After Wú Dàozî

The Northern Range Temple:

CHINA'S SISTINE CHAPEL

Marnix Wells 2012 London

Wú allegedly paid to assassinate painter Huángfû Zhên 皇甫軫 after he produced a mural at Cháng'an, Xuanyángfang, Jìngyùsì, San-jie Yuànmén South Wall, depicting 'demons and gods' that seemed to jump out of the wall. (Jing-Luò Sìtâ Jì, in Duàn Chéngshì d.863: *Yôuyáng Zázû, Xùjí)*.

Homage to Tradition - The Lost Art of Fresco and Human Form Painting in China

Fine wall paintings from as far back as the Han dynasty have survived in tombs and from the fifth century in Buddhist cave shrines of Dunhuang, now a world heritage site. Roderick Whitfield authored a work with magnificent colour reproductions of the latter. Less well known is the fact that early leading masters such as Gu Kaizhi, Wang Wei and Wu Daozi were all famed not only for painting scrolls but also murals. Sadly state directed anti-clerical campaigns destroyed most of these masterpieces. Yet important murals survive. An oustanding example is the Northern Mountain Range Temple in Hebei which Marnix Wells has been active with the authorities in urging full photographic publication. It is time for the wider significance of Chinese fresco painting to be recognised and accorded its due.

Three features immediately distinguish the Beiyuemiao murals from Daoist iconography of the Sòng and later. First is their naturalistic and dynamic postures. Second is the complete absence of haloes on any of the figures. Third is the use of empty space and relative absence of crowding and regimentation of the figures with large-scale landscape playing, not as background but in an independent yet balancing part. .

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Acknowledgements

First, I would like to congratulate and thank Bêiyuèmiào curator Ms. Wáng Lìmîn, retired curator Xuè Zengfú, and conservationist photographer Ms. Zhang Huì from Shíjiazhuang Museum for their efforts and achievement in producing this magnificent volume illustrating properly for the first time the Déníng Hall wall paintings in their full brilliance. This publication provides an invaluable basis for their further study.

North Range Rear wall decommissioned with red earth coating,

I would also like to thank Dr. Ulrike Middendorf of Heidelburg University for her kind assistance to my bibliographical research on leading Táng painter Wú Dàozî (c.680 - c.763) and his school to whom the present temple murals have been attributed.

i. Re-Discovery

Art in the modern sense was hardly known in pre-modern China. Indeed ‘art for art’s sake’ and ‘museums without walls’ are relatively new ideas. The art of handwriting with a brush, calligraphy (shufâ), was always esteemed for practical reasons. It was the indispensible adjuncts to the educated scholar for whom good handwriting was seen as an expression of his inner character and moral worth. As such it was the pre-requisite for success on the ladder of public success.

By contrast, scroll painting mostly in the form of imaginary mountain landscapes (shanshuî huà) became the scholar’s private retreat and escape from the pressures of office. It represented the inner Daoist as opposed to the official Confucian. From the Sòng dynasty onward, critical interest became increasingly centred on scroll paintings by the literati (wénrénhuà). Calligraphic colophons were added to antique works. By the Míng and Qing, it became almost *de rigeur*for erudite painters to adorn their works with specimens of their own poetry and calligraphy.

Other forms of what we call art was generallydismissed as the skills of lowly artisans. They might be admired as feats of technical virtuosity but were held to beof little or no intrinsic moral

worth.Thus architecture, sculpture, portraiture, figure painting and murals were hardly thought worthy of serious study. It was growing exposure to European culture in the nineteenth to twentieth centuries that led to a challenging of these traditional attitudes. Yet old attitudes still remain. Religious art may still be regarded simply for its iconographic purpose or at best relegated to 'folk art' category.[1]

It was the fall of the Qing dynasty in 1911 that heralded a new approach. Reform-minded artists and writers began to seek indigenous Chinese equivalents to these western categories. Liáng Sichéng (1901-1972), born in Japan to Liáng Qîchao, a refugee of the failed 1898 reformmovement in Qing China, determined to recover the glories of China's lost architecture. Not content with mere library research, he set out to do scientificfield exploration in the Chinese countryside. Inspired by Banister Fletcher's 1931 *A History of Architecture* and Itô Chûta's *Chinese Architectural History*, Liáng proposed a Chinese Order exemplified by the model Táng tripartite system of wooden brackets and column on stone base. His biggest triumph was to discover an intact wooden temple of Táng date, Fóguang Sì, among the Wû-Tái mountains of Shanxi comparable to those surviving in Japan.[2]

In 1918 the Republican local government had carried out maintnenance and in the early 1930s Liáng Sicheng 梁思成(1901-1972), son of leading reformist Liáng Qîchao (1873-1929), under the Nationalist government undertook a survey and photographed the murals.

Meanwhile Xú Beihóng 徐悲鴻 (1895-1953.9), famed for his dynamic ink paintings of horses which combined traditional ink technique with anatomic realismand after 1949principal of the Central Academy of Fine Arts in Bêijing, took inspiration from Greek sculpture and its Parthenon freizes.After moving toShanghai in 1915, Xú met radical Kang Yôuweí (1858-1927) painting.[3]Later during the war with Japan in 1942-1943, Zhang Dàqian journeyed to Dunhuáng from Sìchuan to copy its Táng dynasty Buddhist cave murals.

The 'Quyang demon' has been known internationally from the 1930s or earlier through ink rubbings taken from a late Míng engraving on stone. Osvald Sirén in 1933 noted the two 'demon' engravings and that the hall contained murals.[4] An inscription by Zhào Dài the official on whose order the engraving was made ascribed the original painting to Wú Dàozî (c.690-c.760) of Táng's golden age. It has been generally accepted that this dynamic image,

though considerably defaced, may best represent the style if not the actual handiwork of that legendary master.

In 1935 Liú Dézun became the first to publish a study of Quyáng's Northern Mountain Range Temple and included a photograph of figures on the base of its west wall mural. Zoltan de Takacs from Hungaryvisited China in 1936 and was filled with admirationfor the engraved 'God of the Wind' (as he called the iconic flying figure)in which he perceived the hand of the master and echoes ofclassical Greece.He considered the existing mural an inferior copy, yet there can be little doubt it provided the model from which the engraving was taken.[5]

The following year Takacsreproduced two black and white photographs of the west wall muralfrom the institute in Peking. Shadow renders invisible the upper part of the wall on which the 'flying god' was painted. Indeed since the temple has only natural light, the west mural is best viewed in the early morning.The image seen close-up from belowsuffers distortion due to its height.Takacs does not indicate whether he observed it directly.

In a Japanese spring offensive 1938 devastated Quyáng town and reportedly took eight panels of landscape from behind the gods'

imgaes. These were destroyed by the anti-superstition campaign of 1946 or the 1950s. Further damage was done in the ‘Cultural Revolution’ following 1966.[6]

A Míng temple, Zhaohuà Sì in northern Hébêi near the Zhangjiakôu gate on the Great Wall has been mentioned by way of comparison.[7] It has lively coloured murals of strong Buddhist influence which feature the heavenly, mountain range and underworld deities. Its stylistic affinities are closer to the Vairocana temple near Dìngzhou.

While Beîyuèmiào is essentially dedicated to indigenous Chinese religion, whether institutional state or popular Daoist, it also has Buddhist affinities. The half naked and half animal figures, showing developed musculature and anatomical realism, with dark skin, fangs, claws, arm and ankle bands or bracelets, are alien to Chinese convention and point to Hindu influences conveyed to China with Buddhism which reached its peak in the mid-Táng period. This coincides with the time of Mínghuáng (Xuánzong), ca.750, during which Wú Dàozˆflourished.

It is claimed that Máo Zédong visited in person from his nearby PLA base at Xibáipo on his advance to Bêijing in March 23,

1949and gave instructions for the murals' preservation.[8] After the founding of the People's Republic the same year on October the firstthe temple reportedly received official protection.In 1982 it was registered as a museum under the Hébêi Provincial Culture Bureau.Daoist ceremonies are permitted there only on the birthday of the Northern Range God named Cui Yíng 崔瑩.[9] Due to its past status as a state shrine, it is not classed as a temple of religious Daoism.

Earlier in 1949 art historiansHuáng Miáozî (1913-2012)and Hú Mántravelled to Quyángtoinvestigate asHuángrelates. He observes of the murals:[10]

In April 1949, I visited to inspect and confirmed them to be Wú Dàozî's middle period work.

Hú Mán concurred, calling it a 'Heavenly Palace Picture'.[11] This positive verdict was swiftly contradicted by Qí Yingtào of the Central Culture Bureau who visited in 1951. He noted the esteem in which local people held the murals traditionally attributed to Wú Dàozî but suggested these might date to the 1270 temple reconstruction.

This seems effectively to have stifled academic interest in the decades following. No doubt its aesthetic and historic value was overshadowed by its evident manifestations of ‘feudal superstition’. Instead it was made to serve a more utilitarian purpose as a military head-quarters and its murals covered with posters.[12]It may be that the military security apparatus hascontinued to play a role in covertly impeding wider promotion of the siteand awareness of its artistic treasures by the general public.

The temple suffered neglect and damage, with the destruction of its statuary in anti-superstition campaigns of the 1940s or 1950s, and further the ‘Cultural Revolution’ of the late 1960s and early 1970s.[13]If so, one may well ask: why have its muralsstill today received less public attention than those of the nearby Buddhist Pílú monastery, of Shanxi’s Daoist Yônglè shrine, or of the Buddhist cave paintings of Dunhuáng, now UNESCO world heritage sites? Since the temple waspreviously classed as a state shrine and is now a museum, it has not benefited from the rehabilitation of officially sanctioned religions such as Buddhism, which benefits from overseas patrons, or Daoism which has its own heirarchies.

Aradical structural survey, repair and cleaning was undertaken by the Cultural Bureau in 1981-1988. Niè Jinlù and Liú Xiùzhen were greatly impressed by the quality of the murals. Their published report focused on the architecture.Nancy Steinhardt authored the first English language study of the temple's architecture in 1998.[14]

During the restoration Wáng Dìnglî of the Central Arts Academy led forty odd students over two months to copy the murals. He himself sketched the east and west murals in two metre length copies withfair accuracy.[15] Later Lù Hóngnián led more than twenty students here to paintcolour versions. Six are reproduced in plates 13-18 of the excellent booklet published in 2000 by site conservators Xuè Zongmíng (now retired) and Wáng Lìmîn. This workincludes an overall historical and site introduction with transcription of important inscribed steles.

