CHAPTER THREE

HOPING FOR HEAVEN, LANDING IN HELL

As the worshipper would proceed around the grotto from the works related to the repaying of filial debt seen in the Kindness of Parents and Repayment of Kindness tableaux, he or she would encounter first a largely iconic work devoted to the Pure Land. Located on the far end of the north side of Great Buddha Bend, the relief depicting the Pure Land is juxtaposed with the relief depicting hell.[1] Of the thirty-one numbered sculpted works at Great Buddha Bend, these two are numbered eighteen and twenty, with the small relief numbered nineteen joining them (figs. 53-55).[2] As with the two preceding tableaux, there is an inherent logic to considering these two works as a pair – the most obvious being the ritual context surrounding attempts to alleviate the suffering of the deceased by appeasing the Ten Kings, thereby speeding them onto rebirth in the heavens of the Pure Land.[3]

The whole theory behind the Ten Kings revolves around the premise that every soul passes in front of each of the kings at ten predetermined

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[1]This placement of the Pure Land tableau on the north side of the grotto follows along with similar imagery found painted as north wall backdrops in Song dynasty Pure Land halls.

[2]This numbering system was put in place by a team of archaeologists headed by Yang Jialuo. See The Discovery (1945) of 6216 Statues Carved on Rocks During the T'ang and Sung Dynasties at Ta-Tsu (Taibei: Encyclopedia Sinica Institute, 1968).

[3]Stephen Teiser has been very thorough in his discussions regarding the various rituals related to hell in Chinese Buddhist practice. His main works include The Ghost Festival in Medieval China (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988) as well as The Scripture on the Ten Kings (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1994) and "The Growth of Purgatory" in Religion and Society in T'ang and Sung China, eds. Patricia Buckley Ebrey and Peter N. Gregory, 115-45 (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1993). During the Song

points over a three-year duration. These ten dates correspond to the "seven-sevens" - 7, 14, 21, 28, 35, 42, and 49 - designating the days after one is deceased, plus the 100th day, one year and three year anniversaries. On these days, offerings need to be made to each of the Ten Kings. This numbering system appears to be standard within both the longer and shorter versions of the Scripture on the Ten Kings.[4] The idea of interim stages is a Buddhist concept that was given a Chinese twist by the addition of judges in the guise of the Ten Kings. In India, there were rites connected to passing from one existence to the next; however, the Chinese added a bureaucratic format, perhaps drawing on Daoist precedents.[5] Bureaucratic blunders and inordinate amounts of paperwork existed in the afterlife much as they did in this life, and therefore, souls moved slowly through the courts, much as they would have in the actual Song legal system.[6]

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dynasty, rites involving offerings to the Ten Kings while alive in an effort to alleviate later suffering were also used.

[4]See Yongwu Huang, ed., *Dunhuang bao zang*, 140 vols. (Taibei: Xin wen feng chu ban she, 1981-1986), vol. 23 - 574a-b, vol. 36 - 475a, vol. 45 - 143b, and vol. 109 - 434b.

[5]Teiser, "The Growth of Purgatory," 117. Teiser points to the early Daoist notion of heaven periodically taking stock of man's actions and recording them for posterity, to be used regularly in judging one's lifespan. Myron Cohen points out that not all of the hellish underworld was confined to a bureaucratic model, with the notion of Guanyin as escort of the redeemed into the Pure Land being one example of a non-bureaucratic Buddhist twist. See Cohen, "Soul and Salvation: Conflicting Themes in Chinese Popular Religion" in Death Ritual in Late Imperial and Modern China, 180-202. James L. Watson and Evelyn S. Rawski, eds. (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1988): 185.

[6]Teiser, The Scripture on the Ten Kings, 1 and 5. Brian E. McKnight in Law and Order in Sung China (Cambridge, England and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992): 184 notes that miscarriages of justice were common enough in the Song era, an example being that of innocent farmers accused of banditry, bound and flogged. This comparison to the Chinese judicial system was not unique to the Song, but continued up to at least the nineteenth century, wherein C.F. Gordon Cumming remarked that the "the four hundred millions of China believe practically that the departed roam at large in a realm where devils and demons rule, and where they are as entirely dependent on the gifts of their friends as are the captives in a Chinese prison." See Cumming, Wanderings in China (Edinburgh and London: William Blackwood, 1888): 217. Laufer describes later theatrical

Less obvious in inherent logic with regard to the placement of these two tableaux is the fear factor. The worshipper will first be shown the beauties and wonders of the Pure Land only to then be presented with the horrors of hell. Such a powerful contrast would most likely have had an edifying effect, and it is for this reason that I have titled the following Pure Land tableau discussion "Hoping for Heaven", while the more likely scenario of encountering the Ten Kings of Hell and the eighteen hells below is titled "Landing in Hell". The obverse is also true albeit less common – that one might imagine themselves or their loved ones as being among the select few who pass directly from judgement in hell into the bliss of the Pure Land. Both scenarios incurred a certain amount of doubt among the faithful, thereby prompting them to insure the more pleasant fate by performing the necessary rituals.

Similar to the two works discussed in the preceding chapter, both of these tableaux contain large-scale iconic imagery while at the same time incorporating narrative elements to which the worshipper is drawn (figs. 56 and 57). Continuing with the format found in the first chapter, I will begin with detailed descriptions of the two tableaux, and conclude with a discussion of appropriate theoretical narrative models along with an analysis of the utilization of text and image.

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depictions of an innocent being tortured by being ground under a pestle, only to be saved by the appearance of a lotus blossoming forth from his chest. See Berthold Laufer, Oriental Theatricals (Chicago: Field Museum of Natural History, 1923), 13.

Hoping for Heaven

The images which confront the worshipper in the tableau depicting the Scripture on the Visualization of the Buddha of Infinite Life (*Guan wu liang shou fo jing*) cover an area of approximately 160 square meters and are for the most part iconic. Three large sculptures of the Buddha Amitayus flanked by two bodhisattva figures loom over the faithful, all three equally awe-inspiring in scale (fig. 58).[7] To Amitayus' right is Avalokitesvara, her bejeweled crown bearing the identifying small Amitabha figure. Guanyin, as Avalokitesvara is known in China, carries here a flywhisk in her right hand, a bowl cradled in her left palm. This is in keeping with the iconography of the bowl as representative of the Buddhist Law with the flywhisk highlighting Guanyin's compassion toward all living creatures. To Amitayus' left is Mahastamaprapta, who is also depicted resplendently, left hand extended palm up and bearing what appears to be a lotus leaf. This triad is flanked by two double-storied palaces – the left one inscribed as the *Zhu lou* or "Pearl Tower", with the *Da bao lou ge* or "Great Jewel Pavilion" to the right.

Between these three figures are two smaller bodhisattva figures backed by flaming mandorlas, Padmapani holding his lotus attribute to the right, Vajrasattva, with a small Buddha in his headdress, to the left. Rising above them and scattered throughout the tableau are the palaces of the Pure Land paradise peopled with heavenly beings. Below this are several smaller iconic

[7]Amitayus is a variation on Amitabha, meaning "of immeasurable life span" versus Amitabha's "of immeasurable radiance".

arrangements that represent the various levels of rebirth in a uniform fashion. Aside from the group positioned directly below the central Buddha, all of the peripheral sculptural groupings are triads with a Buddha figure either standing or seated, flanked by two bodhisattvas. The central grouping is comprised of four standing bodhisattvas bearing offerings to pay homage to the Buddha. All of the imagery is accompanied by large flat spaces filled with lengthy textual descriptions, which are in turn augmented by text inscribed within the confines of the lower balustrade. Within this tableau, text was clearly as important as image.[8]

Although the central icons are meant to focus the worshipper, what draws the eye are the multiple small figures in various states of rebirth: some popping out of lotuses, others holding up their hands in reverence, still others crawling along the balustrade, all young at heart in their new life in the Pure Land (fig. 59). These newborn souls demonstrate how the layperson can be reborn into paradise, and reinforce the identification of the tableau as being partially based on the Scripture on the Visualization of the Buddha of Infinite

[8]The large text portions of this tableau have not been translated because they appear to adhere roughly to extant versions of the Scripture on the Visualization of the Buddha of Infinite Life, and were not considered vital to an understanding of the narrative scenes which flank the central iconic imagery. Hu, "A Comparative Study of the Paradise Bianxiang in the Sichuan and Dunhuang Grottoes", China Art and Archaeology vol. 1 no. 2 (1996): 14, points out that the inscriptions found carved within the Great Buddha Bend Pure Land tableau come from various versions of the Scripture on the Buddha of Infinite Life. For two current translated variations on the scripture, see Inagaki Hisao, The Sutra on Contemplation of Amitayus. California: Numata Center for Buddhist Translation and Research, 1995, and Meiji Yamada, ed., The Sutra of Contemplation on the Buddha of Immeasurable Life as Expounded by Sakyamuni Buddha (Kyoto: Ryukoku University, 1984). An earlier translation can be found in J. Takakusu, "The Sutra of the Meditation on Amitayus" in Buddhist Mahayana Texts, ed. E. B. Cowell (Mineola, New York: Dover Publications, 1969): 159-203. Further discussion of the text and its history can be found in Julian F. Pas, "The Kuan-wu-liang-shou Fo-ching: Its Origin and Literary Criticism" in Buddhist Thought and Asian Civilization, ed. Leslie S. Kawamura and Keith Scott (Emeryville, CA: Dharma Press, 1977).

Life.[9] This is a busy tableau, with the narrative portions found on the right and left sides, largely subservient to the play of souls and saintly beings that hold center stage. The overtly narrative components of the tableau are monoscenic in nature, and show the Sixteen Visualizations found within the Scripture on the Visualization of the Buddha of Infinite Life. Luis Gomez has noted that this scripture is "most likely not an Indian text at all",[10] and we are therefore confronted with yet another apocryphal Chinese Buddhist text being represented at Baodingshan.

Baodingshan's representation of the Pure Land of Amitayus differs markedly from those seen in other areas of China, including earlier works within Sichuan province itself (fig. 60).[11] At other sites, the emphasis is largely on the palatial qualities of the Pure Land, and the lotus ponds into which the souls are reborn accompanied by the sound of music played by musicians near at hand. With the Pure Land framed by the surrounding niche, the worshipper is placed at a remove from the paradisiacal scene. At Great Buddha Bend, however, the worshipper senses Amitayus and his bodhisattva attendants as having descended to earth, making the work more of a three-dimensional depiction of a *raigo,* or welcoming to the Pure Land,

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[9]Shi Pingting, "A Brief Discussion on the *Jingbian* Buddhist Illustrations at Dunhuang", Orientations vol. 53 (May 1992): 61, points out that illustrations of episodes from the Scripture on the Visualization of the Buddha of Infinite Life showing lay people being reborn into lotuses were usually included in depictions from the Scripture on Amitabha, with Dunhuang depictions of the two showing the Scripture on Amitabha when depicted alone showing only the Western Paradise.

[10]Luis O. Gomez, The Land of Bliss (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1996): 128.

[11]Hu, "A Comparative Study of the Paradise Bianxiang in the Sichuan and Dunhuang Grottoes", 7-8, notes that there are a total of 63 works focused on Amitabha and 85 related to the *Guan wu liang shou fo jing*, ranging in date from the Tang to the Song dynasty, found at the Mogao grottoes in Dunhuang. Ning Qiang, 27, notes that of the imagery found at Dunhuang, none are the same in content or style to the tableau carved at Great Buddha Bend.

than that of a paradisiacal place.[12] This *raigo* aspect is also in accordance with known Song dynasty Pure Land practice, in which imagery served to aid the worshippers in "imagining themselves to be standing directly before the all-seeing Buddha and his legions" prior to engaging in ritual chanting and purification practices.[13] Hu Wenhe sees the dominance of the Amitayus triad in the Great Buddha Bend tableau as being a move away from the self-reliance practiced and preached in earlier eras. This would seem to be in direct contradiction to the presence of a song promoting chanting inscribed at eye-level.[14]

The scripture itself specifically mentions "ten moments of single-minded and sustained recitation of Buddha's name", and as such the inscribed texts located within the tableau at Great Buddha Bend can be regarded as ritual in function.[15] The practice promoted by Zunshi (964-1032 CE) is offered as both a daily meditation and a rehearsal for possible deathbed confessions.[16] These "ten moments" fit well within the context of the site as a whole, in which the number ten figures prominently: Ten

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[12]I employ the Japanese term *raigo* here since it most succinctly describes a depiction of Amitabha and bodhisattvas descending to earth to welcome the recently deceased into the Pure Land.

[13]Daniel B. Stevenson, "Pure Land Buddhist Worship and Meditation in China" in Buddhism in Practice, 359-379, ed. Donald S. Lopez Jr. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995): 364.

[14]Hu, "A Comparative Study of the Paradise Bianxiang in the Sichuan and Dunhuang Grottoes", 16.

[15]Stevenson, 365, 375-377. Stevenson discusses and translates Zunshi's "Procedure for Mindful Recollection of the Buddha", written in 1017 CE, noting that this procedure enjoyed widespread circulation in Song China. The ritual veneration and repentance which comprises the first portion of Zunshi's procedure also may be seen to complement the rituals connected to the recitation of the precepts found in the lower right hand corner of the nearby Hell tableau.

[16]Ibid.

