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LIN JIAO is currently an assistant professor at Lu Xun Academy of Fine Arts. She received her PhD degree from the Central Academy of Fine Arts and was a Postdoctoral researcher at the Academy of Arts & Design of Tsinghua University. She was a visiting student at New York University and a visiting scholar at Harvard University. Her research interests primarily focus on Chinese Buddhist Art and the History of Art History in the early 20th century.

RUIRAO RU, hailing from Yingkou in Liaoning Province, is currently pursuing her postgraduate studies at the School of Humanities at Luxun Academy of Fine Arts. She graduated from the Department of Art History at the same institution with a bachelor's degree. Her research interests mainly focus on Chinese Buddhist art and art management.



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Lin Jiao, Ruirao Ru

Abstract

This paper selects the Ten Thousand Buddhas Grottoes in Northeast China as the research object, and compares it with the Longmen Grottoes of the same period by taking the inscription of the statue as the breakthrough point. It is found that there are certain links and differences in the choice of statue style and style. In addition to the inevitable objective factors, there are also subjective choices of the patrons. Therefore, the process of the statue is also the process of self-image shaping of the patrons. Returning to the specific historical context, through the discussion of the construction background, statue style and statue inscription of the Ten Thousand Buddhas Grottoes, it tried to establish the image association between the statue and Buddhist belief and tomb concept. By analyzing the different statue purposes and motives behind the patrons, the self-image shaping of the patrons is sorted out.

Key Words

Northern Wei Dynasty, Ten Thousand Buddhas Grottoes, Patron, Self-image

Self-image creation is a complex concept, a manifestation of self-identity, involving the individual, ethnic, social, and ethical implications of identity. In the art of grottoes, the creation and expression of self-image are often seen in statues and murals, which are presented in the form of offering portraits and statue inscriptions. Among the Buddhist grottoes built in the Northern Wei Dynasty, apart from the well-known Yungang Grottoes and Longmen Grottoes, there is another little-known grotto in the Ten Thousand Buddha Hall in northeast China.

The Ten Thousand Buddha Hall is located in the north bank of the Daling River, nine kilometers northwest of the county seat of Yixian County, Liaoning Province. Facing south, it is carved in two areas: east and west. There are nine grottoes on the upper and lower floors of the western area and seven caves in the eastern area. It was built after the Northern Wei Dynasty moved its capital to Luoyang and is the earliest and northernmost group of northern Wei grottoes in northeast China, with more than 400 statues.

1. A Survey of Northeast China during the Northern Wei Dynasty

1.1 Political Factors

Before the Northern Wei Dynasty unified the North, the Later Yan and Northern Yan dynasties occupied the Northeast territory at the same time. In 397 AD, the later Yan Dynasty was defeated and moved its capital to Longcheng (present-day Chaoyang, Liaoning Province). In 407 AD, Gao Yun, a Koguryeo man, made Longcheng his capital and became the first monarch of the Northern Yan Dynasty. In 409 AD, after Gao Yun was killed by his subordinates, Feng Ba put down a coup d'état and remained in Longcheng until it was destroyed by the Northern Wei Dynasty in 436 AD. However, since the founding of the Northern Wei Dynasty no salary system had been implemented, the ruling class had raided the people from all over the country, and class contradictions had become increasingly prominent. Emperor Xiaowen moved the capital to Luoyang and carried out Sinicization reform to strengthen the centralization of power and speed up the process of feudalization with

ethnic minorities. Xianbei nobles and other conquered or annexed tribes had to practice Sinicization, but the Khitan tribes in the northeast were a special case.

