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# Analysis of the Conception and Appearance of the Group Portraits of the Twenty-nine Patriarchs in Kanjingsi Cave of Longmen Grottoes

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Gao Pengfei

## Abstract

The portraits of the twenty-nine patriarchs in Kanjingsi Cave of Longmen Grottoes are the largest existing statues of the patriarchs in the Chinese grottoes. Kanjingsi Cave belongs to the design of Zen grottoes influenced by square worship grottoes and has the dual nature of meditation and worship, and the group of twenty-nine patriarchs was first used as a substitute for meditation and then as an object of worship. To better show the posture of the human body and the outline of the eyes and cheekbones that can best reflect the characteristics of the patriarchs, the painter chose a three-quarter angle to present the process of passing on the law from generation to generation. Therefore, the monks who go to meditation can watch the images to achieve absolute realism, and this guides the monks who practice meditation to realize Buddhism and Taoism early. The characterization of the images of the twenty-nine patriarchs may be partly from Han Chinese monks and partly from Indian monks.

## Key Words

Longmen Grottoes, Kanjingsi Cave, portraits of the Zen patriarchs, conception, appearance

The excavation of each grotto was designed in a unified way. What kind of subject matter is displayed on the wall and in what form it is presented must be considered at the beginning of construction. Wu Hung believes that this internal and specific consideration is the historic place of these grottoes.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, the grotto project was directly constructed in the natural mountain, and the process of cutting mountains and chiseling stones is irreversible. Therefore, it is necessary to plan and design the spatial position, scale, and form of caves in detail before construction.<sup>2</sup> Kanjingsi Cave is the largest cave in Longmen Grottoes from the Tang Dynasty period, except for Fengxiansi Cave, and it faces Fengxiansi Cave across the Yi River. Whether from the intentional site selection or the size of the cave, it is likely to be related to the royal family. The artistic value of the group portraits of the twenty-nine patriarchs in Kanjingsi Cave is extremely shocking; since they were created on such a huge scale, there must have been profound intentions and an implied symbolism behind them. The portraits

of the patriarchs of Kanjingsi Cave are characterized by different appearances and obvious personalized features, especially the exotic images that are portrayed differently from ordinary people. How many of the portraits were based on the true portrayal of exotic characters, how many were influenced by Chinese culture, and where the prototype of the patriarchs came from are also issues that we need to explore.

Therefore, starting from the conception, this paper tries to understand the common wishes of Kanjingsi Cave designers and patrons, as well as the original religious function and political metaphor of the statues by analyzing the historical location and source of visual reference for the physical appearance of the portraits of the twenty-nine patriarchs of the Zen Buddhists in Kanjingsi Cave.

## 1. Conception of the Group Portraits of the Twenty-nine Patriarchs of Zen Buddhism in Kanjingsi Cave

### Beliefs and Motivations of the Patrons

Before the Wuzhou period, no large-scale caves were built in the East Hill at Longmen Grottoes. Due to the promotion of Wu Zetian's (武則天) activities of worshipping Buddhism, the cave-opening activities of Longmen Grottoes also reached a peak. This resulted in the use of the cliffs on the west bank that was suitable for the opening of the caves, so the planners who presided over the renovation of caves at that time selected East Hill as the main place for cave-opening statues.<sup>3</sup> Li Chongfeng, based on the systematic investigation and analysis of the existing grottoes in the east and west of Longmen Hill combined with the latest excavation information of the grottoes in the Leigutai area, suspected that the seven large caves, namely Leigutai Northern Cave (擂鼓臺北洞), Leigutai Central Cave (擂鼓臺中洞), Leigutai Southern Cave (擂鼓臺南洞), Duke Gaoping Cave (高平郡王洞), Kanjingsi Cave, Erlianhua Southern Cave (二蓮花南洞) and Erlianhua Northern Cave (二蓮花北洞), were the "seven niches of stone statues" described by the Fazang (法藏).<sup>4</sup>