Kindnesses, Ten Kings, and Ten Austerities to name three.[17] Further evidence for ritual use of the Visualization tableau is found in the aforementioned hymn inscribed beneath the central iconic grouping – a "Song Urging the Chanting of the Buddha's Name" (*Quan nian fo ge*).[18] One could argue that this type of ritual use involving Pure Land imagery may have consisted of sutra lectures similar to what had taken place earlier throughout China, in which worshippers were urged to repeatedly invoke the names of the Buddha and bodhisattvas.[19] The carved lotus altar placed before the central Amitayus figure is yet another indication of ritual activities being performed involving the Scripture on the Visualization of the Buddha of Infinite Life tableau.[20]

As mentioned earlier, the dominant narrative component of this work rests within the Sixteen Visualizations of the tableau. These visualizations as depicted at Great Buddha Bend were all originally "captioned" in a fashion similar to what has already been seen in the The Buddha Preaches the Scripture on the Repayment of Kindness. One example of a caption that accompanies one of the Sixteen Visualizations is that found next to the Water Visualization:

> The meditative mind is clear as calm water, as steadfast as frozen ice, one invariably peaceful and

[17]The fourth "ten" found among the narrative tableaux at Great Buddha Bend can be seen in the Taming of the Wild Buffalo work.

[18]Hu, "A Comparative Study of the Paradise Bianxiang in the Sichuan and Dunhuang Grottoes", 14. For a complete transcription of the song, see DZSKYJ, 290.

[19]Wu Hung, "Reborn in Paradise: A Case Study of Dunhuang *Sutra* Painting and its Religious, Ritual and Artistic Context", Orientations vol. 53 (May 1992}: 56. Wu refers specifically to a text entitled "Lecture on the *Amitabha Sutra*" from the Stein collection, S. 6551.

[20]Stevenson, 364, notes that rituals related to Pure Land practice were performed in areas with either an altar, a sanctuary, or at least a sanctified place of Buddhist practice.

> quiet, (whose) rays of light truly transforms all beings.

Most of the inscriptions no longer remain visible to the naked eye, but have been transcribed via earlier rubbings taken at the site.[21]

The original Sixteen Visualizations as found within the scripture centered on Queen Vaidehi, the protagonist in a story relating one of Buddhism's most notorious examples of an unfilial son. In brief, the story is as follows. After first failing in his attempt to kill his father the king, Prince Agatasatru turns to the person responsible for keeping his father alive, the virtuous Queen Vaidehi, who has secretly been feeding her husband by anointing her body with pastes for him to eat. After first ordering his servants to kill her, the prince is stopped in this supreme unifilial act by a minister who cautions that even among the most wicked of earlier kings, none had ever killed his mother. The minister then refuses to cooperate in Agatasatru's scheme. Scared by his minister's reluctance, Agatasatru orders Queen Vaidehi to be placed under housearrest, and it is within that space that the sixteen visualizations occur. The visualizations demonstrate the Buddha's response to Queen Vaidehi's request for succor, appearing in the form of visits from various bodhisattvas who help her remain strong in her convictions during her unjust incarceration.

The Sixteen Visualizations as depicted in earlier works are "dynamically composed and overtly narrative (with the) small scenes having a clear order for viewing, in contrast to the timeless stasis of the central

[21]DZSKYJ, 480-483.

icon."[22] Although originally all Sixteen Visualizations were represented at Great Buddha Bend, the present state of the Pure Land tableau is missing one of the eight original vignettes from the left side of the work, making the total extant images fifteen.[23] This placement of the narrative illustrations of the Sixteen Visualizations at Baodingshan follows earlier patterns of placing the imagery in two series running up and down the sides of the central iconic imagery.[24] The use of cartouches to label the individual visualization is also in keeping with earlier approaches to representing Queen Vaidehi's spiritual journey toward visualizing enlightenment.[25]

Differing from earlier works as well as other works within the Sichuan region was the decision by Zhao Zhifeng to represent the visualizations within the Great Buddha Bend tableau using images of individuals drawn from all quarters of Song dynasty Chinese society instead of centering the imagery around the character of Queen Vaidehi.[26] While "images of everyday Chinese livelihood" may figure into earlier Pure Land works,[27]

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[22]Murray, "The Evolution of Buddhist Narrative Illustration in China after 850", 129.

[23]Hu Liangxue, "*Dazu Baoding Dafowan xi fang jing tu bian xiang*" ("The Western Paradise Transformation Tableau at Great Buddha Bend, Baoding, Dazu"), *Dunhuang yan jiu* no. 2 (1997): 29.

[24]Murray, "The Evolution of Buddhist Narrative Illustration in China after 850", 129. The story of Queen Vaidehi and the 16 Visualizations seen in the Sutra on the Visualization of the Buddha of Infinite Life is also found at Dunhuang, painted in eight different caves. See Choice Serial Murals, 88.

[25]Ibid.

[26]Hu, "A Comparative Study of the Paradise Bianxiang in the Sichuan and Dunhuang Grottoes", 14. In his discussion, Hu gives a comprehensive listing and analysis of numerous sites in Sichuan containing Pure Land imagery.

[27]Murray, "The Evolution of Buddhist Narrative Illustration in China after 850", 129. Secular aspects depicted within the Pure Land do exist elsewhere. Eugene Wang points out that the depiction of the celestial realm in Cave 217 at Dunhuang is peopled not with *apsarases* or bodhisattvas, but rather with people *sans* halos and clad in secular attire. Wang links this radically different type of imagery to the demands of the patrons of the Dunhuang cave. See "Whose Paradise is It, Anyway? The *Lotus Sutra* Tableau in Dunhuang's Cave 217 Revisited", Orientations vol. 57 (Nov. 1996): 45.

none encountered go so far as to replace the protagonist herself with everyday people. The protagonists in the Great Buddha Bend tableau vary in subject matter from several images of monks in meditation to a general on guard to a young woman as well as an official (figs. 61-65). At least one scholar has postulated that this was consciously done in order to cater to people from all levels of society, and should be viewed as a continuation of the 'popularizing' tendencies found elsewhere within the Buddhist monastic community in Song China.[28]

The Sixteen Visualizations also point toward another aspect of activity taking place at Great Buddha Bend, the fundamental purpose of aiding the worshipper toward a visualization of the Pure Land. In this context, the Sixteen Visualizations were tools utilized in a meditative process in which the practitioner worked from the tangible imagery toward a mind's eye vision of the same image. Wu Hung points out the quandary that creation and use of images of the Buddha had in a very real sense for the Buddhist faithful. On the one hand, true images of the Buddha and the Pure Land can only really be seen in the mind's eye while on the other hand, fabricated imagery was considered necessary and appropriate in order to lead one to that visualization.[29] These distinctions were created as early as the Tang dynasty in Shandao's "rough-seeing" (*cu jian*) versus "mind's eye" (*xin yan*) found in his discussion of methods to be used in visualizing practice.[30]

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[28]Hu, "A Comparative Study of the Paradise Bianxiang in the Sichuan and Dunhuang Grottoes", 14.

[29]Wu Hung, "Reborn in Paradise", 57.

[30]Ibid. See T. 1959.22-30 for Shandao's Methods for the Merit of Samadhi by Visualizing the Image of Amitayus-Amitabha (*Guan nian Amitofo xiang hui san mei gong de fa men*).

Landing in Hell

From the images of rebirth in the Pure Land, one proceeds physically downward to view the hell tableau (fig 66).[31] Joined to the depiction of the Pure Land by the small work numbered nineteen and entitled "Binding the Six Vices", the relief depicting Dizang Bodhisattva and the eighteen realms of hell along with the Ten Kings who preside over them can be divided into four different registers with relative ease. The uppermost register, approximately 13.8 meters above the pathway, depicts a line of ten Buddhas, referred to as the Buddhas of the Ten Directions (fig. 67).[32] Each is seated frontally in the lotus position within a shell-like niche. The effects of time have eroded away much of their facial features, yet each Buddha appears to be distinctly garbed as well as differentiated by his particular mudra or attribute.[33] The painted rays of the niches mimic the effect produced by the central figure of the second level, that of Dizang Bodhisattva, the only figure within the tableau to cross over two strata.

The cult of Dizang enjoyed increasing popularity in China from the sixth century on. Dizang as monk was but one of the popular representations of Dizang in China, the other being the Bodhisattva Dizang depicted as

[31]Historically, a worshipper may have been able to continue directly over to the second tier and have encountered the first ten of the hell scenes up close, but this avenue of approach is no longer available to the modern-day visitor as the cliff-face has given way in some parts.

[32]DZSKYJ, 485.

[33]Stephen Teiser gives a correlation between ten Buddhas and the Ten Kings in The Scripture on the Ten Kings, appendix nine. There does not appear to be a correlation between the images described by Teiser and those present at Great Buddha Bend.

overseer of hell with the Ten Kings in attendance.[34] Although the second level is devoted mainly to the Ten Kings and their assistants, the image of Dizang dominates, his ribboned garment carrying over above his head to form the outline of his radiant aureole (fig. 68). This ribboning continues across his folded legs, serving to link him to the arenas of suffering below. The gold still glistens on his bejeweled crown and necklace, recalling Dizang's status as bodhisattva.[35] His position, seated on a lotus throne and central among the Ten Kings, yet linked to the heavens, reminds the devotee of Dizang's vow to save the damned. He is capable of releasing loved ones from their torments if their descendants perform the necessary rituals.[36] Dizang in resplendent princely attire is also found at several other sites within Sichuan, although the layout of the tableaux varies greatly with regard to the Ten Kings and how they and the hells are represented.[37] This is also

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[34]Only two representative types are presented here, Dizang as monk and Dizang with the Ten Kings of Hell. For a more thorough overview of at least those works found in the Pelliot collection in Paris, see Nicole Vandier-Nicholas' study Bannières et Peintures de Touen-houang Conservées au Musée Guimet, vol. 1 (Paris: Librairie Adrien-Maisonneuve, 1974): plates 105-120. See also Françoise Wang-Toutain, Le bodhisattva Ksitigarbha en Chine du Ve au XIII siecle Monograph no. 185 (Paris: Presses de l'école française d'extrême-orient, 1998).

[35]In the search for liturgical precedents to explain iconographic elements, it must be said that Dizang's depiction at Baodingshan does not correlate to the rules laid out in the non-apocryphal Tantric work, Ritual Protocols on the Bodhisattva Dizang (Dizang Pu sa yi gui), which date to the early 8th century. Marinus Willem de Visser, The Bodhisattva Ti-tsang (Jizo) in China and Japan (Berlin: Oesterheld and Co., 1914): 45.

[36]Chapter seven of the Sutra on the Origins of Dizang Bodhisattva is devoted to the explanation of blessings received by the living who have masses said for the dead, make images of Dizang, or who but for one moment take refuge in Dizang. DeVisser, 7-10.

[37]Good reproductions of Dizang and the Ten Kings as they are carved in nearby Anyue County at Yuanjue Cave, and in Dazu County's own Shizhuanshan can be found in Hu Wenhe's article, "*Sichuan shi ku zhong "Di yu bian xiang" tu de yan jiu*" ("Research into the Hell Scene Transformation Tableaux in Sichuan's Rock Caves") *Mei shu xue* no. 3 (1998): 68-69.

the most common sculpted form for Dizang as seen at other earlier cavesites.[38]

Flanking Dizang Bodhisattva are two figures that remain largely unidentified in the main body of literature regarding this site (fig. 69).[39] As I have noted in an earlier study, several possibilities arise if one studies the iconography of the two more closely.[40] Seen outside of the entire tableau's context, they could be viewed simply as acolytes. Another possibility exists, however, when the tableau as a whole is viewed as a representation of the Ten Kings and the underworld.

The clean-shaven acolyte holding the monk's staff could be either another manifestation of Dizang Bodhisattva represented in monk's garb or the well-known disciple of the Buddha, Mulian.[41] In notes describing an illustrated scripture no longer extant, Mulian is said to appear at the Hell of the Iron Bed, where he converts the jailer and succeeds in freeing his mother.[42] Given the importance placed upon "repaying mother" seen in the first narrative tableau, one could argue that Mulian is presented here as an exemplar for all sons to follow. The Hell of the Iron Bed is one of the hells depicted on the first tier below the Ten Kings at Baodingshan.

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[38]I thank Dr. Amy McNair for information regarding Dizang's representation as a prince at Longmen and other Tang dynasty sites in Gansu and Ningxia. Personal correspondence, 3/14/01.

[39]DZSKYJ, 485. This work identifies the two simply as monk and nun attendants to Dizang Bodhisattva.

[40]Kucera, 84-86.

[41]Soothill, 199. Mulian's Sanskrit name is Maudgalyayana, "one of the ten chief disciple of Sakyamuni, specially noted for miraculous powers." Chen gives the source of the Mulian story as the Syama jataka. See Kenneth Chen, The Chinese Transformation of Buddhism (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973): 24. This jataka is also represented at Great Buddha Bend within the Buddha Preaches the Scripture on the Repayment of Kindness tableau.

[42]Teiser, The Scripture on the Ten Kings, 179.

A third possibility exists, involving yet another individual and yet another textual source. This is the prospect that the figure holding the begging bowl is Daoming, an individual taken to the underworld in a case of mistaken identity.[43] Yet another figure portraying a monk appears in the hell tableau. Placed underneath a small-scale pagoda, this work has been tentatively identified as an additional rendering of Zhao Zhifeng (fig. 70).[44]

Zhao's presence in the depths of hell, rather than a depiction of one of the more illustrious figures discussed above, points toward a changing usage of these religious works of art as well as an elevation in the status of Zhao Zhifeng. Aside from his role as creator of the grotto site, Zhao is now also portrayed as a savior figure, the law he preaches enabling those who listen and follow its precepts to avoid endless suffering. While Mulian or Daoming or Dizang Bodhisattva may have enormous clout in the netherworld, they are intangibles when compared to a very real and present "this-worldly" monk, such as is here portrayed in the very bowels of hell. As such, worshippers may have felt their salvation more readily at hand, more easily obtainable with just such a monk's aid.