Wáng Lìmîn published an historical studyof the temple in 2006 and facsimiles of important stelerubbings calligraphy in 2010.[16]In 2009 I was shownaccurate painted copies of east and west murals about one and a half metres in height in the Hébêi Provincial Museum at Shíjiazhuang. Reproductions of these wereon displayin the temple hallfrom 2010.

In 2012 scaffolding was erected and the murals covered with protective netting while a comprehensive cleaning was begun reportedly under the direction of experts from Dunhuáng with investment by the central government of Rmb five million. Work had ceased by the time of my visit on 25 November due to cold but completion is projected by October 2013 upon which photographic publication will ensue.

Incredibly no adequate colour photographsof the murals themselves or exhaustive studies have yet been published.[17] Gesterkamp's outstanding 2011 study is part of a wider mural investigation and lacks state-of-the-art illustrations without which in-depth assessment is impossible. Governmental authorities retain exclusive rights.

Xuè Zongmíng and Wáng Lìmîn, in the absence of further evidence, sustain the view of the gazeteers that the east and west wall murals are all the work of Wú Dàozî.[18] In early March of 2001 leading art historian Yuán Yôugen visited from neighbouring Shanxi for his book on Wú Dàozî. Despite understandable disappointment at the poor visibility and colours of the paintings which he believes severely damaged and over-painted, Yuán

nonetheless adjudicates them to be the work of Wú Dàozî. Yuán's main argument is stylistic.[19]

He notes affinity between the heavenly lady on the west wall base and the lady in 'The Heavenly King Sends a Son' painting ascribed to Wú Dàozî. Further he detects Táng-style in the proportions of body height which he reckons at six to six and a half head lengths. By contrast Yuán calculates body proportions in Five Dynasty, Sòng and Yuán paintings at seven to seven and a half.[20] In addition he observes that whereas Yuán murals such as Yônglè Gong are signed with painters' names, these murals are unsigned, thus pointing to an earlier age.[21]

Yuán concludes by berating Qí Yingtào, as an architect not a painter, for his rashly dating the murals simply by the Yuán restoration. After all the temple has undergone many structural restorations both before and since. Their purpose was conservation, not creation. He thus blames Qí for irresponsibility ineffectively condemning the paintings to obscurity and deterioration.[22]

Most recently in 2011 Lennert Gesterkamp, PhD graduate of Roderick Whitfield, released a detailed analysis of the murals in his book entitled *The Heavenly Court: Daoist Temple Painting in*

China, *1200-1400*.He points out that, notwithstanding expert diagnoses to the contrary, the murals though in need of cleaning, remain in remarkably good condition. Astonishingly, as Gesterkamp points out, only one published image has been made available at national level publication.[23]

It is incomprehensible that up to the time of writing a full-size monograph with adequate colour photographic reproductions of the murals has yet to be released by the Chinese authorities. 2022 edition!!!

Notwithstanding repeated enquiries and proposals, the reasons for this reluctance to publish remain 'anenigma enfolded in a mystery'.The murals remain still largely unknown to the world and virtually ignored by academia.

Incredibly this important information failed to spark interest among art lovers either in China or abroad to view and study the mural from which the engraving was made. It came as a total surprise to me when I first visited to 'discover' not only the figure whose outline survives in this engraving but also the entire colourful frescoes of which it constitutes but a small, though prominent, part.

Indeed art historians, while paying tribute to the ink rubbing as an indication of the Wú Dàozî style havegenrally overlooked or not deigned to mention the murals. A recent example is Hóng Huìzhèn of Xiàmén University whose bookdevoted entirely to Wú Dàozî and Wáng Wéi gives it just four and a half linesbut not even a word on the murals' existence. Ironically this book in a series on famous artists was published in 2004 by Hébêi Educational Publishing at nearby Shíjiazhuang.[24]

If China has frescoes that may in any way compare with Michelangelo's Sistine Chapel, it is here, here in the 'Virtuous Tranquility Hall', Déníng Diàn, of the Temple to the North Mountain Range, Bêiyuè Miào at Qûyáng in southwestern Hébêi province.[25] The calligraphy of thistitledisplayed on the gable board is signed by a Mr Gài under Kublai Khan of the Yuán dynasty.He notes in small letters: "Under the Great Dynasty in 1270 on Lunar New Year's Day a donor erected this."[26]

For size alone its east and west wall murals are unmatched in China, each mural measuring approximately 6.44 metres in height on a one metre base and 15.44 metres in length (6.44m x 15.44m = 99.43 sqm). Thus theirlengths are 2.4 times their height. Each of

the four bay panels on each side wall are 6.44m high x 3.85m wide, with a height 1.7 times their length.

The Wû Zongyuán scroll multiplied by ten is 58.0m x 4.43m, with a length thirteen times its height.[27] (The Eighty-seven Immortals scroll is shorter, say by ten percent.) It could thus make thirteen square panels. Assuming an imperial shrine of thirteen bay frontage, as Gesterkamp does, it could accommodate these panels using seven bays on the east wall (7 x 4.43m = 30.01m) and six bays on the east half of the rear wall (6 x 4.43m = 25.58m). This at 30.01m with a frontage of 55.59m would make it twice as deep and fifteen metres longer than the Quyáng great hall's four bay 15.44m depth and nine bay 42.35m length.[28]

Some figures are over three metres in height, and one (on the rear wall) of six metres.[29] Even the great Daoist 1325 murals of Yônglè Palace's Infinity Hall (Wújí-zhi Diàn) in Shanxi, are only just over four metres high. The celebrated 1443 tableaux in the Mahâvîra Hall at the Buddhist Fâhâi Monastery, on Bêijing's Western Hills, measure little over three metres.

ii. The Northern Range Temple's History

Quyáng is situated on uplands to the west of south-central Hébêi, near the border with Shanxi. During the Warring States

period the area belonged to the foreign kingdom of Zhongshan, ‘Central Mountain’.From records as early as the Shang dynasty oracle bones of the second millennium BC, kings worshipped the four directions.

The laterimperialcult of the five sacred mountains approximating to the four cardinal points, including centre, doubtless derives from this. Temples were established at each of them, at their foot and on their summit. I translate the special term for them, *yuèmiào*, not as ‘Peak Temple’ but ‘Mountain-Range Temple’ since they represent not only a single peak but a region. The term ‘Marchmount’, a neologism coined by Boodberg and his student Schafer, has recently become current as a translation for yuè in sinological writings.[30]

The cardinal mountain ranges were worshipped in many shrines and localities across the country and capital, not merely in their particular locality. Dynasties would designate a chief state shrine to assert their rule over each cardinal region and direction of which the mountain ranges were a symbol. As in India, each of the four directions was associated with a particular attribute and deity.

Buddhism transmitted to China guardian deity kings of the four directions commonly seen at the sides of monastery or temple gate houses.To the four directions a fifth was added by ancient Chinese tradition to represent centre. These five thus correlated with the Five elemental Agents of black water for north, green wood for east, red fire for south, yellow earth for centre and white metal for west going clockwise.

The Qûyáng shrine looks north to Mt. Dàmòu, a terminus of the Tàiháng Massif which separates Hébêi from Shanxi, running south from Hengshan (Mt Heng), just south of the Great Wall and Inner Mongolia.Hengshan has also been known as Chángshan since‘Cháng’ was used as asubstitute to avoid the tabooword ‘Heng’ in posthumous title of the father of Hàn emperor Wéndì. Both ‘heng’and‘cháng’ mean ‘constant’.

The Quyáng east and west wall murals depict all the god kings s of all five mountain ranges in informal poses without the trappings of chariots and horses, buildings or furniture. Apart from the conventional colour symbolism for each of them, and the emphasis on water as befits the symbolism of the northern direction, there are no indications of Daoist or Buddhist iconography normally associated with the directional deities.The

sign of Xuánwû, the Dark Warriorof the north with his snake entwining tortoise, as displayed for example on Mt Wûdang in Húbêi,is conspicuously absent here.The anomaly of these murals thus confronts the interpreter with an enigma.

Bêiyuèmiào, the Northern Range Temple is not merely a shrine to a mountain but to a great dragon-like vein of mountains (shanmài). The god of the north is associated with Xuánwû, the 'dark or mysterious warrior' traditionally governs warfare and the element of water. Its symbol is the snake and tortoise. A two-headed snake called Shuàirán was reputed to inhabit the mountain.[31]Sun Zî (trad. BC 500)'s *Art of War* cites the snake of Chángshan as a model for military tactics. When its head is struck its tail responds and vice versa. Struck, in the middle both ends respond.

According to legendin the time of primeval emperor Shénnóng 'Divine Farmer'the forests of the north-east was parched by a great fire. The country had been desertified from lack of rain. He asked help from a wild man named Chìsong 'Red Pine' with straw coat, skin kilt, tousled head, bare feet, yellow fur and claw nails.

The stranger danced and sung madly waving a willow branch before revealing himself to be the Rain Master himself. He produced a small bowl of water from his waist and with his willow branch sprinkled water thereby to generate rain and end the drought. Such action can be seen on both walls of the Quyáng temple, emphasising its function to answer prayers for rain.[32] The great dragon descending on the east wall is a patent rain symbol, a theme elsewhere linked by legend to paintings by Wú Dàozî.[33]

Imperial prayers were frequently offered up here for rain, a blessing often in dire shortage on the North China Plain, and even to stop rain when crops had received sufficient. Water was adopted by imperial Qín, and retained by early Hàn, as its dynastic element. First Emperor of Qín, Qín Shîhuáng, accordingly renamed the Yellow River 'Virtue Water' and established Mt Heng as the official shrine of the Northern Range (Bêiyuèmiào). Hàn historian Simâ Qian records simply that Qín Shîhuáng passed by Mt Heng in BC 220, the second year of his new empire.[34]

Martial Emperor of Western Hàn established a shrine near Qûyáng in BC 98.[35] According to the Dìngzhou gazetteer, Hàn Emperor Xuan sacrificed there in 61 AD. In the reign of Shùndì (122-144), Yú Jí a Daoist rain-maker and carrier of magic water

found a divine book in mountains near Qûyáng. He was beheaded as a charlatan by Sun Cè of Wú but his ghost took its revenge on him.[36]

The earliest surviving great stele here is dated 462 AD and is from the Turkic Tóbá dynasty of Northern Wèi.[37] Their capital was then at Dàtóng in north Shanxi close to Mt Heng, Inner Mongolia and the Great Wall. Later as more of their ruling tribesmen adopted Chinese ways Emperor Xiàowén (r. 471-499) moved his capital south to Luòyáng on the Yellow River.Yet the annals report their emperors as early as 419 were worshipping the Northern Range not on the mountain top but at the more convenient location 'south of Mt Heng' (Hengshan-zhi yáng).[38]

Then in 500 AD the second month there was a 'disaster' (zai) at the 'Mt Heng shrine', presumably a great fire. Wáng Lìmîn takes this fire to refer to the shrine in Shanxi on Mt Heng itself but 'Mt Heng'was the designation for the Northern Range god already then officially worshipped at the Quyáng site.[39] If this fire actually occurred in the Quyáng temple hall, it could explain the ash recently found by archaeologists there one metre down.