In the third year of the Taihe period (479 AD), the Khitan tribe, fearing the invasion of Goguryeo and annexing by the Northern Wei, moved to the east of the White Wolf Water—the area of Yixian and Jinzhou—east of the middle and upper reaches of the Daling River. The Northern Wei court allowed the Khitan to maintain their original tribal customs. It did not force the Khitan to carry out Sinicization reform, except to pay tribute at twelve to show their obedience to the court. On the one hand, because the war had just annexed the Khitan and their loyalties were unstable, it was thought that forced Sinicization might cause panic in the Bian towns. On the other hand, the Khitan had lived hundreds of miles north of Helong for a long time in the present-day Xilamulun River valley. The Khitan and Kumoxi were originally of the same ethnic group and had similar social customs. Therefore, Emperor Xiaowen adopted the corresponding ruling strategy, and Sinicization reform could be gradually mapped out.

1.2 Geographical Factors

During the Northern Wei Dynasty, the northeast territory extended to the Liaodong Peninsula and included Yingzhou, southwest of today's Liaoning Province. Yingzhou, bordering Khitan to the north and Goguryeo to the east, was an important border town for defending the northern Hu peoples during the Northern Wei Dynasty. Topographic records from *The Book of Wei* say: "Yingzhou, with its seat in Helong City. Taiyan took two years for the town, and Zhenjun took five years to change. Yong'an fell at the end of the year, and the sky increased at the beginning."¹

Taiping Zhenjun, five years, changed Helong Town to Yingzhou, the formation of the state and town under the same rule, to Emperor Xiaowen Taihe, only to retain Yingzhou. Under the jurisdiction of Changli County, Jiande County, and another six counties, fourteen counties, mainly in the west of the Liao River. Yixian County and Sanyan County were under the jurisdiction of Pingzhou Changli County, Yingzhou County was under the jurisdiction of the Northern Wei Dynasty, and the government was fixed in Longcheng. Although Longcheng was no longer the capital then, it was still the center of local administration as the Yingzhou government seat. Yixian County was about a hundred miles away from it.

1.3 Cultural Factors

1.3.1 Buddhist Beliefs

During the Beiyan period Buddhism was prevalent in the Longcheng area, the capital of Sanyan, where the development of Buddhism was deeply rooted. While conquering Beiyan, the Northern Wei Dynasty moved the residents of the reclaimed areas to the interior several times, including some monks and craftsmen who moved to Pingcheng. Therefore, as the capital of the early Northern Wei Dynasty, the Buddhist beliefs in Pingcheng were also influenced by Longcheng. After nearly a hundred years of development in Pingcheng, Buddhism had gradually matured and formed the Yungang model Buddhist art and culture spread to the east along the road of commerce and trade, which became the road of cultural dissemination and influenced Buddhism in Longcheng.

Born into the Northern Yan royal family, Empress Dowager Feng believed in dharma, and her family had worshipped the Buddha for generations. In 483 AD, during the Reign of Taihe, a statue of the Siyan Buddha was erected in Longcheng to pray for his grandfather and promote dharma. In addition, Empress Dowager Feng held an essential position in the Northern Wei royal family. Therefore, Buddhism in Longcheng did not decline due to the demise of the Northern Yan Dynasty but continued to develop. The Northern Wei rulers respected Buddhist law and built Buddhist grottoes throughout the country. The trend of digging grottoes to make statues also affected Yixian County, which was not far from Longcheng.

1.3.2 Tomb Culture

During the Northern Wei Dynasty, many tombs in Northeast China were located in present-day Liaoning Province, mainly in Liaoyang to the east of the Liaohe River, Liaodong Peninsula, and Chaoyang and Beipiao in the Daling River basin of western Liaoning. As the ancient capital of Sanyan, most of the tombs found in Longcheng were frescoed tombs of Sanyan in western Liaoning. Taking Feng Sufu's and his wife's tombs as examples, a wide variety of funerary objects have been unearthed, including pottery, porcelain, gold and silver, iron, lacquer, and glass. Feng Sufu was the younger brother of Feng Ba, king of North Yan, and the ceremonial vehicles unearthed in the tomb were a symbol of his status and honor. The glassware and the Buddha statue with a hammer on the swinging crown and gold ornaments (锤 鐸) can also testify to the prevalence of Buddhism and frequent trade in this region, which was an important hub for foreign exchanges. In addition to