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[43]Ibid., 66. According to Stephen Teiser, Daoming makes his first appearance in Dunhuang manuscripts in a story of unknown date entitled The Record of the Returned Soul. Annemarie von Gabain also discusses Daoming's importance in relationship to Chinese and Uighur manuscripts dating from the 11th through the 13th century, and which are thought to be based upon an earlier 8th-century work in "The Purgatory of the Buddhist Uighurs: Book Illustrations from Turfan," in Mahayanist Art after A.D. 900, ed. William Watson, Colloquies on Art and Archaeology in Asia, no. 2 (London: University of London, School of Oriental and African Studies, and the Percival David Foundation of Chinese Art, 1972): 26.

[44]*Dazu xian zhi* (Taibei: Cheng wen chu ban she, 1976): np, and Hu Wenhe, "*Lun di yu bian xiang tu*," ("A Discussion of Hell Transformation Tableau Imagery") *Sichuan wen wu* 2 (1988): 25. Further discussion of Zhao's physical presence within the tableaux at Great Buddha Bend can be found in Chapter Four.

The Ten Kings

By the late Song dynasty, dissemination of the Scripture on the Ten Kings was widespread.[45] Copying the text or carving related images is a large part of the emphasis of the scripture; thus, the cultivation of merit can be viewed as at least one factor leading to the work done at Great Buddha Bend. The question is, merit on whose behalf? From what is known vis-à-vis rituals related to the Ten Kings as well as the annual Ghost Festival rites, the merit being produced is often for those already deceased. While the living can be pressured into trying to prepare for their own future rebirths, they are constantly being reminded of the tortures that their recently deceased loved-ones may be suffering. The emphasis is on filial action in order to ensure that the ancestors smoothly pass through the courts of the Ten Kings, and into a better existence.

Whenever the Ten Kings are seen in conjunction with Dizang Bodhisattva, they are presented standing.[46] Each king and magistrate is fronted by a table over which is hung a piece of blue cloth, on which are inscribed his titles and a corresponding hymn. Overall, the Ten Kings are not depicted so much as sacred entities, but as men of justice, and although the kings' placement within the Great Buddha Bend work concurs with that seen in The Scripture on the Ten Kings, the hymns inscribed under the kings at Baodingshan do not. Also notably absent from the carved inscriptions is any

[45]I base this statement on the prevalence of earlier medieval Chinese Ten Kings worship as discussed by Stephen Teiser in his body of work devoted to the Ghost Festival and the Scripture on the Ten Kings.

[46]DeVisser, 29.

reference to celebrating the days of fast associated with each king at set weekly and yearly intervals.

Traditionally, royal attendants are present in pairs or not present at all; however, within the Great Buddha Bend grotto, each king would appear to have only one attendant perhaps due to space restrictions. These attendants, sometimes referred to as clerks, carry the ledgers of merit and demerit by which the Ten Kings will pass judgement on the deceased. The attendants are for the most part male, with the exception of two female figures who flank King Yama and the King of Transformations. The presence of these women coincides with the female donor figures appearing within the Ten Kings' handscrolls, although at Great Buddha Bend these women appear to be holding ledgers rather than offerings, similar to the male royal attendants on this tier.

Introduced by the Officer of Immediate Retribution (fig. 71), the Ten Kings follow the standard order of placement as given in the scripture, beginning with King Guang of Qin at the far right (fig. 72).[47] The inscriptions accompanying this officer and King Guang set the tone for the tableau as a whole, explaining first how one ends up in hell, and then, how a soul can be released from hell through merit cultivation. Underneath the Officer of Immediate Retribution is inscribed the following verse:

> If one desires peace and happiness and to reside amongst men and gods, one must immediately stop taking money belonging to the Three Jewels.[48] Once you fall into the

[47]At Baodingshan, written as *Xian bao si guan*. This personage exists under the name *Si Lu*, "Officer of Records" in The Scripture on the Ten Kings.

[48]The Buddha, the Sangha, and the Law.

> hells within the dark regions of the underworld, there, amongst the clamor, you will receive punishment for untold years.

The verse accompanying King Guang of Qin reads as follows:

> The various kings (of hell) dispatch messengers to inspect the deceased in order to see what merit these men and women have cultivated. Depending on one's name, one can be released from the hells of the three paths,[49] and escape passing through the dark regions, there encountering suffering and grief.

It becomes evident from the first inscription that the surest way to hell is to "take money belonging to the Three Jewels", i.e., the Buddhist establishment. This is the most heinous of crimes, being the original sin promulgated by Mulian's mother, Qingti, who, rather than use the money given to her by her son in order to feed the itinerant monks, decided instead to keep it. Her wicked ways landed Qingti in the very depths of hell, where even the great Mulian could not find her.

The inscription accompanying King Guang highlights how one circumvents such an odious end. Doing good Buddhist works while alive would enable the deceased and their descendants to rest assured that hell would be passed through in a timely manner. Specific numbers regarding the amount of meritorious works necessary to insure this end result are avoided throughout the Scripture on the Ten Kings. This lack of detail could only serve to create doubt within the hearts and minds of the deceased's

[49]Teiser, Scripture on the Ten Kings, 211.

descendants, insuring that they would continue to perform the necessary "seven-sevens" rites as a precautionary measure.

A good rebirth, fortuitous to the family as a whole, is hinted at in the inscription accompanying the King of the First River (fig. 73). No introduction is given as to what specifically has been done to create such a favorable outcome, but evidently not enough meritorious actions have been undertaken to avoid rebirth altogether:

> Wrongdoings are like mountains, their peaks as numerous as the sands of the Ganges; blessings are like fine grains of dust, there numbers also few.[50] Yet the good spirits protect you, so you can be reborn into a powerful, rich and devout family.

The King of the First River should play a vital role iconographically. In handscroll and hanging depictions of this hell, the "River Nai" or River of No Recourse is a prominent theme, and it is unusual that there is no representation of the river among the hells at Baodingshan. Given the clever channeling of runoff water seen in other parts of the grotto (fig. 74), such a depiction would have seemed not only possible, but desirable. Other images popular to hell iconography are also absent at Great Buddha Bend, most notably the black horseman who serves as messenger to the kings, and who is accorded a verse in the scripture itself.

The fourth hell is ruled over by the Sovereign King of Song (fig. 75).[51] It is in this hell that those who have been found guilty by King Guang of Qin

[50]Soothill, 302.

[51]Little is known regarding the origins of this title.

are sent to be scalded and roasted by hot water and flame.[52] This corresponds well with the Boiling Cauldron Hell carved directly below. The idea of karmic retribution is further reinforced by the text of the hymn:

> Actions of sin and suffering within the three paths are completed with ease;[53] they are all conditioned by killing living beings in order to sacrifice to the gods. You should aspire to wield the diamond sword of true wisdom, using it to cut off all of Mara's clan, and to awaken (to the truth of) the non-arising (of all phenomena)."[54]

The cooking of sacrificial offerings, particularly with regard to ancestor worship, was a traditional practice in China that continues up through the present day.[55] Here the Buddhist institution takes a stand against the taking of life, as well as against established Chinese tradition, offering instead a new approach toward salvation for one's ancestors. Implicit in this message is also the fact that evil will be avoided and good attained if such sacrificial offerings are foregone for more self-sacrificing methods.

The head of the fourth court, the King of the Five Offices (fig. 76), is considered to be the overseer of the hell in which the guilty have their hearts torn out and their bellies cut open.[56] At Great Buddha Bend, this king

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[52]DeVisser, 31.

[53] Soothill, 62. The three roads, the three unhappy ways of the six gati.

[54]*Wu sheng* is a technical term for *anutpattikadharmaksanti*. Many thanks to Dan Stevenson, 5/15/01 for clarifying this.

[55]For more on the importance of food and ancestor worship, see Stuart E. Thompson, "Death, Food, and Fertility" in Death Ritual in Late Imperial and Modern China, ed. James L. Watson and Evelyn S. Rawski (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988): 71-108.

[56]Soper traces the origins of this sovereign to the Bhaisajyaguru Sutra, in which there is mention of King Yama entrusting the "Five Officials" with keeping records of those who have committed the five deadly sins. He also notes that as early as the late Zhou Dynasty, the five highest officials at court were referred to as such as well as being linked to the five senses. See Alexander C. Soper, Literary Evidence for Early Buddhist Art in China (Ascona, Switzerland: Artibus Asiae, 1959): 176.

appears to watch over the damned in the Freezing Hell, the Balance of Karmic Deeds separating the two. The suggestion of karmic retribution as described above is reflected in the inscribed verse, which refers quite pointedly to those who kill animals:

> Breaking the fast and violating the precepts, you slaughter chickens and pigs. Illumined clearly in the mirror of actions, retribution will come without fail. If one commissions this scripture together with the painting of images, King Yama will issue a judgement that you be released and that your sins be eliminated.

One might expect to find the hells related to the punishments for raising and slaughtering animals to be placed directly below the fourth court, but in fact they are located in the very lowest level of the tableau to left of center. Furthermore, this verse in The Scripture on the Ten Kings places the Mirror of Karmic Deeds in the King of the Five Offices court, which makes the presence of the Balance of Karmic Deeds questionable here. Illustrated scriptures often place the mirror in King Yama's court, while later printed works show the mirror in the first court. [57]

This is the first inscription to cite a specific method to aid one in avoiding the tortures of hell. By commissioning scriptures and having images painted, a soul can be given absolution for his or her various sins associated with breaking the fast and killing animals. Again, as if in a nod to the imagery seen earlier in the Scripture on the Kindness of Parents, the sin of slaughtering chickens and pigs, presumably for consumption, is highlighted

[57]Regarding the jurisdiction of the various hells, I have tried to present variations in placement of the hells as they occur, based mainly on the works done by DeVisser and Teiser.

here, a sin that a mother willingly takes on during the marriage feasts on behalf of her son, and which a filial son would need to repay.

The fifth and sixth kings differ in that both are depicted in imperial garb.[58] King Yama crosses both continental and ideological boundaries. He is the original father of the afterlife in the Vedic tradition.[59] In China, King Yama came to be ruler of the underworld in both Buddhist and Daoist cosmologies.[60] No longer a revered god in his country of origin, Yama was quickly adopted by the Chinese, and just as quickly sinicized.[61] The name "King Yama" came to be synonymous with any of the Ten Kings, the term often being used plurally, as in the "Ten Yamas."

Yama is always represented in imperial attire, wearing a flat-board cap from which beads hang down to hide the royal visage, and has a dark face to symbolize his non-Chinese origins (fig. 77). Originally king of the first hell and head of the underworld, King Yama was demoted due to his compassionate nature, and like all the beings in hell, must undergo tortures until his eventual rebirth. He is further differentiated from the other kings by

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[58]Their imperial regalia dates back to the late Qin - early Han dynasties. For an overview of the various specifics of this style of dress, see 5,000 Years of Chinese Costumes (Hong Kong: Commercial Press, Ltd., 1984): 34. This type of dress can also be seen in depictions of the emperors, such as Yan Liben's Thirteen Emperors, and in nobility presented in wall paintings found at Dunhuang.

[59]The Mahavastu. trans. by J. Jones. Sacred Books of the Buddhists, vol. 16 (London and Boston: R. & K. Paul for the Pali Text Society, 1949-1956): 11.

[60]In the Daoist faith, Yanluo Tianzi is said to rule the nether regions from his palace at Fengdu. See John Lagerwey, Taoist Ritual in Chinese Society and History (New York and London: Collier Macmillan, 1987): 225, as well as references to the imperial encounter with Yanluo Tianzi, as mentioned in Wu Zhengen's Journey to the West, trans. W.J.F. Jenner, (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1986): 198.

[61]Michel Soymié, "Les dix jours de jeûne de Ksitigarbha," in Contributions aux Études sur Touen-houang, vol. 1, ed. Michel Soymié. Centre de Recherches d'Histoire et de Philologie de la IVe Section de l'École pratique des Hautes Études, Hautes Études Orientales (Geneva and Paris: Librairie Droz, 1979): 148.

his title, "Son of Heaven" (*Tian zi*), as opposed to "Great King" (*Da wang*). The accompanying verse reads:

> Compassionately (seeking to) augment universal conversion (to the good), he displays an awe-inspiring majesty. Revolution through the six paths (of incarnation) goes on unceasingly. Although his instruction is painful, he thinks only of (bringing creatures to) contentment and joy. Hence, he manifests himself in the form of the god Yama, Son of Heaven.

At Baodingshan, King Yama is placed immediately to Dizang Bodhisattva's left. Although this is one possible placement in scriptural illustrations, he is not always honored in such a fashion.

Moving to the left side of the hell tableau, it is not clear as to why the sixth king, the King of Transformations (fig. 78), is also attired in imperial garb, except perhaps in response to aesthetic demands of symmetry in the Great Buddha Bend tableau.[62] The more appropriate sovereign to enjoy such treatment would be the King of Mount Tai, as he was already ranked highly as the head of the underworld within the Daoist pantheon. Yet within the tableau the King of Mount Tai is placed seventh in the series of Ten Kings, two removed from the central Dizang triad, and thereby not parallel to the imperially-attired King Yama.

In literary sources, the damned are beaten and placed in cangues under the King of Transformation's jurisdiction, similar to what occurs in the actual depictions of the hells below him. The inscribed verse reads as follows:

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[62]The King of Transformations Chinese name is *Bian cheng Da wang*. Pelliot suggests that *bian cheng* comes from *shi ba bian cheng*, the 18 transformations. See Paul Pelliot, "Bibliographie," Toung Pao 28 (1931): 389.

> If one truly believes that the Law is inconceivable, and copies the scriptures, aspiring to listen to them, receiving and upholding them, then upon giving up this life, one will instantly release himself from the three evil paths, and in this body he will forever avoid falling into Avici Hell.

Although one would expect Avici Hell to be placed within the geographical jurisdiction below the King of Transformation, in fact it is placed to the right of center on the lowest level of the tableau. As is the case with most of the inscriptions connected to the Ten Kings and the placement of the hells related to them, this disjuncture forces the worshipper to search the tableau for the appropriate image, no doubt creating a moment of confusion and panic similar to what one would expect a soul to experience in its journey through hell.