TheSuí dynasty (581-618) re-unified all China for the first time since the fall of Hàn almost four centuries earlier. Under the aegis of Buddhism it ordered Buddhist monasteries built on all five holy cardinal mountain ranges of which justthe pagoda survives at Quyáng, across the road to the south of the temple moat.

When the dynasty fell, a local hero by name of Dòu Jiàndé raised his banner in the area. Yet despite the failure of his bid for the throne he left his name in folk memory, the great hall still known until recently as ‘King Dòu’s Hall’.

Lî Shìmín (r. 627-649) chief founder of Táng, canonized as Tàizong, claimed descent from Lâo Zî through their shared surname Lî. According to the Qing dynasty district gazeteer it was in Tàizong’s reign that a meteor or ‘flying stone’ landed on the west side of town. Consequently the rockitself was enshrined as a treasure and worshipped at the full moon.[40] It burnt down in 1909 but the ruins are marked by a broken ‘flying stone’ stele in front of the Déníng hall.

It would appear that the event is actually depicted on the great west mural, just to the left of the famed demonic figure. A thin white straight diagonal line, about 25 degrees from the vertical, drawn from ceiling to floor indeed appears to mark the trajectory of such a flying object passing just below the nose of a regal parasol bearer.

Empress Wû in 685, who briefly established her own Zhou dynasty,had sent an emissary to Mt Heng to attend a ‘divine meeting’ (shénhuì). [41] Emperor Mínghuáng, posthumously canonised as Xuánzong (r. 712-756), a fervent Daoist and patron of the arts in 712 established an army base on the “south of Mt Héng.”[42]

A great stele dedicated to the god, as ‘Northern Range District Lord’, was erected by localofficial Wéi Xuxin. It is dated 721.03.26 and refers to the temple’s splendidmurals.On it Wéi records without question a miraculous sighting in 713, the year of Mínghuáng’s accession, by traveller Wèi Míngquè and shaman-priest (zhù) Yáng Xiantóng. Two celestial envoys appeared to them, one clad in white and one in purple,to proclaim:[43]

We are the Five Mountain Ranges’great envoys who have despatched troops and horsesto the number of six hundred thousand on behalf of the nation to arraign bandits. The Five Mountain-Range Great Gods will on the ninth month third day all meet at this mountain for a great celebration.

This sighting was reported to the authorities and the throne ordered appropriate gifts sent. The emperor evidently took a personal interest in such matters and involved his favourite painter. John Lagerwey in *A Religious State* recounts:[44]

in 725, at Sima Chengzhen's behest, the emperor had added to the worship of the Five Peaks that of Daoist Perfected (*zhenren*). In 732, Daoists were selected for the temples of the Five Peaks and two other cults, notably that of the Messenger of the Nine Heavens (*Jiutian shizhe*), who had appeared to Xuanzong [i.e. Mínghuáng] in a dream. Wu Daozi was commissioned to paint the subject of the emperor's dream for hanging in the Temple of the Nine Heavens. (The same painter did murals of the conversion of foreigners for a Daoist temple near Luoyang.)

The same year in the 12th month governor of Youzhou, Zhang Shôugui(d. 739), won the surrender of Khitan tribal leaders Quliè and Kêtúgan over the northeastern frontier.[45]Zhèng Zîchun's stele erected in 735 lauds Zhang Shôugui's ability to pacify barbarians without shedding blood. Previously, he tells us, a certain Tián Dengfeng of Gaoyáng prayed here for blessing. The god descended, revealing his form, and informed him: "I help the obedient and capture criminals. I annihilate the ring-leaders and hang their heads on poles in the street." The outcome seemed to prove the truth of his words.[46]

In 736 Mínghuáng despatched Xú Qiáo from the Central Secretariat with an imperial sealed letter to Daoist Zhang Guô at

Mt Heng and lodged at the Jíxián Yuàn ‘Gathering of Worthies Lodge’. Then in 747 he formally enfiefed the Northern Range’sMt Hengas ‘Pacifier of Heaven’s King’, An Tian Wáng. The choice of name ‘An’ for ‘Pacifier’ was significant.

‘An’ was a surname of the Sogdians, then powerful in China,and indicated a family origin in Bukhara. In particularit was the surname of imperial favourite and Turco-Sogdian generalissimo An Lùshan (c.700-757), originaly named Rokhshan meaning ‘Light’, then commander of China’s north-eastern frontier against the Khitans. Having won the favour of Mínghuáng, he was given charge by the all too trusting emperor with three out of Táng’s ten military commanderies.[47]

The name An Lùshan translates literally and not inappropriately into Chinese as ‘Pacifier of Endowment’s Mountain’. The coincidence between the two pacifiers, An the god and An the man, can hardly be fortuitous.

Lî Quán (712-779) was a Daoist and foremost expert in military science. His importance as a philosopher has been long overlooked.[48] He composed the text for a great imperial stele erected at the Northern Range Temple in 749 to celebrate the god’s

new enfiefment. On it, after a brief homage to the emperor's mountain-like power, he reverentiallylists An Lùshan's official titles in three lines totaling seventy-five charactersand acclaims him as 'the nation's hero'. On the reverse side of the stele are over three hundred officials.[49]

In similar vein Liáng Sichéng and Steinhardt report a local tradition that An Lùshan was associated with the monastery of Dúlè ('Solitary Joy', his by-name) where he fatefully rallied his troops and as well as other temples in northern Hébêi.[50] This suggests the depth of An Lùshan's influence on the region's folk culture.

Altogether this evidence makes 'barbarian' An Lùshan the most viable candidate to be the swarthy rotund military patron figure represented in realistic portrait mode by the entrance on the west wall. Dressed in full armour, right fist inside left palm, he gives the martial salute in ostensible modesty.

Yet who but a man of such over-arching ambitioncould or would dare have himself publicly portrayed on a par with the gods of thunder and lightning, wind and rain? The same gods are depicted at the court of the heavenly emperor on the top of the

temple's great west wall. Not even emperors have exhibited such brazen effrontery, foreign to Chinese tradition.

Above our generalissimo are the two parasols and spear axes attendants used otherwise only once on each wall for the mountain range kings. A further discrepancy is the wind god who here looks like a munificent figure unlike his cadaverous equivalent on the east wall. It appears this group was made to order, painted later than the east wall group.

Half behind him on his left he is closely attended by a similarly full-faced youth with loose locks of jet-black hairbut lighter complexion, doubtless of Hàn Chinese stock, burns incense. He fits thepart of Qìng'en, Lùshan's young son by his second wife Lady Duàn, whom he tried to have to succeed him as 'emperor'. Instead Lùshan's favouritism, ill-temper and failing health provoked his own murder in a short-lived usurpation by Qìngxù, surviving elder sonfrom his estranged first wife Lady Kang.[51]

Unfortunately Lî Quán's eulogy to the man he later fought to suppress was premature. It surely pandered to his arrogance. In the winter of 755 An Lùshan rebelled, proclaiming himself emperor of Yàn, and led his armies south and west. He devastated both

capitals Luòyáng and Cháng'an (Xi'an), almost annihilating the dynasty. Mínghuáng fled to mountainous Sìchuan.

On the way he was forced to hang his beautiful favourite Yáng Guìfei, whom An Lùshan had called 'mother', now blamed by the soldiers for his revolt. Eventually, aided by Uighur auxiliaries from the far west, Táng imperial rule was restored but its power remained weak. It finally disintegrated in 906 leaving a power vacuum for the Khitans just to the north of the temple.

Recent studies have stated that "the Northern Range Temple was burned" after Khitan attack in 946.[52]Gesterkamp goes further: "In 946 it was burnt to the ground by the Khitan armies..."[53] This alleged incident does not appear in the annals of Latter Jìn who controlled it until the end of that year.[54]

They merely report that in the fifth month of the previous year 945 a great hailstorm uprooted trees in the Northern Range Temple grounds, a bad omen.[55] The region subsequently suffered famine despite prayers for rain. In the eleventh month of 946 Dìngzhou governor Lî Yin achieved a minor victory by a night attack on the Khitans at Mt Jia near Quyáng.

Nevertheless in the twelfth month Latter Jìn's troops surrendered en masse to the Khitans who took its last emperor into captivity with them.[56]Unable to retain control of their conquest, the Khitans retired with their spoils to proclaim their own Chinese-style dynasty as the Great Liáo at Dàtóng (Shanxi) their capital near Mt Heng of the Northern Range.

In 960 General Zhào Kuangyìn, posthumously canonized as Tàizû 'Grand Ancestor', founded the Sòng dynasty. In 968 Tàizû decreed that sacrifices to pacify the north be made at Quyáng (Dìngzhou)'sNorthern Range shrine, close by the northern border with Liáo. There is no word of it being a ruin or fire damaged.[57]

Emperor Tàizû was succeeded, not by his son, but atypicallyby his brotheras Tàizong, a mannoted more for literary than martial skills. Tàizongmade two ill-fated attempts to recover the 'sixteen counties', centred on present day Bêijing to the north of the temple. He twice invaded Liáo but suffered crushing routs in 979 and 986, himself escaping wounded from the first in a cart. His successors were no more successful.

