

What's in a Buddha's Name: Case Study of a Sixth-Century Chinese Buddhist Stele from the Shaolin Monastery

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Among the Chinese sculptures in the Sackler Collections at Columbia University, there are several excellent examples of sixth- and seventh-century Buddhist steles that elucidate the unique character of this particular genre. In form, they are flat slabs, with either round or flat tops, and are all small to modest in size. The tallest one (cat. 2), more than one meter high, has at the top an intertwined dragon motif, which points to one of the origins of this type of monument, namely, the traditional Chinese stele that came into vogue in the latter part of the Han dynasty. With the introduction of Buddhism, the commemorative stone slab became a vehicle for local donors to record their devotional and commemorative acts. That one of the Columbia steles (cat. 21) is primarily a funerary monument in content and iconography (it also includes the intertwined dragon motif) attests to the original functions of such slabs; the presence of a reborn being on a lotus, however, suggests Buddhist beliefs in rebirth in the afterlife.

More typical Buddhist themes appear on other Columbia steles. On an example from the Eastern Wei dynasty (cat. 1), the obverse features a Buddha triad, while the three other sides include scenes from the Buddha's life events and of his previous lives (*jātaka* stories) and a monk meditating in a mountain cave, all of which exemplify the models of Buddhist behavior and practice. The Buddha group, in a recessed niche on many of them (cat. 1–2, 4–5), represents the devotees' focus. Complete with the depiction of the offering of incense, sometimes with the censer flanked by lions, such steles function like an altar group in a temple, a private chapel, or a Buddhist cave chapel. The group varies from three to five figures, usually with the Buddha flanked by two bodhisattvas, or two disciples and two bodhisattvas. Occasionally the pratyeka buddhas,

with their unique coiling headdress, are also present, suggesting the Mahāyāna doctrine of multiple paths to enlightenment, with the path of the "voice-hearers" (*śravaka*), those who seek enlightenment for themselves and become pratyeka buddhas, being subordinate to the path of the bodhisattvas, those who are destined to gain enlightenment but postpone it to save sentient beings. The superiority of the One-Vehicle doctrine, namely, the bodhisattva path, is a central tenet in the *Lotus Sutra*, which was widely popular at the time. On the early Tang stele (cat. 5), scenes of the Buddha's Parinirvāṇa are also depicted. In addition, the presence of Dizang Bodhisattva, the lord of the six realms of existence, indicates the emergence of this new cultic deity in the seventh century.

This small sampling of Buddhist steles shows a broad range in form and content. In the following essay, I shall examine closely one monument that yields further information on Buddhist beliefs and practices of the period. Even though this stele is now presumed to be lost, I intend to reconstruct its narrative content and importance.

ZHANG RONGQIAN BEI, 535 AD

This stele, a rectangular block, measured 95 centimeters high, 60 centimeters wide, and 22 centimeters deep (figs. 8a–c and 9). Dated to the year 535, it was dedicated by Zhang Rongqian in honor of his deceased father, Zhang Fashou. The monument was installed in the Shaolin Monastery near Luoyang, an important center of Buddhism since the late fifth century. Documented and published in the early twentieth century, it was lost in 1928 in a major fire that destroyed many of the temple buildings.¹ The stele is unique in that all its Buddha images are identified in inscriptions, which provide valuable information concerning both the textual

sources and the religious practice associated with it.

On the obverse of the stele, known only through a rubbing, is a recessed niche with the relief carving of a triad of Śākyamuni Buddha (Ch. Shijiamouni fo) flanked by Avalokiteśvara (Guanyin), the Bodhisattva of Compassion, and Mañjuśrī (Wenshu), the Bodhisattva of Wisdom (fig. 8a). Seven small Buddha images (Seven Buddhas of the Past) are carved above the niche in a horizontal row. Each of the two short sides, also known through rubbings, features an engraved image of the standing Amitāyus Buddha (Wuliangshou, figs. 8b–c). The reverse, known through a photograph and a rubbing, is carved with forty-two seated Buddha images in seven rows (fig. 9). The third and fourth niches in the third row show two Buddhas in a double niche, the Twin Buddhas motif showing Śākyamuni together with Prabhūtaratna (Duobao fo), the Buddha of Abundant Treasures, a Buddha of the past.

The dedicatory inscription² is recorded on one side of the stele (fig. 8b). The first few sentences concern word and image in the Buddhist tradition and are formulaic expressions frequently found in votive inscriptions of the time. They emphasize the edifying, evangelical purposes of both canonical texts and imagery. The inscription also explains that the monument was dedicated by Zhang Rongqian in commemoration of his father, Zhang Fashou, who had donated his house to be converted to a Buddhist temple some eighteen years earlier, in 517. The main images on the monument are a Buddha triad in the main niche and two Amitāyus Buddhas on the short sides. Although the rubbing omits many details of the relief carving, the treatment of the repetitive folds of the drapery is similar to other sculptures of the period, including the Columbia stele dated to 548 (cat. 1).³ The engraving below shows a censer, a pair of lions, a monk, a nun, and two donors: Zhang Fashou (on the far right) and his wife, Wei Qingji (on the far left). Zhang held the title *lushi canjun* (administrative supervisor), an official post at the local government. The monk standing next to him is Hongbao, who composed the text of the inscription. Standing next to Zhang's wife is a nun named Huirun.