the tombs mentioned above, tombs in the early and middle periods of the Northern Wei Dynasty were mostly concentrated in the Longcheng area, such as the Jiuzhong tombs in Chaoyang, the Northern Wei Tombs in Xidaiyingzi, and the Zhang Lve Tombs in the middle period. The Northern Dynasty tombs found in the Longcheng area are mostly concentrated in the northwest, northeast, southeast, and southwest of the area, and late Northern Wei tombs are rare.

The above situation is closely related to the era's background of regime change, ethnic hybridity, and cultural exchange in Northeast China at that time. Taking Changchun as an example, in the Koguryeo tombs adjacent to Yingzhou the No. 1 Tomb was buried around the end of the fifth century. Buddha statues, donors and maids, lotus blossoms, flying sky, and other Buddhist themes are carved inside the tomb. It can be seen that although Koguryeo was adjacent to Bian Town of Northern Wei, it was more culturally influenced by the Central Plains, indicating that the capital Luoyang became the political, economic, and cultural center of Northern Wei due to the transfer of political power, while the northeast became a remote, economically and culturally backward area. As a result, the development of the burial culture in the northeast of the Northern Wei Dynasty was sluggish.

2. The Style Characteristics of the Grottoes of Ten Thousand Buddha Hall

2.1 The Shape of the Grottoes

The grottoes are divided into Buddhist temple grottoes and pagoda temple grottoes. The Buddha temple grottoes have a square plane, mainly divided into square single-chamber grottoes and three-chamber grottoes with binaural chambers. Inside the cave are three walls, three niches, and the top of the vault. The pagoda temple grottoes are comprised of the vestibule and the main chamber. The vestibule is a slightly trapezoidal plane, and the main chamber is an obliterated square plane. Inside the door above the carved Buddha are three columns, grottoes for the center of the square column connected to the courtyard, and four sides of the two layers of Buddha niches.

Niches can be divided into six types according to different forms. They are pointed-arch niches, round-arch niches, house niches, tent niches, square niches, and boat niches. The style can be roughly divided into three types: no beam lintel and decoration, niche lintels with carved lintels inside and no decorations at the end, and niche lintels with ornaments inside and at the end.

Most carvings are of Buddha statues, lotus flowers, or dragon heads. Its shape and decoration are commonly used in the niches of Yungang Phase II.

2.2 The Characteristics of Statues

Most of the statues in the cave are incomplete, according to the status quo of the remaining analysis. In West 6 cave, at the top edge of the cave the residual shape of the lotus treasure cover can still be seen, surrounded by the flying sky. The combination of statues should be one Buddha, two disciples, and two Bodhisattvas, and the main statue is the foot-crossing Maitreya Buddha, with a height that can be more than three meters. The statues are of an old style with plump faces and strong bodies. In the West 2-5 caves, the top of the cave is carved with a lotus treasure cover, the thousands of Buddha faces in the statues are full and round, there are Bodhisattvas, flying sky, etc., the upper body is bare, and the skirt is worn in the old style. West 1 cave is the Pagoda Temple cave. The statue's seven Buddhas, disciples, and offerings to heaven are all in the old style with full faces. Still, there are also slight differences: the tower heart column in the upper Buddha niche on the two flanks of a Buddha has a slender body, the flying face is beautiful, wears three jewelry crowns, and the Bao Zeng is also slender. In the East 1 and 3-6 grottoes, the top of the grottoes feature only carved lotus, and the new style of the statue is mainly thin and slender. Due to the collapse and weathering of the East 2 and 7 caves, the statues in the caves have been impossible to verify. In the West 7-9 caves, of which eight caves have not been completed, nine cave statues are only chiseled out stone, and then there is no sign of continued chiseling. The overall characteristics of the western caves are dominated by the old style, while the new style is dominant in the eastern caves.

