, at least where Yün-kang and Lung-men are concerned.⁽¹²⁾ What the writer has done below is to align the inscriptions and the imagery for all of the figures in mixed gold and copper and the single standing stone images that date to the northern dynasties and to compare the findings with the Yün-kang and Lung-men evidence.

According to Messrs. MIZUNO and NAGAIRO, at both Yün-kang and Lung-men the basic Gautama figure is seated, while Maitreya is depicted as a cross-legged Bodhisattva, Prabhūtaratna as one of two Buddhas seated side by side, Dīpaṅkara as a standing Buddha, while after Yung-p'ing 永平 (508–512), when Amita appears on the scene, there is a tendency, at least at Lung-men, to represent Gautama as a Buddha seated with arms raised, Amita likewise as a seated Buddha, but with palms joined, thus delineating them by resort to different imagery.⁽¹³⁾ In contrast to this, there is not a little confusion of imagery between gold-copper figures and single standing stone images. Let us now have a look at the differences between the two with respect to Yün-kang and Lung-men.

1. Maitreya

The above table seems to indicate that the figure that shows the least consistency in imagery is that of Maitreya. A study of gold-copper figures of unmistakable imagery and clearly inscribed 'Maitreya' reveals the following:

14 standing Buddhas, 6 standing Bodhisattvas, 3 standing ?, 4 seated Buddhas, 1 reclining image, 1 crosslegged image, 1 image in *panchia* 半跏.

(11) The latter term is one adopted by the present writer as a convenience for distinguishing this kind of statuary from cave images and from images carved into living rock. The term 'single standing stone image' is meant to include, in addition to quite independent figures, such things as images on stone slabs, images with several faces and stūpa images (the stūpa itself going by several Chinese names, such as *t'a* 塔, which transcribes the Indian word; *fou-t'u* 浮圖, an old transcription of Buddha; or even *t'ien-kung* 天宮, 'palace of the gods').

(12) Cf. n. 6.

(13) S. MIZUNO and T. NAGAIRO, *Ryūmon Sekkutsu no Kenkyū* 龍門石窟の研究 (*A Study of the Buddhist Caves of Lung-men*), published by Tōhō Bunka Kenkyū-jo 東方文化研究所 (Institute for the Study of Eastern Civilization), p. 108. (hereinafter to be referred to as *Lung-men*).

Of single standing stone images, one finds the following:

9 standing Buddhas, 2 seated Buddhas, 1 reclining image, 5 cross-legged images.

The above findings are in plain conflict with the fixed notion of Yün-kang and Lung-men as sites of the Bodhisattva image with legs crossed. As the table below will show, from a study of 38 Maitreya images, in which the subject is standing or seated, one concludes that the overwhelming majority originate in the Hopei-Shantung area.

Distribution of Maitreya Images (Standing and Seated)

	Seated Buddha	Standing Buddha and Bodhisattva
Ho-pei 河北	2	15
Shan-tung 山東	1	5
Shan-hsi 山西		2
Kan-su 甘肅	3	1
Uncertain	3	9

Now, what of the distribution of crosslegged images? Outside of the Buddhist caves, crosslegged images bearing inscriptions are extremely few. This is why the present writer has studied the distribution of all crosslegged images dating to the Northern Dynasties (except for those in the caves) by noting all of them, whether they bore inscriptions or not.

Distribution of Crosslegged Images (not in caves)

	Northern Wei	East/West Wei North Ch'i/Chou
Ho-pei 河北	2	1
Ho-nan 河南	0	2
Shan-hsi 山西	2	3
Shan-hsi 陝西	13	3

Crosslegged figures were most numerous in the Shan-hsi 陝西 region under the Northern Wei, becoming widespread throughout North China after the east-west split. On the other hand, after the split, from the point of view of the total number of icons, their number was trifling.⁽¹⁴⁾

The same tendency is evident in the caves and in carvings in living rock as well. That is to say, in the Ho-pei and Shan-tung caves no crosslegged images are to be seen, most of them being in the Shan-hsi 山西, Shan-hsi 陝西 and Kan-su caves of the Northern Wei, while even there they disappear from the caves of the Northern Ch'i and Northern Chou, to be totally replaced, in Sui and T'ang, by reclining Bodhisattva figures. Thus, chronologically speaking, the crosslegged Maitreya figure may go so far as to be called a symbol of

(14) See n. 1.

Buddhism under the Northern Wei, one that is actually felt to have shared its fate with that of the empire of the Northern Wei, whether in triumph or in decline.

From the above analysis it has become evident that, whereas Maitreya figures other than crosslegged were current, before Yün-kang, principally in the Hopei-Shantung area, the crosslegged Maitreya figure made its appearance after Yün-kang, to prevail in the Shanhsi-Shanhsi region. This discrepancy in Maitreya imagery leads one to wonder whether the crosslegged Maitreya adopted at Yün-kang was not, in fact, based on a tradition different from that of the Maitreya cult already current throughout the Middle Plain by that time.

Now the crosslegged image can be seen as early as in the art of Gandhāra and of Central Asia.⁽¹⁵⁾ By about the middle of the fifth century, the golden age of Liang-chou 涼州 Buddhism under the protective control of the Chü-ch'ü 沮渠 clan (rulers of the Northern Liang), thanks to the currency of the Maitreya cult in and around Kao-ch'ang 高昌, Tun-huang 敦煌, Chiu-ch'üan 酒泉 and Wu-wei 武威, many Maitreya figures were executed. A piece whose date is unmistakable is to be seen in a niche within a *ching-t'a* 經塔 (reliquary for remains of holy books),⁽¹⁶⁾ discovered in a cave in Mount Mañjuśrī (Wen-shu-shan 文殊山) at Chiu-ch'üan and bearing an inscription dated Yüan-ho 緣禾 3, under the Northern Liang (434).

As is commonly known, Emperor T'ai-wu put an end to the Northern Liang in T'ai-yen 5 (439), moving more than thirty thousand households of Liang-chou people to P'ing-ch'eng.⁽¹⁷⁾

This is the time at which the *śramaṇa* T'an-yao, together with his colleagues Hsüan-kao and Shih-hsien, was also transferred, so that all at once the Buddhism of Liang-chou came pouring into the Capital.⁽¹⁸⁾ It is virtually certain that the crosslegged Maitreya figures of Yün-kang were based on the Maitreya cult nurtured within the Buddhism of Liang-chou.

2. Avalokiteśvara

Avalokiteśvara, whether in the form of a gold-copper image or in that of a single standing stone figure, is always characterized by the imagery of a standing Bodhisattva. The 'image of the standing Bodhisattva Padmapāṇi', holding a still unopened lotus blossom in his right hand⁽¹⁹⁾ and with a water

(15) Cf. n. 6.

(16) Cf. *Wen-wu* 文物, 1956-7, p. 56. Cf. also the treatment of the inscription in the present article.

(17) Annals of Shih-tsu 世祖本紀 in the *Wei-shu* 魏書.

(18) It is recorded in the Notice on Buddhism and Taoism 釋老志 that Liang-chou was pacified and the people of the country moved to the capital; the *śramaṇas* and Buddhist practices both went east, and both the images and the doctrine prospered more and more. 涼州平, 徙其國人於京邑。沙門佛事皆俱東, 象教彌增矣。

(19) As indicated in Chart 1, in the standing Bodhisattva figure dating to T'ai-p'ing chen-chün 2 (441), he sometimes holds a white whisk.

pitcher suspended from his left, is considered typical of the imagery peculiar to Avalokiteśvara. As indicated in the table, there were Avalokiteśvara figures even before Yün-kang, but under the Northern Wei the said figures were all of gold and copper. This is particularly true before Yung-p'ing (i.e., before 508), where the gold and copper figures were in an overwhelming majority (22 items, as against 2 single standing stone images).⁽²⁰⁾ In the Yün-kang caves, on the other hand, there are almost no Avalokiteśvara images, whether inscribed or uninscribed. There are many standing Bodhisattva images in the guise of attendants, but even among them there are felt to be very few identifiable as Avalokiteśvara.⁽²¹⁾ Even at Lung-men, it is only in Yung-p'ing 永平 2 (509) that lone Avalokiteśvara images make their first appearance. In other words, in the caves excavated⁽²²⁾ at Yün-kang and Lung-men under the auspices of a metropolitan Buddhism, Avalokiteśvara has not yet been accorded, in terms of the accoutrement of the caves, the position of principal object of worship.

Let us now have a look at the distribution of individual Avalokiteśvara figures. Under the Northern Wei, they are most numerous in Ho-pei and Shan-tung and at Lung-men. However, if one takes into account the above-mentioned fact that the Lung-men Avalokiteśvara images were late in making their appearance, one is likely to conclude that the Avalokiteśvara cult had taken root in the Hopei-Shantung region even before the time of Yü-kang.

Distribution of Avalokiteśvara Images

	Ho-pei	Shan-tung	Ho-nan	Shan-hsi (山西)	Shan-hsi (陝西)	Uncertain
Northern Wei:						
gold-copper	16	3				25
single standing stone	1					4
Lung-men			15			
Eastern Wei, Northern Ch'i:						
gold-copper	4	1				26
single standing stone	7	3	4	1	1	33
Lung-men			2			
Kung-hsien 鞏縣			12			
Western Wei, Northern Chou:						
gold-copper						4
single standing stone					1	8

(20) Cf. the aforementioned study by the present writer. See n. 1.

(21) Cf. n. 6.

(22) Cf. *Lung-men*, inscription catalogue, entry no. 1047.

3. Amitāyus

Under the Northern Wei, the transcribed (Indian) name A-mi-t'ō-fo 阿彌陀佛 seems not to have been in use; at least, it is nowhere in evidence, the inscribed name always reading *Wu-liang-shou-fo* 無量壽佛, 'the Buddha (this alone transcribed) of immeasurable life'. As for Amitāyus figures, apart from the gold-copper image dated Ho-p'ing 和平 5 (464) and recorded in Table 1, accompanying the present article, there are a seated stone Buddha image dated Ch'eng-ming 承明 1 (476),⁽²³⁾ a gold-copper standing Buddha image dated T'ai-ho 太和 6 (482),⁽²⁴⁾ and a gold-copper image dated T'ai-ho 9 (485)⁽²⁵⁾ are the only single images, while none of the rest is any earlier than Shen-kuei 神龜 2 (519), the date of a seated Buddha figure in Lung-men.⁽²⁶⁾ This is not much, when compared with Gautama, Maitreya and Avalokiteśvara. Yet, about the middle of the fifth century in South China, there appears to have been a good deal of Amitāyus sculpture, for he makes frequent appearances in the literature.⁽²⁷⁾ A stone Amitāyus dating to Yüan-chia 元嘉 25 (488, of which, however, only the throne survives)⁽²⁸⁾ is probably to be viewed against the general background, just described, of the prevailing mood south of the Yang-tze.

In the light of the above, it is evident that Amitāyus was also known before Yün-kang; it is still maintained, however, that virtually no image is to be found in the Yün-kang caves that is likely representation of Amitāyus.⁽²⁹⁾ As already stated, it is only from the end of the Northern Wei that the Amitāyus figure makes its appearance at Lung-men, from which it is clear that in Yün-kang the Amitāyus figure is a departure from the thought underlying the construction and accoutrement of the Yün-kang caves as well.

In the light of the above examination of the three icons considered, it

(23) Saburō MATSUBARA 松原三郎, 'Bosuton Bijutsukan-zō Sensei-ha Sekibutsu Santai ni tsuite' ポストン美術館藏陝西派石佛三昧について (On the Three Buddha Figures of the Shan-hsi School housed in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts), in *Bukkyō Geijutsu* 佛教藝術 (*Art Buddhica*), No. 90.

(24) S. MATSUBARA, *Chūgoku Bukkyō Chōkoku-shi Kenkyū* 中國佛教彫刻史研究 (*A Study of the History of Chinese Buddhist Sculpture*), p. 255 and Fig. 36b. (hereinafter to be referred to as 'Matsubara').

(25) See the Uemehara Collection of Archaeological Materials deposited in the Toyo Bunko.

(26) Cf. *Lung-men*, inscription catalogue, entry no. 636.

(27) Cf. the following: a) Mention of Amitāyus figure by Chu Tao-lin 竺道隣 (ca. 400, recorded in the Biography of Chu Fa-k'uang 竺法曠傳 in the *Kao-seng-chuan*, *chüan* 5; b) Seng-liang's 僧亮 sixteen-foot gold-copper Amitāyus (432, recorded in the *Fa-yüan chu-lin* 法苑珠林, *chüan* 15; c) the gold-copper Amitāyus of the nun Tao-ch'üung 道瓊 (438, recorded in the *Pi-ch'iu-ni chuan* 比丘尼傳 (*The Lives of the Bhikṣuṇīs*), *chüan* 2; d) the inscription on the gold Amitāyus figure executed by the Sung Emperor Hsiao-wu 宋孝武帝造無量壽金像記 (452-464, or thereabout, recorded in the *Ch'u san-isang chi-chi* 出三藏記集, *chüan* 12; e) the oath taken by Hui-yüan 慧遠 of Lu-shan 廬山 before an Amitāyus image and an Amitābha image, recorded in the *Kao-seng-chuan*, *chüan* 6.