Continuing with a description of the remaining kings, one next encounters the King of Mount Tai, an entity of the early Chinese pantheon who was quickly absorbed into the Buddhism (fig. 79). Theories vary as to what effect Daoism did or did not have on the formulation of the Ten Kings, with some scholars stating unequivocally that the Daoists were responsible for the final number of kings standing at ten, having added one judge to their already extant cosmology of nine, while others maintain that the Daoists only later appropriated the set of kings from Buddhism, using their notoriety to popularize their own set of deities.[63] The King of Mount Tai was later absorbed into Daoist cosmology in his new capacity of "Bodhisattva Emperor

[63]Henri Maspero, "The Mythology of Modern China" in Asiatic Mythology, ed. J. Hackin, 252-384 (New York: Thomas J. Crowell, 1932): 364, and Teiser, The Scripture on the Ten Kings, 29.

of the Eastern Peak."[64] At Great Buddha Bend, this king continues to reiterate preparedness as a method to avoid spending time in hell:

> A single life is fragile like a lantern in the wind; two rats creep up, gnawing at a vine in the well. If one does not cultivate a precious raft to ferry one over the bitter sea of life, then what can one depend on to attain deliverance?

The eighth hell of the Impartial King (fig. 80) is where the souls are weighed, their good and bad deeds affect the suffering they must further undergo.[65] Unfortunately, the placement of the karmic balance has been switched with the karmic mirror within the tableau. It is not clear whether this was an oversight in planning the work, a misinterpretation of the scripture, or whether a different recension of the scripture was being used as the artistic source. The Impartial King is accompanied by the following verse:

> At that time the Buddha put forth a ray of light that filled the great chilocosm; dragons and preta assembled with humans and gods. Indra, Brahma, the various gods, and the hidden multitude of the underworld all came to prostrate themselves in front of the World-honored One.

The second to last of the Ten Kings is the King of the Capital (fig. 81). The text accompanying this king specifically cites efforts in providing for

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[64]DeVisser, 30. DeVisser, 35, discusses other later works which link the two philosophies, one of the most noteworthy being the Calendar of Jade or *Yu li*, which is recognized as having been written sometime in the later Song Dynasty. For illustrations taken from a contemporary calendar, and other more modern depictions of hell, see Wolfram Eberhard, Guilt and Sin in Traditional China (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1967): 51-55.

[65]At Great Buddha Bend, he is referred to as *Ping zheng Da wang*. This deity is also known under the title *Ping deng wang*. Teiser points out that Tang dynasty Tantric texts portray the Impartial King as another manifestation of Dizang Bodhisattva. Teiser, The Scripture on the Ten Kings, 177.

"feasts" – most likely for the members of the sangha – and "meritorious deeds" as ways to expunge the innumerable sins accrued in a lifetime. With no clear protagonist cited, the "feasts" and "deeds" become possible post-mortem solutions for descendants of the deceased. The accompanying inscribed verse reads as follows:

> Each birth on the Six Paths contains suffering without limit; the Ten Evils and the Three Paths are not easy to bear. If all efforts are put forth to establish the feasts and complete meritorious deeds, then sins as numerous as the sands of the Ganges will disappear of themselves.

Like the King of Mount Tai, the King of the Capital would appear to have direct connections to indigenous gods and beliefs. As his name implies, the King of the Capital may simply be a further extension of the City God. It is the City God, along with the God of Moats, who is responsible for bringing dead souls to justice in popular Chinese mythology.[66] The formulation of such a deity may have been in direct response to these popularly held beliefs. Pelliot posits that his true title is "King of the Market of the Capital", the market area being the natural place for a prison, as it was there that public executions took place.[67] This correlation may be seen as once again bridging the gap between the earthly and afterlife existences.

Aside from the officers, who are clearly identified by their caps, only three of the ten figures vary in iconography: King Yama, the King of

[66]Maspero, 373.
[67]Pelliot, 389.

Transformations, and the King who Turns the Wheel .[68] The King who Turns the Wheel is dressed in martial attire, and his militaristic attire would appear to link him to previous military men found in earlier Tantric texts (fig. 82).[69] Attending this last king is a standard-bearer, characteristic of the King who Turns the Wheel's soldier-of-fortune attendants.

Like the first king, whose job it is to start the dead on their journeys through the various hells, the King who Turns the Wheel does not control a particular environ of hell. His job is to appoint the souls to their respective paths of transmigration, based on the judgements of the previous courts. These possible transmigrations are known as the Six Paths of Being.[70] It must be noted that the position of the Ten Kings and the Hell tableau is one of being across the grotto from the visual representation of these Six Paths, seen in the Wheel of Transmigration (fig. 83). This representation of the wheel would easily be visible while standing in front of the hell scenes. Aside from the jailers tormenting the damned, the King who Turns the Wheel is the only figure depicted with a militaristic aspect. His accompanying inscribed verse reads as follows:

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[68]Unlike the illustrated scriptures and most printed works, the kings depicted at Great Buddha Bend do not have the word "king" (*wang*) inscribed on their caps. Although the figures themselves appear not to have been altered, the pieces of blue draped cloth and the inscriptions have been restored.

[69]Teiser mentions the eighth century appearance of *Wu dao jiang jun wang*, or the General King of the Five Paths, in his discussion of The Scripture on the Ten Kings, 178. Arthur Waley also mentions this personage as being part of a text devoted to the worship of Yanluo Wang, known as the Manual of the Procedure for Making Offerings to King Yama.

[70]Soothill, 139. Dizang Bodhisattva is closely associated with the Six Paths of Being, in which he is transformed into six separate entities to aid all beings in their struggle for salvation.

> For the last three, where they pass is an important crossing.[71] Good and evil depend only on felicitous actions as a cause. The unvirtuous will yet continue to suffer grief for a full one thousand days. They will be reborn into a womb only to die in birth, or to die at a young age.[72]

In this verse, the pressure is being placed on the descendants of the deceased to insure that proper rituals are undertaken at the appropriate times "for the full one thousand days". This in turn contributed to a steady flow of goods and capital into the Buddhist establishment as people died on a regular basis, and rites were necessary for at least three years thereafter.

The King who Turns the Wheel is the last major figure on the left end of the relief. The final figure is yet another second-level functionary, the Officer of Rapid Recompense (fig. 84).[73] He gives the worshipper his final word of warning:

> Not constructing a boat or bridge is man's folly; meeting with danger, you will at last begin to understand. If you awaken to the fact that one hundred years will pass like a snap of the fingers, (then) one must surely not delay in observing days of fast and listening to the Law.[74]

The Ten Kings and their attendants stretch across the cliff face in an orderly fashion, mirroring the symmetry of the meditating Buddhas above

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[71]The last three here refers to the last three periods in the cycle of the 10 feasts required of family of the deceased in order to insure their safe passage - i.e. seven times seven or forty-nine days, the 100 day feast and the 1000 day or three-year feast. According to Teiser, precedence for the 'seven-seven' practice can be found in the fifth-century Consecration Scripture (*Guan ding jing*). Teiser, "The Growth of Purgatory," 118.

[72]Teiser, 215.

[73]At Great Buddha Bend written as *Su bao si guan*. In The Scripture on the Ten Kings, this position is filled by *Si Ming*, "Officer of Life Spans." He helps to record the rulings of the ten judges, and keeps track of future rebirths for each individual.

[74]Teiser, 219.

them. Below them the viewer finds the hell scenes which appear systematic in the layout of the register carved directly below the Ten Kings, but which digress into chaos by the time eye-level is reached. The disoriented viewer is thus himself or herself placed in the very bowels of hell, face to face with hungry ghosts and the eternally damned.

The Eighteen Hells Seen at Baodingshan[75]

Di yu or "earth-prison" is the Chinese term for hell. Prison is an interesting metaphor for hell, and one first used by the Chinese.[76] As seen earlier within the discussion of the Ten Kings' iconography, links to the real world were fundamental to hell imagery. The penal ideology of the day reflected a combination of rewards and punishments that served as effective means for changing behavior.[77] Such was the case within Buddhist ideology as well; an individual was not damned for all eternity, but upon repaying his karmic mistakes, would automatically be freed into a new existence, capable of starting anew. Like the Song dynasty penal codes, however, one did not pass from a state of guilt to one of innocence without paying a price. Methods of torture employed by earthly jailers were thought to be far harsher in practice than they were on paper. Rituals related to the "seven-sevens"

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[75]For an overall picture of the placement of the eighteen hells within the Great Buddha Bend tableau, please see figure 11.

[76]This statement is based on the Chinese definition of the Sanskrit term *naraka* or "hell" as "earth-prison" as provided by Soothill, 207.

[77] Brian E. McKnight, Law and Order in Sung China (Cambridge, England and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992): 8.

easily correlate with real-life bribes paid to jailers at regular intervals in order to ensure the jailed individual's wellbeing and hoped-for eventual release.[78]

Visual images of hell far exceeded literary descriptions of hell in both their variety and their detail. Gabain notes that, "Anxiety for the dead might have stimulated the fancy to more than the text contained."[79] While the Ten Kings listed above mirror to a large degree the arrangement found within the Scripture on the Ten Kings, the hells at Baodingshan number eighteen in all, and they do not appear to follow any one specific text.[80] Some, although not all, appear to have as a source the apocryphal text *Da fang guang Huayen shi e pin jing* (The Mahayana Expansive Flower Ornament Sutra on the Ten Evils).[81] More interestingly, although the grotto's hell tableau is regarded by many as a representation based on the Scripture on the Ten Kings, no hells are actually described in that work, the majority of the text being devoted to the Ten Kings and their worship.[82]

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[78]Ibid., 330.

[79]Annemarie von Gabain, 26.

[80]Some of the hells are similar to those described in Journey to the West, 202-206. Some similarities can also to be seen in the hells described in the Mahavastu, 13-21. For a general listing of the descriptions of hell to be found in the Pali canon, see Bimala Charan Law's Heaven and Hell in Buddhist Perspective (Varanasi : Bhartiya Publishing, 1973): 94-111. For a discussion of hell specific to the Yogacara school of Buddhism, see Daigan and Alicia Matsunaga's work The Buddhist Concept of Hell (New York: Philosophical Library, 1972): 60-72.

[81]The following hells – Hell of the Iron Bed, Hell of Cutting and Grinding, Avici Hell, Hungry Ghost Hell, Boiling Cauldron Hell, Feces and Filth Hell, Hell of the Iron Wheel as well as the evils of alcohol - are all found described within the Sutra on the Ten Evils, complete with the cause for each punishment. None of the chants accompanying the first tier of hells is found within this text, and many of the aforementioned inscribed texts are similar but not identical to what is written in the sutra. See T. 2875. I'd like to thank Henrik Sørensen for helping me trace the source of this imagery. At least one written example of the Sutra on the Ten Evils is found within the Dunhuang collection, see Stein no. 132 as listed in Victor Mair, "Lay Students and the Making of Written Vernacular Narrative: an Inventory of Tun-huang Manuscripts", 5-96.

[82]Consistent with the notion of worship, references to hell found in extant portions of the Scripture on the Ten Kings focus on how not to enter hell, or what one has done to arrive there, not on actual descriptions of the hells. See *Dunhuang bao zang*, vol. 109, 432b-434a.

Such anomalies were not unusual in Buddhist imagery, with the majority of hell scrolls maintaining common themes while differing considerably in detail.[83] Since the hells were not literally described, how the artist iconographically depicted the hells was largely subject to individual discretion. Both earlier and later period works can be found which are consistent in their usage of the Ten Kings and their courts, while varying greatly in the tortures shown. One explanation for such discrepancies may be the changing realities of punishment and torture seen at various places and times within China; yet another explanation may lie in the vividness of the imagination of any given image's author. The possibility of "sourcing" any given hell scene's tradition seems unlikely, since hell, along with its ghosts and demons, was a subject matter which allowed for considerable latitude on the part of the image's producer and patron.

As one's eye travels down the tableau at Great Buddha Bend, it moves from the meditative calm of the heavens of the Buddhas of the Ten Directions, through the orderliness and symmetry of the Ten Kings and Dizang Bodhisattva, to the first level of hell, where the worshipper encounters the sensation of disorder that will serve as a precursor to the chaos still to come. Still arranged along a horizontal register, the ten hells depicted on this level do not, however, fit neatly below the Ten Kings above, nor do they correlate to the occasional hell mentioned in the inscriptions accompanying these same Ten Kings.[84]

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[83]Teiser, 62, and Gabain, 26.

[84]Some of the deities invoked do correspond to the kings located above them vis-à-vis the deities connected to the ten feasts in Buddhism as outlined by Teiser, "The Growth of Purgatory", Appendix 4.3. These correspondences will be duly noted within the discussion of the hells.

The discussion of this first level of hell will start at the far right, proceeding to the left as one would move when performing rituals related to the Ten Kings. This is a case of expedient means rather than known reality – a worshipper might just as easily have worked through the hell vignettes in any number of ways, another logical approach being that of beginning with the monk figure standing and preaching on the lowest level, and from there allowing the eye to proceed upward. Since any number of approaches to the hell scenes is plausible, expediency will serve to direct us through the hells, and from there into the grouping of admonitions located largely in the lower right-hand corner of the tableau.