In 990 Khitan Liáo invaded to pray at the North Range Temple but received an unfavourable prognosis. The next year in 991 Wáng Yúheng (954-1001) erected a stele in honour of

Northern Range god, still styled ‘King Antian’. Wáng mentions the Khitan’s visit to the site withthe unfavourable answer to their divination on invading China andadds that they consequently committed great arson:[58]

Previously the Xiongnú (i.e. Khitans) violated the border to visit the shrine and make divination of good or ill fortune but it (i.e. the oracle) did not approve their intent on invading China. They thereupon set a prairie fire (liáoyuán-zhi huô, i.e. great fire)… Even if the Shànyú (Khitan)’s fires illuminated the Sweet Springs (of Hades) how would it harm civilisation’s emperor?

Wáng Yúheng then announces his own repairs making the temple as good as new. Significantly, he uses the turn ‘repair’ (xiu), not ‘built/erected’ (jiàn).[59]However Liáng Sichéng concluded that the temple was twice ‘rebuilt’, first in 992 and again in 1270. Mèng Nà notes that while the temple is an example of Yuán dynasty wooden architecture it preserves features of Sòng architecture as recorded in the classic work *Yíngzàso Fâshì*.[60] This Northern Sòng encyclopaedic work is itself a compendium of earlier construction methods.

Despite Wáng’s vaunted work, repairs to the leaky roof were needed within sixty years. (see below) Wáng Yúhéng specifies

neither the date nor extent of thisindicted destruction for which he is the sole written source. It should be born in mind that the great hall at the rear of the perimeter is the chief but not only one of the shrine's structures. Gù Yánwû reported seven hundred years later without adducing new evidence: "At the start of Sòng, the Khitans burnt it down and it was rebuilt in 991."[61] Gù uses the word 'rebuilt' (chóngjiàn) but Wáng Yúheng had only said 'restored' (xiu). If we use circumstances of armed conflict to prove the building's inevitable destruction, the tyemple must have been leveled many times in the past millennium, not least during the depredations of the late Sino-Japanese war.[62] Yet somehow against all odds the great hall and its murals has survived until now.

The upper parts of the murals show blackened areas and even signs of under paintings. Variations of style and quality suggest past lairs of restoration or repairs. Burning of the wooden roof rafters, leading to collapse of the roof, would not necessarily entail destruction of the massive side walls on east and west, nor of the rear external and internal north walls. Murals on these wall would be scorched and damaged but not totally obliterated. The temple may well have had reduced ink outline copies of its murals in the form of paper cartoons (fênbên), like that of the Eighty-seven Immortals Scroll (Bashíqi Shénxian Tú) or Exorcising the

Mountain Picture (Soushan Tú) which have likewise been ascribed, rightly or wrongly, to Wú Dàozî. Precautionary possession of such blueprints, if available, would doubtless have facilitated restoration from damage arising from earthquakes, accident or arson.

Lî Chángruì and Zhou Yuèzi in 1985 published a four page article on the murals illustrated by sketches. A large portion of their article is devoted to their argument that the murals are not by Wú Dàozî since the temple was destroyed by the Khitans. They cite records of tenth century Khitan-Chinese fighting in the area but produce no concrete evidence of temple destruction. While recognizing the paintings' exceptional qualities, they theorise that the extant murals were executed by Yuán folk artists working from an old blueprint, "a Sòng dynasty cartoon (fênbên)."They also note there has been extensive repainting and repairs to the murals, particularly on the east wall dragon and landscapes.[63]

Gesterkampessentiallyadopts this hypothesis and cites the biography of Quánzhen master Zhang Zhìjìng 張志敬(1220-1270) which lauds his restoration of all Five Range temples destroyed under under the Jin.[64]Yet does not necessarily mean rebuilding. The 1984-1987 report by archaeologists recordsash a metre down

below another layer of floortiles in the great hall which they tookto represent the Liáo destruction.[65]

Yet even if carbon-14 analysis, whenever undertaken and published,were to substantiate such a dating, thiswould notin itself prove that the building was then "burnt to the ground."[66] The massive side walls which hold the frescoescould have survived a fiery destruction of the timber roof. Old vertical cracks plainly visible along the line of the column between the first and second outer bays onboth east and west walls could possibly testify to this.

A further question, if we presume the extant murals are post-Táng, is why a reconstruction undertaken by a new dynasty, whether Sòng or Yuán, should lavish massive expenseon a state shrine to recreatewhat Gesterkamp aptly calls 'an archaicmodel'.[67]Rather custom immemorial dictated that a dynasty should stamp its own protocol on every aspect of its rituals. To perpetuate the model of an earlier 'lost kingdom' would be unprecedented and inauspicious in the extreme. We shall discuss this matter in further detail below.

A major discovery was made during the 1980s reconstruction. On the rear of the inner wall, that on three side surrounds the

sanctum, opposite the rarely opened rear door, archaeologists found a great mural (7.7m high by 25m wide) of an imperial figurein crimson dragon robe with mortar-board crown and hollow square collar tie,enthroned on mobile throne and attended by serving maids and armed warriors.Stylistically it is alien to the other murals and is surely post-Sòng in date.It was covered by a coat of sticky red clay as if it had been at some period been decommissioned or 'de-activated'. Only the central portion was cleaned yet this now appears to have been recoated.[68]

In 1004 Liáo Empress Xiao Chuó invaded and reached Chánzhou (Chányuan, Púyáng) in Hénán by the bridge spanning the Yellow River, only one hundred kilometres from third Sòng emperor Zhenzong (993-1023)'s capital at Kaifeng.The next year in 1005 the emperorsigned a peace treaty and agreed to pay Liáo 100,000 ingots of silver and 200,000 bolts of silk annually.

The Northern Range Temple was now close to the mutually recognised northern border. In 1011Zhenzongexpanded the title of the mountain's resident deity to 'Northern Range's Pacifier of Heaven, the Primal Sage Emperor' (Bêiyuè Antian, Yuán Shèngdì).[69]It seems the reconstruction or repairs of 991 cannot have been very thorough-going.Leading commander and statesman

Hán Qî (1008-1075) posthumously honoured asZhongxiàn ‘Loyal Contributer’), tells us on his stele engraved in 1050,that the roof of the Northern Range Shrine leaked. Considering this an affront to the gods, he ordered full repairs.Yet the huge muralsshow the Mountain Range gods as kings, not emperors with bead-curtain mortar-board crowns. Nevertheless we are told that prayers subsequently offered up to arrest drought or flood were promptly answered.[70]

In 1075 Shénzong on the advice of premier Wáng Anshí ceded seven hundred lî of land to the Khitans. The ridge of Hengshan’s Dàmòushan now became the frontier with the Khitans.[71]

The genius poet and official Su Dongpo’s collected writings preserve his prayer to the North Range god for rain here, in his capacity as prefect of nearby Dìngzhou, during drought in 1094. It is interesting that Su, despite his keen interest in Wú Dàozî’s paintings affirmed by at least eight short pieces or poems, shows no awareness of the murals. This may be because of his Buddhist penchant. On the other hand, with the exception of local scholars from the late Míng, no known writer or artist appears to have remarked on them until the 1930s, and precious few from then until now.

In 1097 Wáng Yì composed a stele commemorating the exension to the eaves in a second external roofing.[72]

In 1125, the Khitans were overthrown by Jurchens, Manchu ancestors, who established the Jin 'Gold' dynasty and annexed North China, while Sòng retreated and reformed on Hángzhou south of the Yangtze. A hundred years on, the Mongols vanquished the Jurchens and founded the Yuán 'Primal' dynasty.Genghiz Khan's grandson Kublai went on to unify all China under his rule. Although the Mongols adopted Buddhism as their official creed,they like the Jurchens gave support toDaoism particularly of the Complete Truth (Quánzhen) sect and Confucianism.

Liú Bóróng (劉伯榮),allegedly Wú Dàozî's disciple, painted a fierce guardian figure on the temple's lost eastern gate of Manifest Blessings. However, Gesterkamp has demonstrated that Liú Bóróng was a known early Yuán dynasty artist of the Quánzhen sect from the region of the Yônglè temple. [73] By coincidence, written slightly differently, Liú Bóróng (劉柏榮 b. 1952) isnow a leading oil painter in realist style.

Beam inscriptions dated 1268 and 1270 in the Quyáng temple's great hall prove Kublai Khan first emperor of the Yuán

dynasty to rule all China, despite partiality to Buddhism, must have authorised the reconstruction.[74]Indeed interior structural decoration bearshallmarks of Yuán date.[75] Steinhardt acclaims the existing structure, though 'reconstructed' several times since, as the most important, largest and finest surviving example of Yuán palatial architecture.[76]

It stands twenty-five metres high, roofed in imperial style resting on massive side and rear walls of brick and sixty-four wooden columns. Thirty of these support the outer arcade extension, twenty-two the interior and twelve the inner sanctum.The front terrace facing south measures twenty-five metres across and twenty deep, while the hall front itself is over forty metres across and almost thirty deep. Interior columns divide the sides into four bays. Its frontage has nine bays, or rather seven plus the two eave extensions. Bêijing Forbidden City'sGrand Ancestral Shrine (Tàimiào) inner roof has nine.The Yônglè shrinehas a front of seven bays, of which five have folding doors open and the two smaller sides are completely walled.[77]

Steinhardt concludes:[78]

The extant building that most closely replicates a hall of the Dadu [Bêijing] palace city is the Temple to the Northern Peak,

built in Quyang, Hebei province, in 1270. The two sets of roof eaves, two sets of intercolumnar bracket sets, and white marble balustrade whose posts support lions are all features described in texts about the Yuan imperial halls, which were destroyed in the late fourteenth century by order of the Yongle emperor.

The second roof of the Quyáng temple was a North Sòng addition, attested by the stele of 1097. The classical early Táng model has corbel brackets only on the columns, but by mid-Táng there is evidence for one intercolumnar bracket (Dunhuáng murals and Fóguangsì). Déninghall has two brackets between columns, but its extension like Yônglè Gong has two with only one on the corners.

The essential features of the great hall at Quyáng, including the high raised platform on which the hall and its front terrace rest, are features already seen in reconstructions of Táng imperial models.The Yuán dynasty imperial palaces like the Hányuán Diàn followed and incorporated Táng models, as did the Míng in their Tàimiào shrine and Tàihé palace reconstructed in the Forbidden City we enjoy today.[79]

Despite similarities between the Northern Range hall and known Yuán foundations such as the Yônglè shrine, these thus seem insufficient to brand the former also a Yuán creation. Differences in structure are the masonry corners on the façade and the round caisson cupola or 'ornamental well' (zâojîng) in the ceiling of the Yônglè model, features absent from the Quyáng hall.