In addition, according to the related research on Leigutai Central Cave, which has the same subject matter as the statues of the patriarchs in Kanjingsi Cave, Kuno Miki (久野美樹) believes that Leigutai Central Cave is the product of the sacred activities of the Huayan Sect (華嚴派), and the designer should be Fazang, the confidant of Wu Zetian and the third ancestor of the Huayan Sect.<sup>5</sup> By studying the "15,000 Buddhas" and the scriptures carved in Leigutai Central Cave, Luo Shao thinks that Leigutai Central Cave has the function of ceremony and confession and speculated that it was excavated by the monks of Shendu Taiping Temple and Princess Taiping;<sup>6</sup> the above shows that the excavation of Leigutai Central Cave cannot be separated from the strong support of the royal family. Therefore, Kanjingsi Cave, whose cave volume is nearly twice as large as Leigutai Central Cave, was probably planned and excavated under the auspices of the royal family; otherwise, it is impossible to complete the cost of such a large-scale project by private fund-raising alone. Li Chongfeng also speculated that Kanjingsi Cave's sculpture activities were forced to stop because of Wu Zetian's abdication.<sup>7</sup>

The identity of twenty-nine patriarchs should be regarded as the masters of Zen Buddhism, and Kanjingsi Cave was probably excavated under the auspices of the Northern Sect of Chan Buddhism. The popularity of the Northern Sect of Chan Buddhism in Luoyang around

the Wuzhou period is not groundless. *Datong Chanshi Bei* (《大通禪師碑》) recorded: "In 700 CE, the age of the Zen master Shen Xiu (神秀) was already very old. Wu Zetian sent a letter to invite Shen Xiu to enter Luoyang and carried him to the palanquin. Wu Zetian condescended to bow down, greeted the Shen Xiu with a ceremony and sat down had a dialogue with him, cleaned the Jiuchong Palace to fete the Shen Xiu. The people who passed the law did not surrender to the king of the world, and the real saints were not bound by the courtesy of their ministers. Therefore, Shen Xiu was elected as the master of the two capitals and the master of the three emperors."<sup>8</sup> The two capitals refer to Chang'an and Luoyang, and the three emperors refer to Wu Zetian, Li Xian (李顯) of Zhongzong and Li Dan (李旦) of Ruizong respectively.<sup>9</sup> It can be seen that Shen Xiu's reputation in the imperial court is extremely high, and Zen Buddhism spread to the north. Shen Xiu died in the second year of Shenlong (706 CE). After his death, his disciples still enjoyed great fame and were supported by the imperial court. With the strong support of Emperor Zhongzong, after the death of Shen Xiu, Pu Ji (普寂) became the natural leader of Zen Buddhism.<sup>10</sup> Wang Zhenguo bases this on the various details of the trajectory of Pu Ji's activities, coupled with the comparison of time, to speculate that the main patron of Kanjingsi Cave may be Pu Ji.<sup>11</sup> Yuan Deling also thinks that the excavation of Kanjingsi Cave is part of the historical background of the struggle of the grade of masters between the Southern School of Chan Sect and the Northern School of Chan Sect, and the appearance of the statues of the patriarchs should be related to the struggle between the sects of Zen Buddhism.<sup>12</sup>

To sum up, no matter whether it is Shen Xiu or Pu Ji, it is very likely that one of them is one of the Zen monks who participated in the excavation of Kanjingsi Cave, and their status determines that Kanjingsi Cave's planning and conception must be inseparable from Zen Buddhist beliefs.<sup>13</sup> From Jia She (迦葉) to Shi Zi (師子), their political identities are all Indian princes, and Dharma (達摩) is the first patriarch of Zen. This group of patriarchs from the West to the East fully reflects the unity of politics and religion.