3. Ten Thousand Buddha Hall Grottoes in the North and Longmen Grottoes in the Central Plains

3.1 Formal Characteristics

The main Longmen Grottoes built in the Northern Wei Dynasty are Guyang Cave, Binyang Middle Cave, and Lotus Cave. The inner shape of the caves are roughly a horseshoe-shaped plane and the roof of the vault. The wall image combination of one Buddha, two disciples, and two Bodhisattvas, the main image for Shakyamuni, the left and right walls each have a shop of statues of Buddha two Bodhisattvas. In addition to the positive wall, the rest of the wall or set up a shop, engraved

with relief, or hundreds of small and large Buddhist niches. The roof of the cave is carved with the lotus flower cover, and around the lotus are carved Acting Bodhisattva, offering heaven, flying heaven, etc.

The cave structure of the Ten Thousand Buddhas Hall grottoes is generally divided into the front, left, and right three walls and three niches. The statue combination is one Buddha, two disciples, and two Bodhisattvas or one Buddha, and two helpers, with the main statue being three Buddhas. The front wall is dominated by thousands of Buddhas, and there are Bodhisattvas and Weimas among them. A lotus flower is carved on the top of the cave, and a Bodhisattva statue and a flying sky are carved near the top. Some grottoes have carved statues of strongmen on both sides of the doors.

3.2 Style of Statues

Statues in the western area of the Ten Thousand Buddha Hall grottoes are mainly in the old style, with plump faces and vigorous bodies. The Eastern area was excavated later than the Western area, and the new style with a handsome and slender body gradually became mainstream, which was influenced more by the Longmen Grottoes in this period. For example, the statue of Li is similar to one in Binyang Middle Cave in Longmen Grottoes, the flying sky is close to that of Guyang Cave, Binyang Middle Cave, and Lotus Cave, and the lotus flower at the top of East 4 cave is similar to that of the lotus flower at the top of Lotus Cave in Longmen.

In addition, the head and hair of the statues in the grottoes of Ten Thousand Buddha Hall are exquisitely depicted, but the clothing pattern is simple and generalized. The statues in Longmen Grottoes are both round and handsome, the body is thin, and the clothing patterns are fine. However, the existing statues in the grottoes of Ten Thousand Buddha Hall mainly have two kinds of clothes: bare right and full-shouldered robes, and there are no such clothes after the reform of Chinese culture. However, in the Yungang Grottoes and Longmen Grottoes of this period, the new costume system had already appeared and was widely used.

3.3 The Main Body of the Donor

Longmen Grottoes are the royal grottoes, and the earliest grotto dug is Guyang Cave. It is a cave of merit built by Emperor Xiaowen of Northern Wei for his grandmother Empress Feng. It is also the cave where a group of princes and nobles who supported Emperor Xiaowen's reform and relocation of the capital most desired to make statues. Binyang Cave was built under the supervision

of Emperor Xuanwu for his father Xiaowen, and only Binyang Middle Cave was completed during the Northern Wei Dynasty. In the Longmen Grottoes, most providers appeared on the inner wall or both sides of the doors. Besides the royal family, the providers also included senior officials and monks.

In addition to the two statues and inscriptions in the Ten Thousand Buddha Hall grottoes, inscriptions have only been found on the west side of the inscribed stone wall and both sides of the Buddha statue in the upper niche south of the tower center pillar in the West 1 cave. The former remains are unrecognizable. The Pagoda Temple grottoes (West 1 grottoes) are divided into two parts: the front for monks to gather and the back for monks to practice around the central pagoda column to provide a place for worship. The West 1 Cave was probably built in imitation of the Buddhist buildings on the ground, creating an orderly sacred space for the devotees to imagine walking around and worshipping the Buddha. The figure of the offeror is located on the upper part of the center column of the pagoda. The overall shape is in profile, and the body is half kneeling to gaze at the main Buddha statue, which reflects the state of devout worship of the offeror.

