

Arts of Asia Lecture Series Fall 2012
The Culture and Arts of China: From the Neolithic Age Through the Tang Dynasty
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Tang Dynasty: Continuity and Change after An Lushan (755-63)

Burial practices in mid-late Tang: Burial figures from AAMSF and elsewhere (note changing body types, introduction of *sancai* 三彩 glazes (700-750), return of unglazed figures after the An Lushan 安祿山 rebellion (755-63), rarity of burial figures in 9th century.

Miraculous Images in Tang: Dunhuang 敦煌, Cave 237; and Cave 17 (Manuscript Cave), banner, Stein Collection, British Museum

Nanzhao 南詔 Kingdom, Dali, Yunnan (separated from Tang in 751; subdued in 901):

The “Luck of Yunnan” (see two AAMSF images that replicate this famous image in Srivijayan style)

Cf. Zhang Shengwen 張勝溫, *The Long Roll of Buddhist Images* (aka The Origin and Flow of the Dharma Picture), handscroll, ink and colors on paper, 12th c. (National Palace Museum, Taiwan), picturing the Luck of Yunnan (Acuoye Guanyin 阿嵯耶觀音)

The Power of Relics and the Development of Esoteric Buddhism:

Dunhuang, Cave 158: Parinirvana of the Buddha, Middle Tang (Tibetan period: 781-847), with mural of bodhisattvas, the Buddha’s disciples, foreign kings.

Longmen, Henan: Fengxian Temple 河南龍門奉先寺 (patronized by Empress Wu Zetian 武則天, 673-6); **Leigutai 雷鼓台** (also built by Empress Wu, ca. 700; see Buddha head in AAMSF, B60S38+).

Famensi 法門寺 (Dharma Gate Monastery), Fengxian, Shaanxi: major donations by Empress Wu Zitian (661) and Tang Emperors Yizong 懿宗 and his son Xizong 僖宗 (873)

Ming pagoda (pre-1981); collapsed pagoda (post-1981 earthquake); new pagoda (1982-)

Underground Palace (*digong* 地宮): sealed since 874 (by Tang emperor Xizong)

Pagoda foundations (round—late Ming, 16th c., square—Tang era, 618-906) Section of foundations (dome-shaped—late Ming)

Front chamber: Guardian lion, stone with polychrome

“**Asoka Stupa,**” stone; containing bronze pagoda and partial gilt silver coffin-shaped reliquary (with *yinggu* 影骨 “shadow bone”)

Middle chamber: Stone screen containing **reliquary with *kalavinka*,** partial gilt silver (contains another “shadow bone”).

Bodhisattva with relic tray, partial gilt silver, dated 873 (Yizong’s reign)

Rear chamber: Four ewers (*arghya*) w/*vajra* set in each of the four corners

Monk’s staffs (*khakkara*), gilt metal (found leaning against the chamber door)

Set of 8 nesting reliquaries, holding a third “shadow bone” of jade with 7 stars of Big Dipper, found in the middle of the rear chamber.

1. Sandalwood with partial gilt hinges (not included in photo—deteriorated)
2. Four Heavenly Kings (*tianwang* 天王), gilt silver
3. Plain, gilt silver
4. Śākyamuni, Mañjuśrī, Samantabhadra, Buddha, partial gilt silver
5. Cintāmaṇicakra (Wish-Granting Avalokiteśvara/Guanyin), Vairocana Medicine Buddha and Śākyamuni, gold
6. Gilt silver decorated with inlaid flowers
7. Stone decorated with inlaid flowers
8. Miniature pagoda-shaped container holding “shadow bone”

Set of 5 reliquaries, inc. crystal & jade (holding the *linggu* 靈骨 “Spirit bone”) found in a secret niche under the back wall of the chamber.

Mandala theory of the reliquaries: The 8-box set = the Womb (Garbhadhātu) Mandala and the 5-box set = the Diamond (Vajradhātu) Mandala.

Mandala = a ritual enclosure or platform; a visual representation/diagram of such an enclosure. Part of esoteric (tantric, *mijiao* 密教) practice introduced by Indian monks Śubhakarasiṃha, Amoghavajra, Vajrabodhi and others in High Tang).

Other imperial gifts to the finger bone:

Ritual objects: Ewers with vajras, alms-bowl with imperial inscription of Yizong, censer

Gilt silver luxury objects: Woven silver and gold wire basket, boxes (one with Emperor Yizong gift inscription in ink (Compare to cups in AAMSF), lotiform bowls on spiral wire stems, silver lotuses.

Luxury objects in other media: Glass bowl and stand; glass plate in Near Eastern style; *mise* 秘色 (“secret color”) stoneware bottle vase; *kasaya* (monk’s mantle, silk with gold couched thread); short jacket (silk with gold couched thread).

Tea set, partial gilt silver: tea canister shaped like a basket (dated to reign of Yizong, 859-73; compare to AAMSF mirror with birds, B62B3); tea mill (dated by inscription to 868), tea sifter, condiment container (dated by inscription to 868); made in the imperial palace’s Wensiyuan 文思院)

819: Han Yu’s 韓愈 Memorial Concerning the Buddha’s Fingerbone

845: Huichang 會昌 Persecution of Buddhism

Guan Xiu 貫休 (832-912), *Sixteen Luohan* 十六羅漢 (Arhat), hanging scrolls, ink and colors on silk (Japanese Imperial Household Collection); and copies made under Qing Qianlong 清乾隆 (ca. late 1750s).

Sources: Robert Sharf, “The Buddha’s Finger Bones at Famen-si and the Art of Chinese Esoteric Buddhism,” *Art Bulletin* (March 2011).

James Watt, *China: Dawn of a Golden Age: 200-750* (2007).