### The Choice of Expression Form and the Creation of Details

The expression form of the group portrait of Kanjingsi Cave's patriarchs should be discussed emphatically here because it is different from the round sculpture or semi-round sculpture commonly used in Buddhist statues in the past, and it is expressed in the form of high relief. It is necessary to master proportional compression and

parallelism without perspective in relief. This method looks simple but it is not easy to do it well. If you don't master it there will be incongruity in shape.<sup>14</sup> At the same time, although the compression principle of a three-quarters side view of the figures is the same as that of the front side, it also increases the difficulty of understanding and sculpting to some extent because of the angle of deviation (figure 1).<sup>15</sup> It can be seen that the choice of the statues of Kanjingsi Cave's patriarchs from the form to the character angle is easy to go but difficult to find, so there must have been a special intention behind this choice. Looking at the form of the portraits of the patriarchs from before, it can be said that they are in the same line. Therefore, we can guess that this form of three-quarters of the sides plus high relief is the product of the designers of the portraits of the patriarchs at that time after repeated consideration. This is the best choice to combine the motivation of the patron, the belief of the sect and the grottoes as a carrier.

Generally, the paintings or sculptures of the main Buddha statues in grottoes are positive and solemn, ignoring the bustling crowds around them and staring at the believers who come to worship them.<sup>16</sup> This kind of positive statue contains ingredients for people to worship. When believers bow down or salute the Buddha, they will make eye contact with the Buddha, thus completing the communication between believers



Figure 1. Three-quarters side compression example. From *Clay relief*.

and the Buddha.<sup>17</sup> However, there is no statue of the main Buddha in Kanjingsi Cave, the portraits of the patriarchs show people in profile, and they are different from the above-mentioned general grottoes' function. "Due to the rise of tantra and zen, Buddhism, which used to be like religion, paid less attention to statues and paid more attention to religious ceremonies and activities, and people's demands for religion changed to some extent."<sup>18</sup>

As a meditation place for monks, the Zen cave needs to be built in a quiet environment. Therefore, the Zen caves excavated on the cliffs between mountains became the first choice as a place for monks to meditate.<sup>19</sup> Kanjingsi Cave is located in the middle of Longmen East Hill, far away from the main road, and there is a square altar without a statue of the main Buddha. From the choice of geographical location to the structural design and planning of the internal space of the cave, the characteristics of the Zen cave are revealed, and some scholars believe that the construction of Kanjingsi Cave is referenced from the statue layout of Leigutai Central Cave. Judging from the situation of the thousands of Buddhas left on the inner wall of Kanjingsi Cave, its original design should also have had carvings of 10,000 Buddhas on the surrounding walls.<sup>20</sup> During the Wuzhou period, the ritual practice of chanting and worshipping 15,000 Buddhist names prevailed in Shendu Luoyang, and was also one of the academic contents of Zen monks in the Tang Dynasty.<sup>21</sup> In this way, it further shows that Kanjingsi Cave is a Zen cave. Su Bai once made a summary: "With the gradual changes like caves in the Tang Dynasty, in addition to the Zen, it also played the role of prolonging life and curing disease. The object of worship in addition to the Zen monks, laity gradually became the main object of the patrol grottoes, and the laity nature of grottoes became stronger and stronger."<sup>22</sup>

The increase of Zen caves, from the original grottoes without other facilities to the square altar, should be more influenced by the square worship grottoes in the Central Plains, which shows that this kind of Zen cave has the dual nature of meditation and worship.<sup>23</sup> In other words, the group portraits of the twenty-nine patriarchs were first used as a substitute for meditation, and they were often stationed in the grottoes, followed by the object of worship. To better show the posture of the human body and the outline of the eyes and cheekbones that can best reflect the characteristics of the characters, the painter chose a three-quarters side angle to present the process of passing on the law from generation to generation. Therefore, the monks who go to meditation can watch the statue to achieve an absolute sense of reality and guide the monks who practice meditation to

realize Buddhism early.

The personalized characteristics of the shapes of the twenty-nine portraits of the patriarchs are obvious, and the conception and design of their appearance, age and hand-held objects are deliberately distinguished as far as possible. To a certain extent, the emergence of these statues also conforms to the secular trend of Buddhist teachings. After roughly translating from Xuanzang's *Fa Zhu Ji* (《法住記》), the arhat statues began to become popular.<sup>24</sup> “According to the *Fo Fa Ji* (《佛法記》), an arhat is an eminent monk who is practicing Buddhism, and its image should be ‘hidden sacraments’ and ‘common people’.”<sup>25</sup> Therefore, folk painters are also bolder in their creation, less bound by the ritual of sculpture, and create a more acceptable sculpture for the current people close to the secular image of the patriarch.