(28) Cf. Mizuno, p. 42.

(29) Cf. n. 6.

would appear that the Buddha images chosen for the Yün-kang caves are to clearly delimited from the Buddhist traditions of the Middle Plain current in an area with Ho-pei and Shan-tung at the centre.

4. Gautama

The Gautama image was not unknown before Yün-kang, but at Yün-kang it is the principal image, whether in terms of number or in terms of size. Nevertheless, it is worthy of some note that, figured in gold and bronze, Gautama is in a bit of a minority in comparison with Maitreya and Avalokiteśvara.⁽³⁰⁾

5. Prabhūtaratna

The Prabhūtaratna image is always figured in a sitting position, side by side with Gautama, being thus, among other things, a barometer indicating the diffusion of the *Saddharmapundarikasūtra*. Prabhūtaratna is prominent in the Northern Wei both as a gold-copper image and in the Yün-kang caves.⁽³¹⁾ Among the earlier Prabhūtaratna figures are a gold-copper image dated Yen-hsing 延興 2 (472)⁽³²⁾ and another dated the following year,⁽³³⁾ both a bit later than the excavation of the Yün-kang caves. Let us have a look at the distribution of the inscribed images of Prabhūtaratna.

Prabhūtaratna images in gold and copper, like those of Avalokiteśvara and of Maitreya not in a crosslegged pose, are found distributed in the Hopei-Shantung area. This inclines one to the supposition that even Prabhūtaratna images must, after all, have been current throughout the Middle Plain before

Distribution of Prabhūtaratna Images

	Gold-Copper	Yün-kang	Lung-men	Single Standing Stone Image
Northern Wei:				
Ho-pei	14			
Shan-tung	2			
Ho-nan			3	
Shan-hsi (山西)		7		
Uncertain	11			1
East/West Wei,				
North Ch'i/Chou:				
Ho-pei	1			1
Shan-tung				
Ho-nan	1			
Shan-hsi (山西)				
Uncertain	2			2

(30) Cf. the author's work mentioned above. See n. 1.

(31) Cf. the author's work mentioned above. See n. 1.

(32) Seigai ŌMURA 大村西崖 *Shina Bijutsu-shi Chōso-hen* 支那美術史彫塑篇 (*A History of Chinese Art—Sculpture Volume*), p. 185 and fig. 460.

(33) Cf. the Umehara Archaeological Materials; also 'The Inscription on Liu Ch'en's Statue' 劉琛造像記 in the aforementioned work by the present writer.

Yün-kang. Yet, at Yün-kang Prabhūtaratna was, together with Gautama and the crosslegged Maitreya, the most frequently constructed image. The inscribed images evidenced in the above table amount to 7, but the unscripted are literally innumerable. A peculiar feature of them is that, among standing images (Gautama), crosslegged images (Maitreya) and images of Buddhas seated side by side (Prabhūtaratna), the most frequent cases are those in which two or, as the case may be, three figures are carved facing one another or, at least, as a single set.

By sorting out the above representations of five sacred figures, we feel rather certain of the following conclusions:

- a. By Yün-kang times, apart from Gautama figures, Maitreya images other than crosslegged, single Avalokiteśvara figures, Prabhūtaratna images seated side by side with Gautama, and images of Amitāyus had already been produced. Most of them are distributed throughout the Hopei-Shantung area.
- b. At Yün-kang itself, Gautama, the crosslegged Maitreya, and Prabhūtaratna constitute the main stream, so to speak, while Avalokiteśvara and Amitāyus are virtually ignored.

Now a problem arises. If one sets aside Gautama figures, which were so well known in China ever since the introduction of Buddhism into that country, the one thing that the Hopei-Shantung area and the Yün-kang caves have in common is the Prabhūtaratna figure. There is but one word for such a phenomenon—uncanny. Let us have a look, then, at the source of the Prabhūtaratna cult.

In Gandhāra and in Central Asia there is no image of two Buddhas (i.e., Gautama and Prabhūtaratna) seated side by side, for its westernmost limit is the Mo-kao cave (the one 'than which there is none higher') in Tun-huang 敦煌莫高窟. At that, there are few enough of them apart from the principal object of worship in Cave 259 (the so-called 'Wei cave' 魏窟), for otherwise the representation amounts to what is seen on T'ang 唐 murals. Now the aforementioned Cave 259, said to be a concretization of the *Saddharmapūṇḍarīkasūtra*, has on its left and right walls crosslegged Bodhisattvas and niches for seated Buddhas, thus much resembling Yün-kang, but the date of original excavation, held to be the end of the fifth century,⁽³⁴⁾ is thus not felt to precede T'an-yao's five caves. It is thus virtually impossible to see in the Mo-kao cave, as it now is, an image of the two Buddhas, seated side by side, that could be a forerunner to Yün-kang. Even where Buddhist canonical manuscripts at Tun-huang are concerned, there are very few *Saddharmapūṇḍarīka* MSS dated with any certainty to the period bestriding the Northern Wei and the Northern Chou, something felt to be quite unique

(34) Cf. 'Notes on the Tun-huang Caves' in Mizuno, p. 386 ff.

when compared with the case of other scriptures.⁽³⁵⁾ Seen in this light, there is no material leading one to conclude a triumph of the Prabhūtaratna cult at Tun-huang under the Northern Wei. Furthermore, the figures of the two Buddhas seated side by side, still to be found in Kan-su caves outside of Tun-huang, can all be dated to late Northern Wei at the earliest, which means that, to the contrary of what has just been seen, it is they that have been influenced by the style of Yün-kang and Lung-men; a classic example of this would be such things as the image, engraved on a stele, found in Cave 133 at Mount Mo-chi 麥積山石窟.⁽³⁶⁾

If the above conclusions are not greatly in error, the origin of the image of the two Buddhas seated side by side must be sought elsewhere. In Mr. Seigai ŌMURA's 大村西崖 work,⁽³⁷⁾ on p. 174, is recorded the oldest such image, in gold and copper, dated T'ai-p'ing 太平 2, under the Northern Yen 北燕 (410). The 'Northern Yen', governed by the FENG 憑, a Chinese clan, extended over the territory of what is now Liao-ning Province 遼寧省, which brought it into contact with the Buddhism of the Ho-pei area; together with the Northern Liang 北涼, to its west, it was the most intensely Buddhist country in China of the time.⁽³⁸⁾

To shift our attention to a different time and place, under the Western Tsin 西晉, in T'ai-k'ang 太康 7 (286), the *Saddharmapundarika* was translated into Chinese, under the title *Cheng-fa-hua-ching* 正法華經 by Dharmarakṣa (CHU Fa-hu 竺法護). Once it was copied, four years later, in Lo-yan 洛陽, it is said to have circulated widely in the Middle Plain.⁽³⁹⁾ The conclusion drawn from the above is that the Prabhūtaratna cult was already current in the Middle Plain before Yün-kang, and from that stems another conclusion, namely, that the above-mentioned images, the gold-copper figure dated to T'ai-p'ing 2 under the Northern Yen (410) and the Prabhūtaratna figures scattered throughout Ho-pei, were also born on that soil. Incidental proof of this is the fact that the Avalokiteśvara image, derived like the Prabhūtaratna image from the *Saddharmapundarikasūtra*, circulated throughout Ho-pei at the same time as did the other. This leads one to suppose that the Yün-kang Prabhūtaratna brought in the Prabhūtaratna image born of the *Saddharmapundarika* cult that marked Ho-pei Buddhism.

It is from the end of the fourth century that Ho-pei Buddhism really

(35) Cf. *Tonkō Butten Kaidai* 敦煌佛典解題 (*Explanatory Introduction to the Buddhist Canon of Tun-huang*) (in mimeograph), edited and published by the Institute of Humanistic Studies, Kyoto University.

(36) *Mo-chi-shan shih-k'u* 麥積山石窟 (*The Caves of Mount Mo-chi*), published by the Bureau of Social and Cultural Affairs, Ministry of Culture.

(37) Cf. ŌMURA, *op. cit.*

(38) T'ang Yung-t'ung 湯用彤, *Han Wei liang-Chin Nan-pei-ch'ao fo-chiao-shih* 漢魏兩晉南北朝佛教史 (*A History of Early Chinese Buddhism*), p. 488.

(39) Zenryū TSUKAMOTO 塚本善隆, *Chūgoku Bukkyō Tsūshi* 中國佛教通史 (*A General History of Chinese Buddhism*), Vol. 1, p. 217 ff.

came to P'ing-ch'eng. Emperor Tao-wu, in T'ien-hsing 天興 1 (398), putting an end to the state of the 'Latter Yen' 後燕, based in Chung-shan, moved into the Middle Plain and transported large numbers of officials and commoners from there to P'ing-ch'eng, where he put them to work on the construction of the new capital.⁽⁴⁰⁾ Within the thinking that underlay this construction of a new capital, so it is said, were included a five-storeyed *stūpa*, a 'Mount Gṛdhrakūṭa'⁽⁴¹⁾ and Mount Sumeru Hall', a lecture hall, a meditation chamber and a '*śramaṇa* throne' (*sha-men-tso* 沙門座).⁽⁴²⁾ The same emperor also designated the *śramaṇa* Fa-kuo 法果, a native of Chao commandery 趙郡 (the district, *hsien* 縣, of the same name in Ho-pei Province), the first Comptroller of Religious, making him the general supervisor of the Saṃgha and all its members.⁽⁴³⁾ In this way, the Buddhism of the time in which the Northern Wei established their state was one in which Ho-pei Buddhism was the main current. Since the newly conquered Ho-pei country was well populated and agriculturally rich, the Northern Wei saw very diligently to the management of the whole area, occupying itself first with the building, then with the frequent improvement, of a highway connecting P'ing-ch'eng and Chung-shan 中山.⁽⁴⁴⁾ There can be little doubt that the traditional culture of the Middle Plain took this route into P'ing-ch'eng, and that along with it, virtually as a matter of course, the various styles in Buddhist statuary must also have been transmitted.⁽⁴⁵⁾ Yet, it is to be noted that, among the iconic styles current in Ho-pei Buddhism, there are at Yün-kang no Maitreya figures, whether standing or seated, and no single Avalokiteśvara figures—which is not true of Gautama and Prabhūtaratna seated side by side. To look at it in another way, at Yün-kang there was a selection made among the icons already known, thus bringing unity into a disunited imagery. This means that the Yün-kang excavators tried to bring a fixed and consistent policy into the *genres* and imagery of the icons. The said policy is surely not unrelated to

(40) Cf. under the first and twelfth months, Annals of T'ai-tsu, the *Wei-shu*.

(41) Cf. S. MIZUNO, *Unkō Sekkutsu to sono Jidai* 雲岡石窟とその時代 (*The Yün-kang Caves and Their Times*), p. 126, where the author, reminding the reader that Gṛdhrakūṭa (Kijakussen, Ch'i-she-chü-shan 耆闍崛山) is the mountain better known to the Japanese as Ryōjusen (Ling-chiu-shan 靈鷲山), expresses the view that the hall in question must have been a representation of the preaching of the *Saddharma-puṇḍarīka-sūtra* on Mount Gṛdhrakūṭa, particularly of the scene in which the jewelled *stūpa* wells up out of the earth and the two Buddhas take their place in it side by side.

(42) Cf. the Notice on Buddhism and Taoism in the *Wei-shu*.

(43) Cf. *op. cit.*

(44) Masana MAEDA 前田正名, 'Hokugi Heijō Jidai ni okeru Teishū no Chiiki Kōzō ni kansuru Ronkō' 北魏平城時代における定州の地域構造に関する論考 (Speculations concerning Construction Work in Ting-chou under the Northern Wei during the P'ing-ch'eng Period), in *Shigaku Zasshi*, Vol. 84, Nos. 6 and 7.

(45) The fact that T'an-yao went into hiding in the Chung-shan region during the proscription suggests that P'ing-ch'eng Buddhism after the restoration was not unrelated to Ho-pei Buddhism.

the nature of Yün-kang Buddhism. The next logical step must be to ask what, exactly, that policy was.

C. The Principal Themes of Yün-kang Statuary.

The principal themes of Yün-kang statuary may be narrowed down to three, viz., the two Buddhas Gautama and Prabhūtaratna and the Bodhisattva Maitreya. In addition to them, one sees Seven Buddhas, a Thousand Buddhas, emanation-Buddhas and the Buddha Dīpaṃkara, to which can be added such ancillary figures as those of standing Bodhisattvas and images of persons seated in meditation in a *pan-chia* attitude.