Hongbao probably resided in the Wusheng Monastery, mentioned in the inscription. The organizer of

the stele project, he might have played a role in designing its iconographic program. In coordination with the chief donor, he also solicited contributions from other patrons in the community to sponsor the smaller Buddha images on the obverse. The majority of the donors were lay individuals; many came from the Zhang clan, but there were members of other local clans as well. In addition, three monks, including Hongbao, and two nuns were among the donors. Most of the lay donors dedicated the images to their parents, deceased parents, or deceased children. In a few instances, the dedications were extended to all ancestors or all sentient beings.

Dāna (charity) is one of the principal acts of Buddhist piety, especially for lay worshippers. Acts of donation promise spiritual gain in return.⁴ Furthermore, dedicating the merit accrued from making images to one's relatives corresponds to the Buddhist concept of *pariṇāma* (transference of merit). Such practices are also recorded in inscriptions of early Indian Buddhist art.⁵ In China, because of the tradition of ancestor worship and the Confucian emphasis on the virtue of filial piety, the notion of accumulating merit for one's parents or ancestors became one of the most powerful motivational forces for image making. From the inscription, it is apparent that raising this stele was a communal project, led by a prominent donor in conjunction with the clergy and other members of the community.

The inscription, however, does not mention the Shaolin Monastery, one of the most important centers of Buddhist learning throughout its history. According to tradition, the Shaolin Monastery was founded by the Northern Wei emperor Xiaowendi (r. 477–491) in 496 for the little-known Indian monk Fotuo, who accompanied the emperor when he left Pingcheng (present-day Datong) in Shanxi, in 493, to establish a new capital at Luoyang in central China. Xiaowendi built a temple for the monk as a quiet place to meditate. The name Shaolin referred to the location of the monastery, on the Shaoshi Peak of Mount Song, about sixty kilometers southeast of Luoyang, amid a dense wood. Soon after the founding of the monastery, a special hall was built for the purpose of translating Buddhist texts from Sanskrit and Central Asian languages into Chinese.

FIG. 8A
Zhang
Rongqian stele
(now lost),
from the
Shaolin
Monastery.
Eastery Wei
dynasty, dated
to 535. Rub-
bing of ob-
verse.

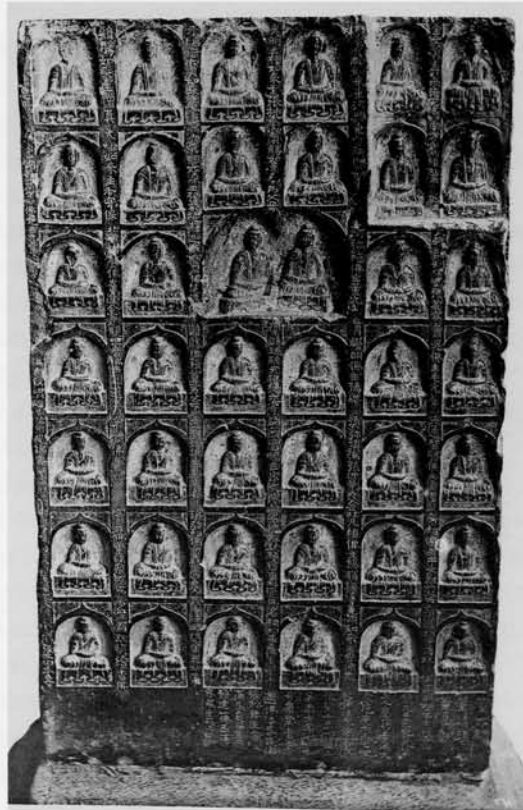


FIG. 8B
Rubbing of
side a of fig.
8A



FIG. 8C
Rubbing of side b of fig. 8A

FIG. 9
Photograph
of reverse of
fig. 8A



From 493 to 534, Luoyang served as the second capital for the Northern Wei dynasty. The Tuoba rulers of the Northern Wei, of the Xianbei tribe, were devout Buddhists, and supported Buddhism as a state religion. Aristocrats and commoners alike vied to spend extravagant sums to build monuments and dedicate images. The translation bureau, sponsored by the imperial court, attracted many foreign and Chinese monks, including the Indian monk Bodhiruci (Ch. Putiliuzhi, act. ca. 508–535), who headed the bureau and is known for translating a number of important Mahāyāna Buddhist texts. The Shaolin Monastery, situated in a scenic, quiet environment away from the city would have been an attractive place for monks. Most likely the Wusheng Monastery was a smaller temple in the vicinity. When Buddhist temples became dilapidated or fell into disuse, it was a common practice to move existing statues and monuments to larger establishments nearby. The weight of stone monuments in general impeded their being moved long distances. Even though no longer serving the original patrons or used as objects of devotion, these monuments were still perceived as retaining spiritual value and were honored as such. Stylistically, the carvings of the stele are characteristic of the Henan regional style in the second quarter of the sixth century.

ICONOGRAPHIC PROGRAM

The iconic groups shown on this stele—Śākyamuni–Avalokiteśvara–Mañjuśrī triad, Seven Buddhas of the Past, Amitāyus, Twin Buddhas, and Thousand Buddhas—are all motifs prevalent in fifth- and early sixth-century Chinese Buddhist art.