### The Inherent Image of the Patriarch in Historical Biography—Taking Jia She and E’nan as Examples

The reference text for the creation of the group portraits of the twenty-nine patriarchs of the Zen Buddhists in Kanjingsi Cave is probably richly based on *Fu Fa Zang Yin Yuan Zhuan* (《付法藏因緣傳》). However, due to the description of the personalized characteristics of the patriarchs in the scriptures, they are mostly reflected in their life stories and cannot be confined to visual images. Therefore, this section only selects the patriarchs who have outstanding images in the scriptures and can be expressed through visual images for analysis.

The distinctive characteristics of the contrast between Jia She and E’nan (阿難), one old and one young, began to appear during the Northern Wei Dynasty and were mostly located on both sides of the Buddha as servant disciples; this feature continued until the Tang Dynasty, such as in the Fengxian Temple of Longmen Grottoes.<sup>26</sup> Jia She is the most important disciple of Sakyamuni Buddha (釋迦牟尼佛), known as “Toutuo First (頭陀第一)”; “Toutuo” is one of the ascetic Buddhism.<sup>27</sup> It is also recorded in *Fu Fa Zang Yin Yuan Zhuan* that Jia She “is pure and vegetarian, doing nothing and having no desire, but is idle and diligent in asceticism.”<sup>28</sup> The practice of asceticism includes far more physical and mental suffering than we imagine. There are various examples of the asceticism of Sakyamuni in the text, from which we can get a glimpse. For example, giving up his cherished body, head, eyes, bone marrow and brain juice; abandoning the country, the city, wife, children, palaces and ministers, and concubines; jumping off a cliff, falling into the fire, or cutting off limbs. Sometimes, for a sentence or a poem, he peeled

off his skin as paper, broke his bones for a pen, and used blood as ink to write a sentence or a poem. It can be seen that Jia She, who also insisted on asceticism, must have suffered a variety of hardships that ordinary people could not bear. Therefore, Jia She is often portrayed as a weather-beaten, pious and simple ascetic monk in Buddhist statues.

E’nan, the cousin of Sakyamuni, is known as “Duowen First (多聞第一)” because of his intelligence, extensive knowledge and strong memorization, and the poems (偈語) can be completely recited only once. Therefore, based on the inherent impression of E’nan in Buddhist statues, Ananda is portrayed as a young and intelligent little disciple, with the young metaphor about agile thinking and an excellent memory. Another detail that needs to be noticed is that among the group of twenty-nine portraits of the patriarchs, only E’nan and Luo Houluo (羅睺羅) are wearing Chinese clothes and the style of the knotted belt. It is recorded in the *Da Zhi Du Lun* (《大智度論》): “E’nan’s appearance is correct and clean...the women were always happy and moved when they saw him, so Buddha allowed E’nan to wear clothes that could cover his shoulders.”<sup>29</sup> It is also mentioned here that E’nan’s appearance is beautiful, but it is precisely because of his outstanding appearance that he has caused a lot of trouble, so the Buddha made E’nan wear a shoulder coat.<sup>30</sup> This may be a reference to E’nan’s style of Chinese clothes.

Jia She and E’nan both hold hanging lotus flowers, and E’nan’s is smaller than Jia She’s. According to the *Dialogue of the Buddha and Mahapitaka Brahmaraja* (《大梵王問佛決疑經》), “The Great Brahman once presented a golden pineapple flower to the Buddha on Lingshan, and asked him to speak. Sakyamuni should be invited to sit, only to show flowers to the public, but he said nothing. The disciples at the scene did not understand his meaning, only Jia She smiled. The Buddha knew that he has the ability, so he announced in public: pass Buddhism to Jia She.”<sup>31</sup> This is the famous legend that “Buddha touched flowers and Jia She smiled (佛祖拈花, 迦葉微笑),” which explains why Jia She’s hand-held object is a lotus flower.