There are also engraved representations—not sculptures, to be sure—of the life of the Buddha.⁽⁴⁶⁾ The points that these Yün-kang images have in common can all be reduced to the Gautama cult; what they mean may be sorted out in the form of the following questions:

1. How did Gautama become a Buddha? The answer is provided by engravings of the Buddha's life and by images of Dipaṃkara.
2. What supernatural characteristics does Gautama possess? Answers provided by images of Prabhūtaratna and of emanation-bodies of Buddhas in all ten quarters.
3. What is Gautama's position among Buddhas whose number is simply incalculable? Answers provided by images of the Thousand Buddhas of the Bhadrakalpa, the Seven Buddhas of the Past and the Bodhisattva Maitreya.
4. What were the primary and secondary marks borne by Gautama, what the manner of his preaching, when he preached the Dharma? Answers provided by the Gautama images.

Thus, Yün-kang is a series of caves for the glorification of Gautama, where Gautama is the principal object of worship. Let us, then, have a look at the position of the crosslegged Maitreya image. Maitreya's position at Yün-kang is clearly that of a Bodhisattva with only one reincarnation left to him (*ekajātīpratibaddho bodhisattvaḥ*), the promised successors to the Seven Buddhas of the Past (Vipaśyin, Śikhin, Viśvabhuḥ, Krakucchanda, Kana-kamuni, Kāśyapa and Śākyamuni, i.e., Gautama). In other words, he is a Bodhisattva in the sequence Six Buddhas—Gautama—Maitreya. The carving of Maitreya's image in large stone figures alongside that of Gautama indicates that Maitreya was accorded a position as Gautama's equal or, at least, as his successor.⁽⁴⁷⁾ In other words, Yün-kang may be called a series of 'caves in which the rôle of Gautama and of Maitreya is being strongly asserted'. This

(46) Cf. 'Unkō Sekkutsu to Butsuden Chōkoku' 雲岡石窟と佛傳彫刻 (The Yün-kang Caves and the Figuration of the Buddha's Life), in *Yün-kang*, Vol. 7.

(47) The caves in which a crosslegged Bodhisattva is the principal object of worship are nos. 10, 13 and 17. Other large images are those of standing Buddhas, seated Buddhas and reclining Buddhas.

is an intimation that the Buddhism that T'an-yao had in mind was a doctrine with Gautama and Maitreya at its centre. The reason that, at Yün-kang, Amitāyus and Avalokiteśvara are off the main theme of the statuary is, presumably, due to the fact that they were regarded as a Buddha and Bodhisattva in a different 'line'. The question is, why the above-mentioned Gautama-Maitreya doctrine was so strongly stressed.

The present writer is of the opinion that in the thinking of T'an-yao, the sponsor of the Yün-kang caves, there was the wish to work the genealogy of the ruling family of the Northern Wei into the abovementioned line leading from the Buddhas of the past to Maitreya.⁽⁴⁸⁾ The conclusion, seen from the character of Maitreya, is that this wish was simply another expression of the intention to liken the former emperors of the Northern Wei to the Buddhas of the past and the reigning emperor to the Bodhisattva Maitreya. It is only with the aid of such a conjecture that, in this writer's opinion, one can understand the abovementioned characteristics of the Yün-kang icons and the historical conditions leading to the excavation of T'an-yao's five caves as will be discussed in the next chapter.

Early in the Notice on Buddhism and Taoism is a general account of Buddhism, wherein one sees the following statement:

He who is spoken of as 'Buddha' was originally called Śākyamuni, which, being interpreted, means 'capable of benevolence'. That is to say, his virtue fulfilled and his way complete, he is able to save the myriad beings. Before Śākya there were six Buddhas. Śākya, succeeding to the six Buddhas, achieved his enlightenment and dwells in the present age, the Noble Era (*bhadrakalpa*). It is also said that in time to come there shall be a certain Maitreyabuddha, who, succeeding directly to Śākya, shall come down to this world. 所謂佛者，本號釋迦文者。譯言能仁。謂德充

(48) The *Vividharatnakośa* (?) translated by Chi-chia-yeh 吉迦夜 (Kimkara?) and T'an-yao under the title *Tsa-pao-tsang-ching* 雜寶藏經, is a collection of the stories of the Buddha's former incarnations (jātaka). The first story, 'Shih-she-wang-ching' 十奢王緣 (Scripture of King Jivaja), is a *Rāmāyaṇa* story having no direct connection with Gautama, a story of filial and fraternal piety in which a younger brother cedes the throne to his elder brother. As it happened, a strikingly similar incident took place in real life at the time of the accession of Shih-i-ch'ien 什翼犍, who was to live in history as Emperor Chao-ch'eng 昭成皇帝. (Cf. Hsü-chi 序紀 (Preface) and Lieh-chuan 列傳 (Biographies), *chüan* 2, in the *Wei-shu*.) The descendants of the orphan who went to take the place of his brother Shih-i-ch'ien, held in hostage by Shih Chao 石趙, were treated favourably for generations thereafter, in recognition of the virtuous willingness to surrender even a throne. The *Tsa-pao-tsang-ching* is a scripture that exerted considerable influence on the accoutrement of the Yün-kang caves, so much so that several of the stories it contains are evident in the engravings of the life of Buddha. (Cf. n. 46.) The present writer is of the opinion that one can see in the position occupied by this story, where it is at the very beginning of the *Tsa-pao-tsang-ching*, T'an-yao's wish to link the life of the Buddha to the ancestors of the Northern Wei.

道備，堪濟萬物也。釋迦前有六佛。釋迦繼六佛而成道，處今賢劫。文言將來有彌勒佛，方繼釋迦降世。

From this one knows that the doctrine of Six Buddhas — Gautama — Maitreya was the common coin of Buddhism by the end of the Northern Wei. At the very beginning of the *Ta-chi-i-shen-chou-ching* 大吉義神呪經 (*Mahā-śrīnirdeśatantra?*), the translation of which is ascribed to T'an-yao, there is mention of the Seven Buddhas of the Past and of Maitreya, which leads one to conjecture that by P'ing-ch'eng times this doctrine was already widely known.

Now, given the fact that the reigning emperor was likened to Maitreya, the natural conclusion is that Cave 17 is in honour of Emperor Wen-ch'eng 文成帝, while, where the remaining four caves are concerned, two possible interpretations come immediately to mind, viz.,

1. The Four Buddhas are the last four, including Gautama, that is, Krakucchanda, Kanakamuni, Kāśyapa, Śākyamuni (Gautama).
2. The Four Buddhas are *nirmāṇakāyas* of Gautama alone.

While the former interpretation would seem to tally well enough with logic, on the other hand, there are no examples of the formalized representations of merely the last four of the Seven Buddhas. Besides, in all the Northern examples known, the Seven Buddhas are figured with the same imagery. Thus, one cannot set aside the question of whether the figures in the four caves can be made to harmonize with figures of varied imagery such as those of the Four Tathāgatas in T'an-yao's five. Now, when all is said and done, since T'an-yao's five caves are successors to the idea embodied in the five standing Gautama images housed in the great five-storeyed monastery built for the five emperors beginning with T'ai-tsu, and since the figures in the said monastery are not the Seven Buddhas of the Past, the likelihood that the aforementioned Four Great Buddhas are four of the Seven is not very great. The second interpretation is based on two facts, namely, that, when viewing in terms of imagery, it is not outrageous to regard all four as Gautama images, and that the Notice on Buddhism and Taoism, after giving the order of sequence as Six Buddhas—Gautama—Maitreya, has the following to say:

'The Buddhas' Body of the Law' means two things. One is the true body, the other is that of momentary response. 'True' means the ultimate substance, wondrously surpassing all bonds and impediments, not to be restricted to place or direction, not to be delimited by form or measure. When there is a stimulus, it responds, but the substance is ever tranquil. 諸佛法身有二種義。一者真實，二者權應。真實身，謂至極之體。妙絕拘累，不得以方處期，不可以形量限。有感斯應，體常湛然。

However, the 'body of momentary response' refers to the one that blends its light with that of the six paths of existence, that shares defil-

ment with the myriad kinds, whose birth and extinction accord with the times, whose length or shortness is in response to the beings. Its form comes into being because of a stimulus, but its substance is truly existent. Although the temporary form may take its leave, the true substance does not move. It is only because at times there is no great stimulus that it cannot always be seen. It is obvious that the Buddha's birth is not a real birth, his death not a real death. 權應身者，謂和光六道，同塵萬類。生滅隨時，修短應物，形由感生，體非實有。權形雖謝，真體不遷。但時無妙感，故莫得常見耳。明佛生非實生，滅非實滅也。

The idea of the twofold division of the 'Buddha's body' was quite widespread under the Northern Dynasties, and it is on this basis that images were created and honoured with gift-offerings.

Let us now have a second look at the notice concerning the creation of the first icon following the revocation of the edict of proscription:

This year (452), the officials were commanded by Imperial edict to have made a stone likeness of the Emperor's person. When it was finished, on both the face and the soles of the feet were black pebbles, which mysteriously resembled the moles on the upper and lower parts of the Emperor's body. Those who discussed this thought that it was in response to his pure sincerity.⁽⁴⁹⁾ 是年。詔有司，爲石像令如帝身。既成。顏上足下，各有黑石，冥同帝體上下黑子。論者以爲純誠所感。

The last few words, 'in response to his pure sincerity' (*ch'un-ch'eng so-kan* 純誠所感), are telling us that, Emperor Wen-ch'eng's wholesome deed, that of religious restoration, being in perfect accord with the *ens substantissimum* that is the Buddha (his 'real body'), the response made its appearance on the stone figure. The idea was, to be sure, that the presence of the Buddha's 'real body' in the emperor was being thus acknowledged, but the doctrine of the twofold division of the Buddha's body is evident in many scriptures, most notable, for the time under discussion, being Dharmakṣema's translation of the (Mahāyāna) *Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra*. One gets the impression that T'an-yao was applying to the Buddhism of the Northern Wei the doctrine of the two bodies already current in Buddhist circles in the Northern Liang. This is why the present writer would like to regard the Four Great Buddhas of T'an-yao's five caves as *nirmāṇakāyas* of Gautama. It is our belief that the varied imagery of the Four Great Buddhas is there to symbolize the *nirmāṇakāyas* displayed by Gautama, in keeping with the respective objects of his teaching and conversion, in order to convert the beings in general. Given this interpretation, one is presumably entitled to say that T'an-yao, seeing, as he did, the four emperors beginning with T'ai-tsu, during their lifetimes, as *nirmāṇakāyas* of Gautama, by insisting that the reigning emperor

(49) Cf. the Notice on Buddhism and Taoism in the *Wei-shu*.

was Maitreya, was attempting to fit the successive emperors of the Northern Wei into a Buddhist doctrine that preached a Buddha-lineage of past-present-future. Now, if the Four Great Buddhas are *nirmāṇakāyas* of Gautama, then, at the present stage of research, one has no choice but to suspend judgement as to the identity of the emperors in whose honour caves 16, 18, 19 and 20 were originally excavated.⁽⁵⁰⁾

Above, we have deduced, from an analysis of the structure of the icons and of such things as their imagery, the idea that marks the Buddhism of Yün-kang, namely, that 'the Emperors of the past are Gautama, the reigning Emperor is Maitreya'. The next problem is the nature of the historical conditions under which were born these Buddhist ideas so permeated by the character of a State religion. It is, in other words, the problem of the historical necessity that left no choice but to liken the emperors of the Northern Wei to the Gautama-Maitreya lineage. To clarify this, one must pursue and, likewise, clarify the nature of the Buddhism and of the state of the Northern Wei during the middle years of the fifth century.

II. Proscription and Restoration

A. Proscription

The edict of proscription dated the third month of T'ai-p'ing-chen-chün 7 (446) was the first major act of legal repression in the history of Chinese Buddhism. What the religious community produced out of the bitterness of having endured this severe persecution, a persecution the like of which it had never seen, was the Yün-kang caves.

