

Fall 2022 Arts of Asia Lecture Series  
Forging New Connections: Asia in the First Millennium of the Common Era  
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**Xuanzang's World: Art and Pilgrimage in Tang China**

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**Xuanzang (602–664CE)**

- 629 leaves the Tang empire and travels to India;
- 645 returns to the Tang capital Chang'an, resides at Hongfu Monastery;
- 646 completes *The Great Tang Records on the Western Regions*;
- 648 becomes head monk of the Great Ci'en Monastery, establishes a Translation Bureau. • 652 builds the Great Wild Goose Pagoda;
- 656 moves to Ximing Monastery.

**Monarchs of China and India in the 7th century**

- Li Shimin 李世民: Emperor Taizong (b.598–649, r.626–649)
- Li Zhi 李治: Emperor Gaozong (r.649–683)
- Harṣa (b.590—647CE, r. 606–647): Ruler of large empire of Northern India at Kannauj

**Important Figures of the 7th century Tang Court**

- Wang Xuance 王玄策 – Diplomat to India from the Tang court.
- Song Fazhi 宋法智– Painter who accompanied Wang Xuance.
- Su Changshi 蘇常侍 – Eunuch who sponsored the making of clay tablets.
- Chu Suiliang 褚遂良– Imperial calligrapher who followed Wang Xizhi's style.
- Yan Liben 閻立本 – Court painter, architect, and minister.

**Buddhist Sites in South Asia**

- Lumbini Gardens—Birth of the Buddha
- Mahabodhi Temple, Bodhgaya, Magadha—Enlightenment of the Buddha
- Deer Park, Sanarth, country Vārāṇasī—First Sermon of the Buddha
- Kuśinagara—The Buddha's Nirvana
- Vulture Peak, country of Magadha—where the Buddha preached the Lotus Sutra
- Nalanda—center for Buddhist learning, where Xuanzang studied.

**Seven Buddhist Images Xuanzang Brings Back to Chang'an**

- 1) A golden statue of the Buddha, after the image of the shadow left in the Dragon Cave of the Prāgbodhi Mountain in the kingdom of Magadha, 3 chi 3 cun tall (approximately 97 cm);
- 2) A golden statue of the Buddha, which resembles the image of Buddha as he is turning the Wheel of the Law in the Deer Park in the country of Vārāṇasī;
- 3) A sandalwood image of the Buddha, after the image commissioned by King Udayana when he was desirous to see the Buddha in the country of Kauśambī, 2 chi 9 cun tall (approx. 85cm);
- 4) A silver statue, after the image of the standing Buddha descending a stairway from [Trāyastriṃśa] Heaven at Sāṃkāśya in the country of Kapitha, 4 chi tall (approx. 117.5 cm);

- 5) A gold statue, after the image of the Buddha preaching the Lotus Sūtra on Vulture Peak in the country of Magadha, 3 chi 5 cun tall (approx. 103 cm);
- 6) A sandalwood statue, in the image of the Buddha's shadow in a cave after his defeat of a venomous dragon in the country of Nagarahāra, 15 cun tall (approx. 44 cm);
- 7) A sandalwood statue, in the image of the Buddha touring and preaching in the city of the country of Vaiśālī.

### Some of Xuanzang's Translation Projects

- T30n1579 瑜伽師地論 Treatise on the Foundation for Yoga Practitioners (translation)
- T20n1071 十一面神呪心經 Eleven-Faced Avalokiteśvara Heart Dharani Sutra (translation)
- T15n0592 天請問經 Questioning Devas Sutra (translation)

### Important Terms

- Wang Xizhi 王羲之(303–361 CE)—famous calligrapher, whose work is promoted by Taizong
- Stūpa/Pagoda 塔 *ta* – devotional building to house relics of the Buddha
- Gupta style 笈多風格 *jiduo fengge* –sculpture style related to the Gupta Empire (4–6th cent.)
- Merit-Clay Tablets 善業泥 *shanyeni*
- Indian Buddha Images 印度佛像 *yindu foxiang*
- Tathāgata 世尊 *shizun* – “thus come one”, a title of the Buddha
- True Thusness 真如 *zhenru* – Buddhist concept denoting ultimate reality
- Dharma-relics 法舍利 *fasheli*– the Buddha's words, which can take up the quality of relics.
- Miraculous Image 瑞像 *ruixiang*– a special type of images with extraordinary qualities in China
- The Dependent-Origination Verse 緣起法頌 *Yuanqi fasong*
- Transformation Tableau 變相 *bianxiang* – large images that visualize Buddhist sutras.

### Recommended Readings

Brose, Benjamin. *Xuanzang: China's Legendary Pilgrim and Translator*. First edition. Boulder, Colorado: Shambhala Publications, 2021.

Choi, Sun-ah. “Zhenrong to Ruixiang: The Medieval Chinese Reception of the Mahābodhi Buddha Statue.” *The Art Bulletin* 97 no.4 (2015): 364–87.

Foong, Ping. “Materiality as Objecthood in a Buddhist Clay tablet: From Tang Calligraphic Style to an imaginary encounter with Dunhuang.” In *The Social Life of Chinese Objects*, Lyce Jankowski and Alice Bianchi, eds. European Studies in Art and Archaeology Monograph Series no. 3. Leiden and Boston: Brill Press. Forthcoming.

Ning, Qiang. *Art, Religion, and Politics in Medieval China: The Dunhuang Cave of the Zhai Family*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2004.

Shen, Hsueh-man. *Authentic Replicas: Buddhist Art in Medieval China*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2019.

Whitfield, Roderick. “Ruixiang at Dunhuang.” In *Function and Meaning in Buddhist Art*, edited by K. R. van Kooij and H. van der Veere, 149–56. Groningen: Egbert Forsten, 1995.

Wong, Dorothy. *Buddhist Pilgrim-Monks as Agents of Cultural and Artistic Transmission*. Singapore: NUS Press, 2018.