## 2. The Appearance of the Group Portraits of the Twenty-nine Patriarchs in Kanjingsi Cave and the Hybrid Characteristics of the Faces of the Group Portraits of the Twenty-nine Patriarchs of Zen Buddhism in Kanjingsi Cave

Facial features are one of the most important things to distinguish in the images of ancestors. From the facial depiction, the images of patriarchs in Kanjingsi Cave can

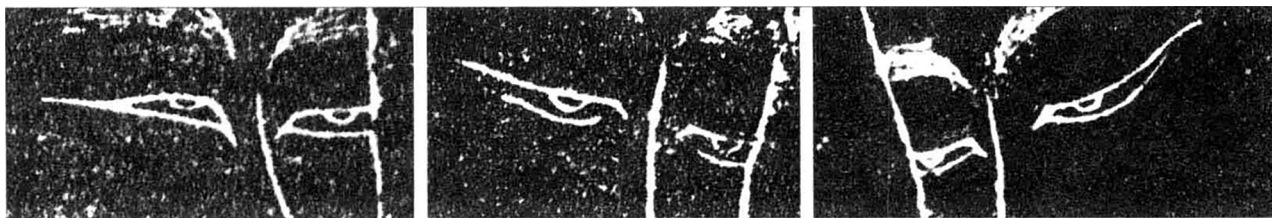


Figure 2. (a) In the north of the outer wall of the stone coffin of Princess Yongtai's tomb, the maid has three white eyes; (b) In the east of the south of the outer wall of the stone coffin of Princess Yongtai's tomb, the maid has three white eyes; (c) In the second room on the north side of the inner wall of Princess Yongtai's tomb, the maid has three white eyes. From *A Study on the Painting Styles of the Line Carving of Stone Carvings in Tang Dynasty*.

be divided into two types: the images of monks from the Han Dynasty and the images of monks from foreign countries. Based on the images of Han monks mentioned by scholars in the past and the author's observation, the following characteristics are summarized: the faces of Han monks are round, the eyes of Han monks are mostly in the form of single eyelids,<sup>32</sup> use two even thin lines to bend up and down, and the upper eyeliner and the lower eyeliner will press a part of the pupil to prevent the eyeball from protruding outwards. This kind of eye shape has "three white eyes (三白眼)" (figure 2) and "four white eyes (四白眼)" (figure 3).<sup>33</sup>

The age levels shown in the group portraits of the patriarchs are obvious. From the facial features, the six young patriarchs should belong to the Han monks, namely, the second E'nán (figure 4), the fifteenth Bodhisattva Jia'na Tipo (迦那提婆菩薩), the seventeenth Sengjia Nanti (僧伽難提), the twenty-first Poxiu Pantuo (婆修槃陀, figure 4), the twenty-fourth He Le'na (鶴勒那) and the twenty-seventh Hui Ke (慧可). We can also see the image of Zhi Dun (支遁), a monk in the Han Dynasty, in Han Gan's (韓幹) *The Painting of the Steeds* (《神駿圖》, figure 5). There is no need to go into details here; the following mainly discusses where the prototype of the exotic foreign statues of Kanjingsi Cave comes from.

These are the two most detailed descriptions of the appearance of the Hu people by the Han people. Yan Shigu (顏師古) of the Wusun Kingdom (烏孫國) in *Book of Han · Biography of the Western Regions* (《漢書·西域傳下》) said: "Wusun is the most different in its type in the western regions. Today's Hu people are blue-eyed, red-bearded, and macaque-like. It's their original racial characteristics."<sup>34</sup> Fan Qin's *Sanhu Rhapsody* (《三胡賦》) says: "The Hu of Shache (莎車) has a golden eyeball, deep eyes, round ears and a narrow chin. The Hu of Kangju (康居), had hair curled as charred, nose collapsed, cheekbones high convex, and two gills collapse. The Hu of Jibin (罽賓), the facial beard is short and stiff, and the top of his head is like carrying a pocket. Deep red eyes, cave-like

nostrils, and a nose protruding upwards. Yellow hair on the forehead is like withered orange peel."<sup>35</sup> It seems that there are different descriptions of the appearance of different Hu people in the Western Regions in the Han rhapsody, but it can be compared with Kanjingsi Cave. In summary, those features are mainly deep eyes and a high nose, prominent cheekbones, curly hair and beard. Apart from the hair and beard, the above features are indeed evident in the portraits of foreign patriarchs in Kanjingsi Cave; however, only using this rhapsody for information to define the country of origin for the images of the patriarchs is still insufficient.