The identification of the Śākyamuni–Avalokiteśvara–Mañjuśrī triad in the main niche is unusual: most early Buddha triads are not identified. The same grouping is also found in another Chinese example dated 534, with one bodhisattva holding a lotus and another one a book, now in the Metropolitan Museum of Art.⁶ Celestial bodhisattvas such as Avalokiteśvara and Mañjuśrī are created as personifications of epithets describing the qualities of Buddha-nature, in this case compassion (*karuṇā*) and wisdom (*prajñā*)—the two ultimate conditions of Bodhisattvahood.⁷

Two vertical lines of inscriptions flanking the main niche identify the horizontal row of small images above the main niche as the Seven Buddhas of the Past. From top to bottom, on the right side are Vipāśin (Ch. Pishoshi), Śikhin (Ch. Shqi), and Viśvabhū (Ch. Pishepo); on the left are Krakucchanda (Ch. Julousun), Kanakamuni (Ch. Junahanmouni), and Kāśyapa (Ch. Jiaye). The names of the Buddhas of Seven Ages are more or less standard in various texts, and Śākyamuni, of the historical era, is considered as a Buddha of the Past. In sequence Śākyamuni comes last, but since the Buddha is represented in the main niche his name is not repeated.

On the two short sides, the engraved Buddha images are identified as Amitāyus Buddha (figs. 8b–c). Devotion to Amitāyus in China began quite early, as fifth-century cult images of this Buddha attest. Belief in the chance of rebirth in the Western Pure Land was soon to grip the Chinese imagination, and early representations of the Pure Land are also found on steles, engraved on flat surfaces and executed with a sure, even line.⁸ Their style is comparable to that of sculptural images of about the same time. A particularly fine example is the Henan Buddha pentad, dated to 543, in the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum (fig. 10). Similar in proportion and in the treatment of drapery, this work shares the same robust, columnar form that foreshadows the Northern Qi style of Henan and Hebei. The uniformity in figural style from the flat to the three-dimensional form seen in the *Zhang Rongqian bei* and the Gardner sculpture demonstrates an integrated Buddhist style achieved as a legacy of Northern Wei Buddhist art. This artistic synthesis is derived from a fusion of two phases of the Northern Wei Buddhist art style—a robust, sculptural style of the earlier, Yungang phase and a flatter, linear style of the later, Longmen phase in central China.

On the reverse are forty-two small Buddhas in seven rows; the identifying inscriptions are all legible except for two damaged ones on the left edge (fig. 9 and Appendix I). Typologically, this stele belongs to the group called Thousand Buddhas steles (*qianfo bei*), named for the numerous Buddha figures. The Thousand Buddhas motif, prominent in Northern dynasties Buddhist art, is often shown together with images of



FIG. 10 Votive stele with Buddha pentad. Eastern Wei dynasty, dated to 543. Limestone. ©Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, Boston. Photo: Thomas Lingner



FIG. 11 Exterior of Yungang Cave 19, with Śākyamuni, Prabhūtaratna, Seven Buddhas of the Past, Maitreya, and Thousand Buddhas. Northern Wei dynasty, early 6th century. Sandstone.

Buddha Śākyamuni, Maitreya (Ch. Mile, the Future Buddha), Seven Buddhas of the Past, and sometimes depictions of *jātaka* tales, the Buddha's birth stories. I have argued that in these contexts the Thousand Buddhas motif denotes the concept of the temporal succession of Buddhahood, with one Buddha of each eon (*kalpa*) succeeding one after another in eternity—a key concept developed in early Mahāyāna doctrine, which reached heightened expression at Yungang (fig. 11).⁹ Maitreya, however, is absent on this stele. Besides, some of the names of the Buddhas on the reverse indicate spatial rather than temporal categories, thus suggesting shifts in religious beliefs.

The French scholar Édouard Chavannes was the first to identify the *Lotus Sutra* (*Saddharmapuṇḍarīka sūtra*, or *Sutra of Lotus of the True Dharma*, hereafter *LS* (Ch. *Miaofa lianhua jing*),¹⁰ as a major source for the names of Buddhas found on this stele.¹¹ In addition, I have identified the *Golden Light Sutra* (*Suvarṇaprabhāsottama sūtra*, hereafter *GLS*; Ch. *Jinguangming jing*),¹² as another principal textual source. A diagram of the Buddhas' names and positions is in Appendix 1. The forty-two figures comprise Buddhas of the past and the present, the four cardinal directions, the sixteen regions of space, great celestial Buddhas and bodhisattvas, and buddhas-to-be when numerous beings attain enlightenment.

The founder of Buddhism, Śākyamuni is a historical personage. In Mahāyāna Buddhism, however, the Buddha—meaning the enlightened or awakened one—is gradually transformed into a transcendent being, universal and absolute. Unrestricted by time or space, the Buddha is ultimately equated with the dharma, the essence of the Buddha's teachings.¹³ The development of this theory of Buddhahood or Buddha-nature evolves over a long period of time and is one of the central concerns in Buddhology. The *Golden Light*, *Lotus* and *Garland* sutras are all early exegeses of this new theory of Buddhahood.

As the Buddha is no longer limited in time or space, a new concept arises of numerous Buddhas co-existing in different regions of space. The Twin Buddhas motif of the *Lotus Sutra* marks an incipient motif associated with this radical change in the Mahāyā-

na doctrine, while categories of Buddhas of the four directions, ten or sixteen regions of space represent further developments. In the Mahāyāna, the Buddha is increasingly interpreted as an omniscient, transcendent being in the cosmic dimension. Light imagery figures prominently in describing the Buddha's supramundane and magical power.