The proscription of Buddhism by order of Emperor T'ai-wu of the Northern Wei has been studied in meticulous detail by Professor Zenryū TSUKAMOTO 塚本善隆,⁽⁵¹⁾ but there still seems to be much room left for inves-

(50) Satoshi YOSHIMURA 吉村 怜, in his article entitled 'Don-yō Gokutsu-ron' 曇曜五窟論 (T'an-yao's Five Caves), in *Bukkyō Geijutsu*, No. 73, attempts, on the ground of style, to match the principal objects of worship in the five caves with respective emperors, in the course of which he expresses some very interesting views as to the arrangement of the images in the five caves. However, as the basis for a concrete match, his conjectures reveal themselves as forced. It is difficult to agree with an identification of the principal cave when the identification is based upon the size of the images in the cave (besides which there seems to be a miscalculation in the case of the height of the principal image in Cave 18), or with the conjecture that the principal image in Cave 16, because of its appearance, is to be matched against the then emperor, who was a lad at the time. Z. TSUKAMOTO, in his aforementioned work 'Unkō Sansoku', ventures the view that the central image in Cave 18 is appropriate to the reigning emperor, while in his 'Unkō Sekkutsu no Bukkyō' 雲岡石窟の佛教 in *Indo-gaku Bukkyō-gaku Kenkyū* 印度學佛教學研究 (*Journal of Indian and Buddhist Studies*), Vol. 2, No. 2, he supposes that the central figure in Cave 17 may have been in honour of Kung-tsung Ching-mu-ti 恭宗景穆帝, who, in spite of his posthumous title, actually died while still heir apparent to the throne. No substantial evidence is offered, however, in support of either view.

(51) See Z. TSUKAMOTO, 'Hokugi Taibutei no Haibutsu Kishaku' 北魏太武帝の廢佛毀釋 (The

tigation.

The present writer plans to devote another work, at some later date, to a discussion of the historical significance of this proscription; the intention here is to outline the historical situation that provided the background to it.

The ancestors of the Northern Wei, when they ruled over a state called Tai 代, were the heads of a commonwealth made up of a federation of clans with the T'o-pa 拓跋 (Tabγač) clan occupying a central position, a situation in which regal power was quite plainly subject to restraint on the part of powerful clans.

Emperor Tao-wu took the decisive step of dissolving the clan organizations and placing their members under direct imperial rule, but the power of the northern clan nobles, descendants themselves of mighty clansmen, was deeply rooted, so much so that it nullified the move in the direction of absolute imperial power. The era of Emperor Ming-yüan 明元帝 was a time of imperial weakness, devoted exclusively to the perfection of internal government. His successor, however, Emperor T'ai-wu, breaking out of the isolationist political mould of his predecessors, and in the teeth of opposition on the part of the northern aristocracy, embarked decisively on a war of conquest, eventually, in T'ai-yen 5 (439), uniting all of North China. Thereupon the state of the Northern Wei found itself obliged, internally, to rule rationally over two worlds, one Chinese, the other 'barbarian', and externally confronted by the urgent task of creating an imperial organism fit to rival those of the southern dynasties. Those who advanced the cause were a body of State officials, scions of illustrious Chinese families, headed by Ts'ui Hao 崔浩. Ts'ui Hao, as Emperor T'ai-wu's right-hand man, in his attempt to manage a bureaucratic system supportive of the imperial power, frequently clashed with the aristocracy of the northern clans. The reason he succeeded in focussing all of his sovereign's love and favour on himself is that he responded to the ambitions of an emperor aiming at the reinforcement of imperial power. Besides, he himself, possessed of the great ambition of converting the empire of the Northern Wei into an aristocracy of distinguished Chinese families, backed by the unquestioning trust of the Emperor, intended to place T'ai-wu on its pinnacle as an 'effulgent theocrat of the middle and flowering' (i.e., as a strictly Chinese emperor), one with absolute power. For this purpose, it was necessary for the ruler to boast before all the world that he was a 'lord recipient of the Mandate', whose identity was evident in Heaven-sent tallies. This mode of thinking was, to be sure, the Confucian view of the 'effulgent theocrat' (*huang ti* 皇帝), endowed with absolute authority by a set of magical charms (*ch'en-wei* 讖緯). At the same time, what was utilized for 'tallies' were the appearance of the Taoist practitioner K'ou Ch'ien-chih 寇謙之 and the 'charm booklets' (*ch'en-shu* 讖書) he had brought with him. Besides, the 'new

Anti-Buddhist Proscription of Emperor T'ai-wu of the Northern Wei), in the *Shina Bukkyō-shi Kenkyū Hokugi-hen*.

Way of the Heavenly Master' (*hsin t'ien-shih-tao* 新天師道), proclaimed by K'ou Ch'ien-chih, had been cleaned up so as to make it suit a Taoism subservient to, and attendant on, the State. In Chen-chün 3 (442), in the first month, the Emperor, mounting the 'platform of the Way' (*tao-t'an* 道壇), formally received the *fu-lu* 符籙 tallies, by which a Confucian machinery with Taoist coloration, having the Emperor, Ts'ui Hao and K'ou Ch'ien-chih as its three 'pillars', took final form. The promoter of this scheme, Ts'ui Hao, loathing Buddhism as a monstrous evil corruptive of the spirit of the middle and flowering (Chinese), frequently tried to convince the Emperor of its vanity and falsity. Even the sovereign, who at first was, if anything, sympathetic towards Buddhism, once he became inclined towards Taoism, proceeded to cool rapidly towards the object of his one-time favour. By contrast, the aristocrats of the northern peoples and the Chinese officials from undistinguished families, as well as the Buddhist clergy, all of whom, being in opposition to Ts'ui Hao, were shabbily treated by him, showed an inclination to band together under Prince Huang, heir apparent to the throne, a man with a profound and sympathetic concern with Buddhism. Given a Buddhism now involved in a power struggle, Ts'ui Hao became militantly critical of its anti-political character as well. In T'ai-yen 4 (438), it was decreed that all *śramanas* under fifty years of age were to be unfrocked.⁽⁵²⁾ This was a pursuit of the monasteries for being a drain on the State by harbouring, as unofficially ordained monks, commoners shirking the corvée. In T'ai-p'ing-chen-chün 5 (444), the private maintenance of *śramanas* and of diviners (*shih wu* 師巫) was prohibited.⁽⁵³⁾ This was a prohibition of divinations and spells carried out on a basis different from that of the State sacrifices, but, at the same time, the mantric character of Buddhism was being suppressed as something contrary to the interests of the State. Then, in Chen-chün 6 (445), the rebellion of Kai Wu 蓋吳⁽⁵⁴⁾ broke out all over Shan-hsi 陝西. When, in the following year (446), it came to light that a Buddhist monastery in Ch'ang-an had lent its weight to the rebel cause, an anti-Buddhist edict was promulgated for the whole Ch'ang-an area, one that eventually, under prompting from Ts'ui Hao, came to be enforced throughout the entire land.⁽⁵⁵⁾ A prohibition that, in this way, extended over all the territories of the Northern Wei dealt Buddhism a blow that defies the imagination. Buddhism, which until that time had been gradually moving toward relative prosperity, was, in a single stroke, extirpated from North Chinese society. Thereafter, what with the deaths of K'ou Ch'ien-chih, Ts'ui Hao and Emperor T'ai-wu, the final seal at length was put to a proscription that had lasted seven years. Still, it can scarcely be

(52) Cf. the Notice on Buddhism and Taoism in the *Wei-shu*.

(53) Cf. the Annals of Shih-tsu 世祖本紀 and the Notice on Buddhism and Taoism in the *Wei-shu*.

(54) Cf. *ibid.*, and also the Biography of So Lu 索虜傳 in the *Sung-shu* 宋書.

(55) Cf. n. 53, specially *Yün-kang*, Vol. 16, pp. 64-68.

denied that this unprecedented experience quickened in a Saṃgha whose members had embraced the ideal of the defense of the Faith the thought of self-examination, enabling them to recognize their own position for what it was, one in which their only choice was reliance on secular power.

B. Restoration

In the tenth month of Hsing-an 興安 2 (453), Emperor Wen-ch'eng 文成帝 ascended the throne, and two months later the edict of toleration was promulgated.⁽⁵⁶⁾ Its essential message can be reduced to three points:

1. The Emperor T'ai-wu, far from intending the destruction of the Buddhist religion, wished merely to correct the wicked abuses of clergy and monasteries.
2. Construction of monasteries shall be permitted, but it shall be confined to a single monastery in each heavily populated place, whether prefecture (*chou* 州) or commandery (*chiün* 郡).
3. Permission to take orders shall be confined to those who come from good families, who have always been acknowledged in their villages to be persons of good conduct. The limits are to be fifty persons for a large prefecture, forty for a small one, ten for a commandery remote from the imperial capital.

Point 1, while appearing to be but an excuse for the proscription of the preceding reign, actually has great significance. This lies in the fact of its impressing on the religious community the corruption of the Saṃgha before the proscription and the justice of Emperor T'ai-wu who had tried to rectify the same. The State is not acknowledging the proscription as an error on the part of Emperor T'ai-wu.⁽⁵⁷⁾ Yet, on the very day of the promulgation of the edict, Emperor Wen-ch'eng personally administered the tonsure to Shih-hsien and others, five men who had reverted to the Order, designating Shih-hsien Comptroller of Religious.⁽⁵⁸⁾ Thus, the Buddhist religious community after the restoration was placed, from the very moment of its resuscitation, under the control of the State in respect of the right of final decision in matters of ordination, of the limits to the number of monasteries, of the qualifications for admission to orders, of the numerical limits to be imposed on the Saṃgha, and the like. This means that, any time the State chose to exercise its authority, Buddhism could be proscribed again. From the point of view of a Saṃgha that had just survived one suppression, there was no guarantee that the structure here described could prevent a second, or even a third, proscription. Another thing that the members of the Saṃgha could not get out of their heads was the awareness that the arch-villain in the proscription of

(56) Cf. the Notice on Buddhism and Taoism in the *Wei-shu*.

(57) There is a view that in the original excavation of the Yün-kang caves there lurks an attitude of penance and atonement on the part of the imperial family, but the view seems unjustified. See the previously mentioned work of the present writer.

(58) Cf. the Notice on Buddhism and Taoism in the *Wei-shu*.

Buddhism was Taoism, for which Ts'ui Hao and K'ou Ch'ien-chih had been standard-bearers. To quote a monkish biography, 'Ts'ui Hao, *ssu-t'u* 司徒 by rank, a crooked flatterer and an eloquent sycophant, persuaded the Emperor to hold in high esteem, and to attach much importance to, K'ou Ch'ien-chih, a master of the Way, upon whom was conferred the title of Heavenly Master (*t'ien-shih* 天師). In his ever greater veneration for Lao-tzu 老子, he wantonly killed the Śākya seed (i.e., the members of the Buddhist order), burning and otherwise destroying monasteries and stūpas.'⁽⁵⁹⁾ 司徒崔皓, 邪佞諛詞, 令帝崇重道士寇謙之, 拜爲天師, 彌敬老子, 虔劉釋種, 焚毀寺塔. Similar statements can be found elsewhere.

What is at work here is the perception that the cause of the proscription was the fact that Taoism had taken hold of the Emperor's heart, a perception common to the entire Saṃgha at the time of the proscription. For Shih-hsien and T'an-yao, who headed the religious community after the proscription, the most vital question was how to present a doctrine that would yield nothing to Taoism in its glorification of the Emperor.

This is not to say, however, that until that time the notion of glorifying the Emperor was absent from the Buddhist side. A matter upon which we have touched briefly is the thought of Fa-kuo, first comptroller of religious during the reign of T'ai-tsu, the Emperor Tao-wu, as revealed in his remark that 'the Effulgent Theocrat is identical with the Thus-Come-One' (*huang-ti chi ju-lai* 皇帝卽如來, i.e., the Emperor is the same as the Buddha):

Fa-kuo had always used to say, 'T'ai-tsu is enlightened and loves the Way. He is in his very person the Thus-Come-One. Śramaṇas must and should pay him all homage.' Then he would always do obeisance. Fa-kuo would say to others, 'He who propagates the teaching of the Buddha is the lord of men. I am not doing obeisance to the Emperor, I am merely worshipping the Buddha.'⁽⁶⁰⁾ 初法果每言, 太祖明教好道, 卽是當今如來, 沙門宜應盡禮. 遂常致拜, 謂人曰, 能鴻道者人主也. 我非拜天子, 乃是禮佛耳.

The words and deeds of Fa-kuo as just described must presumably be understood against a background of the dispute as to whether or not a *śramaṇa* should do obeisance before a king. It seems only natural that, precisely at a time at which this question was being made into a political issue in the South, the same matter should be debated in the North as well. Hui-yüan's essay entitled *A Monk Does Not Bow Down before a King* (*Shamen pu-ching wang-che lun* 沙門不敬王者論) was written under the Eastern Ch'in in Yüan-hsing 3 (404), corresponding, in the terms of the Northern Wei, to T'ien-tz'u 天賜 1 in the reign of T'ai-tsu, a time at which Fa-kuo was active as Comptroller of Religious. In contrast to the disputes taking place under the Southern Dynasties, and to the confusion that they engendered, the

(59) Cf. the Biography of T'an-yao in the *Hsü Kao-seng-chuan*, *chüan* 1.