Due to the characteristics of the "deep eyes" of the Hu people, the painter often portrays the eyes of the Hu people in a large way. If they take the form of quasi-relief (擬浮雕) the pupil will be shaped into a convex shape except for the sunken eye socket.<sup>36</sup> Most of the foreign images in Kanjingsi Cave have deep-set eyes with raised pupils, but there are also eye depictions that are different from ordinary people. This phenomenon can also be seen in Lu Lengjia's *The Portraits of Six Sakyamuni Buddha* (《六尊者像》), which includes both images of Han monks and foreign monks. The painter likely drew a group of patriarchs for the image to enrich the picture, both a realistic reference and their artistic imagination. Kanjingsi Cave's group portraits of patriarchs and *The Portraits of Six Sakyamuni Buddha* all use a mixture of Han monks and Hu monks. Let us further speculate that there is probably a certain pattern and stylization in drawing such themes. The meticulous depiction of Kanjingsi Cave's patriarchs always gives people an illusion that it must truly reproduce the original appearance of the eminent monks in the Tang Dynasty.<sup>37</sup> Zheng Yan once pointed out that it is misleading to equate realism with realism. When we describe the portrait as a "real life theme", how much of the content in the portrait is a true reflection of real life needing to be scrutinized repeatedly?<sup>38</sup> Therefore, this paper holds a conservative attitude towards the view that the portraits of the patriarchs of Kanjingsi Cave are true reproductions of the eminent monks of the Tang Dynasty.

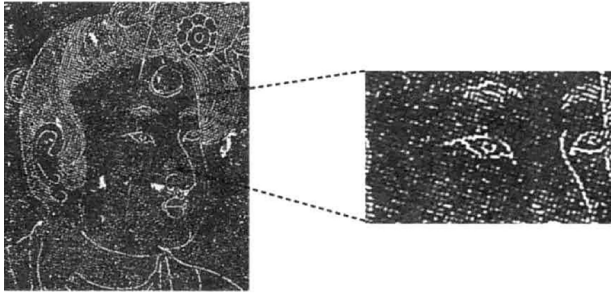


Figure 3. The inner wall of the stone coffin of Li Xian's tomb is west to the middle wall, and the maid has four white eyes. From *A Study on the Painting Styles of Stone Carving in Tang Dynasty*.



Figure 4. (a) E'nan, four white eyes; (b) Poxiu Pantuo, three white eyes. From *Chinese Grottoes · Longmen Grottoes 2*.