The low masonry wall on the front corners is evident in the plan drawn by Liú Dunzhen reproduced by Gesterkamp (Figure 65).Quyáng's Déníng hall has shutter doors and windows the entire length of its front. This is a feature that links it more closely to Táng models and sets it apart from the Yônglè temple. Niè Jinlù's diagram misleadingly shows the front corners as equivalent to the full height masonry side walls.[80]

Steinhardt identifies the earliest extant example of this "sunken ceiling" to 984. She comments: "The form is widespread in surviving Liao, Jin, and Yuan architecture."[81] Indeed it has remained a standard fixture of temple architecture.

Grounds in favour of a Táng datefor the underlying structure of the Northern Range hall are:

1) Fundamental compatability of the existing structure with Táng models, as built by emperor Xúanzong (Mínghuáng) in 735.

2) Possibility that the basic structure including the masonry walls could survive extensive fire damage to the wooden roof and columns.

3) Lack of discernible motivation for the Sòng and Yuán central government to invest heavily at this locationin a new structure on such a scale bearing massive murals of no contemporary relevance.

4) Absence of data (so far released) to establish scientifically the date of the existing wooden columns together with the date and extent of the destruction level reportedly unearthed about a metre below the floor under a earlier floor.[82]

Míng founderTàizû (1368-1399) the Hóngwû emperor expelled the Mongols and restored ethnic Hàn rule. An ex-Buddhist monk, he objected to the idea of emperors 'enfiefing' gods. Hetherefore in 1370 abolished all the royal and imperial titles bestowed on mountain gods by dynasties since the Táng.[83]In his 13th year 1383, the Dragon-Tiger general Zhou Lìchu governed Yúnzhong but rain failed to fall so he ordered sacrifices and donated funds for repairs. 1448 Wáng Shìchang repaired it. 1470

marshal Yáng Xìn prayed here before gaining a great victory.1478 there was a great drought. Dàtóng governor Lî Mîn prayed for rain here and there was a great downpour.

In 1501 a great horse plague broke out at Xuanfû, Dàtóng and Yánsui. Myriads died and prayers to the horse god had gone unheeded. Liú Yû an officer from Dàtóng on the Great Wall frontier prayed to Hengshan and the plague stopped. He erected a shrine on the mountain top at Húnyuán (Shanxi). In 1502 Army Department Mâ Wénsheng petitioned to change, whileNí Wényì of the Ritual Ministryargued for Quyáng. In 1524 Dàtóng Wáng Guan prayed for rain from the Mounatain Range and obtained a great downpour.A restoration inscription of 2appears to describe the existing murals, leading Zhào Wêi in 2003 to argue they date from this time:[84]

Purple parasols, yellow banners,
Wind and rain gust in front and behind.
A turquoise dragon descends in coils,
Thunder and lightning threaten on east and west.

In 1546 Tax bureau Chèn claimed the legend which claims the flying stone came from the Flying Stone Cave on Mt Heng at Huyuánin northern Shanxi was a fraud and urged unsuccesfully for

a move there. Yáng Shùn prayed here in 1554 before defeating rebellious miners. Then in 1556 the Daoist Jiajìng emperororordered herbs from Quyáng which were not found here, but found at Húnyuán.[85]

The Manchu Qing dynasty (1644-1910) made Húnyuán in the official Northern Range temple.Dissident Míng loyalist and historian Gù Yánwû nevertheless marshalled facts to prove that Quyáng was the ancient site.[86] The old town and its shrine then fell into decline but the local magistrate was charged with continuing seasonal observances. Further reconstructions or repairs were carried out in 1845 and 1897.

iii. Dating the Murals

The gently curving Déníng double roof of imperial yellow tiles,on aten column frontage,is classed as a superb achievement of Yuán dynasty architecture. It is similar in design to the single roofYuán eight-columnedInfinity Hall of the Yônglè Palace, dedicated to Daoist saint Lyû Dòngbin, by the Yellow River in neighbouring Shanxi. This has led some scholars to conclude that the murals of both must beYuánin date. Yet the date of the surviving Déníngwooden beamsand roof above maynot be that of its great supporting wallsbelow which bear the murals.

Gesterkamp has assembled conclusive evidence against the accepted view that the murals date to the Yuán dynasty restoration. Yet remains convinced that the reported Khitan destruction, which he dates to the year 946, rules out any earlier date for the paintings. He therefore concludes:[87]

A date of 1270 for the Beiyue miao murals is sufficiently convincing…

But Gesterkamp then argues:

… the Beiyue miao murals are painted after an archaic model originally painted in 991.

The problem acceptance of the 1270 architectural date contradicts the content and style of the murals. The fire evidence seems to rule out a pre-Sòng date. So Gesterkamp hypothesises a compromise of an early Sòng ‘original’between these*termini non ante, non post quem*. Yet this still does not solve the problem since even this date is not a perfect stylistic fit. Thus Gesterkamp argues the existing murals are in turn a Yuán copy, of a Sòng adaption, of an ‘archaic’(i.e. Táng) model. To support his thesis he identifies a donor figure at the western top left with Sòng emperor Tàizong (r. 976-997) in martial mufti:[88]

The personalization of the Beiyue miao murals thus consisted, I would argue, of consciously copying an archaic model in order to express a wish for restoring Chinese cultural supremacy.

This answer however raises troubling new questions. First, why would the second founder of a new dynasty deliberately set out to copy ‘an archaic model’? Given the Sòng’s known determination to purge the foreign influences which had characterized Táng’s brilliant cosmopolitan culture, why would he wish now to depict the Mountain Range deities as conspicuouslynon-Hàn ‘barbarians’?Thirdly where would he find such ‘an archaic model’, unique in the history of Chinese art for both style and content?How could he then reproduce it, totally lacking in the stylized formulae of copiers, on this unparalled scale? How could, and why should, an hypothetical Yuán copier produce such an amazingly flowing and lively copy of a copy?

Gesterkamp work vividly illustrates the massive disconnect between this temple’s murals and those of ‘heavenly court’ iconography from major shrines of Yuán date that have survived in remote areas of Shanxi and Hébêi. The main features in common are elements of the ‘Wú Dàozî style’ which remained a model for

generations of mural artisans. We shall later examine the components of that style in so far as it can now be reconstructed.

A comparison of the wall paintings shows enormous disparity of styles between the two temples.Yônglè Palace artwork, though highly accomplished in both formal religious and secular narrative styles, is mostly static. Both figured shapes and their outline brushwork tend to the pedestrian, lacking vigour and spontaneity. Their iconography, often signed and dated, instandardDaoist style of the Yuán period,is unlike that of the Déníng Hall.Can it be thatcontemporaneously at Qûyáng anonymous masterpieces, of a totally different order,style and scale,were produced as it were in a historical vacuum?

iv. The Wú Dàozî Style

Minitiarisation

- Detailed
- Abbreviated
- Draft sketch
- Black and white aesthetic, line, stroke, space, shading, colour
- Sculpture, three dimensional, dynamism, proportions, perspective

- ‘Southern’ v. ‘Northern’ (literatus Chán), Wáng Wèi, Su Dongpo, Dông Qíchang
- Dragons, clouds, water, trees, human habitations (absence)
- Ideology, religion, class, politics, barbarian, female
- Temple walls, side walls, end walls, *al fresco*?
- Technology v. inspiration, North v. South, martial v. civil, Wú Dàozî v. Wáng Wéi

Gù Kâizhi, draperies and clouds, rpopcks and trees, flying god

Wáng Wéi, landscape, Jialíngjiang waters, Fú Sheng portrait

Buddhist themes, entry into nirvâna, hell scenes, preaching

Daoist themes gods and demons, processions, martial figures

Portraits, furniture, architecture

Copying, engraving, rubbings, fênbên, Confucius (Chavannes 1909 vi: plate cccxcvii, no. 870, Qufù, Shèngjì Diàn. Julia Murray), Lao Zi (Suzhou), Guanyin,

Gesterkamp proposes that the four groups of upper register figures represent the Daoist Three Officials’ san-

guantrinity of heaven-earth-water, represented not as vertically in the Boston scroll, but in horizontal form E>S>W>N as East = water (NE) = thunder, South-east = earth (wind? SE), South-west = donor, West = planets = heaven (NW).[89]

censers[90]

If we take the west as planets, we get Saturn as a Persian holding presenting a Buddhist-type long-handled censer, Jupiter riding dragon, Mercury and Venus as ladies bearing banners with three shrunken-skull pendants, and Mars as the 'demon' brandishing halberd.[91] Wú Dàozî is recorded to have painted a terrifying scroll painting of Mars which survived into the Yuán dynasty with a seal by Jin emperor Zhangzong (r. 1190-1208).[92]

Points in common with Táng astrological iconography as seen in heavily Hindu-influenced scrolls (such as that in Osaka Museum, previously ascribed to Zhang Sengyôu) are the two females as Venus and Mercury with the weapon-bearing Mars. Venus, 'Grand Whiteness' (tàibái) equates to the agency of metal and the western direction. It is associated

with death, destruction and, like its Babylonian counterpart the goddess Ishtar, warfare.

Saturn here appears as a magi, whereas there he is a half-naked brahman sadhu. Jupiter here rides a boar, here a dragon, but he is accompanied by scroll bearers in keeping with his function as civil official. The group is not dissimilar to that in the early Míng Vairocana Monastery(Pílúsì) outside nearby Dìngzhou.A striking difference there is the depiction of Mars as a roaringmulti-limbed deity of Tantrism whichbecame fashionable only from the mid-eighth century.[93]

According to ancient tradition, Confucius is said to have visited the Zhou capital. There he viewed the Illuminated Hall (Míngtáng) of the Zhou dynasty which contained wall paintings portraying the virtuous and evil kings of Chinese history and pre-history. He used them to remind his followers of the lessons and warnings from the past.[94] Unfortunately no wall paintings of these periods have yet been discovered in China. The earliest murals known todate are from the Qín and Hàn dynasties and mostly from tombs. The Mâwángdui tomb of Chángsha premier Lî Cang,

Marquis Dài, dated BC 168 yielded manuscripts and paintings on silk. Among them the fragment of a Nine Rulers Picture (Jiû-Zhû Tú) appears to be simply a diagram. The earliest known extant pictorial representations of past rulers survives in the late Hàn engravings on the walls of the Liáng family shrine in Shandong.