Knife Mountain Hell is the first hell encountered when progressing through the tableau in this fashion (fig. 85). Like all of the hell scenes, this narrative is presented in monoscenic format, the protagonists being the anonymous sinner or sinners pitted against the gleeful denizens of hell. To the left of a stylized mountain mass on which an arc of knifeblades is clearly visible, stands a jailer, clad in military attire. As I have noted elsewhere, the jailers at Great Buddha Bend can be seen as an example of art imitating life.[85] During the Song dynasty, the military became increasingly involved in executions and punishment, with many soldiers making their living by forcing inmates to pay them for leniency or freedom.[86] It is not then surprising that at Baodingshan these purveyors of punishment should wear cuirasses, boots, and helmets. The fact that many of the soldiers were also themselves convicts, forced into conscription in order to serve out their

[85]Kucera, 91.
[86]McKnight, Law and Order in Sung China, 71-72 and 375.

sentence, is another aspect to be considered with regard to the pleasure these individuals seem to derive from causing pain as shown in the Baodingshan imagery.[87] Furthermore, many of the jailers depicted within the hell scenes are grotesque, reflecting Chinese penal policy of scarring or mutilating interred criminals, many of which in turn would become jailers.[88]

The jailer in Knife Mountain Hell points up, seemingly at the soul already skewered on the Knife Mountain, directing another soul to join him. Another possible reading of these two souls seen in this one vignette is that in fact it is only one damned individual, and the suggestion of the infinite number of times a soul must encounter the same torture is being made by the jailer who gestures upward, as if to say "Again!" Watching this process is one of the souls who apparently roam somewhat freely within the hell realms, a woman in a cangue. Cangues appear on four different individuals scattered throughout the two levels of hell in the tableau, and were perhaps the most visible form of punishment in Song China (fig. 86).[89] Cangues were used to transport criminals, to torture innocent individuals in order to gain information, and to publicly humiliate the incarcerated.[90]

The inscription accompanying the Knife Mountain Hell vignette reads:

> If once a month one chants the name of the Dipamkara Buddha 1000 times, one will not fall into the Knife Mountain Hell.[91] The hymn says:

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[87]Ibid., 396.

[88]Ibid.

[89]Although size, weight, and construction were explicit in the penal code, officials often were accused of using injurious cangues, such as the "four-layer cangue" in which wrought iron and uncured rawhide were attached to raw wood, the resulting effect being one of shrinking and squeezing as the rawhide dried. McKnight, 345-6.

[90]Ibid., 344-347.

[91]Dipamkara Buddha. Teiser, appendix 4.3. This is the first feast to be celebrated, and is the first of the ten deities to be invoked at Great Buddha Bend. I would like to take

> "Hearing tell of Knife Mountain yet unable to climb it, the outlines of its rocky hills, lofty and precipitous, causing the heart to swoon. Assiduously cultivating blessings when the days of fast occur, one avoids becoming victim of the drag of evil karma on the path ahead."[92]

The hells are neither captioned nor numbered on this level. They do all, however, begin with the phrase: "If daily one chants the name of such-and-such a Buddha", which, given that ten different Buddhas are named, may correlate with the badly eroded Buddha figures in the niches high above. This phrase is then followed by the name of the particular hell, and the following text often does provide specific directions as to how to avoid a certain hellish fate, as we see here with the warning to "assiduously cultivat(e) blessings when the days of fast occur".[93]

The second hell on this level has as its focal point a large cauldron in which the damned are barely visible as their heads bob up and down amidst the boiling water (fig. 87). This awful brew is being stirred by one of the horsefaced jailers seen in the tableau. Horsehead and Oxhead were already seen as guards in earlier Indian sources.[94] They also would appear to have been a part of Chinese lore prior to the rise in the popularity of hell, and are found in both the Buddhist and Daoist pantheons. The depictions of Oxhead

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this opportunity to thank Dr. Stevenson for his astute editing of the following hell translations.

[92]The format of this, and many of the hymns to follow, mirrors those described by Michel Soymié in "Les dix jours de jeûne de Ksitigarbha" in Contributions aux Études sur Touen-houang, ed. Michel Soymié, 135-59. vol. 1 (Centre de Recherches d'Histoire et de Philologie de la IVe Section de l'École pratique des Hautes Études, Hautes Études Orientales. Geneva and Paris: Librairie Droz, 1979): 137.

[93]Although the format of these hymns may reflect those discussed by Michel Soymié, the texts are not similar and the translations included here are by this author.

and Horsehead at Great Buddha Bend are interesting in that, given that fact the artisans could easily create life-like animals in stone, as seen in the Taming of the Wild Buffalo relief across the grotto from the hell scenes, Oxhead and Horsehead remain caricatures of animals. Their cartoon-like appearance may further substantiate the argument that the artisans were working from popular imagery, such as illustrated handscrolls or theatrical productions.

It is important to note the difference in scale that becomes apparent within the hells. Like the kings above, who stand taller than their assistants, the jailers in these monoscenic narratives clearly dominate the damned within the hell regions. The jailers in hell are tall and brawny, emphasizing the shirking, insignificant souls at their feet. Aiding Horsehead's endeavors within the Boiling Cauldron Hell is one particularly ecstatic assistant, monkey-faced with hair flaming upward, who stokes the fires below the cauldron, the flames carved curling up around the lip of the giant cauldron. Behind the cauldron, another damned soul cowers, eyes covered, as a second jailer raises his hammer to strike a floating soul back down into the boiling brew. The accompanying text reads as follows:

> If daily one chants the name of the Buddha of Medicine 1000 times, one will not fall into Boiling Cauldron Hell.[95] (The hymn says:)

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[94] Teiser, Scripture on the Ten Kings, 212.

[95] "Buddha Master of Medicine Lapis Lazuli Radiance", Stevenson, personal correspondence, 06/18/01. This is the second of the ten feasts to be celebrated, Teiser, appendix 4.3, and is appropriately the second deity to be invoked at Great Buddha Bend.

> "Exhort the ruler to strive to be mindful of the Lord Master of Medicine, and escape from enduring the suffering of the boiling cauldron. Fallen into the waves, wondering when one will get out, early cultivation of the Pure Land helps to escape perishing."

This inscription is interesting on two counts. One, it implicates the ruler and his actions in the fate of the souls of the deceased; should the ruler fail to be swayed to follow the Buddhist path, his subjects, by extension, will be doomed to suffer in this hell. Two, by directing the worshipper to engage in "early cultivation of the Pure Land", this vignette helps to reinforce the hypothesis that the hell tableau and its neighboring Pure Land tableau were ritually linked. Furthermore, the admonition to engage in "cultivation of the Pure Land" can be interpreted as a reference to the practice of chanting, an activity promoted in each of the ten hells depicted on this level.

The third hell is the Freezing Hell, and is aptly represented by two huddled, crouching and clearly shivering souls (fig. 88). Arms hugging their knees to their bony chests, they are naked. The inscribed verse gives a good description of their plight:

> If daily one chants the names of the One Thousand Buddhas of the Present Kalpa 1000 times, one will not fall into the Freezing Hell.[96] (The hymn says:)
> "The worst of sufferings to be found therein are its cold and ice (where one), with eyes covered, (is) naked and exposed to the gods. Merely chant to the various Buddhas seeking merit, and evil karma will be eliminated, and one will be reborn in a good place."

[96]Soothill, 444. This is the third of the ten feasts to be celebrated, Teiser, appendix 4.3, and is the third deity to be invoked at Great Buddha Bend.

Eberhard notes that fear of freezing, to the point that it is devoted its own hell, was more common to Tibetan and Mongolian systems of hell than to those of the Chinese.[97] Given the proximity of the Baodingshan site to the Tibetan plateau, it is not unlikely that Tibetan beliefs and practices would influence this Sichuanese site. International trade routes, which skirted the Tibetan plateau to the south, flowed through Sichuan, and merchants historically were responsible for many instances of iconographic exchange within the Buddhist world.[98] In addition, the latitude and elevation of the Great Buddha Bend grotto can result in winter snows, and as such fear of freezing would have been a very real concern for both the local lay and monastic communities.

The fourth hell is largely destroyed, and large portions of the hymn are missing, due to what appears to be a shifting of the earth, possibly an earthquake (fig. 89). Whatever the cause, Sword Tree Hell, which is now blocked up in order to provide additional support for the level above it, was mostly destroyed. The remaining legible portion of the verse is as follows:

> (If daily one chants the name of (Amitabha)) 1000 times, one will not fall into Sword Tree Hell.[99] The hymn says:

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[97]Wolfram Eberhard, Guilt and Sin in Traditional China (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1967): 25.

[98] For more on the various routes moving in and out of Sichuan, see Angela Falco Howard, "Buddhist Sculpture of Pujiang, Sichuan: A Mirror of the Direct Link Between Southwest China and India in High Tang" Archives of Asian Art no. 42 (1989): 49-61.

[99]The compilers of DZSKMWL, 143, cite "Amitabha" as the Buddha invoked here, although their own accompanying inscription shows this portion of the text as missing. No explanation is provided as to how they ascertained which Buddha was being named. In most

> "(I have heard tell that the blessings of Amitabha are most) powerful. (Upon touching) the deadly sword trees, death occurs automatically. (Whatever) one invites upon oneself, one brings (in retribution) upon oneself. (This retribution) is not something that depends upon (affliction by another)."[100]

Tongue extraction is the mode of torture inflicted in the fifth hell (fig. 90). The narrative shows a figure kneeling, head thrown back as a jailer, probably another Horsehead or Oxhead figure based upon what remains of the head, places a knee on the sinner's chest. With his left hand, he grasps the soul's tongue, and is depicted in the act of pulling it out. Behind the stake to which the damned soul is bound can be seen another figure in a cangue. Tucked back into the very recesses of the natural rock cliff-face, this image with bound hands is a silent and unwilling observer to the pains of the soul before him. The accompanying verse points out that it is not telling falsehoods which leads one to this fate, but the apparently innocent act of tilling the soil. It reads as follows:

> If daily one chants the name of Tathagatha 1000 times, one will not fall into the Tongue Extraction Hell.[101] The hymn says :
> "The Hell of Tongue-Extraction is caused by sending the ox out with the iron plow; all types of grasping does not still it for even one moment. If one desires to avoid personal interrogation by King Yama, recite the name of Dizang 1000 times."

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other instances involving the hell inscriptions, DZSKMWL is a superior, more complete source than the earlier compilation DZSKYJ.

[100]Dan Stevenson, 06/18/01 personal correspondence, provided this probable reconstruction of the largely effaced text of this inscription.

[101]The feast associated with this king by Teiser, appendix 4.3, should be that of the deity Avalokitesvara.

Stephen Teiser notes that in at least one copy of The Scripture on the Ten Kings there is a colophon in which the person commissioning the work asks to have the scripture copied for his plowing ox's merit.[102] A plowing ox would need someone to create merit on his behalf, as the animal itself is unlikely to know to do so. Furthermore, since the ox is forced to till the soil, and inherently kill other sentient beings by doing so - either immediately while in the act of plowing, or due to the fruits of his labors, which will then be used to fatten livestock for slaughter - the individual responsible for the ox's actions gains bad karma. Another point of interest with regard to the Tongue Extraction Hell is its placement underneath Dizang Bodhisattva, who is specifically cited only in this verse. This further supports the theory that the Ten Buddhas above are linked to the hells below.

The Hell of Poisonous Snakes appears immediately next to Tongue Extraction Hell, the carved snakes themselves forming a motif similar to a lotus unfolding as the cobra hoods rise up from their twisted snake bodies to "support" the accompanying inscription (fig. 91). It reads:

> If daily one chants the name of the Tathagatha Wisdom of Great Power 1000 times, one will not fall into the Hell of Poisonous Snakes.[103] The hymn says:
> "The compassion of the bodhisattvas is vast and plentiful; they deliver one from suffering and provide constant instruction, drawing one out from the river of desire.[104] The lotus blossoms of the nine grades (of being) each have their share of

[102]Teiser, Scripture on the Ten Kings, 136.
[103]Soothill, 85.
[104]Ibid., 401.

> the dew.[105] What can cause one to be sent through the poisonous snakes?"

The snakes and their accompanying pains are not as explicitly shown within this vignette, the visual focus being rather the domineering jailer, mace in hand, who forces the damned souls back into the snakes' midst. Bent and contorted, the sinners shrink before the dual onslaught of the jailer's brutal punishment and the awaiting serpentine affliction. Outlines of snakes carved into the rock are still faintly visible underneath one shirking soul, as another snake curls up around his torso.

Yet another moment captured from within this larger, repetitive narrative context, the Hell of Cutting and Grinding is more obvious in its torture than the Hell of the Poisonous Snakes imagery (fig. 92). The grinding aspect of this hell is vividly portrayed with a very prominent pestle, the crosspiece of which is being clutched by a particularly happy and hideous jailer, who applies his weight to the mechanism by a now-shattered left leg. He is also aided in his endeavors by a small, monkey-faced creature, while behind the pestle a figure, possibly that of a woman, cowers and covers her eyes with one hand rather than watch the torture occurring before her.

Next to this vignette is another scene from this especially bloody hell; here Oxhead gleefully cuts a damned soul in half, from the crotch up, with the aid of yet another impish assistant (fig. 93). Legs splayed apart with head

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[105]Ibid., 16. The nine grades of incarnation, i.e. everyone.

down, the soul is clearly suffering an anguishing fate. The inscription for both reads as follows:

> If daily one chants the name of the Bodhisattva who Regards the World's Cries 1000 times, one will not fall into the Hell of Cutting and Grinding.[106] The hymn says:
> "Chopping up bodies, cutting and grinding, no time for repose; all here performed evil deeds, not cultivating and maintaining good. Avalokitesvara grieves for the suffering of all sentient beings, revealing her mercy and compassion, she aids all to escape from hell." [107]

Although no specifics are given regarding the "evil deeds" performed that would land one in this particularly gruesome hell, clear mention is made of how one escapes such a fate, i.e., by beseeching the all-compassionate Avalokitesvara.