### The Foreign Monks of the Tang Dynasty and the Source of the Image of the Patriarchs of Kanjingsi Cave

People in the Central Plains used to call the Western Regions Hu.<sup>39</sup> The geographical scope of the words “Western Region” in each period is often different. In the Tang Dynasty, the Western Regions, in a narrow sense, only referred to the Central Asian region from the west of Congling to Persia, while in a broad sense, it included the west of Dunhuang, the north and south of Tianshan Mountain, Central Asia, West Asia and South Asia subcontinent.<sup>40</sup> Therefore, the Hu people in the Tang Dynasty are the vast residents of the Western Regions. Scholars have different views about the so-called “Hu monk.” Cheng Guobin believes that most of the Hu monks in the Tang Dynasty were Arabs.<sup>41</sup> Xie Haiping thought that Hu monks included both Western monks and Indian monks.<sup>42</sup> Li Hong concluded that on the one hand, the term Hu monks refer to foreign and ancient Chinese ethnic monks who accompanied foreign religions such as Buddhism, Manichaeism, Zoroastrianism, Nestorianism, and Islam. On the other hand, they refer to those who grew up in China and converted to one of the above religions and became monks.<sup>43</sup> In the early Tang Dynasty, “Fan (梵)” and “Hu” were often confused and difficult to distinguish. However, related scholars' research shows that Hu monk in the early Tang Dynasty is a vague general term, and refers to the monks from Tianzhu (天竺), not the Hu monks from the Sogdian area.<sup>44</sup> In addition, “according to the records of *Biographies of Eminent Monks* (《高僧傳》) and *Further Biography of Eminent Monks* (《續高僧傳》), there were 42 foreign monks in the Tang Dynasty, except for three people whose nationalities were unknown, there were 30 people Tianzhu monks, 5 people in the Western Regions, 2 people from Tuhuoluo (吐火羅), 1 person from He Country (何國) and 1 person from Kangju. Tianzhu monks accounted for 88%.<sup>45</sup> It can be seen that Tianzhu monks still accounted for the majority of foreign monks in the Tang Dynasty. Therefore, it is



Figure 5. Han Gan, *The Painting of the Steeds* (excerpt), Tang Dynasty, heavy-color on silk, 27.5×122cm. China, Collection Liaoning Provincial Museum.

likely that the actual foreign monks referred to by the foreign monks in Kanjingsi Cave are from India. In other words, the prototype of Kanjingsi Cave's foreign monk statue is likely to be the Tianzhu monk, also known as Fan monk. And Hu monks rarely enter the upper society; on the contrary, the status and respect of Fan Monks are extremely high.

To sum up, the statues of patriarchs with local physical features in Kanjingsi Cave may have followed the stylized and modeled performance of depicting the Han monks. The images of the patriarchs with obvious exotic features have no hair and beards, which is influenced by the Han region, but the typical facial characteristics of foreign countries are still there. Therefore, the author believes that the images of the patriarchs with exotic appearance are the product of the combination of Fan monks and Han monks, and the painter's creation.

### 3. Conclusion

Analyzing the conception and prototype of the group portrait of the twenty-nine patriarchs of Kanjingsi Cave is an effective way to analyze the cave's deeper grotto

function and political metaphor.

At the same time, combined with the belief in Zen Buddhism, the support of the royal family, the expression of high relief, the three-quarters angle of the characters, and the embodiment of the inherent images of Jia She and E'nan in Kanjingsi Cave in historical biographies, we can see that Kanjingsi Cave has the dual nature of meditation and worship, and the statues of the twenty-nine patriarchs are not only the substitute for meditation, but also the object of worship.

Due to the long-term history, it is very difficult to determine the exact reference objects of the exotic images in the images of the patriarchs. However, according to the description of the appearance of the Hu people in the literature and the status of the foreign monks in different regions in the Tang Dynasty, the formation of the exotic images of the patriarchs can be roughly speculated.

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## ENDNOTES

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10. Wang Zhenguo, "Longmen Grottoes and Luoyang Buddhist Culture," (Zhengzhou: Zhongzhou Ancient Books Publishing House, 2006), 83.
11. *Ibid.*, 83.
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## 龍門石窟看經寺二十九祖師群像的構思與樣貌探析

郝鵬飛

**摘要：**龍門石窟看經寺內的二十九尊祖師像是中國石窟中現存最大的祖師群雕像。看經寺受方形禮拜窟影響後的禪窟設計，具有禪修和禮拜的雙重性質，祖師群像既是禪修的替身，也是被參拜的對象。祖師群像首先作為禪修的替身，其次才是被作為祭拜的對象。為了更好的表現出人體的姿態，以及最能體現出人物特點的眼睛和顴頰部位的輪廓，將祖師間一代一人付囑傳法的過程加以呈現，畫師選擇了四分之三側面的角度。從而使前去禪修的僧侶觀像時以達到絕對的真實感，引導禪修的僧侶早悟佛道。祖師像的樣貌的刻畫，可能一部分來自漢地高僧，一部分來自印度僧人。

**關鍵詞：**龍門石窟；看經寺；禪宗祖師像；構思；樣貌