If we examine undoubted examples of Táng paintings of muscular guardian figures, we note characteristic features which set them apart from the styles of later periods. These are the semi-naked torso, realistic rendition of bulging muscles, open mouth showing fangs and even tongue, hands and feet articulated and flexed in opposing directions, flesh a reddish-brown colour contrasting with white draperies, teeth and eye-whites. The figures are captured in three-dimensional motion, with sharp angles, and flowing lines uniform in thickness, with few or no tapered calligraphic brush strokes.

To chart this development we can compare paintings from Táng dynasty Dunhuáng cave shrines, Mt Wûtái's Fóguangsì (dated 857), Suzhou's Ruìguang pagoda wooden panels (1013) against paintings attributed to Wú Dàozî and his school. By these criteria, Bêiyuèmiào's 'flying god'

figure conforms to the earliest strata of any, whether in dynamism, realism, colouring or line.

By contrast, Sòng dynasty and later styles reverse most of these features. Instead we find static, decorative figures, caricatures, stiff and formal, without realism or interest in anatomy.

v. Wú Dàozî, Prince of Painters

Wú Dàozî (c.690-c.760), the most celebrated painter in Chinese history, was reportedly born of poor parentage in Yángdí, Hénán. If so, it is not clear how the young Wú acquired the motivation and funds to study calligraphy with wild cursive 'grass-style' master Zhang Xù and Hè Zhizhang (659-744). No specimen of Wú's calligraphy is known, since surviving attributions are unsigned, unless his portrait of Confucius signature: "Táng; Wú Dàozî brush", with seal, be accpeted as genuine. Temple murals have customarily been unsigned. In Sòng dynasty murals the names of divinities may be attached as labels (as reflected in the scroll copy *Eighty-seven Immortals Procession*, deduced to be after Wú Dàozî). This is believed to be a copy of a temple mural. The scroll is approximately one foot high by six foot long. Assuming a height of ten feet, this would cover sixty feet of temple wall.

Wú evidently early abandoned any ambition to become a calligrapher, but he evidently used such training to forge a vibrant graphic line of indomitable strength and suppleness. He quickly established a reputation in painting and was patronised by culture-loving Emperor Mínghuáng (r.713-755). Restrospectively, Zhang Yànyuân, in *Succeeding Ages' Famous Paintings* (prefaced 845), dubs Wú Dàozî 'painting's Sage' (huàshèng), and acclaims him as the only painter who excelled in all six categories of painting. While Wú is known primarily as a peerless figure painter, the development of landscape, the painting of 'mountains and waters', into an independently recognised art-form is also attributed to him.

It is surely no exaggeration to say that the place of Wú Dàozî, also known as Dàoxuán 'Way Mysterious', in the history of Chinese painting is comparable to that of Michelangelo in Europe, or of Hokusai in Japan. Like these perhaps, Wú inspired many later imitators, but was never equalled or surpassed. Wú Dàozî's output was prolific. He is reported to have painted murals for three hundred temples, and worked rapidly, on a grand scale, without mechanical aids. His command of line, both of spatial proportions and

natural movement, was said to be unequalled. he excelled at the human figure, but was a master of plant and animal forms, mythological beings, including dragons. Above all Wú Dàozî was famed for ability to convey movement, as in the flow and surging of waters, or of the wind, as expressed through freely fluttering draperies. (‘Wúdài dangfeng’)

The particular characteristic of the Wú style is defined by Zhang Yànyuân as his use of the broken line: “While all the others took pains to join the ends of their strokes, Wu Tao-tzu for his part broke up and left spaces between his dots and strokes.”[95] While this statement is literally true of the more dynamic and martial of the Wú attributions, their most consistently impressive aspect, particularly amongst endless folds of drapery, is in their controlled interweaving of continuous lines, which never seem to lose their way, and thereby generate without the aid of perspective an illusion of three-dimensional space. It is in this aspect that Wú Dàozî and his school remains truly outstanding.

Ernest Fenellosa, pioneer in the modern appreciation of East Asian painting history found substantial evidence for the influence of the Wu Daozi (Godoshi) tradition in Japan, both

in the paintings there attributed to him and in the important Kose school founded by Kanaoka (ca. 900). He writes (189) “Altogether we must regard Godoshi, whether as compared with architects, sculptors, or painters, as one of the very greatest of the line masters of the world. His figures do not look cheap, even when seen in the same blow of the eye with photographs of Phidias or Michel Angelo. ”

It may be traced in the sheets of shhoting cataracts and boiling pools of precipitate mountain waterfalls as in the interlacings of flying ribbons and curling draperies and hair of his subjects.

It is also through Wú’s infinitely sinuous curves that a lively sense of movement is sustained even in subjects that are static or moving at the frozen pace of court ceremonial. Wú had little need of splashing ink play (pomuò) to heighten tension or hold attention. He seems less a striver after special effects, notwithstanding the dramatic impact on viewers of all classes that his novel brand of supra-realism reportedly created, than the effortless wielder of an inner power derived from his absolute command of the structured but steadily unwinding continuum of space-time, as in a moving picture scroll.

This quality that makes the tradition of Wú Dàozî an enduring enigma to this day. It may endow his sensational break-throughs with a relevance for the future, if we do not lose his now tenuously suspended thread, but rather firmly grasp and carry it forward as an ever evolving art. It is Wú's art which so excited 20th century masters Xú Beihóng and Qí Báishí when they inscribed their colophons on the *Eighty-seven Immortals* scroll.

The enduring nature of the Wú Dàozî legend, with little in the way of visible masterpieces to support it, may inspire scepticism. Wú's larger than life status appears to conform to mythic archetypes. In popular imagination he easily becomes a folk-hero with super-natural powers. Attributions of surviving works, even in the form of painted copies or engravings and rubbings must be rigorously scrutinised. There may possibly remain not a single original from the master's own brush Yet there are fulsome literary testimonials to Wú Dàozî's achievement, both from his contemporaries, and from eye-witnesses to his masterpieces, certified by experts as authentic in the succeeding half millennium.

Over the last century, new sources have emerged from the ground to shed light on the actuality of high Táng art. These are above all the Buddhist cave shrines in the Dunhuáng oasis to the west, preserving Táng paintings and sculptures, with their clearly Indian and Central Asian influences, and the painted tombs excavated in particular around the Táng capital of Cháng'an (Xi'an)..These bear silent witness to the unadulterated styles of thirteen hundred years ago, styles which often bear closer resemblance to works of art preserved in Japan, than to those familiar in China. Perhaps the most striking of Dunhuáng murals, in reflecting the recorded descriptions of Wú Dàozî's portraiture, is that of the sage Vimalakirti, caught in the midst of philosophical debate, on a wall of Cave 103.[96]

The outstanding qualities of Wú Dàozî's work are directly attested by a detailed poetic description of his contemporary, leading poet Dù Fû (712-770), who was overwhelmed by his murals of the Daoist supreme deity near Luòyáng in 741:[97]

The Five Sages range their dragon robes
The thousand officers are like wild geese in flight.

When painters consider the men who went before
Then Master Wú is master of the field.

Yet destruction of temples in 845 by government suppression, and the ravaging of both east and west capitals, Luòyáng and Cháng'an in 880 by rebel Huáng Cháo, resulted in the loss of Wú's greatest monumental works within little over a century of his death. Nonetheless, scattered survivals of Wú Dàozî's work, while they lasted, continued to compel virtually universal admiration, among leading critics and independent scholars with first–hand experience of them.

Chief amongst these is 'universal genius' Su Dongpo, himself a noted calligrapher and painter. Su Dongpo, with younger brother Su Zhé (Zîyóu), not only collected and appraised surviving paintings of Wú Dàozî, but strove to conserve and protect them for future generations. (see Appendix i) Other leading scholars of Sòng who left detailed laudatory evaluations of Wú Dàozî's legacy include poet calligrapher Huáng Tíngjian, natural scientist Shên Gua, philosopher Zhu Xi, and antiquarian Dông You who defines the property of Wú Dàozî's painting as 'sculptural.' Indeed Dông links the three-dimensional quality of Wú's graphics to

Yáng Huìzhi, Wú's contemporary and rival whose speciality was sculpture in the round.[98]

It is recorded that ink-outline reduced-size copy scrolls of Wú Dàozî murals were prevalent among wealthy families during Northern Sòng. Surviving examples of these scrolls are attributed to figure-painter Wû Zongyuán, classified as a follower of the Wú Dàozî 'school', and later to Lî Gonglín (Lóngmián 1049-1106) who adapted it to a freer manner. These painters adopted the style of mural 'cartoon' (fênbên), painting monochrome outline without adding colour. Mî Fèi (1051-1107) paid written tribute to the importance of Wú's stylistic contributions, though he personally rejected the Wú calligraphic line in order to develop his own 'boneless' style of landscape.

The origin of these monochrome cartoon sketches is closely related to the 'soot sheets' fênbên used by professional muralists. Reduced-scale sketches are first extended to the required scale, before multiple pin-pricks are used to mark out the course of the lines. Finally the sheets are hung against the blank prepared plaster and soot is blown through the holes to trace the outlines of the figures to be

painted on the walls. This process, technically known as ‘pouncing’ in English, guarantees accuracy of proportion, is shared by traditional murals from East Asia to Europe.[99]

The production of cartoons facilitated transfer of the design in the correct proportions to the wall to be painted, and doubtless facilitated restoration work, copying and engraving. In the Sòng dynasty cartoon painting was popularised ofr its own sake by monochrome artists like Wû Zongyuán and Lî Gonglín in the Wû Dàozî school. This no doubt stimulated the development of black and white aesthetics with the famous liúbái technique ‘leaving blank’ for which Far Eastern art became famous..

Ironically, Wú Dàozî the master who applied the power of calligraphic line to figure painting, and whose example helped establish landscape painting as an art in its own right, unwittingly helped to toll the death knell of his own grandiose art. In place of heroic figures in a landscape of dynamic lines and vibrant colours, there developed an amateur tradition of monochrome landscape scrolls, of ink pale washes, abstract in design with little or no human participation. Under Emperor Mínghuáng of Táng, Wáng

Wéi was a scholar-poet who also painted Buddhist murals; Wú Dàozî an artisan who was honoured as an academician.