The Hell of Being Sawn into Pieces works well in terms of shared imagery with the Hells of Cutting and Grinding. Placed immediately to the left of these two, a bearded jailer can be seen skewering and slicing open a crouching sinner. The Buddha invoked here is Vairocana, and no specific cause is given as to how one comes to arrive at such a painful fate. The verse reads:

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[106]Avalokitesvara. Soothill, 489. In DZSKYJ, 487, it is noted that, on the pestle being used to grind the poor souls, the phrase "Thus the Buddha spoke a scripture from the canon" is inscribed. From photos, it would appear that an additional two-line inscription runs the length of the pestle, along with words being engraved on the pestle's crossbar. It must be noted that the transcriptions provided by the compilers of the *Dazu shi ke yan jiu*, while helpful, are not entirely accurate nor are they complete. Care should be taken when using this text as numerous discrepancies and omissions occur.

[107]I have chosen to refer to Avalokitesvara in the feminine here since this deity appears mainly in female form at this and earlier sites within Dazu County.

> If daily one chants the name of Vairocana Buddha 1000 times, one will not fall into the Hell of Being Sawn into Pieces. (The hymn says:)
> "The Tathagata's merits are vast and perfect radiance, which follows like a bright moon coming out among the myriad stars. Merely by chanting (his name) one is able to eliminate all manner of sins. Only a sovereign presumes to saw into pieces without cause."

With yet another reference to worldly realities, this chant points out that only rulers can mete out punishment, and likewise grant pardons. Mutilation existed as a punishment in China as far back as the Qin, when common practices included the amputation of feet and hands or the cutting off of the nose.[108] Death by slicing, while an irregular punishment, was nonetheless condoned with regard to violent criminals, in order to serve as a warning to all evildoers.[109] Similar practices included beheading and being cut in two at the waist (fig. 94).

The Hell of the Iron Bed and the Hell of Darkness complete the third register of the tableau, but do not spell the end of the hells, with eight more clustered on the lowest level of the work (figs. 95 and 96). The inscription accompanying the Hell of the Iron Bed reads as follows, and helps to decipher the imagery:

> If daily one chants the names of the Bodhisattvas Medicine King and Medicine Excellence 1000

[108]McKnight, 331. McKnight also gives evidence for punishment by cutting off limbs dating as far back as the Shang dynasty, with oracle bone script depicting one man with one leg shorter than the other, and a saw placed next to the shorter leg.

[109]Brian E. McKnight, "Sung Justice: Death by Slicing," American Oriental Society 93 (1973): 359.

> times, one will not fall into the Hell of the Iron Bed.[110] (The hymn says:)
> "The Bodhisattvas true names are those of Healing Kings, and they can dissolve the flames of the iron bed. They have mercy on those who created evil karma as heavy as a mountain, and by merely chanting their true names all living creatures can avoid such calamities."

Adjacent to the soul being gutted in the Hell of Being Sawn into Pieces is an impish hell demon working in the Hell of the Iron Bed. Tube in hand and pressed up to his mouth, he blows air to stoke the flames below the iron bed carved behind him. The figure on the bed writhes in pain, his arm unnaturally bent behind him. To their left, another monkey-faced jailer raises his mace to club a flailing soul, clutching the damned by the hair. This is undoubtedly another candidate for the burning iron bed. The use of clubs to inflict harm upon the damned was another common form of corporal punishment in Song China, with various-sized rods being used to mete out the appropriate punishment.[111]

To their left can be seen a chasm, reaching back into the face of the cliff; it is now shored up with bricks to serve as support for the tableau's upper registers. Two figures grope their way out of this dark place, and the inscribed text gives adequate advice on how to avoid this hell, with Amitabha Buddha being the deity capable of brightening the darkness, again a clear reference to the neighboring Pure Land tableau:

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[110]*Bhaisajyasamudgata* and *Bhaisajya-raja*. Soothill, 472. This is the ninth of the ten feasts to be celebrated, Teiser, appendix 4.3, and is the ninth deity to be invoked at Great Buddha Bend.

> If daily one chants the name of Sakyamuni Buddha 1000 times, one will not fall into the Hell of Darkness.[112] The hymn says:
> "Keeping the fast-days, serving the Buddha, and taking delight in reciting the scriptures, one accumulates good (deeds), and the inspectors of the netherworld inscribe one's name (in the registers of merit). Additionally reciting the name of Amitabha 1000 times, naturally the darkness will manifest brightness."[113]

Having completed this third tier of the hell tableau, the final eight hells will be addressed as if one then continued down and around into the lowest reaches of hell. Rather than being written in verse format, the inscriptions connected to these hells on the lowest level are more narrative in construct, perhaps an effort by the clergy to make them more readily available to be read to a larger audience, perhaps also to provide a text not for chanting aloud, but rather to be read internally.

The first hell encountered in this fashion is the Hell of Feces and Filth (fig. 97). This hell is presided over by a grotesque, fanged jailer who, with a mace in each hand, proceeds to beat back down the damned bobbing up out of the square vat of boiling feces. The vat itself juts down and out so as to allow the worshiper the opportunity to see the struggling souls, two with faces up, as they gasp for air. One soul floats face down, an arm raised in

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[111]McKnight, Law and Order in Sung China, 82. Size was combined with number of blows under what was called the traditional Five Punishments (*wu xing*).

[112]This is the tenth of the ten feasts to be celebrated, Teiser, appendix 4.3, and is the tenth deity to be invoked at Great Buddha Bend. Of the ten feasts and deities invoked in rituals related to the Ten Kings listed by Teiser, only five show a correspondence to the works at Great Buddha Bend.

[113]Of what remains of the inscriptions carved alongside the imagery in the Hell scenes, those areas with the term "the hymn says" all utilize the phrase *zan yue*, literally "to speak in praise", whereas the earlier discussed textual inscriptions describing the Ten Kindness in the Kindness of Parents tableau all utilize the phrase *song yue*, "to praise".

supplication. The carved flames that encircle the sides of the vat increase the aura of noxious fumes suffocating the damned within. The inscription reads:

> The scripture states that Kasyapa asked the Buddha, "Those who eat meat fall into which hell?"
>
> The Buddha informed Kasyapa,
> "Those who eat meat fall into the Hell of Feces and Filth. Therein one finds feces and filth 10,000 'feet' deep, the meat eater is thrown into this hell, and repeatedly he goes through the cycle of immersion and exit. When he goes through the first cycle, myriads of spikes situated all around him stab and rupture this body, and serrate his limbs. This is the great torment (of this hell). For five million lifetimes, he knows no release."[114]

The accompanying inscription is not found directly above and to the left of the Hell of Feces and Filth, but rather carved on the front of a table depicting two men seated with plates in front of them, clearly meant to be a reference to a feast at which meat was consumed. As if to confirm this fact, beside the two seated guests a butcher can be seen straddling his block, upon which is placed an animal head already severed from the carcass (fig. 98).

Located directly below this trio of sinners, the second hell on this lowest level is the Halberd Hell. As noted in the inscription which flanks the preaching monk figure nearby, this hell is for "people who kill living creatures", and thus can be seen to reflect the punishment for the butcher placed above. As seen in the Halberd Hell (fig. 99), spears were also used by

[114]The complete transcription of this text can be found in SDJFJSKYS, 313.

Song authorities.[115] Halberd in hand, Horsehead is positioned virtually at eye-level with the worshipper in the act of literally skewering a hapless soul. Naked to the waist, the soul's hands are bound, his arms wrapped around a sturdy stake as Horsehead gleefully runs him through.

Adjacent to this hell is the gruesome Hell of the Iron Wheel, for "people who seize upon others" (fig. 100).[116] The most visible of the two such hells at Great Buddha Bend being placed at viewer eye-level, the iron wheel as instrument of torture dominates the vignette as it runs back and forth over the crushed body of a soul, whose head and legs peek out from under its weight. With its jagged teeth and two side-by-side handles, the iron wheel resembles a primitive thresher. The operator of this contraption is yet another grotesque hell-demon.

The Hell of the Iron Wheel actually exists in two places within the tableau, with the other variation placed high and on the right side of the pagoda (fig. 101). In this hell, the iron wheels are smaller, and run under the soul's armpits, who is once again tied and bound to a stake. Horsehead holds open the mouth of the damned into which he ladles molten copper. According to the inscription, this is the punishment wrought on those who eat medicine meant for their father or mother, or who eat during the days of fast:

> The Buddha said,
> "(If one) eats (food) or if (one) prepares food and serves it to parents, (teachers, elders), friends,

[115] McKnight, Law and Order in Sung China, 183.
[116] This text is also a portion of the inscription near the pagoda.

> wife, children, and family, then in future lives they will fall into Iron Wheel Hell.[117] There in the armpit on the right side (x), (x) copper is poured (x), suffer for eating during the days of fast (x), likewise it is thus."[118]

Directly above and to the right of the larger Hell of the Iron Wheel is a second Boiling Cauldron Hell (fig. 102). This hell flanks the left side of the pagoda found on the lowest level of the hell scenes. This is also a repeat image, as a boiling cauldron also figures in the set of ten hells situated on the tier above. Here Oxhead presides over the boiling of souls who "cook meat", and the inscription clearly describes a scene much more complex than could be depicted within the confines of the tableau. In a frozen moment, Oxhead has grabbed one the frenzied souls by the leg and hair, and readies to launch him into the vat of boiling water to his left. The accompanying inscription reads :

> The Buddha spoke,
> "(x) (x) (x) (x) create bad karma, the Buddha is all compassionate. The body which falls into the Three Paths meets with pain and suffering; those who believe in one truth bring together ones' own knowledge."
>
> The Buddha then informed Kasyapa,
>
> "Those who seize upon others fall into Iron Wheel Hell. Those who cook meat of any living creature fall into the Boiling Cauldron. There in the midst of water, with a fire below they are kept stewing until they burst. Also boiled are those who urge others to

[117]Large portions of this inscription are no longer legible due to weathering. I present what has been transcribed.

[118]This inscription is actually inscribed on the same tablet and to the left of the admonition against feeding chickens, which is depicted just below it.

> cook meat; they enter this hell and endure its great torments.
>
> People who broil meat fall into the Hell of the Iron Bed. Those who cut and chop meat fall into the Hell of Cutting and Grinding while those who kill living creatures fall into Halberd Hell, wherein an iron-faced (halberd) is used during the daytime, with a copper-iron (halberd) being employed during the evening. The halberd's body has a blade the length of 4 feet. Facing (the damned), it is run through (his or her) chest, coming out his back. For those who kill living creatures it is so. Consequently, to expound the dharma is to explain it to all living creatures."

Although vaguely alluded to in the inscriptions above, the causes of certain hellish punishments are at last explicitly stated. It is interesting to reflect on societal roles with regard to who will eventually be punished in this particular series of hells. Two different classes of individuals come to mind: butchers – who by all accounts were lower class citizens – and women. Given that the barbecue as a man's domain is a twentieth-century construct, who but wives and mothers will be cutting and chopping, or broiling and boiling, meat? This links the worshipper back to the indebtedness owed to mothers seen in the first tableau, and hopefully inspired sons to offer greater sacrifices on her behalf. For not only did the mother engender her son's gratitude through the very act of physically nurturing him, she also created bad karma for herself with virtually every meal she prepared.

Tending the various household flocks and herds more likely than not would also have been woman's work in twelfth-century China, as women were bound by tradition to stay home while the men were employed away

from the home. As such, the punishment meted out to those who raised animals, in this instance specifically chickens, would have been directed more towards women than men. The imagery accompanying the Admonition against Raising Animals is often reproduced, with many a commentator unaware of the grimness of the vignette (fig. 103). Rhapsodizing on the lovely pastoral quality of the young woman who tends her hen and chicks, they fail to realize that the fate that awaits her for just such an innocent act is not a pleasant one. Largely effaced, the gist of the inscription reads as follows:

> The Buddha told Kasyapa,
> "All sentient beings who raise chickens, enter into hell....'"[119]

Carved on the lowest level below the second and smaller Iron Wheel Hell and the Admonition against Raising Animals is Knife Boat Hell, with the following brief inscription:

> Receiving the penalty for one's own sins, it is not a case of heaven meting out punishment to humans.[120]

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[119]There is some irony in this admonition against raising animals. Shih Heng-ching, The Syncretism of Ch'an and Pure Land Buddhism (New York: P. Lang, 1992): 12, notes that "strictly speaking, the Chinese monastic tradition of farm cultivation violates the *vinaya*, yet it is one of the factors that contributed to the acceptance and survival of Buddhism in China. In not only was a means of self-support, but also became a means of spiritual discipline."

[120]Dan Stevenson, personal correspondence, 6/19/01. The inscription for this scene can be found on a small stele placed above the souls in the boat. It is letter 'C' in the diagram.

Two male figures, again naked to the waist, are seated side by side in a dinghy up out of which curved knife blades rise, cutting at their bodies (fig. 104). The curling waves at the bottom of the boat represent the rough seas on which they must endure this torture, their faces contorted as they wail in pain.

To the right of Knife Boat Hell, and directly behind the remains of what appears to be a large lotus-shaped altar, is Hungry Ghost Hell (fig. 105). The reincarnation of Mulian's mother as a hungry ghost prompted the Buddha's preaching of the Yulanben Scripture, and the subsequent celebration of the yearly Ghost Festival.[121] The presence of the lotus altar directly in front of the Hungry Ghost Hell may point to a ritual use for this aspect of the tableau, possibly in conjunction with yearly lay and monastic combined assemblies devoted to helping the hungry ghosts and the denizens of hell be reborn in the Pure Land.[122] Another possible use for the lotus altar would have been the Flaming Mouths Ritual, this inference being made based upon the existence of the inscribed text of *Jiu ba yan kou* nearby. The accompanying inscription reads as follows:

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[121] Teiser, Ghost Festival, 107, claims a Tantric precedence for the Ghost Festival rituals, citing the Scripture of Dharanis for Saving Hungry Ghosts with Burning Mouths (*Jiu ba yan kou e gui tuo le ni jing*), T. 1313, 21: 464b-65b as a possible precursor. See The Ghost Festival in Medieval China for more history on the hungry ghosts and their accompanying rituals. Charles Orzech agrees, noting that large plenary masses for the dead, which evolved out of esoteric rites begun in the Tang dynasty but which had been defunct by the Five Dynasties period, were renewed and performed during the Song dynasty. See Orzech, "Esoteric Buddhism and the Shishi in China" in The Esoteric Buddhist Tradition, ed. Henrik Sørensen (Copenhagen: Aarhus, 1994): 56.