The lower half of the stele expresses the *Lotus Sutra's* theme of the Buddha's prophecy and promise of attainment of Buddhahood to a multitude of beings, listing their names as Buddhas in the future. Implicit in this theme are the sutra's principal teachings of the bodhisattva doctrine and the One-Vehicle theory. According to this doctrine, a worshipper takes an initial vow to follow the bodhisattva path, then embarks on a career of spiritual progress in ten stages.¹⁴ The *Lotus Sutra* also emphasizes that the bodhisattva path is not only superior to the other two paths—that of hearers (*śrāvakas*), whose goal of individual religious practice is to achieve *arhatship*, and that of those who achieve Buddhahood by themselves without helping others (*pratyeka buddhas*)—but is in fact the only path to salvation. By including the names of all the buddhas-to-be, the stele emphasizes the fulfillment of the Buddha's promise of enlightenment for all beings.

REPENTANCE RITUAL

In addition to offering a doctrinal interpretation of the iconographic program, I would also argue that the textual sources for these Buddha names suggest a link to the rites of repentance and confession (see W. L. Adamek's essay, pp. 30–32). Recent scholarship on this topic enables us to establish a firmer connection between such practices and Buddhist imagery.

Huiguo, or *chanhui*, refers to the rites of repentance of transgressions that have been part of the code of discipline for monks in India since ancient times. Over time, several forms of repentance have evolved: (1) communal repentance and confession within the monastic sangha; (2) metaphysical repentance of one's karmic past to a supramundane Buddha; (3) meditative repentance of incorrect attachments and understanding.¹⁵ In China, repentance and confession developed into elaborate public rituals, with the goals of re-

lieving the sufferings of both the living and the dead. The fifth and sixth centuries represent a formative period for the development of Chinese forms of confession ceremonies, and both the *Golden Light* and *Lotus* sutras are among the principal scriptures that provide the doctrinal basis for such practices. For example, chapter 3 of the *Golden Light Sutra*, a central chapter entitled *Chanhui pin*, focuses on confession. Ruciraketu Bodhisattva (Xinxiang pusa, Shining Banner Bodhisattva) dreams of a golden drum, and he hears the verses of repentance emanating from the sound of the drum when a man who looks like a Brahmin beats the drum. Through the performance of repentance rituals, which include the invocation and veneration of various Buddhas and bodhisattvas, the sutra promises the expiation of transgressions and the removal of impediments toward enlightenment. Even the golden light (*suvarṇaprabhāsa*) has the power to destroy all hindrances, thus promising the elimination of sins and alleviation of sufferings in the cosmic sense.¹⁶

The significance of the *Golden Light Sutra* in relation to the bodhisattva doctrine is further demonstrated by the fact that Dharmakṣema, who first translated this text into Chinese, was also instrumental in introducing the Bodhisattva Order to China. He ordained Daojin, the first Chinese monk to follow the bodhisattva precepts (*pusajie*), and instructed Daojin to repent transgressions to remove karmic obstructions in order to receive the bodhisattva precepts.¹⁷ Lay believers who took bodhisattva vows also practiced repentance and confession, in conjunction with other ritual activities that included maigre feasts called *baguan zai*, meditation, visualization, recitation of sutras, and incantation of Buddhas' names.¹⁸ Among the well-known figures who have practiced and written on repentance rituals are Monk Xuangao (402–444), who practiced the Golden Light Maigre Feast (*jinguangming zhai*) not long after the sutra was translated; Liang Wudi (464–549; r. 502–549) and Chen Wendi (522–566; r. 560–566) of the south; and the Tiantai master Zhiyi (538–597). Zhiyi has written a number of repentance manuals, including both the Golden Light Repentance (*Jingiangming chanfa*) and the Lotus Samādhi Repentance (*fahua sanwei chanfa*), based on the *Golden*

Light and the Lotus sutras, respectively. Zhiyi's extensive works on these liturgies signal both the popularity and the consolidation of such practices in the latter part of the sixth century.¹⁹ In Zhiyi's Golden Light Repentance, the list of Buddhas invoked comes from the Lakṣmi chapter, as are the ones recorded on the *Zhang Rongqian bei*.

Zhiyi's Procedure for Performing the Lotus Samādhi Repentance (*fahua sanwei xingfa*) is one of the most complete manuals for the practice of *samādhi* (meditation, visualization) and repentance included in his Great Calming and Contemplation (*Mohe zhiguan*).²⁰ Zhiyi's exegesis of the repentance rite includes both metaphysical and insight methods, emphasizing in particular the role of meditative experience. In the liturgical sequence, the participant is asked to:

1. Purify and adorn the sanctuary and participants (instead of a Buddha statue, a copy of the *Lotus Sutra* is placed on the altar)
2. Purify the body (of the participants)
3. Offer the Three Deeds
4. Invoke and salute the Three Jewels
5. Summon and invite deities of the *Lotus Sutra*
6. Praise merit and offer prayers
6. Venerate and salute deities of the *Lotus Sutra*
7. Confess sins
8. Perform ritual circumambulation
9. Recite the *Lotus Sutra*
10. Contemplate

Participants also practice seated meditation and visualization, interspersed among these steps. The writings of Zhiyi and his contemporaries make clear that repentance and confession rituals were becoming increasingly important in Chinese Buddhist practice in the middle and latter parts of the sixth century. Since the Buddha names on the reverse side of the *Zhang Rongqian bei* come almost exclusively from the *Golden Light* and the *Lotus* sutras, the donors who sponsored this stele were probably familiar with rites of repentance and confession based on these two texts. The recording of the Buddhas' and bodhisattvas' names on the monument thus commemorates the donors' religious beliefs and their devotional, ritual activities.