The two could meet on essential middle ground. Su Dongpo admired both but finally inclined towards the subtle restraint in the style of his fellow scholar. It seemed just as the lofty constructs of doctrinal Buddhism were being supplanted by the simple directness of Chán, so the lavish artistic patronage of great temples was being exchanged by private collectors and scholar poet-painters. It seems that, broadly speaking, what the individual gained, society and popular culture lost.

If we examinefamous paintings by artists said to have worked in the style of Wú Dàozî (c.680- c.763), such as *Vimâlakirti' Teaching* attributed to Lî Gonglín (Lóngmián c.1049-1106) of Sòng (fig. i-a) orthe *Nine Songs* by Zhang Wò of Yuán (fig. i-b),we will see that they, great as they are, are manneredand academic.[100]They do not compare with the vibrant Táng style in dated cave murals seen at Dunhuáng, such as Cave 103's *Vimâlakirti*, a theme also painted by Wú Dàozî according to the literature. (fig. i-c) If the Qûyáng murals are not by Wú Dàozî

himself, the crown of Chinese painting must go to ‘A.N. Other’, an anomalous orphan without traceable relations.It may be hoped this present publication willat last facilitate an informed assessmentboth of the murals’ intrinsic aesthetic worth and of their authorship.

Wang Renbo calculates that in the Suí and Táng periods almost half the painters on record were muralists.[101]Until Northern Sòng, great wall, screen and hanging-scroll paintings continued to be patronized by the imperial court. The Jade Hall of the Academy was decorated with a continuous painting of dragons in the ocean surrounding the Isles of the Immortals. This was the age of Guo Xi and Fàn Kuan, following in the footsteps of ninth century masters Dông Yuán and Jùrán.Ironically, Wen Fong traces the decline of monumental landscape painting to painter and collector emperor Huizong (r. 1101-1125) who promoted instead the album and handscroll.As dramatic evidence of this, Fong cites critic Dèng Chún (1167) that Huizong on his accession ordered all landscapes by Guo Xi, a favourite of Shénzong (r. 1068-1085), removed from the walls of his palaces. This then became the policy of the imperial Painting Academy which subsequently “left monumental pictorial decoration to artisan painters.”[102]

These Qûyáng murals cannot be made-to-order copies. Their subject matter is as unique and original as their execution. They depict a gathering of gods that reported as witnessed in 713, and of great contemporary moment at that time of Emperor Mínghuáng (Xuánzong)'s accession. Who would pay to have it reproduced in giant proportions centuries later when it can have held little relevance or interest?

The exceptional qualities of the lines in the engraved Flying God or Demon have been universally hailed by modern art critics as a probable legacy from Wú Dàozî or his school. Line has been called a key characteristic and forte of traditional Chinese painting. Bristling hairs and whiskers have been seen as uniquely capable of conveying physical emotions in visual form. They feature prominently in paintings found in tombs as far back as the Hàn dynasty. Wú Dàozî, it is related, studied cursive calligraphy but abandoned it before completion. His style excels in the power of line, but does not sacrifice realism for its abstract pursuit, nor enter the dichotomy we see in later imitators of subordinating image to calligraphic pattern.

Yet these critics have only seen the engraving, but not yet the actual painting from which was copied. This painting is in fresco,

where every hair and brushstroke is frozen in the wet plaster before it dries. It affords no chance for alteration or tinkering. Futhermore the qualities in this one figure are not confined to this alone, but manifest over dozens of others imbued with the same vital energy all over the huge wall ‘canvasses’. Nor are they just bare outlines but endowed with bright colours of exceptional subtlety and beauty, now revealed to the world in the present photographic work of conservator Zhang Huì.

Wú Dàozî has been celebrated in Chinese art history not only for his revolutionary treatment of the human form, but also for his mastery of landscape. Wáng Wéi often hailed as the source of China’s refined landscape tradition, also painted murals and indeed copied Wú Dàozî’s landscapes.[103]This has often been forgotten or overlooked by those who in later centuries sought to draw a line between the scholar’s introspective landscape musings and the temple artisan professional painting the gods of popular religion to order.

There was a rhyming jingle to describe two masterpieces attributed to Wú Dàozî in southern Hébêi. It went: Quyáng guî, Zhàozhou shuî, 曲陽鬼趙州水, ‘Qûyáng’s demon, Zhàozhou’s waters.’ The sixth centry bridge at Zhàozhou is one of the earliest

single-span bridges of elliptical arch in the world. It also boasted the Báilín Chán (Zen) Monastery, recently entirely rebuilt, which once contained the famed mural depictions of swirling waters ascribed to the master. Renowned poet statesman Wáng Shìzhen (1526-1590) appears to conflate Dìngzhou's Quyáng murals which also contain swirling waters with those of Zhàozhou. A similar phenomenon is seen in Dông Lû's 1126: *Guângchuan Huàbá* which attests the presence of water murals at the Quyáng temple.[104]

A stone engraving, apparently now lost like the murals themselves, is attested in the late Míng miscellany of Xiè Zhâozhè (1567-1624):[105]

At Chao-chou, in Hopei province, is a stone engraved after a monochrome painting by Wu Tao-tzu. The lines are like roaring waves swelling up to the heavens, twisting and turning. It startles one so that sweat breaks out. When we look at it closely it dazzles the eye. I dare not say whether it is a genuine replica of his work, but Wu's painting may well have been like this.

'Landscape' in Chinese translates as 'mountains and waters' but Wú perhaps first received his first imperial commission when the travelled to Sìchuan to sketch the raging torrents of the Jialíng

river. On his return to the capital at Cháng'an he had stored the images in his breast and, it was said, in one day poured out in a continuous tour-de-force of paint on a wall all that he had at first hand patiently observed and memorised. By contrast retired general Lî Sixùn (651-716) or possibly his son Zhaodào who was more Wú's contemporary, pioneers of the delicate blue and green (qinglyù) style, was alleged to have laboured several months over his version.

Outstanding landscapist Fán Kuan of Northern Sòng, for instance,displays a martial spirit reminiscent of Wú in his ferocious rocks. His powerful landscapes, such as *Travellers in Mountains and Streams* (Qishan xínglyû),include spirited human figures also, but only in insect-like proportions below the towering peaks and waterfalls. (fig. ii)Whereas early painters like Gù Kâizhi used landscape as background to human figures, the Déning murals show a balance of apotheosised man and nature on equal terms. Impressive also is the command of space in which the individuals are felt to interact.

We may lament all the temples and murals destroyed in the late Táng 845 religious persecution. Yet here in Qûyáng in the Déníng Hall we have not only the dynamic figures of which we

read in books about Wú and classic Táng art, but lo and behold, in the inner halves of the walls where the natural light from the south doors hardly penetrates, we have the roaring torrents and surging whirlpools among rocks and trees in an unbroken continuum, that we thought lost for ever at Zhàozhou, and might not dare to dream of ever finding outside hyperbolic, generally deemed ‘exaggerated’, literary accounts. Let the reader now judge by these photographs of the murals in their present state.

Despite their enormous size, the Déníng frescoes have an integration and vibrant power not approached by any of its rivals. Its effect lies not so much in its dimensions but in its individual hair lines and strokes, still miraculously fresh in the plaster, beneath the accumulated dirt, as if just painted. Here we see no haloed icons of seated or standing deities or buddhas in the formal poses familiar from many another shrine and temple. Nor do we find independent cameos or narratives strung together in quasi strip cartoon style often used to illustrate the lives of saints and enlightened beings. Rather here we behold one episode of mountain gods, demi-gods and monsters, from both sides of the gigantic hall, caught in a moment of time as if we were there.

In the middle distance stroll the chief dignitaries, namely the five mountain gods in flowing robes and regal headdresses, attended by Daoist sages, prodigies, armed guards with fluttering pennants and maidens bearing flowers, coral and other rareties. The figures are mostly grouped into informal clusters of not more than half a dozen, often appearing to engage each other in conversation and eye contact. This aspect has a remote affinity with the treatment of the Five Hundred Arhatson the great Shàolín Monastery mural in its late Míng Vairochana Hall.

vi. The Eighty-seven Immortals Scroll

Despite their greater dispersal over land and skyscape, the lightness of touch recalls the *Eighty Seven Gods and Immortals* (Bashíqi Shénxian) silk hand scroll acquired in May 1937 by renowned Chinese-ink horse painter Xú Beihóng from a German lady collector in Hong Kong for silver 10,000 yuán and seven of his own works.

This painting in ink outline devoid of colour on silk measures approximately thirty centimeters in height and two metres fifty in length. It is currently preserved in Bêijing's Xú Beihóng Memorial Museum.There for easy viewing it has been reproduced in a life-size mural.[106](fig. iii-b, v-a)

Xú was ecstatic at his discovery which he trumpeted as the greatest Chinese figure painting, able to stand comparision with the masterpieces of Europe like the sculpted marble freize of the Parthenon in Athens. Many Chinese restaurants and luxury hotels have since adapted itinto a prominent feature of their décor. (fig. iii-b)

Xú Beihóng had a special seal carved for it reading "Beihóng's life." (Beihóng-zhi mìng) He was convinced it must be the work of Wú Dàozîhimself, a view endorsed by his friends the famous painter Zhang Dàqian (1899-1983) who was to spend some war years copying Táng murals at Dunhuáng and calligrapher Xiè Zhìliú (1908-1997).

Howevernowadays many scholars place it with Wû Zongyuán (d. 1050), a painter in the Wú-style known to have copied Wú's 749 murals in the former Lâo Zî temple just north of Luòyáng. An ode to this painting by leading Táng poet Dù Fû refers to its flowing procession of 'Five Sages'.

A strange event befell this scroll during China's war of resistance against Japan when the Nationalist forces took refuge in Yúnnán, adjoining Burma, and Sìchuan, to the southwest. In 1942 Xú took his treasured scroll to Yúnnán University at Kunmíng where he planned to exhibit it in support of the armed forces. On May 10th the scroll was stolen from Xú's office during an air-raid alert. Xú was frantic and offered rewards.