(60) Cf. the Notice on Buddhism and Taoism in the *Wei-shu*.

religious community under the Northern Wei seems not to have been in a position, objectively speaking, in which it would have been able to advocate the 'refusal to bow down before a king' 不拜王者. Fa-kuo's remark is a clear indication of this. 'He who propagates the teaching of the Buddha is the lord of man' (*neng-hung-tao-che jen-chu yeh* 能鴻道者人主也, lit., 'the One able to prosper the Way is the Lord of man), in paraphrase, means, 'the activity that is the propagation of the Faith has no choice but to rely on the imperial power.' This bears a close resemblance to what Tao-an meant when, on the occasion leaving his disciples at Hsin-yeh 新野, he said, 'Unless we rely on the lord of the State, the Dharma's affairs shall not easily stand.' (*pu-yi kuo-chu tse fa-shih nan-li* 不依國主則法事難立).⁽⁶¹⁾ Fa-kuo's justification is not that he is abasing himself before the Son of Heaven simply because he is the Son of Heaven, but rather that he is worshipping him as a Buddha because he is the protector of the Dharma.

Behind this self-justification is the intimation that the Buddhist community of the time was passive, if acquiescent, in respect of the matter of 'bowing down before kings' 拜王者. One may not, of course, make light of the statement that the Emperor is in his very person the Buddha 皇帝即如來, but it must be pointed out that Fa-kuo's words, far from representing a positive attempt to find a place for the reigning emperor within the schema of Buddhist doctrine, is rather the expression of an idea issuing forth almost passively, given the conditions in which the religious community of the time was placed. It is presumably after this that it became fixed custom for *śramaṇas* to bow down before kings, while the idea of Fa-kuo and his contemporaries that Emperor=Buddha underwent no qualitative change up to the time of the proscription, coming to life again after the religious restoration to become the very kernel of the new Buddhist view of the Emperor under the Northern Wei. The creation, in the very year of the revocation of the edict of proscription, of a stone Buddha figure designed to resemble the emperor represents the first attempt to concretize the notion of Emperor=Buddha, while the production two years later, within the great five-storeyed monastery, of five standing Gautama images in gold and copper, dedicated to five successive emperors, beginning with T'ai-tsu, represents the second such attempt. One may say that the five Buddhas of the five-storeyed monastery were a step forward, in the sense that they endeavoured to include in the Emperor=Buddha theory not only the reigning sovereign but the entire imperial house of the Northern Wei, going back as far as to include the founder of the dynasty. They did not, however, go beyond K'ou Ch'ien-chih's Taoistic view of the Emperor.

C. The Taoistic View of the Emperor.

The principal feature of K'ou Ch'ien-chih's 'new Way of the Heavenly

(61) See the Biography of Tao-an 道安 in the *Kao-seng-chuan*, *chüan* 5.

Master' (*hsin t'ien-shih tao*) was its notion of the Emperor as the 'true lord of peace and tranquillity' (*t'ai-p'ing chen-chün*). Where the notion of the 'true lord' is concerned, there exist studies by many of our predecessors,⁽⁶²⁾ so that what we shall do here is to go beyond the said studies while making use of their principal findings.

According to the Notice on Buddhism and Taoism (in the *Book of the Wei*), K'ou Ch'ien-chih, in Shen-shui 神瑞 2 (415), was commanded by the 'Great Supreme Aged Lord' (*t'ai-shang lao-chün* 太上老君), i.e., the great god of Heaven, to purify and bring into order the 'teaching of the Way', namely, Taoism. It is further stated that in T'ai-ch'ang 泰常 8 (423), on the occasion of a visit from a great-great-grandson of the said Aged Lord, he was given the charm book entitled the '*True Scripture of the Magical Charts*' (*Lu-t'u chen-ching* 籙圖真經), accompanied by the command to assist the True Northern Lord of Peace and Tranquillity. The title in question was, in reality, a designation for the reigning emperor of the Northern Wei. Since this latter, the 'true lord of peace and tranquillity', thereby had his identity guaranteed as an effulgent theocrat holding sway over the Middle Realm in obedience to the will of the 'great supreme aged lord' who was the great god of Heaven and, at the same time, the very embodiment of Heaven itself, he could thus be characterized as a 'lord recipient of the Mandate', in accord with a Confucian theory of prognostication—with a certain Taoistic colouration, to be sure, but Confucian nonetheless.

It is from the union of this notion of the 'true lord of peace and tranquillity' with the 'effulgent theocrat of the Middle and Flowering', the latter representing the thinking of Ts'ui Hao, that there emerged the structure joining together the three persons, the Emperor T'ai-wu and his two highly placed Chinese subjects, Ts'ui Hao and K'ou Ch'ien-chih.

The expression 'true lord' (*chen-chün*) is said to represent a messianic notion current among the general populace from about the fourth century. Mr. Ninji OBUCHI 大淵忍爾 has done a very close study⁽⁶³⁾ of this notion as it appears in the *Scripture of the Divine Charm of the Deep Abyss* (*Tung-yüan shen-chou ching* 洞淵神呪經). On the basis of his work, one feels justified in summing up the nature of the 'true lord' as follows:

(62) Yoshitoyo YOSHIOKA 吉岡義豊, *Dōkyō Keiten Shiron* 道教經典史論 (*Historical Studies of the Taoist Canon*); *id.*, 'Rikuchō Dōkyō no Shumin Shisō' 六朝道教の種民思想 (The Six-Dynasties Taoist Notion of 'Seed People'), in *Nippon Chūgoku Gakkai-hō* 日本中國學會報 (*Journal of the Japan Sinological Society*), Vol. 16 Ninji OBUCHI 大淵忍爾, *Dōkyō-shi no Kenkyū* 道教史の研究 (*A Study of the History of Taoism*); Chōhachi ITANO 板野長八, 'Dōkyō Seiritsu no Katei' 道教成立の過程 (The Genesis of Taoism), in *Tōa Ronsō* 東亞論叢 (*East Asian Seminar*), No. 5; Minoru SUNAYAMA 砂山 稔 'Rikō kara Kōkenshi e' 李弘から寇謙之へ (From Li Hung to K'ou Ch'ien-chih), in *Shūkan Tōyō-gaku* 集刊東洋學 (*Collected Studies of East Asia*), No. 26; and Yang Lien-sheng 楊聯陞, 'Critical Notes on the Lao-chün-yin-sung-chieh-ching' 老君音誦誡經校釋, in *Li-shih yü-yen yen-chiu-so chi-k'an* 歷史語言研究所集刊 (*Collectanea of the Institute for Historical and Linguistic Research*), No. 28.

1. The 'true lord' is Tree-Son-Bow-Mouth (木子弓口, the components of the two characters that make up the name of Li Hung 李弘).
2. The 'true lord' made his appearance in time past, and may possibly do so again in time to come.
3. The 'true lord', making his appearance in times of great disturbance, governs and regulates All-under-Heaven through the rule of no-ado based on the Way and the Dharma, thus realizing an age of peace and tranquillity.
4. To the realm of a 'true lord' come gentlemen of the Way, holy and worthy men, to assist him.

Now, during the period of North-South division, against a background of the notion of a 'true lord' such as just described, there were frequent popular uprisings proclaiming Li Hung to be the 'true lord'. K'ou Ch'ien-chih for his part, proclaiming the 'true lord' to be the reigning emperor of the Northern Wei, on the basis of alleged instructions from the 'Great Supreme Aged Lord', rejected these popular rebellions with their own 'true lord', Li Hung, as the work of rebellious elements of generally dubious character, attacking most savagely the popular shamanistic abracadabra of the sort that had produced them. In the words of Mr. Minoru SUNAYAMA 砂山稔, 'K'ou Ch'ien-chih attempted to elevate to an official level the notions of the "true lord", then widely current among the mass of the population, and thus to divert into an energy for the support of the state of the Northern Wei what popular energy, in rebellion against the system, could otherwise not be kept from crystallizing under the leadership of "rebels of dubious character".'⁽⁶⁴⁾

Seen in this light, the 'true lord of peace and tranquillity' preached by K'ou Ch'ien-chih begins to look, on the one hand, like an Emperor endowed with absolute power by virtue of his submission to the Mandate, while at the same time being the future Saviour concealed in every possible place among the mass of the people and earnestly expected by them all. The strength of this idea lay, presumably, not merely in its traditional Confucian theoretical base but also in what it drew from concrete and very present popular beliefs. This Taoistic 'lord recipient of the Mandate' saw his completion in the ritual wherein the Emperor, mounting a 'platform of the Way' 道壇 and mingling with the God of Heaven, received the magic tallies at the latter's hands, a ritual that maintained itself at least into the reign of Emperor Hsien-wen 獻文帝.

D. The Buddhism of Liang-chou

In the face of the above described Taoistic view of the Emperor, Fa-kuo's Emperor=Buddha pronouncement by itself was unable to halt the oncoming

(63) N. OBUCHI, *Dōkyō-shi no Kenkyū*, p. 435 ff.

(64) M. SUNAYAMA's article, cited in n. 62.

persecution of Buddhism, as the historical developments show. After the revocation of the edict of proscription, a Buddha image was figured to resemble the Emperor, and five standing Gautama figures, in gold and bronze, were fashioned in honour of five emperors, beginning with T'ai-tsu. The latter move was a step forward in three senses, namely, that it gave the Emperor=Buddha notion the concrete form of an icon, a Gautama figure at that, and that, not limiting itself to the reigning Emperor alone, it was designed to include in its scope several generations of rulers. Gautama, however, was a sacred figure who had been born and who had attained to Buddhahood in India and who had already 'entered into extinction', i.e., who was already in *nirvāṇa*. As the understanding of Buddhism progressed, it was presumably to be expected that this likening of a reigning emperor to Gautama would be accompanied by a certain feeling of unreality. It was thus virtually inevitable that the Buddhist religion of the time should move in a different direction, that of taking deceased Emperors for Gautama and the reigning sovereign for Maitreya, the Buddha of the future, by adopting the messianic Maitreya cult already quite widespread among the general population. Intimations of this seem to be provided by the Buddhism of Liang-chou.

The close connection between the glorification of the reigning emperor and the cult of Maitreya did not begin with T'an-yao's five caves. The stele telling of Chü-ch'ü An-chou's merits as a sponsor of icons (*Chü-ch'ü An-chou tsao-hsiang kung-te pei* 沮渠安周造像功德碑), dated Ch'eng-p'ing 承平 7, under the Northern Liang (449),⁽⁶⁵⁾ tells us that An-chou, who made his base in Kao-ch'ang 高昌 after Liang-chou had been subdued by Emperor T'ai-wu, created a huge Maitreya image. Since the inscription says that the actual work was done by the supervisor of statuary (*chien-tsoo fa-shih* 監造法師) Fa-k'ai 法鑑 and the censor (*tien-tso yü-shih* 典作御史) So Ning 索寧, that it was begun in Ch'eng-p'ing 3 (445) and completed four years later, the presumption is that it was a State-sponsored project. The image itself does not survive, so that nothing is known of the imagery. However, in view of the fact that there is a crosslegged Bodhisattva in Cave 275, the oldest at Tun-huang,⁽⁶⁶⁾ and for the reasons to be given below, there is a strong possibility that An-chou's Maitreya figure was a crosslegged Bodhisattva as well.

Chü-ch'ü Meng-hsün 沮渠蒙遜 of the Northern Liang had a cousin, Ching-sheng 京聲, who at Kao-ch'ang obtained two meditational scriptures (*kuan ching* 觀經), one on Avalokiteśvara, the other on Maitreya. When the Northern Wei invaded Liang-chou, he dodged them, fleeing southward in

(65) Cf. ŌMURA, *op. cit.*, p. 177; *Hsin-chiang fang-ku-lu* 新疆訪古錄 (*Record of Quest for Antiquity in Hsin-chiang*); *Hsi-ch'ui shih-k'o-lu* 西陲石刻錄 (*Record of Stone Carvings on the Western Border*); and O. Franke, *Eine Chinesische Tempelinschrift aus Idikutšahri bei Turfan*, Berlin 1907.

(66) MIZUNO, 'Notes on the Tun-huang Caves', p. 386 f., dates Cave 275 somewhere between 450 and 470.

