

Fall 2025 Arts of Asia Lecture Series
It's Magic: Art and the Power of Transformation
Sponsored by the Society for Asian Art

Modes of Transformation in Chinese Buddhist Painting

Richard Vinograd
Stanford University
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Competitive magical performances, illusions, and transformations:

Magical Competition between Śāriputra and Raudrākṣa: Handscroll and mural painted versions at Dunhuang, 7th-9th c. CE

Buddha with Temptations of Mara, banner painting from Dunhuang, early 10th c. CE

Transformation Bodies and Emanations: Nirmāṇakāya (Ch. *huashen* 化身)

Ten Wisdom Kings from Water and Land Ritual Paintings at Baoning Temple, Shanxi, Ming dynasty, mid 15th c.

Zhang Shengwen, *Long scroll of Buddhist Images*, completed by 1173-76 CE

Wu Bin (active ca.1568 - 1621) *Album of Twenty-five Deities of the Śūrangama Sutra (Twenty-five Dharma Gates of Perfect Wisdom)*

Manifestations and (Re)incarnations

Zhou Jichang, *Luohan Manifesting Himself as Eleven-Headed Guanyin* Bodhisattva, late 12th c.

Luo Ping, (1733-1799), *Portraits of Jin Nong and Ding Jing as Luohans*, after Guanxiu, ca. 1763

Ding Guanpeng, *Portrait of the Qianlong Emperor as a Bodhisattva Watching the Washing of an Elephant*, 1750

Attributed to Lang Shining (Giuseppe Castiglione) and others, *Portrait of the Qianlong Emperor as Manjushri*, ca. 1750, thangka painting

Suggested Readings:

Sarah E. Fraser, "Formulas of Creativity: Artist's Sketches and Techniques of Copying at Dunhuang," *Artibus Asiae*, vol. LIX, 3/4, 2000, pp. 189-224.

Wu Hung, *Spatial Dunhuang: Experiencing the Mogao Caves* (Seattle, 2023), Ch. 5, "Pictorial Space," pp. 239-286.

Hui-Chi Lo, "Shifting Identities in Wu Bin's Album of the Twenty-Five Dharma Gates of Perfect Wisdom," *Archives of Asian Art*, Vol. 66, No. 1 (2016), pp. 107-151.

Richard Vinograd, *Facing China: Truth and Memory in Portraiture* (London, 2022), Ch. 5, "Critical Reflections: Portraits in Question," pp. 232-273.