On another Buddhist stele, the *Chen Hailong zoaxiangbei* from Shanxi, dated to 562 (fig. 12), the names of Buddhas come from the *Sutra on the Universal Ornament of Attaining Buddhahood through Confession and Expiation of Sins* (*Datong fangguang chanhui miezui zhuangyan chengfo jing*).²¹ An apocryphal text that was popular in the fifth, sixth, and seventh centuries, the *Datong fangguang jing* became lost but has since been found among the manuscripts from the Dunhuang library and the Buddhist texts carved on stone at Fangshan in Hebei province. The title of the sutra indicates that it was specifically associated with rites of repentance and confession. Thus, the *Chen Hailong bei* is an additional example of a stele commemorating such activities.

By the late sixth and early seventh century, confession texts along with the names and images of buddhas invoked in such rites are recorded in rock-cut cave chapels and other sites.²² Confession rituals had now become closely intertwined with beliefs in the End of the Dharma (*mofa*) and the Three Levels Movement (*Sanjie jiao*), led by the charismatic religious leader Xinxing (540–594). The subsequent suppressions of this latter movement as a heresy made this religious sect an intriguing phenomenon in Chinese history.²³

Buddhist steles were usually set up in open public places, such as temple courtyards, where they could play a central role in the community's religious life and activities. The carvings of images of Buddhas and their names on the *Zhang Rongqian bei* and the *Chen Hailong zoaxiangbei* commemorate a religious community's activities, which include rites of repentance and confession, incantation of Buddhas' names, maigre feasts, and meditation. The invocation and veneration of the Buddhas and deities in confession rituals are ultimately derived from the practice of *buddhānusmṛti* (Ch. *nianfo*)—translated as “recollection,” “remembrance,” or “commemoration of the Buddha,” “calling the Buddha to mind,” or “meditation on the Buddha,” which also gives rise to the chanting of Amitābha's name in the popular Amitābha worship in later times. In his discussion of *buddhānusmṛti*, Paul Harrison notes that one aspect of this practice is very close to commemorating as a form of remembering and relates

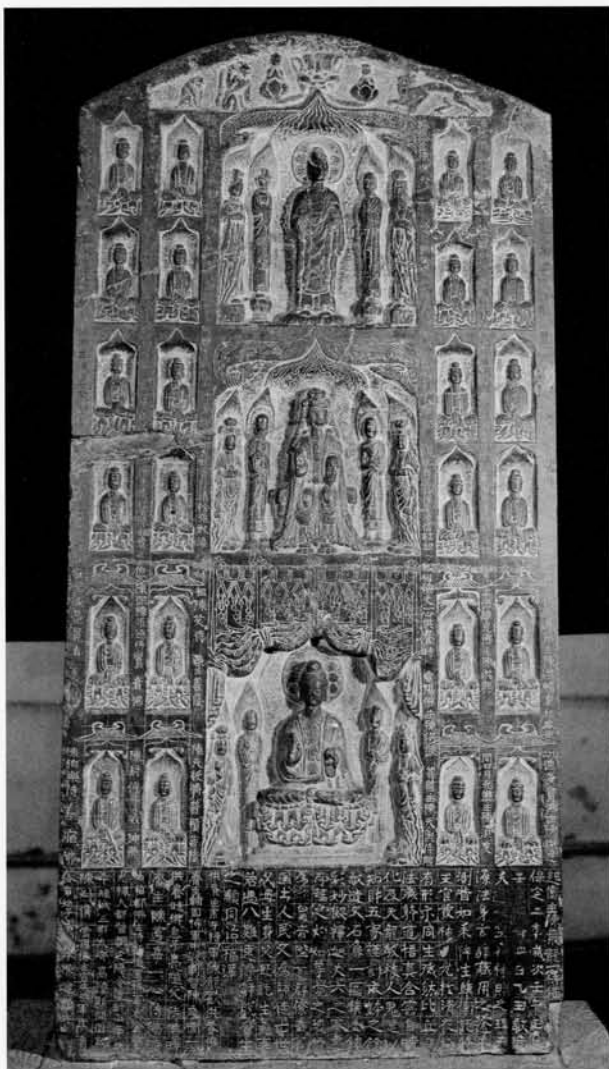


FIG. 12 *Chen Hailong* stele. Shanxi. Northern Zhou dynasty, dated to 562. Limestone

to the participant's identity.²⁴ The Indian form of *buddhānusmṛti* that Harrison analyzes is mostly performed in private, but he nevertheless notes the presence of a communal element: "the ritual and text connected with it were the shared property of the community that transmitted them, and their performance, even in solitude, marked one off as a participant in that community."²⁵ He further comments that the self-transformative experience resulting from this practice—such as purification of consciousness, understanding of emptiness, elimination of terror, and awakening—ultimately rests on the close relation between

memory and identity.²⁶ In sixth-century China, it is evident that the rites of contrition that involved the lay community were public and communal events. In that sense, the group performances of invoking, remembering, and meditating on the Buddhas, bodhisattvas, and other deities were acts of commemoration that engendered a communal identity. Buddhist steles such as the *Zhang Rongqian bei* or the *Chen Hailong bei* became physical emblems of the community's memory and identity. Furthermore, the custom of patronage required an individual sponsor for the carving of each Buddha image, thereby establishing a karmic bond between the donor and the named Buddha. The recording of such practices on Buddhist steles at this early date offers valuable information for appreciating the richness and complexity of religious life and activities in sixth-century China.