4. The Statue of Yuan Jing and Record of Han Zhen Statues in the Grottoes of Ten Thousand Buddha Hall

According to the *The Statue of Yuan Jing* (figure 1), the West cave was built in the twenty-third year of Taihe of the Northern Wei Dynasty (499 AD). It was made by Yuan Jing, a historian of Yingzhou and general of Pingdong at that time, to pray for the blessing of Emperor Xiaowen. The words of prayer and blessing recorded in the inscription were mentioned twice in the Ming Yuan Dynasty and then by himself and his family. Yuan Jing was the great-grandson of Emperor Ming Yuan, Emperor Xiaowen was the clan uncle and was a member of the Northern Wei royal family.² Therefore, it is speculated that the remaining provider of portraits above the stone wall inscribed with the inscription should be Yuan Jing himself or his family. Yuan Jing made the statues to pray for the emperor and himself and his family. At the same time that the Ten Thousand Buddha Hall grottoes were being built, Emperor Xiaowen was gradually implementing Sinicization reform. However, because the comfort policy attached to the Khitan was delayed until the Hanization, and before the Hanization, the Northern Wei implemented the division of soldiers and people, soldiers were used for fighting, and people were engaged in cultivation and mulberry work. The officers and soldiers were mainly composed of Xianbei nationality;



Figure 1. The Statue of Yuan Jing.

many of them belonged to the noble class like Yuan Jing and had a high status. Therefore, the craftsmen used in Yuan Jing's grottoes should have been of Han Chinese or other local minority nationalities.

According to the *Record of Han Zhen Statues* (figure 2) the cave in the East area was a private cave built by local officers and soldiers in the third year of Jingming of the Northern Wei Dynasty (502 AD) to comfort the Khitan envoy Han Zhen and Lu Anchen, commander of the Wolanshu Army. On the stone wall of the cave, Han

Zhen's head is carved to comfort the mission members, which is based on the historical fact that Han Zhen represented the Northern Wei court to comfort the Khitan settlement. In the third year of Taihe (479 AD), the Khitan moved to the east of the White Wolf Water. After internal migration, the Khitan maintained their original social customs, settlement forms, and production methods, reflecting the different ruling policies adopted by the Northern Wei court towards the Khitan tribes. Considering the social background and political factors

at that time, the Northern Wei court sent Han Zhen as an envoy not only to comfort the Khitan but also to build a city and garrison. In the group statues of the Northern Dynasty, Han Zhen, as the emperor's emissary and the highest-ranking member of the delegation, was placed first in the title of the statues, which also reflected the loyalty of the officers and soldiers stationed in the northern frontier areas to the emperor.

5. Conclusion

The Ten Thousand Buddha Hall grottoes and Longmen Grottoes were dug after the Northern Wei Dynasty moved to Luo. The first one is located in the northernmost part of the Northern Wei Dynasty, near the ancient capital of Sanyan. The other was close to the capital city of Northern Wei, that is, the center of political power. By comparing the two grottoes, it can be found that the different purposes and motivations of the donors are behind the meaning conveyed by the choice of sculpture style. Longmen Grottoes belong to the royal grottoes, most of which were built under the leadership of emperors. Through statues, they reflected the idea of unity between the emperor and Buddha, elevating religious belief into political will. As the representative of the royal family and nobility, Yuan Jing built the grottoes not only to offer sacrifices for Emperor Xiaowen but also to cultivate merit for himself and his family. However, the craftsmen used to construct the grottoes should have utilized the local people. For the royal family, the construction of the grottoes was a symbol of political power. As a comfort envoy to the Khitan, Han Zhen led the local officers and soldiers to build the grottoes, which in addition to soothing the town also showed the

obedience of the garrison officers to the court and the deterrence of the Khitan. Therefore, under the influence of political factors, ruling class, region, social customs, national culture and so on, the expression and shaping of the self-image of the donors also display diversified features.

