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佛像

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FIGURES OF BUDDHA
A COLLECTION OF BEST ARTISTIC WORKS
SHANGHAI PEOPLE'S FINE ARTS PUBLISHING HOUSE

季崇建

佛 像

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艺林撷珍丛书编委名单

艺术顾问： 杨 新

汪庆正

张道一

主 编： 吴士余

副 主 编： 马荣华 戴定九

编 委： 钱公麟 林兰英

张德宝 吴少华

撰 文 季崇建

责任编辑 戴定九

装帧设计 陆全根

简 介 郑士有

译 文 陈啟德

An Introduction to Buddhist Figures in China

Arts of Buddhist figures in China were formed with the introduction of Indian Buddhism. There was a legend about it. On the certain night of the year 60, Ming Emperor Liu Zhuang in Eastern Han dreamed a golden man, but he didn't know where the god came from. The next day, the emperor called his subjects together to explain the dream. A minister named Fu Yi said Xitianzhu in ancient India had the sage called Buddha dressed in gold. What Your Majesty had dreamed was surely the Buddha, he said. Then the emperor sent his attendant, Cai Yin, with thousands of soldiers, to Tianzhu as an envoy to seek Buddhist doctrine. In 67, they returned to China with Buddhist Scripture and figures. This was the first record on ancient books, but it didn't tell what kind of the Buddhist figures they were. From the existing stone sculptures and pottery Buddhist figures, we will find that the Han people carved them according to the images of gods in vogue at that time.

In the Five Dynasties and 16 States, the Chinese-style Buddhist figures showed up. They were not reliefs or shallow-carved images attached to other objects, but were round Buddhist figures with a completely-carved body structure. The figures, however, basically followed suit of the Indian model.

In the Northern Wei period, arts of Buddhist

figures flourished and began to get rid of the Indian influence. At that time, emperors believed in Buddhism which resulted in a nationwide practice to cast figures. The early works were greatly influenced by the Indian arts. The most attractive was the model with two figures sitting together. The Hebei region then was the figure-carving centre and gathered many skilful craftsmen from all corners of the country. Hewing the Yungang Grottoes has left us many ancient outstanding works. Figures in the middle of the dynasty changed a lot with Buddha's face becoming fine and delicated and the body round. The bronze figure of Bodhisattva Guanyin, which was created by Ming Che'an in 514, was the representative works in that period. It shook off the yoke of the Buddhist image in features and dress and was imbued with the worldliness. In the late Northern Wei, figures featured the Longmen styles and became fine and delicate. The works showed fine workmanship and a realistic approach. The art was ripe in the era of Xiaoming Emperor and a rule was formed for the figure-carving craftsmen to follow.

Buddhist figures in Western Wei reserved a delicated and elegant bearing of Buddhas in Northern Wei and were permeated with more artistic interest of life. The lifelike and unrestrained figures were mostly shown up in the Grotto Temple on the Maijishan Mountain.

Figures in Northern Qi were known for changeable techniques of expression and characterization. A combination of Buddhas and family dependents appeared. It paid more attention to the sense of beauty in a poor light. The Buddha standing in the front became more perfect against the gorgeous back light.

Early arts of Buddhist figures in the Sui Dynasty followed the styles of Northern Dynasties. At the beginning, there was something unique about the appearance of the figures and many outstanding Buddhist idols were created with dignified gestures and magnificent dress.

Figures in the Tang Dynasty had their own characteristics. They were dressed in muslin as thin as wet cloths sticking on the body. But the figures were carved very plump because of the influence of the Tang culture. Buddhas began female and beautified in the prime of the dynasty. The half-naked body was well-developed and showed a projecting and obvious arc line from breast to waist. The three-curved figure was exquisite and attractive, becoming a big feature in the Tang Dynasty. More materials were used to carve figures and create big wooden Buddhas.

Buddhist figures in the Song Dynasty were inferior in number and standard to those in the Tang Dynasty, but their energetic, magnificent, succinct, skilful styles outdid.

With new techniques of expression, artists characterized many figures with profound psychology and personality to reflect the real life.

A broad view of China's carving arts of Buddhist figures showed that figures first featured Indian styles, then changed in Northern Dynasties and Southern Dynasties. China's first generation of Buddhist images was created. A change in Bei Qi and the Sui Dynasty resulted in a new peak of creating Buddhist figures in the Tang Dynasty. The exotic arts were finally localized and became popular. The Song Dynasty faded the religious colour of Buddhist figures to reflect cordial interest of life. That is the main development process of China's arts of Buddhist figures.