Hsiao-chien 孝建 1 (454), into the territory of the Sung, where he translated the two aforementioned scriptures into Chinese. The scripture concerning Maitreya still survives, in its Chinese form, under the title *Kuan Mi-lo shang sheng T'ou-shu t'ien ching* 觀彌勒上生兜率天經 ('the Scripture in which one contemplates the ascent of Maitreya to be reborn among the Tuṣita gods', usually abbreviated to *Mi-lo shang sheng ching* 彌勒上生經, 'the Scripture of Maitreya's ascent and rebirth'). One knows from this that there was, about the middle of the fifth century, a Maitreya cult in the Kao-ch'ang region,⁽⁶⁷⁾ and it is also said that the jewelled crowns and other accoutrements on the crosslegged Bodhisattva figures at Yün-kang and Lung-men match what it said in the abovementioned scripture.⁽⁶⁸⁾ Besides, there is a religious object even older than Chü-ch'ü An-chou's Maitreya image, namely, a *ching t'a* (repository for remains of damaged scriptures) bearing a date that can be traced to the Northern Liang.⁽⁶⁹⁾ The inscription reads as follows:

In Liang 涼, under the late great Chü-ch'ü, in the third year of Yüan-ho 緣禾 (434), the year being *chia-hsü* 甲戌 (eleventh in the sexagenary cycle), in the seventh month, in the first third of the month, the gentleman of pure (?) faith, Po Shuang-? 白雙且 aware of the insignificance of his own merit; (aware that) he had been born, as it chanced, (into the age of the) eclipse of the Dharma, that the waves flowed _____, that the _____ holy records _____, did of his own accord _____ in regret, truly _____ in long sighs. Then, on mount and crag, walking with this stone on his back, he erected a holy stūpa and of _____ one statue (?), grave and imposing in figure and mien. He prays (?) that, as a (?) reward for this merit (orious act), he may thus enable the Lord of the realm and his august younger brother, with wholesome thought purely _____, to _____ the Three Jewels and the master (?) monks of the present time, thus bearing direct witness to the Fruit of *bodhi*; that his fathers and mothers for the past seven generations, as well as his brothers, both elder and younger (?), his ancestors (?) and his other kin (?), in rejecting their bodies and gaining others, may have an encounter with maitreya. The gateway of thought _____, _____ the vow fulfilled.

涼故大沮渠緣禾三年歲次甲戌七月上旬。[清]信士白雙且，自惟薄福，生值末法，波流 [] []，[] 聖錄 []，正自 [] 慨，信衆永嘆，即于山巖，步負斯石，起靈塔 [] []—[軀]。形容端嚴。[願] [以] 此福報，使國主元弟，善心純 []，[] [] [] 三寶，現在師僧，證菩提果，七世父母，兄 [弟] 宗親，捨身受身，值遇彌勒。心門 [] [] [] 其果願。

(The word following *hsin* 信, 'truly', looks like *chung* 衆, 'multitude', but

(67) Cf. Shōkō WATANABE 渡邊照宏, *Ai to Heiwa no Shōchō Miroku-kyō* 愛と平和の象徴・彌勒經 (*Maitreya-sūtra, Symbol of Peace and Love*).

(68) Cf. 'Yün-kang Iconography' in *Yün-kang*, Vols. 8 and 9.

(69) Cf. n. 16.

it is uncertain, and that reading makes little sense.) The stone surviving from the said *ching-t'a* is one excavated from five such structures found in a cave in Mount Mañjuśrī 文殊山 at Chiu-ch'üan 酒泉; the report says, 'What remains is 52 cm in height, the diameter at the base being 21 cm. There survive three storeys, the top having a niche with 8 images, the middle one likewise, while within there are crosslegged images of Maitreya Bodhisattva and other figures, all in middle relief and of exquisite construction. The bottom storey bears carvings of scriptural texts and of vows, all in stylized script (*li-shu* 隸書).' It is noted that among the niche figures are crosslegged Bodhisattva images, but the number of crosslegged images and the imagery of the other niche figures are not evident from the report. Still, the content of the vow is extremely noteworthy.⁽⁷⁰⁾ The 'Lord of the realm' mentioned in the inscription is presumed to be Chü-ch'ü Mu-ch'ien 沮渠牧犍, his 'august younger brother Wu-hui 無諱,⁽⁷¹⁾ while the sponsor of the image, Po Shuang-?, had neither rank nor title, nor, to judge by his clan name, was he of royal lineage. The fact that a man who was just one more lay believer should build a *ching-t'a* in honour of the sovereign and his younger brother, as well as other persons, praying that in the next world they may encounter Maitreya, is a good indication of the character of Liang-chou Buddhism as a statified religion.⁽⁷²⁾ Whether or not the identification of the reigning sovereign with Maitreya was a view that had already taken form in the Buddhism of Liang-chou is a question that cannot be answered on the basis of this evidence alone, but there seems to be enough evidence to warrant the conclusion that, at least in the area spanning Kao-ch'ang and Liang-chou, there were created crosslegged Maitreya images strongly impressed with the character of emperor-worship based on the *Scripture of Maitreya's Ascent and Rebirth* 彌勒上生經. With the conquest of the Northern Liang by the Northern Wei, and

(70) The expression, '*sheng-chih mo-fa*' 生值末法 (born, as it chanced, into the age of the eclipse of the Dharma), is particularly noteworthy, indicating as it does the accepted view that the time was acknowledged to be one of the ultimate decline of Buddhism, heralding the end of the cosmic era.

(71) According to the Annals of Shih-tsu and Biography 87 of the *Wei-shu*, Chü-ch'ü Meng-hsün 沮渠蒙遜 died, in terms of the Northern Wei, in the fourth month of Yen-ho 延和 2 (433), to be replaced by his son, Mu-ch'ien 牧犍. In view of another text that mentions 'Mu-ch'ien's younger brother Wu-hui 無諱, Grand Protector of Chiu-ch'üan 酒泉', Wu-hui is now recognized as having been, at that time, the person responsible for the governance of the whole Chiu-ch'üan area, including Mount Mañjuśrī.

(72) Another *ching-t'a* apparently excavated at the same time as that of Po Shuang-? 白雙且 is that of T'ien Hung 田弘, whose inscription reads as follows:

In the second year of Ch'eng-hsüan 承玄 (428), the year being *wu-ch'en* 戊辰, in the second month, on the twenty-eighth day, the day being *ping-yin* 丙寅, T'ien Hung, in order to requite the magnanimity of his father and mother, and of his liege lord, set up this *stūpa*. 承玄二年歲在戊辰二月二十八日丙寅。田弘爲父母君王報恩，立此塔。
(Quoted from the *Wen-wu* 文物, 1956-7.)

The *chün-wang* 君王 (liege lord) of the inscription is presumed to be Chü-ch'ü Meng-hsün.

the population move that came with it, the Buddhism of Liang-chou was transferred, root and branch, to P'ing-ch'eng, as already stated, and all we shall do now is to cite two iconographic inscriptions bearing dates in T'ai-p'ing-chen-chün (440-51).

1. Under the Great Wei, in the third year of T'ai-p'ing-chen-chün (442), the year being *jen-wu* 壬午 (nineteenth of the sexagenary cycle); in the first month, the first day of which being *wu-yin* 戊寅 (fifteenth in the sexagenary cycle); on the eighteenth day, the day being *yi-wei* 乙未 (thirty-second in the sexagenary cycle), Pao Tsuan of Ch'ang-shan in Ting-chou, in permanent attendance on the Prince of Yung-ch'ang 永昌王常侍定州常山鮑纂, was alone on duty. Reducing the accumulated (evil heritage of the deeds of) body and omuth (*chien shen k'ou chih ch'u* 減身口之儲), for the sake of his father, the former governor (*ling* 令) of Hsing-hsing 邢邢, and his mother, of the Wang 王 clan, he created this stone *Buddha* (i.e., *stūpa*) and one copy of the Great Nirvāṇa Scripture. He prays that His Imperial Majesty may enjoy the good fortune (of a reign) without limit, that his own father may extend his years and increase his length of life, that his father and mother may in future be reborn in Maitreya's presence, that their entire household and its dependents may all enjoy the eleven residual happinesses, that their children and grandchildren may all reap the joys of merit.⁽⁷³⁾ 大魏太平眞君三年歲次壬午正月戊寅朔十有八日乙未。永昌王常侍，定州常山，鮑纂，單宦在臺。減身口之儲，爲父前邢邢令亡母王，造茲石浮圖大涅槃經一部。願皇帝陛下，享祚無窮，父身延年益壽，父母將來生彌勒佛前，合門眷屬，普蒙十一餘福，子孫，咸受福慶。

As to this inscription from the reliquary built by Pao Tsuan, all that remains now is the lotus throne, while the *stūpa* and the canonical inscription are lost. The present writer wonders whether this is not something in the nature of the abovementioned *ching-t'a* from the cave in Mount Mañjuśrī or, at the very least, something strongly influenced by it. There are four reasons for this supposition.

- a. There are no other examples from the Northern Wei of *stūpas* with canonical inscriptions engraved on them.
- b. The 'Great Nirvāṇa Scripture' of the inscription is presumed to be the *Ta-po-nieh-p'an-ching* 大般涅槃經, translated by Dharmakṣema under the Northern Liang.
- c. The third year of Chen-chün (442) was also the third year after the subjugation of Liang-chou, a time at which, in the 'place of duty'

(73) MATSUBARA, *op. cit.*, p. 221 and Fig. 8.

(*t'ai* 臺, i.e. the imperial capital at P'ing-ch'eng), the Buddhism of Liang-chou was flourishing.

- d. The wish that 'his father and mother may in future be reborn in Maitreya's presence' 父母將來生彌勒佛前 corresponds to a belief in 'rebirth above' 上生信仰, in which, after death, the person in question would ascend to the world of the Tuṣita gods, there to encounter Maitreya.

If these considerations are free of error, one may conclude that it was customary, before the proscription, under the influence of the Buddhism of Liang-chou to build *ching-t'a* in honour of the Emperor and of one's own parents. It is thus quite conceivable that in Pao Tsuan's *ching-t'a* there was a sculptured image of a crosslegged Maitreya.

2. In the fourth year of T'ai-p'ing-chen-chün (443), Wan Shen 苑申, a man from the village of Jen hill 任丘 in Li-wu 蠡吾, Kao-yang 高陽, vowed, for the imperial Crown Prince in the Eastern Palace, to construct a Bodhisattva in [] jade. On a lower plane, he prayed for his parents and for all his acquaintances that, when Maitreya should come down, they might thrice encounter Him on the dragon flower, listen and receive His words of Dharma and all at once attain to the Path. . . .⁽⁷⁴⁾ 太平真君四年. 高陽蠡吾任丘村人, 苑申. 發願, 爲東宮皇太子, 造 [] 玉菩薩. 下爲父母一切知識. 彌勒下生, 龍華三會, 聽受法言, 一時得道.

The above inscription is taken from a standing Buddha image in gold and copper. It is saying that the Wan clan, inhabiting a village in the district (*hsien* 縣) of Li-wu, within Kao-yang commandery (presently in the vicinity of Po-yeh district 博野縣 in Ho-pei Province), constructed the image in honour of the 'imperial Crown Prince Huang 晃 of the Eastern Palace', i.e., the heir apparent to the imperial throne. The fourth year of Chen-chün (443) was a bare three years before the religious proscription. In the midst of a gradually growing oppression directed against the Buddhist faith, there is no longer any talk of doing things 'in honour of the Emperor' 爲皇帝, but rather in honour of the Crown Prince, known for his adoration of Buddhism,⁽⁷⁵⁾ as well as the expressed wish that Maitreya may come down to be reborn here on earth, and that one may benefit by witnessing the preaching that He shall carry out under the dragon-flower tree. This prayer for the descent of Maitreya may be presumed to include the saviour cult that placed its hopes in a passionately Buddhist Crown Prince as an incarnation of

(74) MATSUBARA, *op. cit.*, Fig. 10, 11a and b.

(75) Dedication of an image to the honour of the Crown Prince alone is unknown, except for this one case, under any of the Northern Dynasties. Cf. the aforementioned work of the present writer.

Maitreya. The imagery of this gold-copper image was that of a standing Buddha, not that of a crosslegged Bodhisattva. The present writer, in view of the place of residence of its sponsor and of the imagery of the figure itself, would like to believe that it is a product of the traditions of Ho-pei Buddhism.⁽⁷⁶⁾

From the above considerations, it has become clear that the idea that 'the reigning Sovereign is Maitreya' 現皇帝即彌勒 was seen in germ, before Yün-kang, under the Northern Liang, also that it existed in the Ho-pei region as a Maitreya cult that looked to the Crown Prince as a sort of Maitreya. Maitreya hopes of this sort can only have broadened in scope during the proscription, for they surely cannot have weakened. Taking such a view, one may say that the Buddhistic view of the Emperor, the thing that launched and advanced the excavation and accoutrement of the Yün-kang caves, came into existence by absorbing a Maitreya cult that, based on Fa-kuo's identification of Emperor and Buddha, influenced also by the relationship between emperor-worship and Maitreya cult that had characterized the Buddhism of Liang-chou, was broadened in the course of the proscription. K'ou Ch'ien-chih's Taoistic notion of the 'true lord' 真君 has a place as a resistant ideology, pushing the notion of the 'true lord' from the outside, as it were.