Lu Xun Academy of Fine Art

LIN JIAO is currently an assistant professor at Lu Xun Academy of Fine Arts. She received her PhD degree from the Central Academy of Fine Arts and was a Postdoctoral researcher at the Academy of Arts & Design of Tsinghua University. She was a visiting student at New York University and a visiting scholar at Harvard University. Her research interests primarily focus on Chinese Buddhist Art and the History of Art History in the early 20th century.

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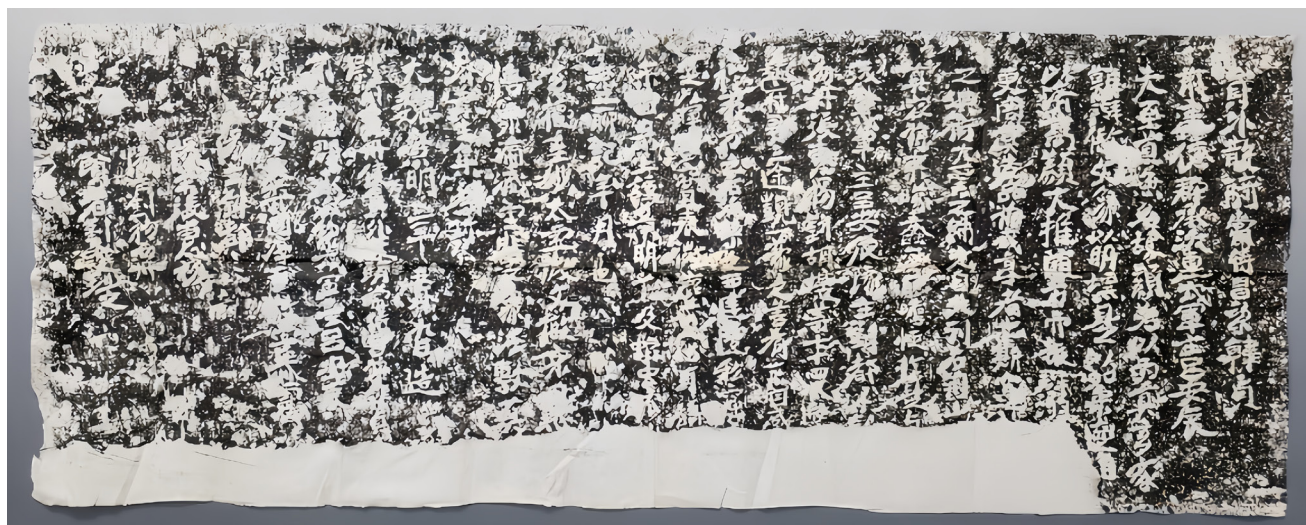


Figure 2. Record of Han Zhen Statues.

ENDNOTES

1. *The Book of Wei*, 106 vols., Topography (Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company), 2492.

2. Cao Xun, "Some Questions in the Two Northern Wei Inscriptions in the Ten Thousand

Buddha Hall," *Cultural Relics*, (1980): 6.

遼寧義縣萬佛堂供養人與自我形象塑造

焦琳，汝瑞嬌

摘 要：本文選取東北地區的萬佛堂石窟為研究對象，以造像題記為切入點，將其與同時期的龍門石窟進行對比。發現造像風格與樣式的選擇存在一定的聯繫與差異。出現這種情況的原因除了不可避免的客觀因素，也有供養人的主觀選擇。因此，造像的過程也是供養人自我形象塑造的過程。回歸到特定的歷史語境中，通過對萬佛堂石窟的營造背景、造像樣式、造像題記等方面進行探討，試圖建立起造像與佛教信仰、墓葬理念之間的圖像關聯。以此分析供養人背後不同的造像目的和動機，對供養人自我形象的塑造進行梳理。

關鍵詞：北魏；萬佛堂石窟；供養人；自我形象