--the end

中国佛像

● 中土萌发

虽然我们还无法说清西天印度的佛像艺术传入中土的确切时间，但传说中的东汉明帝刘庄夜梦金人，遣使取经，携回佛像，则成为佛像流入中土的重要依据。

史籍记载，明帝永平三年（公元60年）某夜，梦见一金人，不知何方神人，遂召群臣，以占所梦。当时有位叫傅毅的大臣说：西天竺（古印度）有此圣人，称为佛陀，全身呈金黄色，陛下梦见即是佛陀无疑。明帝遂派侍臣蔡愔，率千乘万骑出使天竺，寻访佛法。永平十年（公元67年），蔡愔等人不仅携回经文和佛像，还请回迦叶摩腾和竺法兰二位高僧抵京讲经说法，中土之第一名刹白马寺也由此而建。

但这毕竟是一种传说。没有人知道这种外来的佛像是何模样。

佛像初入中土，人们很少理解它，因而把它视为神仙。今存最早的一些东汉时期石刻和陶塑佛像，或混杂于道教的画像之中，或塑刻在原来神仙的位置上。如江苏连云港市孔望山发现的汉末佛教摩崖造像，佛的基本形象与东汉画像石上的人物相似，而且杂置于道教佛像之中；四川彭山崖墓出土的陶“摇钱树”座上塑造的佛像，则完全取代了传统神仙的位置。其姿态、衣纹的处理也与西王母像类同。摇钱树被汉人视为神树，常见的西王母形象，是当时人对传说中掌管不死之药的西王母崇拜心理和渴求长生不老、归天成仙的幻想意绪的表露。而佛像取代神像，说明这时的佛祖形象仅仅是作为一种神仙被人崇拜和供奉。

实物资料表明，中国式的佛像在五胡十六国时期初见端倪。从目前所见的这一时期佛教造像来看，已不再是依附于其他物体上的浮雕或浅刻形象。而是人体结构完整、圆雕式的佛像。中国的佛像艺术也由此步入初创期。

现藏美国哈佛大学福格美术馆的释迦牟尼佛鎏金铜像是



1 摇钱树佛像·东汉
A lucky pottery
Buddhist figure
(Eastern Han)

早期佛像的典型作例。其头作高肉髻，眉间有白毫相，脸庞稍长，颊部颇丰腴，双目下视，大耳小嘴，有八字须，整个形貌宛若中亚人。结跏趺坐于双狮高座上，手作禅定印相，代表了当时佛坐像的规范化形式。其背出肩有火焰纹，这种形式在我国尚属罕见，当出自《佛本行经》释迦牟尼降伏外道时“身上出火身下出水”之神变传说，或可谓后来佛像火焰纹背光的先兆。

同类作品尚存几例，它们基本依西来的创作模式，形象规范，变化不大，表明此时的佛教造像还处于依仿摹拟阶段。特别是一些菩萨小像，则纯粹摹仿西来的原型。即如佛经上所说，菩萨乃成佛之前的释迦，它的原型就是在家的悉达多太子形姿：头结高发，有时戴宝冠，上身裸露，胸前佩装饰，脚穿凉鞋。而其将要成佛，故又有佛陀三十二相八十种好的表征，如眉间白毫相，手足缦网相等。



2 释迦牟尼佛鎏金铜像·十六国

A gold-plated copper Sakyamuni figure (Sixteen Countries)

3 菩萨鎏金铜像·十六国
A gold-plated copper Bodhisattva
(Sixteen Countries)



4 佛鎏金铜像
十六国后赵建武四年
A gold-plated copper
Buddhist figure
(Later Zhao ·
Sixteen Countries)

出现在中土最早的菩萨就是依这种在家贵人形象塑成的。现藏日本藤井有邻馆的菩萨鎏金铜像即为一例。此像原出陕西境内，作于十六国早期，头作高髻，若展开状，长发披肩，宽额，有白毫相，杏仁眼，大鼻小嘴，留八字须，神态端庄。裸上身，佩颈饰，挂璎珞，戴臂钏，天衣飘垂，下着长裙，脚穿凉鞋。从整体上看，印度犍陀罗风格甚浓，但其比例不甚合理，应是中国菩萨像的草创之作。

目前所知，今藏美国旧金山亚洲美术馆的十六国后赵建武四年（公元388年）造佛鎏金铜像，是我国现存最早的纪年铭立体雕塑作品。

佛作高髻，发纹刻划精细，额际宽平，下颚部渐收，仍保持了犍陀罗造像风格特征。柳眉杏眼，鼻梁平挺，人中深凹，嘴角微微上翘，含有一丝笑意，神情温静，面貌端庄，如汉人形象。着通肩大衣，褶纹浅显流转，对称均衡。双手合前作禅定印相，五指纤长，表达细腻，结跏趺坐于高座上。整个造型虽具西来的规范风格，却也显出一定的演进和汉化的征兆。