1 Chavannes, *Mission archéologique*, pls. 419–23; text 578–83. Tokiwa and Sekino (*Shina bukkyō shiseki*, 2: pl. 123) report that at the time the Zhang Stele was kept in the Kinara Hall of the compound. The inscriptions on the stele have been recorded in Wang Chang, 1805, *Jinshi cuibian* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju ed., 1985), *juan* 30; and Omura Seigai, *Shina bijutsushi: chōsohen* (Tokyo: Bussho kankōkai zūjōbu, 1916), 1: 252–53.

2 The inscription reads: “The transcendent truth is abstruse and broad, subtle and unfathomable. It is only with words that the doctrine can be propagated, and with images that the Buddha’s true form can be made manifest. Words explain the twelve primary causes and effects of existence, and images bring into shape the thirty-two *lakṣaṇa* [marks] of the Buddha. Is that not the ultimate expression of profound truth? For this noble reason Zhang Fashou, the donor of Wusheng Monastery, notwithstanding the five hindrances [desire, anger, drowsiness, excitability, and doubt], severed himself from the attachments of loves and labors. In the second year of Xiping [517], he donated his residence to convert it into a temple. With this magnanimous act he accrued many blessings. He wished that all [sentient beings] in this world would be saved and that, in seeking the truth, they would cultivate the thoughts of enlightenment. If it were not for the accumulation of merit over many kalpas [eons], how could he have accomplished such an exalted deed? Zhang’s son, Ronqian, practiced the virtues of harmony, compassion, and benevolence. He was also vigorous in the pursuits of profound truth [of the dharma]. With [this] stone he commemorated the wishes and deeds of his deceased father, and he commissioned the carving of the images of Śākyamuni, Avalokiteśvara, and Mañjuśrī. Furthermore, apparitions of Amitāyus Buddha were made manifest on the sides of the stone slab. May the Buddha’s benevolence extend to all sentient beings in this world as well as to deceased ancestors. By rendering these [deities] material forms, may all reach the realm of purity, understand the true wisdom [*sayun*], and attain enlightenment to become Buddhas.

[Written] in the second year of the Tianping reign of the Great Wei dynasty [535], the fourth month, the eleventh day, by Monk Hongbao.”

3 See also the *Cheng Zhe bei*, dated to 534, in Wong, *Chinese Steles*, fig. 5.7

4 Romila Thapar, “Patronage and Community,” in *The Powers of Art: Patronage in Indian Culture*, ed. Barbara Stoler Miller (Delhi, Oxford, and New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 19–34.

5 Gregory Schopen, “Filial Piety and the Monk in the Practice of Indian Buddhism: A Question of ‘Sinicization’ Viewed from the Other Side,” in *Bones, Stones, and Buddhist Monks* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1997), 56–71.

6 See Lukas Nickel, ed., *Return of the Buddha: The Qingzhou Discoveries* (London: Royal Academy of Arts, 2002), 68, fig. 56. In Kushan art, a small number of carvings show Śākyamuni flanked by Avalokiteśvara, holding a lotus, and Mañjuśrī, holding a book or a sword; see Rhi Juhyung, “Bodhisattvas in Gandhāran Art: An

Aspect of Mahāyāna in Gandhāran Buddhism,” in Pia Brancaccio and Kurt Behrendt, eds., *Gandhāran Buddhism: Archaeology, Art, Texts* (Vancouver and Toronto: University of British Columbia Press, 2006), 168, fig. 7.15.

7 From the latter part of the seventh and eighth centuries onward, however, the flanking bodhisattvas for Śākyamuni in Chinese Buddhist art are usually Mañjuśrī and Samanthabhadra (Ch. Puxian), reflecting the influence of the Huayan doctrine.

8 Wong, *Chinese Steles*, chap. 10.

9 See *ibid.*, 73–77, 123–27.

10 The most popular Chinese version is that translated by Kumārajīva (344–413), *T.* 262; several English translations are available, of which I consult Leon Hurvitz’s, in *Scripture of the Lotus Blossom of the Fine Dharma* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1976).

11 Chavannes, *Mission archéologique*, 581–83.

12 The text was translated into Chinese by Dharmakṣema (Ch. Tanwuchan, 385–433) in the early fifth century (*T.* 663) and again by Yijing (635–713; *T.* 665). R. E. Emmerick’s English translation is based on a Sanskrit version edited by Johannes Nobel, *The Sūtra of Golden Light* (London: Luzac, 1970).