[122] This is still one of the largest and most important yearly religious gatherings for the Buddhist community. See Miriam Levering, "Scripture and Its Reception: A Buddhist Case" in Rethinking Scripture, 58-101. Miriam Levering, ed. (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989): 79.

> The scripture states:
>
> Kasyapa Bodhisattva then addressed the Buddha saying, "Those who do not honor the days of fast fall into which hell?" The Buddha informed Kasyapa, "Those who do not honor the days of fast fall into Hungry Ghost Hell...."[123]

Although the hungry ghosts are depicted as inhabiting hell, and in fact the accompanying inscribed caption clearly states as such, punishment in the form of a hungry ghost was in fact not a hell per se, but rather an alternate state of existence among the six paths found within the Wheel of Transmigration. Hungry ghosts were actually considered to co-exist amongst the humans of this world; the very famous contemporaneous Japanese work, *Gaki zoshi*, which depicts the hungry ghosts quite explicitly engaging in wholly gruesome and unpleasant activities right alongside completely unaware human beings, may have existed in a similar handscroll form in China as well.[124] While such Chinese works are no longer extant, the placement of the mournful hungry ghost at eye-level within the hell scenes at Great Buddha Bend could not help but reinforce this idea of coexistence to some degree.

To the right of the begging hungry ghost is what remains of the backside of another figure, most likely another hungry ghost. Below them

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[123]See SDJFJSKYS, 312, for the complete transcription of this inscription.

[124] An interesting take on the increased prevalence of hungry ghosts within the Buddhist community during the medieval period is discussed by William R. LaFleur, "Hungry Ghosts and Hungry People: Somaticity and Rationality in Medieval Japan" in Fragments for a History of the Human Body, ed. Michel Feher, Ramona Naddaff, and Nadia Tazi, 270-303 (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1989).

sits another of the random individuals wearing a cangue; these cangue-wearing individuals are scattered throughout the tableau much as one would expect to find them within any given medieval Chinese city, being mobile but unable to feed themselves or take care of their physical needs. To the right of this grouping a large gash in the tableau indicates where the rockface has shifted, a feature already seen in the Sword Tree Hell above. What remains of the sculpture of this area is the head of a furry creature with large eyes (fig. 106). None of the previous scholarship makes note of this image, much less bothers at identification. I will venture to state that what remains is the head of a lion, an animal more commonly associated with Manjusri, but, as noted by Francoise Wang-Toutain, also often seen in the company of Dizang Bodhisattva.[125]

The inscription regarding Avici Hell does not accompany an image per se, but could be argued to serve as a transition between the earlier hell scenes and the final grouping of admonitions, which are directed at the monastic community. Entrance to Avici Hell here focuses on the monk or nun who has not followed the four precepts which cause a member of the monastic community to be immediately expelled from the order.[126] The inscription reads as follows:

The Buddha told Kasyapa,

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[125]Francoise Wang-Toutain, Le bodhisattva Ksitigarbha en Chine du Ve au XIII siecle, Monographe no. 185 (Paris: Presses de l'école française d'extrême-orient, 1998). In at least one of the two hell scenes found in Anyue County, Dizang's lion mount is still visible. See Hu Wenhe, "*Sichuan shi ku zhong "Di yu bian xiang" tu de yan jiu*", 68.

[126]For particulars on the monastic code in India, see Charles S. Prebish's work Buddhist Monastic Discipline (University Park, PA: Penn State University Press, 1975).

> "If a mendicant here puts on my dharma robe,[127]
> (he or she must) one, abstain from drinking alcohol, two, abstain from eating meat, three, abstain from envying the good at heart, four, abstain from engaging in ignoble or impure deeds.[128] Those who do not do so fall into Avici Hell..."[129]

Just below and to the right of the Avici Hell inscription is a figure that arguably could be seen as one of this hell's inhabitants (fig. 107). The second of two female figures depicted at Great Buddha Bend with her breasts uncovered, this mournful creature sits at ground level, her mouth open, feet planted, hands clutched into tight fists placed in her lap. Unlike the bare-breasted mother figure seen in the Scripture on the Kindness of Parents, this image is not meant to represent the timeless connection between mother and son, but rather a soul utterly humiliated. At Baodingshan, nakedness is the primary form of depiction for the damned, adding an extra dimension to the horrors expressed there for the Song dynasty worshipper. As Chinese custom at the time called for entire coverage of the body with the exception of hands and face, in the real world only individuals who were being punished would be subjected to forced public nakedness.[130]

While one possible reading for this figure is that of a damned individual suffering the eternity of Avici Hell, a more likely source for this image is found in the inscription accompanying the Admonition against Alcohol:

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[127]Soothill, 270.
[128]Soothill, 107.
[129]The inscription continues with a physical description of Avici Hell.

> A person such as the girl who buys and sells alcohol, will die and fall into hell. When receipt of her punishment is concluded, she will be (reborn with) a body three feet high, two ears blocked shut, a face without two eyes, likewise without nostrils, underneath the lips, a gaping mouth, hands without ten fingers, legs without two feet.[131]

A close examination of the carved image shows that her mouth is not open per se but lipless, a gaping hole. Her hands are not clenched into fists, but altogether lacking in fingers, and her legs end in stubs, without feet entirely. The horrific implication of such an image was intended to aid the members of the monastic community in their efforts to remain faithful to the precepts, which stridently enforced a "zero-tolerance" policy toward alcohol consumption as well as to provide a stiff rejoinder to the laity not to entice people with drink. In the inscription carved above this hapless soul in hell a worshipper would read the following:

> The sutra states:
>
> At that time, the World-honored One informed all Buddhist monks:
> "If someone receives the Five Precepts and the 250 Precepts,[132] and the full range of rules of proper deportment,[133] and yet does not abstain from drinking alcohol, then he or she has violated the 250 Precepts with regard to right conduct. If you

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[130]Gabain, 30-1.

[131]Dr. Stevenson, 6/19/01, rightly points out that the physical impairments suffered in this hell mirror in many ways the deadening effects alcohol in real life.

[132]Soothill, 239. The rules of the *vinaya*. The Sanskrit term is *pratimokosa*. Soothill, 266. This "list of rules" is literally a statement of values for the Buddhist monastic community, explicitly denoting allowable behavior and forbidden behavior.

[133]Mathews, #1047.

> transgress as such you will accordingly enter hell."[134]

Bernard Faure argues that the rationale behind the regular discussion of the code of conduct was an attempt to avoid misconduct on the part of a singular monk or nun as such an act would in effect breach the identity of the group as the whole.[135] He further notes that the regular recitation of such a list of incongruous behavior could have produced a variety of effects, running the full gamut from edification to titillation.[136] Faure posits,

> One could argue that early Buddhist monks, in their attempt to understand reality "as it is," did not avert their gaze from sexuality but rather confronted head on the "facts of life", in the same way as they dwelt on the "contemplation of impurity" during their meditation. But it may also be argued that Vinaya commentators show a rather unhealthy fascination for the trivial and defiling aspects of human existence. Even before being threatened by external accommodations, the rule is already shaped from within by narrativity. The Vinaya is not only a juridical corpus, it is a mine of spicy anecdotes.[137]

Although Chinese and Japanese approaches to the precepts were more abstracted and less prone to the detail found in the Indian versions of the Vinaya, biweekly recitation of the *pratimokosa* as was the case in earlier Indian

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[134]For a lengthy in-depth discussion of the sexual aspects of the 250 Rules of Conduct, see Bernard Faure, The Red Thread (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998): 64-97.

[135]Ibid., 82.

[136]Ibid., 67.

[137]Ibid.

Buddhist monastic tradition continued to be practiced in East Asia.[138] The use of images of buddhas and bodhisattvas by the monastic community within the context of this ritual may account for the presence of this inscription at Great Buddha Bend.[139]

The Hell of Being Cut in Two at the Knees creates a further connection between the lowest levels of hell depicted at Great Buddha Bend and the admonitions directed at the monastic community (fig. 108).[140] Prominently placed to the right of the figure depicting the final dharma form of the girl who buys and sells alcohol, this image is gruesomely realistic in its depiction of a very common Song dynasty torture, that of cutting a prisoner up, limbs first. The accompanying inscription reads as follows, and points out quite succinctly how one acquires such an unfortunate fate:

> In addition to people who drink, those who press alcohol on a monk will fall into the Hell of Being Cut in Two at the Knees, within which a strong man (jailer) with his sword will brutally cut the damned's two knees. Those who press alcohol on a monk will receive such suffering as this."

Central to the vignette is a damned soul whose arms are bound behind him. He is seated, naked, his mouth open as he readies a scream in pain; his legs are held down by a flame-haired demon who wields a sword in his right

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[138]This confessional ritual was referred to as *posadha*. Faure, 64–69 and 89-94. Miriam Levering notes in her study of recent Buddhist monastic practice that "the morning daily office begins with a recitation of the *Surangama Mantra*, which has the specific purpose of dispelling sexual temptations", highlighting a continuing concern among the Buddhist community regarding sexual transgression. See Levering, 77.

[139]Ibid., 94.

hand high above his head, readying to strike the legs off his victim's legs at the knees.

Not only are eighteen hells depicted at Baodingshan, but also an additional four admonitions are included. These include the aforementioned Admonition against Raising Animals along with the Admonition against Alcohol combined with the Evils of Selling Alcohol and the Admonition against Speaking Falsehoods (fig. 109). These have all been prominently positioned at eye-level with the worshipper. With the carved images clad in contemporary Song attire and realistically painted, the vignettes accorded to alcohol consumption must have been highly effective deterrents to over-indulgence. The inscription related to speaking falsehoods as well as the relief depicting a woman feeding chickens can be viewed as delineating the broad scope of the Buddhist precepts, emphasizing how seemingly innocent activities do not go unpunished.

Directly above the Hell of Being Cut in Two at the Knees and the naked female figure seated in mute despair is a depiction of a monk, now without a head, being offered a bowl of wine by a merchant, behind whom stands a young woman, hair up in braids, holding a vessel of wine (fig. 110). Thus as a narrative construct, the viewer's eye is forced to go up and down (earthly existence as wine purveyors; hellish existence below) as well as back and forth in a diagonal manner. They serve as the impetus for the story

[140]The inscriptions for this hell are actually split between a small stele placed behind the demon wielding the sword and the cangue worn by the prisoner to his right. They are notated as letters 'A' and 'B' on the diagram.

carved immediately to the right. Once again the inscription provides the viewer with more information than could feasibly be depicted; the edifying story being told reads as follows:

> Kasyapa addressed the Buddha saying,
>
> "Liquor does not involve living victims. For what reason does the Tathagatha prohibit alcohol (as something that) causes suffering?"
>
> The Buddha replied to Kasyapa,
>
> "Listen carefully. In the kingdom of Sravasti there was Angulimala;[141] the action of drinking alcohol caused stupidity and confusion, causing the son to violate his own mother, and to kill his own father. The mother accordingly took a lover, and together bearing a knife (they) did harm. This is the reason today the precepts say alcohol causes suffering."

Although the inscribed storyline includes evil actions done by a mother as well as her son, the only images shown relate to the son's deeds, which were performed in a drunken state. The first carved image would seem to be unique in Chinese Buddhist art as well as being extremely unusual when seen within the Chinese artistic tradition as a whole. It depicts an incestuous moment, in which the drunken Angulimala reaches into his mother's shirt to fondle her breast (figs. 111a and b). This is a clear violation of his mother, although not as extreme as the inscription would seem to imply. Below this erotic scene is an equally disturbing image: Angulimala

[141]Akanuma Chizen, *Indo Bukkyo koyu mei shi jiten*, 39-41. Angulimala is a murderer who eventually repents and is converted to Buddhism.

killing his own father. The son leans over his sleeping father with a halberd raised in his hands as if to choke him with the weapon's wooden handle.[142]

Recent scholarship refers to this portion of the tableau as "belie(ing) the extremity of the social transgression and Oedipal fantasy they act out", but this is not entirely accurate.[143] Freudian analysis would have it that all men want to kill their fathers and sleep with their mothers. I contend that rather than viewing this vignette as Oedipal in nature, one should view it within it's own Chinese framework, solely as demonstrating the height of unfilial transgression. The inscription clearly states that Angulimala is confused and stupid due to his drunkenness, and therefore is not aware of his own actions. It is not a case of subliminal desires being brought to the fore, but a clear statement on the evils of alcohol, a substance from which one is led into a state of being so blind that even the most dear and revered individuals are no longer known to the imbiber.

Heightening the edifying effect of Angulimala's story are the images carved next to these two depictions which include the two vignettes above of a husband not recognizing his wife and a father not recognizing his son (figs. 112a and b). Below these two are an older sister not knowing her younger sister, placed to the left of an older brother failing to recognize his younger brother (figs. 113a and b). The accompanying inscription reads as follows:

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[142]One of the five major offenses put forward in the *pratimokosa* is the murder of one's father or mother. See Faure, 72.

[143]Robert L. Thorp and Richard Ellis Vinograd, Chinese Art and Culture (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 2001): 269.