到了十六国末至北魏初，逐步汉化的佛教造像，已显露出自身的艺术价值。尤其在制作工艺和形象设计上，表现了传统的审美情趣。如1975年甘肃泾川县玉都乡出土的一尊鎏金铜佛像，是一种装配式的作品，可能与信仰者携带方便有关。这说明，佛像的创作活动流于民间很有基础。由此也加速了西来佛像汉化的进程。

此像由主尊形体、华盖、背光、佛床四部分组成。形式完整，基本形貌近似于建武四年像。虽然制作的细腻程度稍逊于前者，但其灵活和富有创造性的样式，给过于规范的佛教造像带来了新的活力。这是中国式佛像创作初见成效的结果。

然而，这些中国佛像创作初期的作品，由于距今遥远，所存者已成凤毛麟角。尽管当时的制作落后，工艺不精，形象古拙，不甚华美，但“物以稀为贵”，即便是残损不全之

躯，依然被人视为珍贵。比如，我们发现一些同类的十六国晚期至北魏初的金铜小像，已失华盖、佛床，背光，仅存扁体的佛像身軀，但其价值却居高不下，颇令收藏家看好。



5 佛鎏金铜像·十六国至北魏初

A gold-plated copper Buddhist figure (Early Northern Wei)

6 佛鎏金铜像
十六国至北魏初
A gold-plated copper
Buddhist figure
(Early Northern Wei)



7 佛鎏金铜像
十六国至北魏初
A gold-plated copper
Buddhist figure
(Early Northern Wei)



● 百花齐放

北魏佛事大兴，其传播既广，深入人心，故在民间形成以铸造小型佛像祈求福享之风气。创作热情的高涨，虽然带来了佛像艺术的繁荣，却也不免有随意制作者。因此，看待这一时期的佛像，不能以同一种艺术法则或鉴定标准去衡量它。既有制作工艺的进步与落后，又有精丽与拙朴的审美差距。特别是一些高不过10厘米的小型佛像，具有民间作坊式的铸造特色，形象比例不合情理，纹饰装束不甚精美，其实，这是一种讲究实用，携带便利的小作品。它们的创作特点是：形象简率拙朴，刀法硬朗，尤其是衣褶贴体，线条凸起，极富立体感，显然是深受西来的秣菟罗艺术影响。

秣菟罗艺术是一种具有印度本土传统美的佛教艺术。它对于中国佛像艺术的影响，并不亚于犍陀罗艺术。它以形态



8 释迦牟尼佛
鎏金铜像
北魏延兴五年
A gold-plated copper
Sakyamuni figure
(Yanxing ·
Northern Wei)

9 释迦牟尼佛
鎏金铜像
北魏太和九年
A gold-plated copper
Sakyamuni figure
(Taihe ·
Northern Wei)



端庄，表现手法细腻为特色。这同中国传统的写实手法有共通之处。因此，它容易被中国佛像艺术所吸收。

传世有一件北魏太平真君四年（公元443年）范申造弥勒佛鎏金铜像，脸圆颊丰，双肩宽厚，身着通肩袈裟，轻薄贴体，衣纹细密，线条柔和，顶有肉髻，眼睑下垂，双目凝视，神态祥和。当然，这种秣菟罗式的中国佛像绝非刻意摹仿和依样画葫芦，在某些细部刻划上仍显露出汉化的迹象。尤其衣褶线条打破原有的规律化、程式化，而表现出传统的流动和富有韵律感。

美国纽约大都会美术馆也收藏一件同类的北魏太平真君年间弥勒佛鎏金铜像。高达104厘米，是早期立佛中的大件。基本形貌与真君四年像一致。制作手法则显得更加精到。

北魏早期的佛像题材，丰富多变，最具特色的是一种二佛并坐形式，完整的称法是：释迦多宝二佛并坐像。因为这是根据《妙法莲华经·见宝塔品》所述，多宝让座，请释迦



10 弥勒佛鎏金铜像

北魏太平真君四年

A gold-plated copper Maitreya figure
(Taipingzhenjun · Northern Wei)

11 释迦多宝二佛并坐鎏金铜像

北魏延兴二年

Gold-plated copper Sakyamuni and
Duobao figures
(Yanxing · Northern Wei)