13 In the theory of the three bodies (*trikāya*) of the Buddha, the most important form of the Buddha, the *dharmakāya* (truth body), equates the Buddha as the doctrine itself, absolute and universal. The other two forms are *sambhogakāya* (enjoyment body), the supramundane form of Buddha revealed for the enjoyment of doctrine while preaching to assemblies of bodhisattvas and *devas*, and *nirmāṇakāya* (transformation body), the form Buddhas assume to sentient beings according to their spiritual levels and needs. Each of the two later translations of the *Golden Light Sūtra* has a chapter on the three bodies theory; the early translation, on which the stele is based, does not. It was also in the 530s that *The Awakening of Faith Sūtra* (*T.* 1666), another seminal text on this theory, was being composed in China. See Nagao Gadjin, “On the Theory of Buddha-Body,” *Eastern Buddhist* 6, no. 1 (1973), 25–53.

14 The bodhisattva doctrine is explored in many other Buddhist texts, of which the *Garland Sūtra* is the most important Mahāyāna treatise. See Har Dayal, *The Bodhisattva Doctrine in Buddhist Sanskrit Literature* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1932), and also Edward Conze’s discussion of the bodhisattva, *Thirty Years of Buddhist Studies* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1968), 54–59.

15 For an overview, see David W. Chappell’s entry on “Repentance and Confession,” in Robert E. Buswell Jr., ed., *Encyclopedia of Buddhism*, 2 vol. (New York: Macmillan Reference USA, 2004), 2: 721–23. See also Kuo Li-ying, *Confession et contrition dans le bouddhisme chinois du Ve au Xe siècle* (Paris: Ecole française d’Extrême-Orient, 1994), and Stephen Teiser, *The Ghost Festival in Medieval China* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), 31–35.

16 Emmerick, trans., *Sūtra of Golden Light*, 11.

¹⁷ Huijiao (497–554), comp., *Gaoseng zhuan*, juan 2 (T. 2059: 336, vol. 50). See also Nobuyoshi Yamabe, "Visionary Repentance and Visionary Ordination in the Brahmā Net Sūtra," in William M. Bodiford, ed., *Going Forth: Visions of Buddhist Vinaya* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2005), 17–39.

¹⁸ Michihata Ryōshū, *Chūgoku bukkyō shisōshi no kenkyū* (Kyoto: Heirakuji shoten, 1979), 381–94; Funayama Toru, "Rikuchō jidai ni okeru bosatsu-kai no juyō katei—Ryūsō/Nansei ki o chūshin ni," *Tōhō gakuhō* 67 (1995), 6–51.

¹⁹ See Daniel B. Stevenson, "The T'ien-T'ai Four Forms of Samādhi and Late North-South Dynasties, Sui, and Early Tang Buddhist Devotionalism" (Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 1987); and Shi Darui, *Tiantai chanfa zhi yanjiu* (Taipei: Fagu wenhua shiye gongsi, 2000).

²⁰ T. 1911. See Stevenson, "T'ien-T'ai Four Forms of Samādhi"; Shi Darui, *Tiantai chanfa zhi yanjiu*, chap. 4, section 1; and Shengkai, *Zhongguo fojiao chanfa yanjiu* (Beijing: Zongjiao wenhua chubanshe, 2004), 79–160.

²¹ T. 441: 308c, 258b, vol. 10 (trans. anon., Liang dynasty), and T. 2871, vol. 85: 1341c–1342a (trans. anon., Liang dynasty), respectively. See this author's "Guanyin Images in Medieval China, Fifth to Eighth Centuries," in William Magee, ed., *Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara (Guanyin) and Modern Society*. Conference Proceedings, English volume (Taipei: Chung-Hwa Institute of Buddhist Studies, 2007), 266–70. The *Chen Hailong bei* is illustrated in Zhongguo meishu quanji bianji weiyuanhui, ed. *Zhongguo meishu quanji, diaosu bian*, vol. 3: *Wei, Jin, Nanbeichao diaosu* (Beijing: Renmin meishu chubanshe, 1988), pl. 139.

²² Among the earliest cave chapels to record confessional practice are Baoshan Dazhusheng ku in Anyang, Henan, and Fangshan shiku in Hebei; see Li Yumin, "Baoshan Dazhusheng ku chutan," *Gugong xueshu jikan* 16, no. 2 (1998), 1–52. Lothar Ledderose and Petra Rösch at the University of Heidelberg are also conducting research and workshops on Buddhist confession rituals at Chinese Buddhist cave temples, including the Fanshan cave temples. See also Williams, "Mea Maxima Vikalpa."

²³ See Yabuki Keiki, *Sankaikyō no kenkyū* (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1927). A more recent work is Jamie Hubbard, *Absolute Delusion, Perfect Buddhahood: The Rise and Fall of a Chinese Heresy* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2000).

²⁴ Paul Harrison, "Commemoration and Identification in *Buddhānusmṛti*," in *The Mirror of Memory: Reflections on Mindfulness and Remembrance in Indian and Tibetan Buddhism*, ed. Janet Gyatso (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992), 228–31.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 230.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

Appendix I

Diagram by Dorothy C. Wong of reverse of *Zhang Rongqian bei* (see pp. 21–22)