> The Sutra on Brilliant Freshness Preached by the Buddha from the Great Canon:
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> At that time Buddha announced to Kasyapa: ....[144]
> "Those who drink alcohol do not know their own families. Among those who drink alcohol, there are cases where fathers do not recognize their sons, or sons do not recognize their fathers; elder brothers do not recognize younger brothers, or younger brothers do not recognize elder brothers; husbands do not recognize their wives, or wives do not recognize their husbands; elder sisters do not recognize younger sisters, or younger sisters do not recognize elder sisters; or they do not recognize their inner or outer kin. Good sons (of the Buddha) in this current life become utterly confused; how much moreso in future (lives to come). Any sentient being who foregoes drinking wine and eating meat will be able to arouse the resolve to (seek and achieve) the perfected bodhi mind."

With the exception of the vignette of the older sister not recognizing her younger sister, the Admonition against Alcohol depicts the drunken as slovenly souls, their shirts open to expose sagging breasts and paunchy stomachs. Since other forms of nudity present at Great Buddha Bend are found mainly among the naked souls of hell, it is not inappropriate to view these individuals as already among the damned, their drunken state in essence a living hell on earth.

Bringing together the entire hell tableau is the life-size figure of a monk carved directly beneath a pagoda almost central within the lowest level of hell. His left hand raised as if pointing to the images that surround him,

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[144]The text breaks here as a large portion of the actual inscription has been broken away.

his right hand clutches a bound sutra (fig. 114). On his right and left flank are carved the following inscriptions:

> Heaven's halls are vast and broad, yet hell is also vast; not believing in the Buddha's word, then how the heart suffers!
>
> My Way is to seek pleasure in the midst of suffering, but all sentient beings (being confused) seek pain in the midst of pleasure.[145]

In the pagoda above the preaching monk is yet again inscribed the "red-hot iron wheel" chant first seen stretched above the Buddha Preaches the Scripture on the Repayment of Kindness,[146] and it is intriguing to note that the monk himself is placed among several hells in which iron wheels figure prominently. His presence in the depths of hell can be seen to highlight the pedagogical function that may be one rationale for the large amounts of text found at Great Buddha Bend. A number of scholars argue that this monk figure is meant to be a portrait of Zhao Zhifeng, an issue which shall be discussed shortly.

One final grouping exists within the lower levels of the hell tableau, although it is arguable whether it is meant to be viewed as part of the work. This is the trio entitled "Mother and Father Feeding their Child" (fig. 115), located just below and to the left of the Feces and Filth Hell. The carving consists of a seated father figure with his son standing at his knee. The mother kneels to the right, presenting to the boy two bowls with varying contents, from which the child indicates his choice with his right hand.

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[145]These inscriptions are letters 'D' and 'E' in the diagram.

The text accompanying the image is carved next to that of the Hell of Feces and Filth, which previously I have argued could have been placed as such for purposes of expediency, or for lack of a better flat surface.[147] In revisiting the hell tableau, and viewing this grouping within the context of Great Buddha Bend as a whole, I now believe it works as yet another edifying image. What remains of the inscribed text, somewhat abraded, reads as follows:

> Kasyapa addressed the Buddha saying, "When you preach the *dharma* to sentient beings, do they accept it or not?"
>
> The Buddha then told Kasyapa,
>
> "(It is analogous to) a person whose years having reached the age of 80, (remains) poor, poverty-stricken, and forlorn. A ruler bears a single son. (Filled) with the utmost pity and compassion (for his son), he holds gold in one hand and food in the other, offering both at the same time (to the child). The child being ignorant does not recognize the gold, but grasps the food.
>
> For all sentient beings, even rulers, it is so. I (the Buddha) take pity on sentient beings (and preach the *dharma*) in the same way as just as kind as that loving father (offered the gold). Yet all the sentient beings cast it aside, do (not) pay reverence to it, take it to heart, nor put it into practice."

The inscription tells a simple parable to highlight that faith and practice are as valuable as gold, but that to realize such a fact is in no way obvious. A child does not differentiate between what adults value and what it needs to survive, but must in the end be guided toward that end. As the

[146]This inscription is letter 'F' in the diagram.

closing remarks note, likewise all worshippers need guidance to look beyond their physical day-to-day needs and wants, to the gold that awaits them when they embrace the Buddhist path. The father figure in this vignette is then analogous to the Buddha, and the filial aspect seen in these works is now extended to the debt owed by all to the Buddha himself as provider of the True Law.

This is clearly also a rejoinder to parents to allow their sons the opportunity to devote their lives to Buddhism. Monks would have seen their avocation as justified, their choice of the "gold" over the "meal" a testament to a wisdom beyond their years. This vignette can conversely be viewed as a reminder to be thankful to those parents who allowed their sons to pursue Buddhist worship and study. Without their willingness to present both the gold alongside the food, a choice would never have had to have been made. Once again traditional family values are stressed, the son here indebted to the father, the community at large to the Buddha and those who work to achieve his ideal.

Heaven and Hell: A Conceptual Approach

As was seen in the Scripture on the Kindness of Parents tableau, the protagonist in the hell scenes is a universal character, every man or woman's mother or father. The souls are presented not as individuals but rather as

[147]Kucera, 109.

gendered anonymous people, with enough textual or visual differentiation provided so as to affirm for the worshipper that such a fate is non-specific, embracing both men and women, afflicting wealthy and poor alike. As was also the case earlier in the Scripture on the Kindness of Parents tableau, these images can be seen as symbols, particulars representing a more general whole.

The narrative quality of the Scripture on the Visualization of the Buddha of Infinite Life can be seen to function on two different levels, and is therefore also similar to other tableaux at the grotto. The first level is within the cosmic realm, the heavens of the Pure Land. Within this realm the narrative aspect picks up where the hell scenes leave off. The story of the "universal soul" protagonist encountered in the hell scenes is continued in the numerous representations of souls at various stages of rebirth in the neighboring Pure Land.

The second narrative component follows along similar lines, but is manifested in a more concrete fashion. The sixteen visualizations as encountered by Queen Vaidehi again incorporate the “Everyman and Everywoman” aspect by literally choosing to remove the now distant Indian queen, and replace her with Chinese protagonists from all walks of life. In this respect, the audience of the Great Buddha Bend work could easily visualize themselves replicating the queen’s actions, and likewise see themselves as achieving enlightenment. With each step as the worshipper worked through the Sixteen Visualizations at Baodingshan, he or she

encountered familiar faces and occupations, the emblematic monoscenes being peopled with individuals from a world known to them. Functionally, such real-world imagery must have had a strong edifying impact.

When compared to the other five narrative tableaux found at the grotto, the hell scenes are presented to the viewer as chaotic. Unlike the series of images depicting a mother's ten kindnesses, which are clearly numbered, the hells and the Ten Kings who reign over them are captioned in a fashion akin to what is seen in the neighboring Pure Land tableau as well as in the work depicting the Buddha Preaching the Scripture on the Repayment of Kindness. This points to a differing intention in these works' production – i.e., that the images are meant to be understood in a logical yet not necessarily chronological fashion.

This analysis of the function of text within the Great Buddha Bend tableau depicting the hell scenes differs from that of the captioned cave-paintings found at Dunhuang, where the images are also jumbled. Wu Hung has argued that the Dunhuang murals were not meant to be viewed in a didactic sense and, if actually used as such, necessitated prior knowledge of the storyline on the part of the viewer in order to be understood.[148]

At Baodingshan, several of the narrative tableaux under discussion may not have been designed to be viewed necessarily as one continuous narrative. Instead, similar to the Chinese tradition of oral and historical narration, they are composed of discrete units linked together by a common

[148]Wu Hung, "What is Bianxiang?", 136-37.

theme. In terms of didactic function, works such as the Repayment of Kindness and hell tableaux were perhaps more effective because the significance of the entire work was encapsulated within each individual vignette, which was then repeated throughout the tableau. This then allowed the worshipper and the clergy to move through the works more quickly if necessary without compromising the overall message.

Integral to understanding the ritual relationship between the two tableaux is the small work, numbered nineteen within the grotto, titled Locking up the Six Vices (fig. 116). The only individual discussion of this tableau is an article published in 1996 by Deng Zhijin.[149] Deng's discussion can be divided into two parts – the first a thorough overview of the sculptural works in the tableau along with transcriptions of the numerous inscriptions which accompany them; the second, a debate over who is being represented as the central figure of the piece. This second issue of portraiture shall be addressed at greater length within chapter four. In his study, Deng gives no real analysis as to the work's overall function, or a rationale for its placement between the heavens of the Pure Land and the hell scenes beside them.

The size of the Six Vices tableau is significantly smaller than the two adjoining works. However, as Deng notes, "within this niche there are fourteen figures, eight animals, and 30 separate inscriptions, carved in a stone

[149] Deng Zhijin, "*Dazu Baodingshan Da fo wan liu hao tu kan diao cha*" ("An examination of the *liuhaotu* niche at the Great Buddha Grotto, Baodingshan, Dazu") *Sichuan wen wu* no. 1 (1996): 23-32.

area covering only 1015 square centimeters, and containing 687 characters."[150] The work is divided into three registers by Deng, thus mirroring in format other nearby carved works.

The uppermost portion of the work is "captioned" in characters considerably larger than those seen elsewhere in the carving, and reads "Binding Tight the Monkey of the Mind and Locking Up the Vices of the Six Senses". To the right of this inscription one then reads "The Transformation Body of Maitreya", and to the left, " Made by Great Master Fu". Below this segment, and in the middle portion of the tableau, is the central figure, identified by Deng as a "curly-haired person."[151] From this figure's forehead emanates a ray upward to encompass a Buddha seated, hands held in a variant of the meditation mudra. Dressed in monk's attire, the central figure holds a reclining monkey in his lap, a metaphor for the human mind.

On each side of the figure are two symmetrical series of inscriptions. Immediately to the right of the figure's head is the caption "Heaven's halls and hell", which is completed on the left side, "with one stroke are by the mind created". In order to elaborate on this point, two rays emanate outward to the left and right from the central figure's heart, like ribbons draped over the monkey image. Each ray leads out to a seed character of sorts, which will form the basis of a series of inscriptions flanking the central figure. These are larger characters set off in circles; on the right one reads "good (*shan*)" which flows upward to the character "good fortune (*fu*)",

[150]Ibid., 23.

which in turn leads to “happiness (*le*)”. To the left the seed character is “evil (*e*)”, which flows into “misfortune (*huo*)”, which eventually leads to “suffering (*ku*)”.

One can view these characters and the interspersed brief inscriptions that connect them as a schematic – the eye is guided upward from either the “good” or “evil” character by engraved rays, through captions of the various rewards and punishments accorded each chosen path, arriving eventually at small figures meant to represent these various states of rebirth – hungry ghost, hell denizen, humans, animals or conversely, rebirths into various paradisiacal settings. In this sense, the tableau mirrors imagery seen in the Wheel of Transmigration on the south side of the grotto. The sets of rays are completely symmetrical, and frame the Buddha image that rises above the central figure’s head.

Directly below the central meditative figure cradling the monkey is a short inscription known as a “hell-breaking” verse:

> "If a person would wish to know all the Buddhas of the three periods, just discern that the *Dharmadhatu* is by nature generated entirely from the mind."[152]

This short verse is in effect placed directly between good and evil, and their ultimate rewards. Moreover, this verse can be seen to link the hell

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[151]Ibid.

[152]*Dharmadhatu* (*fa shi*) translates as the "name for "things" in general, noumenal or phenomenal; for the physical universe, or any portion or phase of it. It is the unifying underlying spiritual reality regarded as the ground or cause of all things, the absolute from which all proceeds." (Soothill, 271a). Many thanks to Dr. Stevenson, personal

tableau to the worshipper's left with the Pure Land work on his or her right, a sensation which is reinforced by the two emanations of 'good' and 'evil', which flank their respective recompense. 'Good' leads the worshipper's eye to the glories of the Pure Land; 'evil' connects the individual with the sufferings of the damned. Used within a ritual context, the hell-breaking verse represents a way to pass from one existence to the next.[153]

The tableau's overall message is reiterated in the location of the verse between the central seated monk figure, and the animal representations of the six vices, linked to the six senses, which extend outward below it. The six animals, which represent the enemies of human enlightenment, are arrayed below the lotus pedestal of the central figure, and have small inscriptions attached to them, but are not captioned per se. The animal sculptures are very eroded, so identification is tentative. To the left can be seen a wild cat, a fish, and a horse. On the right, one encounters a dog, a crow, and a snake. Underneath these carved images is a lengthy inscription outlining the meaning of the six vices, and equating them with the six senses. Bind up the monkey that is your sensual reality, and you will break free of suffering and hell.[154]

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correspondence 11/14/00, for pointing out the importance of this portion of the tableau to me.

[153]Cohen, 187, notes that "there were other rituals carried out by Buddhist clergy which were aimed at helping the deceased to "pass over" to the Western Paradise; while some were linked to the funeral itself, others were performed periodically (i.e. on a person's death anniversary), thus reinforcing the belief that the dead remained in the underworld."

[154]Deng, 25. The six animals, which represent the enemies of human enlightenment, are arrayed below the lotus pedestal of the central figure, and have small inscriptions attached to them but are not 'captioned' per se. The animal sculptures are very eroded, so identification is tentative. To the left can be seen a wild cat, a fish, and a horse. On the right,

Thus the small Six Vices tableau functions similarly to that of its towering neighbors: text is used largely in a ritual context, but with some text also being used in conjunction with imagery to highlight the essential components of the work's message. Yet this work is critical for its role in connecting the hell tableau with the images of the Pure Land next door. One can surmise that, although the work receives little in the way of scholarly attention today, in twelfth-century China, the Six Vices inscriptions and images were utilized and revered not only for their inherent salvational properties, but also for the quite clearly represented schemata which lead the worshipper towards either good or evil. It is ironic indeed that centuries later this small but integral tableau remains largely overshadowed by its more showy neighbors within the various studies related to the Baodingshan complex.

Moving beyond the beauties of the Pure Land and the horrors of hell, the worshipper encountered the final pairing of tableaux, and yet another set of rejoinders vis-à-vis sacrifices being made on behalf of faith and family.

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