III. Transition in the Buddhist view of the Emperor.

A. The Monastery of Seven Emperors

What course is taken, after the time of T'an-yao's Five Caves, by the Buddhistically tinged view of the emperor, the one which against the background of the notion of the Seven Buddhas of the Past, attempts to make the two lines, Gautama-Maitreya and Deceased Emperors — Reigning Emperor, coincide? There is not room enough here to tell the whole story, but we will content ourselves with demonstrating that it was definitely maintained into the reign of Emperor Hsiao-wen 孝文帝. In the gazetteer of Ting *hsien* 定縣志 under 'Metal and Stone' (inscriptions) 金石, there is an inscription, bearing the title 'Inscribed on a Seven-Jewel Pot' (*ch'i-pao p'ing ming* 七寶瓶銘), that reads as follows:⁽⁷⁷⁾

In the sixteenth year of T'ai-ho 太和 (492), Seng-yün 僧暈, a man of the (Buddhist) Way, in honour of seven Emperors initiated two figures of the Bodhisattva Maitreya, each three rods, eight (feet in height). [] [] height, the construction austere (?). By the second year of Ching-ming 景明 (501) they were complete. In the second year of Cheng-shih 正始 (505), the year being *yi-yu* 乙酉 (twenty-second in the sexagenary cycle);

(76) See the passage on Maitreya in Section I-B of the present article.

(77) In the Institute of Humanistic Studies, Kyoto University, there is a rubbing of this inscription, bearing the title 元魏元鸞造黃塗彌勒二菩薩記 (Inscription on the two yellow-painted Maitreya Bodhisattvas sponsored by Yüan Hsieh and Yüan Luan).

in the second month, the first day of which being *jen-yin* 壬寅 (thirty-ninth in the sexagenary cycle); on the fourth day, it was inscribed, the intention (?) being the conversion of three prefectures. The great image used up three hundred and sixty-six thousand, four hundred catties of copper and two thousand, [] hundred catties of gold, while the two Bodhisattvas used forty-six thousand catties of copper and one thousand, one hundred catties of gold. 太和十六年. 道人僧暈, 爲七帝, 建三丈八彌勒像二菩薩. [] [] 丈造素. 至景明二年, 鑄鑄訖竟. 正始二年歲次乙酉二月壬寅朔四日, 銘旨三州教化. 大像用赤金卅六萬六千四百斤, 黃金二千 [] 百斤. 二菩薩用赤金四萬六千斤, 黃金一千百斤.

His Majesty, the reigning Emperor of the Great Wei, is one whose loyal admiration (for his predecessors) [] follows, whose filial sincerity is (marked by) penetrating wisdom. Propagating his will throughout three prefectures, we hereby proclaim that the work is done. Summarily declaring the beginning and end of the matter, we do but record it for later generations. Seven-jewel pot. 大魏今上皇帝陛下, 忠慕 [] 追, 孝誠通敏. 班旨三州, 率宣功就, 略表始末, 銘之後代耳. 七寶瓶.

The former censor of Ting-chou, prince of P'eng-ch'eng, Yüan Hsieh 前定州刺史彭城王元勰.

Censor of Ting-chou and Prince of Ch'eng-yang, Yüan Luan 定州刺史城陽王元鸞.

The above inscription tells us, in other words, that in T'ai-ho 16 (492), during the reign of Emperor Hsiao-wen, a monk named Seng-yün initiated at Ting-chou, in honour of seven emperors, a great Maitreya figure in gold and copper, three rods, eight feet (i.e., 38 ft.) in height. The imagery of this figure is unknown, but the allegation that it required some 360,000 catties of copper puts it on a scale exceeding even that of the sixteen-foot Gautama figure in the great five-storeyed monastery. Taking a period of ten years, if both year of initiation and year of completion are included, it is in Ching-ming 景明 2 (501) that the casting itself was finished, while the finishing touches were put to it only in Cheng-shih 正始 2 (505). The monastery in which it was housed appears to have been well known, at the time, as the 'Monastery of the Seven Emperors' (Ch'i-ti-ssu 七帝寺).⁽⁷⁸⁾ The inscription, as such, is a tissue of problems, but what is important for the purposes of the present

(78) See the Biography of Chih-chan 志湛傳 in the *Hsü Kao-seng-chuan*, *chüan* 28. As to the origin of the Monastery of the Seven Emperors, the *Ting-hsien-chih* 定縣志 (the Ting district gazetteer) has recorded the iconographic inscriptions from two monasteries, 'Feng-lo ch'i-ti erh-ssu tsao-hsiang-chi' 豐樂七帝二寺造像記 (*Iconographic Inscription of Prosperous Joy and that of the Seven Emperors*); *Ch'i-ti-ssu pei* 七帝寺碑 (*The Stele from the Monastery of the Seven Emperors*); and *Cheng-chieh-ssu ts'an-pei* 正解寺殘碑 (*What remains of the Stele from the Monastery of Right Understanding*). One learns from them that this great Maitreya figure was destroyed during the proscription of the Northern Chou.

study is the passage that reads, '(Seng-yün, . . .) in honour of Seven Emperors initiated two figures of the Bodhisattva Maitreya, (each) three rods, eight (feet in height).' By 'Seven Emperors' are meant the five already mentioned, beginning with T'ai-tsu, in addition to Hsien-wen and Hsiao-wen. The construction of this monastery in honour of seven emperors seems to be closely related to two other events, namely, that of the new grand mausoleum (*t'ai-miao* 太廟) of the Northern Wei and of the refurbishment of the seven imperial mausoleums (*t'ien-tzu ch'i-miao* 天子七廟). According to the *Book of the Wei*, both the Annals of Kao-tsu in roll 7 and the Record of Rites (*li-chih* 禮志) in roll 108, Emperor Hsiao-wen, in the fourth month of T'ai-ho 15 (491), built a bright hall (*ming t'ang* 明堂) and rebuilt the grand mausoleum (*t'ai-miao*). At this time, there was some dispute as to the enshrinement in the grand mausoleum of spirits each of which already had its own private mausoleum. The upshot of it all was a decision to change the shrine title of Emperor Tao-wu, in recognition of his achievement as actual founder of the dynasty, from *Lieh-tsu* 烈祖 to *T'ai-tsu* 太祖, changing his plaque to that of *T'ai-tsu-miao*, 'Mausoleum of the Grand Patriarch', and sacrificing to it as such; further, to re-style Shih-tsu as well as Hsien-tsu, the father of Emperor Hsiao-wen, both of whom had done so much for the unification of the North, as *T'iao* 祧,⁽⁷⁹⁾ then enshrining their successors, alternately, as Chao 昭 and Mu 穆. Given this, the line beginning with T'ai-tsu, the Emperor Tao-wu, and ending with Hsien-tsu Hsien-wen, would count only six, leaving the seventh mausoleum without an occupant, thus violating the principal of 'seven imperial mausoleums' (*t'ien-tzu ch'i-miao*). On this, the Emperor Hsiao-wen commented as follows: 'That We Ourselves should be the recipient of such honours is a thing to which Our subordinates and even Our children object. However, that everyone born must have an end is a human truth to which there are no exceptions,' thus indicating that he himself was to occupy the one vacant mausoleum. In this way, to the new grand mausoleum, completed in the eleventh month of T'ai-ho 15 (491), were transferred the plaques of the seven mausoleum. While the construction, at Ting-chou in T'ai-ho 16 (492), of a monastery of seven emperors may be regarded as an attempt to apply to Buddhism the Confucian institution of the mausoleum in honour of seven emperors, the fact that the principal object of worship constructed by Seng-yün in honour of seven emperors was a Maitreya figure shows that the Buddhistically tinged view of the Emperors of the Northern Wei in terms of the lineage leading from the Buddhas of the past to the Buddhas of the future,

(79) In the Treatise on Rites 禮志 in the *Wei-shu*, one reads as follows: 'We now venerate Tao-wu as Grand Patriarch, making him and Hsien-tsu into the two *t'iao*.' 朕今奉尊道武爲太祖，與顯祖爲二祧。The meaning of this, however, is hard to construe. Clearer is the version of the *Tzu-chih-t'ung-chien* 資治通鑑, *chüan* 137, which says, 'We now reverently elevate Lieh-tsu as T'ai-tsu, designating Shih-tsu and Hsien-tsu as the two *t'iao*.' 朕今奉尊烈祖爲太祖，以世祖顯祖爲二祧。

of the reigning Emperor as the Maitreya of the future, was very much alive.

B. Lung-men and After.

Even after the transfer of the capital to Lo-yang, the construction of caves and monasteries in honour of emperors continued. The Notice on Buddhism and Taoism describes as follows the circumstances of the excavation and accoutrement of the Lung-men caves:

Early in Ching-ming 景明 (ca. 500), Shih-tsung 世宗 commanded the Grand Chief Autumnal Prince, Po Cheng 白整, to make, on the model of the stone caves of the Monastery of the Ghostly Crag (*Ling-yen-ssu* 靈巖寺) in the Tai capital (P'ing-ch'eng, modern Ta-t'ung 大同), stone caves on Mount Yi-ch'üeh 伊闕, south of the Lo 洛, for Kao-tsu 高祖 and the Empress Dowager Wen-chao 文昭皇太后. 景明初, 世宗詔大長秋卿白整, 準代京靈巖寺石窟, 於洛南伊闕山, 爲高祖文昭皇太后, 營石窟二所.

The most important part of this notice is the expression, 'on the model of the stone caves of the Monastery of the Ghostly Crag in the Tai capital'. This suggests that even at Yün-kang the caves must have been excavated and accoutred in honour of the emperor, that a pair of caves must have been created for the imperial couple. At Yün-kang there are some classic pairs, Caves 5 and 6, 7 and 8, 9 and 10. It is conceivable that these pairs of caves were created in honour of emperors and empresses, or of the fathers and mothers of the imperial kinsmen and other princes and nobles who sponsored the images. As it happens, at Lung-men the plan for a pair of caves was abandoned midway because of the excessive cost, to be taken up again in Yung-p'ing 永平 (508-512), when, on a different crag, a cave in honour of the reigning sovereign, Emperor Hsüan-wu 宣武帝, was added, thus totalling three. These are the so-called three caves of Pin-yang (among the Lung-men caves 龍門石窟賓陽三洞).⁽⁸⁰⁾

However, it appears that, of the three, the only one to be finished under the Northern Wei was the central Pin-yang 賓陽 cave, presumed to be in honour of Emperor Hsiao-wen,⁽⁸¹⁾ while the caves on both sides, north and south, were apparently discontinued under the Northern Wei, to be taken up again under the Sui and to be completed in early T'ang. Thus, in contrast to the principal object of worship in the central cave at Pin-yang, a Gāutama figure, nothing is known about the original imagery of the main objects of worship in the other two caves, those to the north and south. One simply does not know which cave was in honour of Emperor Hsüan-wu, the then reigning emperor, nor who was its main object of worship, Gautama or Maitreya.

Now, how did things stand during the following reign, that of Emperor

(80) Cf. *Lung-men*, p. 11 ff.

(81) Ch'en Ming-ta 陳明達, '鞏縣石窟寺的彫鑿年代及特點' (The Date of Excavation and the Peculiar Features of the Cave Temple of Kung-hsien), in the *Kung-hsien shih-k'u-ssu* 鞏縣石窟寺 (*The Cave Temple of Kung-hsien*), published by the Cultural Operations Team of the Ho-nan Provincial Office of Culture 河南省文化局文物工作隊.

Hsiao-ming 孝明帝, and after? Mr. Ch'en Ming-ta, who holds that the cave temple of Kung-hsien 鞏縣 was created for the exclusive use of the imperial family, ventures the following conclusions, on the basis of a close examination of structure and of historical conditions:⁽⁸²⁾

- Caves 1 and 2. A pair of caves, dedicated to Emperor Hsüan-wu and to the Dowager Empress Ling 靈太后. Originally excavated in Hsi-p'ing 熙平 2 (517). Cave 1, finished in Cheng-kuang 正光 4 (523). Cave 2, unfinished.
- Caves 3 and 4. A pair of caves, dedicated to Emperor Hsiao-ming and his lady. Originally excavated in Hsi-p'ing 2 (517). Finished towards the end of Hsiao-ch'ang 孝昌 (ca. 527).
- Cave 5. Possibly dedicated to Emperor Hsiao-chuang 孝莊帝. Unfinished.

Mr. Ch'en ventures the conclusion, namely, that caves nos. 3 and 4 at Kung-hsien are in honour of the then sovereign, Emperor Hsiao-ming, and his lady. However, there is no crosslegged Bodhisattva image in either cave. This fact, which applies equally to all of the cave temples at Kung hsien, makes it impossible to detect any connection between the then emperor and the Maitreya cult.