1. [] [] 如來 ([] [] rulai; Tathāgatha?)	2. 難勝如來 [Nansheng rulai; Tathāgatha Sudurjayā] GLS, ch. 8	3. 無垢熾寶如來 (Wugou chibao rulai) Wugou chibao guangming wangxiang rulai 無垢熾寶光明王相如來 is read as one name: Tathāgatha Vimalojjvala-ratnasuvarṇabhāsaketu GLS, ch. 8	4. 光明王相如來 (Guangming wangxiang rulai)	5. 金焰光明如來 (Jinyan guangming rulai; Tathāgatha Jambusuvarṇa- dhvajakāncanabhāsa) GLS, ch. 8	6. 金山寶蓋如來 (Jinshan baogai rulai; Tathāgatha Suvarṇa- ratnākaraçchatrakṇūta) GLS, ch. 8
7. 金華焰光相如來 (Jinhua yanguang rulai; Tathāgatha Suvarṇa- puspollalaraṇśmiketu) GLS, ch. 8	8. 大炬如來 (Daju rulai; Tathāgatha Mahāpradīpa) GLS, ch. 8	9. 寶相如來 (Baoliang rulai; Tathāgatha Ratnaketu) GLS, ch. 8	10. 寶勝如來 (Baosheng rulai; Tathāgatha Ratnaśikhin) GLS, ch. 8	11. 東方阿閼如來 (Dongfang Achu rulai; Tathāgatha Akṣobhya) GLS, ch. 8; LS, ch. 7; Buddha of the East	12. 南方寶相如來 (Nanfang Baoliang rulai; Tathāgatha Ratnaketu) GLS, ch. 8; Buddha of the South
13. 西方無量壽佛 (Xi Wuliangshou fo; Amitāyus Buddha) GLS, ch. 8; Buddha of the West	14. 北方微妙聲佛 (Bei Weimiao sheng fo; Dundubhisvara Buddha) GLS, ch. 8; Buddha of the North	15. 釋迦多寶二佛 (Shijia Duobao erfo; Śākyamuni and Prabhūta- ratna) LS, ch. 11	16. [See 15]	17. 阿彌陀佛 (Amituo fo; Amitābha Buddha) LS, ch. 7; Buddha of the West	18. 文殊師利佛 (Wenshu shili fo; Mañjuśrī) LS, chief interlocutor
19. [] [] [] 那佛 ([] [] na fo; Vairocana Buddha?) <i>Garland Sūtra!</i>	20. 觀世音佛 (Guanshiyin fo; Avalokiteśvara) LS, ch. 25	21. 難勝佛 (Nansheng fo; Buddha Sudurjayā) <i>Foming jing!</i>	22. 藥師琉璃光佛 (Yaoshi liuliguang fo; Bhaiṣajyaguru)	23. 日月燈明佛 (Riyue dengming fo; Candrasūryapradīpa, Sun- and-Moon-Glow) LS, ch. 1; 20,000 Buddhas of the past, all with same name	24. 普光佛 (Puguang fo, also known as Puming fo 普明佛; Samantaprabhāsa) LS, ch. 8; name of 1,200 arhats and 500 arhats when they attain Buddhahood
25. 華光佛 (Huaguang fo; Padma- prabha) LS, ch. 3; name of Śāriputra when he attains Buddhahood	26. 常滅佛 (Changmie fo; Nityapari- nirvṛta) LS, ch. 7; Buddha of the South	27. 虛空佛 (Xukong fo; Ākāṣapratīṣṭhita) LS, ch. 7; Buddha of the South	28. 師子音佛 (Shiziyin fo; Siṃhaghoṣa) LS, ch. 7; Buddha of the Southeast	29. 須彌頂佛 (Xumiding fo; Sumerukūta) LS, ch. 7; Buddha of the East	30. 大通智勝佛 (Datong zhisheng fo; Mahābhijñānābhībhū) LS, ch. 7; a Buddha of the Past
31. 雲自在王佛 (Yunjizaiwang fo; Meghasvararāja) LS, ch. 7; Buddha of the North	32. 雲自在佛 (Yunjizai fo; Meghasvara) LS, ch. 7; Buddha of the North	33. 須彌相佛 (Xumixiang fo; Merukalpa) LS, ch. 7; Buddha of the Northwest	34. 多摩羅跋耨檀香 (Duomoluoba zhantanxiang tongshen fo; Tamālapatracandanagand hābhijña) LS, ch. 7; Buddha of the Northwest	35. 梵相佛 (Fanxiang fo; Brahma- dhvaja) LS, ch. 7; Buddha of the Southwest	36. 帝相佛 (Dixiang fo; Indradhvaja) LS, ch. 7; Buddha of the Southwest
37. 寶藏如來 (Baocang rulai; Tathāgatha Ratnagarbha) LS, ch. 9; name of Buddhas conferred to 2,000 learners and adepts	38. 多摩羅跋耨檀香佛 (Duomoluoba zhantanxiang fo; Tathāgatha Tamālapatra- candanagandha) LS, ch. 6; name of Buddha conferred to Maudgalyāyana	39. 閻浮那提金光如來 (Yanfunati jingguang rulai; Tathāgatha Jambūnada-prabhāsa) LS, ch. 6; name of Buddha conferred to Kātyāyana	40. 名相如來 (Mingxiang rulai; Tathāgatha Śāsiketū) LS, ch. 6; name of Buddha conferred to Subhūti	41. 光明如來 (Guangming rulai; Tathāgatha Raśmiprabhāsa) LS, ch. 6; name of Buddha conferred to Mahākāśyapa	42. 寶華功德海琉璃 (Baohua gongdehai liuli jingshan guangming rulai; Ratnakusumagu- naśāgaravainḍūrya- kanakagirisuvarṇa- kāncana prabhāsaśrī) GLS, ch. 8; a Buddha of the Past

NOTE: A pair of square brackets denotes an illegible character; a character enclosed in brackets has been deciphered on the basis of context.

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