From the above, it is evident that under the Northern Wei, from T'an-yao's five Yün-kang caves until the end of the dynasty, there was an uninterrupted succession of caves dedicated to emperors, the identification of the reigning emperor to Maitreya being verifiable into the reign of Hsiao-wen, but that the situation is nuclear where the reign of Hsüan-wu is concerned, while, by the time of Emperor Hsiao-ming, there is no longer any evidence of the practice. It thus becomes evident that the positioning of the Emperor within the framework of Buddhist doctrine had undergone a change; the shift in the Buddhistically tinged view of the Emperor, however, we prefer to reserve for a future study.

Let us say a word, finally, about the cave excavated in honour of Hsien-tsu, the Emperor Hsien-wen 顯祖獻文帝. It is only natural, in our view, that a cave dedicated to this emperor, the son of Wen-ch'eng 文成帝 and father of Hsiao-wen 孝文帝, should be at Yün-kang. It is also entirely possible that the caves excavated during the lifetime of Emperor Hsiao-wen, as well as that in honour of the Dowager Empress Wen-ming 文明太后 (the Lady Feng 馮) and those of other princes, were done there. These days, when there is no written evidence whatsoever, it is an extremely difficult undertaking to decide with which of the numberless Yün-kang caves they are to be identified. It must await further study, but the present writer takes upon himself the following conjectures, if some provisional theorizing is permissible.

In view of a tendency evident in all the caves dedicated to emperors, from

(82) See n. 81.

T'an-yao's five to the Pin-yang caves at Lung-men, one concludes that in every case the principal object of worship was a great image. Thus, Emperor Hsien-wen's cave, if it was excavated during his own lifetime, was presumably on the model of T'an-yao's five, that is, a place of worship of a holy image, the image and main object of worship being, in this case, a great Maitreya figure. A cave that fulfils all these conditions is no. 13. If, on the other hand, the cave originated only after Emperor Hsien-wen's death, it then stands to reason that it was sponsored by Emperor Hsiao-wen. In that case, to judge from the above-quoted edict ('. . . to make, on the model of the stone caves of the Monastery of the Ghostly Crag in the Tai capital, two stone caves on Mount Yi-ch'üeh, south of the Lo, for Kao-tsu and the Empress Dowager Wen-chao'), one conjectures that there was probably a pair of caves dedicated to Emperor Hsiao-wen's parents (Emperor Hsiao-wen and Empress Ssu 思皇后). Among all the Yün-kang caves, the ones that fulfil these conditions and that are also the most suitable are the pair consisting of Caves 5 (where the principal object of worship is a seated Buddha figure) and 6 (the 'square-pillared cave' 方柱洞). The present writer surmises that the caves in question must have been nos. 13, which dates to Emperor Hsien-wen's own lifetime, and 5, dedicated to the posthumous welfare of Emperor Hsiao-wen.⁽⁸³⁾

Now there is yet another Yün-kang cave whose principal objects of worship are great Maitreya images. It is Cave 10, which, with Cave 9, constitutes a pair. In Cave 9, the central objects of worship are three reclining Buddhas, while in Cave 10 they are three crosslegged Bodhisattva figures. The present writer is of the opinion that a sponsor peculiarly appropriate to the great crosslegged Maitreya images in Cave 10 was the then reigning emperor. If that is true, then, proceeding from the presumed date⁽⁸⁴⁾ of early T'ai-ho (ca. 475-80), or thereabout, one concludes that the sponsor was probably Emperor Hsiao-wen. One further presumes that a likely sponsor for Cave 9, which was paired with Cave 10, was the Dowager Empress Wen-ming, the Lady Feng. On the stone surface in the front courtyard of this pair of caves are carved the design of a great lotus blossom and one of a tortoise shell, both of the same pattern as in the Pin-yang caves at Lung-men,⁽⁸⁵⁾ another seeming proof that the two caves were dedicated to emperors.⁽⁸⁶⁾

(83) That Cave 5 was dedicated to Emperor Hsien-wen 獻文帝 is a fact already pointed out by MIZUNO and NAGAIRO; cf. *Yün-kang*, Vol. 2, p. 30 and Vol. 3, p. 46.

(84) Cf. *Yün-kang*, Vol. 7, p. 37.

(85) Cf. NAGAIRO, *Unkō Sekkutsu*, p. 72.

(86) The date of each cave, the person who dedicated it and to whom it was dedicated must be deduced on the basis of a many-sided scrutiny, which will include the structure of the caves, the imagery of the icons, the decorative design, etc. The sixteen volumes of *Yün-kang* are a great and precious monument to research and investigation, but unsolved problems remain, and the date of each cave is more uncertain than ever. One awaits further research.

Conclusion

The present paper has investigated the nature of the Yün-kang icons and the character of the statified religion permeated by the spirit of Yün-kang Buddhism. The author has also concluded, from certain facts, that the Yün-kang caves are a concrete expression of a Buddhistically tinged view of the Emperor, a view that sought to make the series leading from the emperors of the past to the one of the present coincide with the one leading from Gautama to Maitreya. The facts just mentioned are the following:

1. The Yün-kang icons were systematized along a Gautama-Maitreya line by the exercise of a certain selection and rejection of already known iconic types.
2. The very first Buddha images created at Yün-kang, those of T'an-yao's five caves, dedicated to five emperors beginning with T'ai-tsu, were also designed each to resemble one sovereign.
3. In the historical process leading from the proscription to the restoration, the Buddhist community had no choice but to accept total control on the part of the State power.
4. At the same time, the community was confronted with the necessity of fitting the Emperor, smoothly and without conflict, into the skein of Buddhist doctrine.

It is our belief that this Buddhistically tinged view of the Emperor, based on Fa-kuo's idea that Emperor=Buddha, and provided with some suggestion from the Buddhism of Liang-chou, with its interlocking emperor worship and Maitreya cult, originated in resistance to the Taoist notion of the 'Calm and Tranquil True Lord' (*t'ai-p'ing chen-chün* 泰平眞君). Thus, the emperor of the Northern Wei, as a living Maitreya, became the object of all the hopes and expectations of future salvation, then, after death, was placed in the role of a Buddha protecting the state and the nation. It is in this way, presumably, that the religious community, establishing the Buddhistically tinged emperor-view mentioned several times above, a view that incorporated a whole series of sovereigns into the Buddha lineage of past, present and future, even in its instruction and conversion of the mass of the population, preached by linking the being of the emperor with the spiritual dignity and authority extending from Gautama to Maitreya. The frequency of Gautama and Maitreya figures among the images in the Yün-kang caves and in the *yi-yi* led by teaching monks, as well as the striking evidence⁽⁸⁷⁾ of emperor worship and of prayers for protection of the State, is presumably due to conditions such as those described above.

(87) Cf. the aforementioned work of the present writer.

There are, however, evidences that this Buddhistically tinged view of the Emperor gradually changed after the capital was moved to Lo-yang. We should like to reserve the subject of the process of that change to a future study.

Chart 1. Buddhist Images under the Northern Wei before Yün-kang

Year	Sponsor	Figure	Imagery	identification	Material	Evidence
1. Teng-kuo 登國 5 (390)	Hsü Ch'ang-lo 徐常樂	Maitreya	standing	Bodhisattva	gold, copper	ŌMURA
2. Huang-shih 皇始 1 (396)	CHIANG Shih 江石	?	?	?	"	rubbing ^(a)
3. T'ien-tz'u 天賜 3 (406)	WANG Yin-t'ang 王銀堂	?	?	?	stone	ŌMURA
4. Shen-shui 神瑞 2 (415)	WU Hung 吳弘	Buddha	standing	?	gold, copper	"
5. 415	CHANG [] [] 張 [] []	"	seated, palms joined	Buddha	"	<i>Meng-p'o-shih</i> 夢坡室 ^(b)
6. Shih-kuang 始光 1 (424)	WEI Wen-lang 魏文朗	<i>Fo-tao-hsiang</i> 佛道像	<i>pan-chia</i> 半跏 (meditating?)	?	stone	<i>Archaeology (K'ao-ku 考古)</i> 103
7. Yen-ho 延和 1 (432)	WU Yen 吳炎	Buddha	standing	Bodhisattva	gold, copper	ŌMURA
8. 432	SHAO Ching-po 邵景伯	Maitreya	3 standing images arms raised	Buddha	"	<i>Meng-p'o-shih</i>
9. Yen-ho 2 (433)	KUO Ling-fei 郭令妃	?	?	?	stone	ŌMURA <i>Hsi-hsing Jih-chi</i> 西行日記 ^(c)
10. T'ai-p'ing-chen-chün 太平眞君 1 (440)	CHU Hsiung 朱雄	statue	seated, palms joined	Buddha	"	ŌMURA
11. T'ai-p'ing-chen-chün 2 (441)	[] []	?	standing image with white whisk	Bodhisattva	gold, copper	"
12. 441	PEN Shan 本善	?	standing (3)	Buddha	"	rubbing

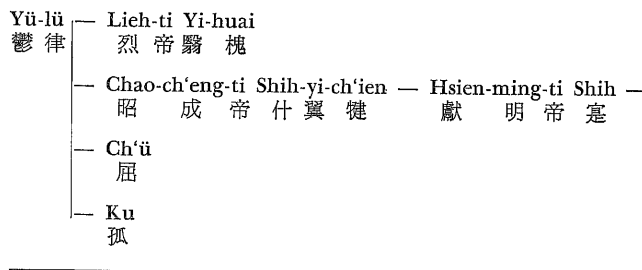
13. T'ai-p'ing-chen-chün 3 (442)	PAO Tsuan 鮑纂	stone <i>stūpa</i>	?	?	stone	MATSUBARA 松原
14. 442	[] []	holy image	<i>pan-chia</i> , meditating	Bodhisattva	stone	"
15. T'ai-p'ing-chen-chün 4 (443)	WAN Shen 苑申	Bodhisattva in [] jade	standing	Buddha	gold, copper	"
16. Cheng-p'ing 正平 1 (451)	K'ai-tu 開度 and others (nuns)	statue	standing, arms raised	?	"	rubbing
17. Hsing-an 興安 2 (453)	CH'ENG Hsiu-tsu 成休祖	Avalokiteśvara (3)	?	?	stone	ŌMURA
18. 453	CHAO Lu-yüan 趙路原	Avalokiteśvara	standing	Bodhisattva	gold, copper	UMEHARA archa- eological material 梅原考古資料
19. T'ai-an 太安 1 (455)	CHANG Yung 張永	?	3 seated Buddhas, palms joined	Buddha	stone	MATSUBARA
20. T'ai-an 3 (457)	SUNG Te-hsing 宋德興	Gautama	"	"	"	"
21. Ho-p'ing 和平 1 (460)	Fa-liang 法亮 (monk)	Maitreya	3 seated Buddhas, arms raised	"	gold and copper on board	"
22. Ho-p'ing 5 (464)	CHIN Chiang 盡姜	Amitāyus	Seated Buddha, palms joined	"	gold, copper	"

- LEGEND: a. *Hsiao-hsiao-ching-ko chin-wen t'o-pen* 小校經閣金文拓本, Vol. 18.
 b. *Meng-p'o-shih huo-ku ts'ung-pien* 夢坡室獲古叢編
 c. CH'EN Wan-li 陳萬里, *Hsi-hsing jih-chi*, p. 5.

Chart 2. Genealogy of the Northern Wei.

(insofar as it concerns the present study)

Shih-tsu Shen-yüan-ti Li-wei — Wen-ti Sha-mo-han — Ssu-ti Fu — P'ing-wen-ti
 始祖 神元帝力微 文帝沙漠汗 思帝弗平文帝



— (1) T'ai-tsu Tao-wu-ti Kuei (r. 386-409) — (2) T'ai-tsung Ming-yüan-ti Ssu (r.
 太祖道武帝珪 太宗明元帝嗣

409-423) — (3) Shih-tsu T'ai-wu-ti T'ao (r. 423-452) — Kund-tsung Ching-mu-
 世祖太武帝燾 恭宗景穆

ti Huang (never reigned) — (4) Kao-tsung Wen-ch'eng-ti Hsüan (r. 452-464) —
 帝晃 高宗文成帝顯

(5) Hsien-tsu Hsien-wen-ti Hung (r. 465-471) —
 顯祖獻文帝弘

— (6) Kao-tsu Hsiao-wen-ti Hung (r. 471-499) — (7) Shih-tsung Hsüan-wu-ti K'o —
 高祖孝文帝宏 世宗宣文帝恪

— (8) Su-tsung Hsiao-ming-ti Hsü (r. 515-528)
 肅宗孝明帝詡

— P'eng-ch'eng-wang Hsieh — (9) Ching-tsung Hsiao-chuang-ti Tzu-yu (r. 528-530)
 彭城王勰 敬宗孝莊帝子攸