Acording to Xú's last wife Liao Jingwen (whom he married in 1946), in 1944 a female student Lú Yinhuán told Xú she had seen it in a friend's home at Chéngdu, Sìchuan, a gathering place for artists during the war. Zhang lived there then, when not working at the Dunhuáng caves of Gansù. [107] Liú Déming undertook to go and retrieve it which he did posing as a buyer. Xú though unwell managed to raise 200,000 yuán and over ten of his works in ransom which almost bankrupted him.

The scroll was recovered minus its original mounting, seals and colophons.[108] Xú was consumed with guilt at his carelessness but had earlier ordered Zhonghuá Press in Hong Kong to make a lithographic copy which he finally was able to see in 1946 at Shànghâi. In 1947 on the 19th of the first lunar month Xiè Zhìliû at Shànghâi added a colophon which contains this remarkable statement:

Originally this scroll was unknown. Previously in Guângdong (Canton) there was a painting called 'Wú Dàozî's *Procession of Immortals Paying Court to the Source*' (Cháoyuán Xianzhàng). An inscription on it by 'Pine Snow' (Songxuê i.e. Zhào Mèngfû,1254-1322, of Yuán) says it was done by Wû Zongyuán at the time of Northern Sòng. Its figures and composition is absolutely no

different from this scroll. So it seems that this was really its origin (shí wéi lànshang).

Xiè echoes the undated colophon by Zhang Dàqian there in uncannily reduplicative phrasing. Zhang mentions seeing the *Eighty Seven* scroll at Nánjing twelve years earlier, Xiè ten years earlier. Both men, though making no mention of the other, speak of copying cave murals at Dunhuáng from the "Six Dynasties, Suí and Táng" from which experience they identify Xú's scroll as being in the style of "late Táng." Unlike Xiè, Zhang does not mention having seen the *Procession* scroll, but gives precisely the same verdict as Xiè in almost identical words: "The so-called '*Procession of Immortals Paying Court to the Source*' by Wû Zongyuán of Northern Sòng really originated from this (shí lànshang)." It is hard not to suspect some sort of not-so-subtle collusion. (fig. v-b)

It is clear then than prior to the 1949 fall of the Nationalist Chinese government, Zhang Dàqian and Xiè Zhìliû shared private knowledge of this second scroll of which Xú Beihóng's inscriptions show no inkling. Curiously, Zhang has a composition of own his entitled *Heavenly* Female[s] *Scattering Flowers* bearing the date "1933 (guîyôu) 12th month" which seems inspired by the 'Opening Light Child' (Kaimíng Tóngz') in the *Procession* scroll, the backward glancing flower-maiden in the *Eighty Seven*.[109] (figs.

iii-a, -b, -c) If Zhang's '1933'date is true,Zhangwould seem to havecopied the*Procession* or*Eighty Seven* scroll overthree years before Xú's 'discovery' of it in Hong Kong.

Thissame maiden, without turnedhead, re-appears inpurported Sòng dynasty scrolls of Vimâlakirti in whose scripture 'the heavenly maiden scattering flowers' features prominently.[110] (fig. iii-d)A variant flower maiden with turned head is seen on the west wall of Déníng Hall and another directly facing the viewer on the west wall of Fâhâi monastery's shrine in Bêijing's Western Hills. (fig. iii-e and -f)

This second scroll is doubtless that subsequently acquired in New York by C.C. Wang (Wáng Jìqian) from Zhang Dàqian. It is held privately in the U.S. under the title *Procession of Immortals Paying Court to the Source* (Cháoyuán Xianzhàng), attributed to Wû Zongyuán, which is a virtually exact copy of Xú Beihóng's *Eighty Seven Gods and Immortals*. Yet the sharp details of *Procession of Immortals* lack the refinement of *Eighty Seven Immortals.*

It is further distinguishable from the latter by its showy brushwork, seemingly fanciful labelling of individual figures after the style of certain temple murals (extended to even minor attendants), the stereotyped little smiles on the female figures, the attachment of numerous colophons ostensibly by past connoisseurs

and even the Xuanhé seal of Sòng emperor and doyen of collectors Huizong (r. 1101-1125) himself.[111] Zhang Dàqian is known to based several of his fakes on this Xuanhé collection.[112] (figs. iii-c, v)

How and when the copy attributed to Wû Zongyuán came to be made is unknown. To my knowledge this scroll has not yet been made available for scientific scrutiny. I myself was only able to view it when it was exhibited briefly, onloan from C.C. Wang, at Táibêi City's Historical Museum in 1982. Zhang Dàqian, with long white beard, crook staff and hermit robes, was then revered as the leading traditional Chinese painter under the Nationalist government in Táiwan, though he had earlier resided in Brazil and California. He devoted considerable energy into copying the early murals from Dunhuáng'sBuddhist caves in Gansù. Copying of ancient artworks has been an honoured tradition which unfortunately can at times cause the boundary between legitimate imitation and deliberately contrivedforgery to disappear.[113] Wen Fong observes that the new technology of facsimile reproduction available from the early twentieth century facilitated the manufacture of forgeries. In particular Fong recognizes the activities of Zhang Dàqian as a master forger, though not of the *Riverbank* attributed to Dông Yuán (fl. 930s-960s) in the Metropolitan Museum from the C.C. Wang Collection, the

promised gift of Oscar L. Tang family. Zhang's style, he characterizes as: "fluent but flat brushwork, static mountain and tree forms, and smooth, heavy, Western-style chiaroscuro modelling." Fong concludes his investigation: "So while Zhang Daqian may have been capable of creating forgeries of works by Dong Yuan by successfully imitating *Along the Riverbank at Dusk* and *The Xiao and Xiang Rivers*, in whose styles he was thoroughly conversant, he could never have painted *Riverbank*, whose ancient and forgotten forms and techniques were alien and incomprehensible to him."[114]

After leaving China in 1949, Zhang Dàqian sold many allegedly ancient works to the Metropolitan Museum of New York and other American museums. In 1998 Zhang was publicly and convincingly indicted as a master forger, not only of paintings themselves but of their supporting documents of authentification, by eminent art historian James Cahill and others in the 'Chinagate' controversy over his painting 'Along the Riverbank' attributed to tenth century artist Dông Yuán.[115] Since the demise of its collector C.C. Wang, the whereabouts of the 'Wû Zongyuán scroll' are unknown. Cahill told me in a personal conversation that it seemed to have been secreted following an inheritance dispute between his eldest daughter and son.

At any rate, the *Eighty Seven Gods and Immortals*,and its variant *Procession of Immortals Paying Court to the Source*,essentially share the religious Daoist theme of five god kings, representing the five directions (including centre)with their respective mountain ranges,of our Déníng Hall murals. If my calculation is correct the figures, including three dragons of different types, on its east and west walls (42 + 46 or 42?) total the Chinese auspicious number of eighty-eight, perhaps the originally intended total on each of the two truncatedscrolls. Each scroll version begins with a torn edge, but the *Eighty-Seven* scroll also ends with a tear, unlike *Procession*. Both have the same number of eighty-seven figures. *Procession* omits the fragmented guardian, with which the *Eighty-Seven* begins, but inserts a novel sheathed-sword bearer at the end.

The independent discovery of two all but identi-twin scrolls at virtually the same time and place in the hands of two artists with close connections is a coincidence of astronomical odds. Taken with the fact that each begins with a break at almost the same spot and ends again at almost the same exact place makes one conclude that one is recent copy of the other. The greater depth of Xú's *Eighty-Seven* leads to the verdict, that it not Zhang's *Procession*, is the original. *Procession* is surely a splendid and inspired copy by a great modern artist.

Whereas *Eighty-Seven* employs mostly smooth ‘iron-wire’ strokes of uniform thickness in the tradition of Gù Kâizhi (c.344 - c.406), which Wú Dàozî reputedly copied, *Procession* uses ‘nail head, rat’s tail’ strokes, beginning thick and ending thin (dîngtóu shûwêi) in the calligraphic manner of Northern Sòng.[116] Anomalies unique to the Wáng version include use of varied chiaroscuro brush strokes, inconsistent labeling and naming of individual serving maidens, stereotyped tight smiling lips, a bodhisattva- like curly mustachio for the ‘South Pole Emperor’, and corded open sandals for the penultimate armoured figure.[117]

Both scrolls convey a remarkable sense of flow and movement infusing the breath of life into a long ceremonial procession, so much so that one can almost hear the musicians playing a stately march as they progress forward between the delicate balustrades of the bridge over a lotus lake. Interest is sustained in each version by the varying degrees of oblique angles and triangular structure, though in *Eighty-Seven* the angelic throng with their swirling draperies is more tightly integrated.

Apart from three haloes, mystic vapours, a tongue of flame issuing from the mouth of one of the leading martial figures in upper body armour, and two very lifelike small dragons on offering plates, there is nothing overtly supernatural in the procession of Daoist gods and immortals. They could almost be

mortal dignitaries and their attendants come from the imperial court to honour Lâo Zî, patron saint of the Táng dynasty and mythical ancestor of the imperial house. The handscrolls fit the designations recorded in literature of fênbên, 'powder books'. These contained outlines in miniature which could be enlarged into 'cartoons' and used to trace designs for giant murals by the application of soot through pin-holes to mark a blank wall before painting it. The same technique was used as an aid in Europe. Colouring was added later.

The only animal life takes the form of dragons of different species, though several of the attendant creatures display features resembling beasts such as dogs or monkeys. Several heroic figures in semi-covered dress, in addition to the famous flying god or demon atop the west wall, display the well-developed musculature characteristic of Táng temple guardians. Such robust vibrancy and animation, rendered in continuous powerful brushstrokes, has been deemed to typify the style of Táng master Wú Dàozî himself. A notable example of this style, datable to Táng, has been noted on a damaged temple banner, now in the British Museum, from the cave library at Dunhuáng.

vii. The Dàozî Ink Treasures and Rubbings

Other examples can be found on the *Dàozî Ink Treasures scroll* collected in Hong Kong c. 1910 by Swedish orientalist

Fredrik Robert Martin and acquired byCleveland Art Museum in 2004. This scroll of possible Sòng date appears to be an example of a miniature cartoon (fênbên) to guide painters in the execution of great temple murals. This scroll comprises three sections, namely an array of Daoist celestial deities, the ten levels of the Buddhist-Daoist courts of hell with their judges and tortures, and *Harrowing the Mountain*(Soushan) scenes of the hunting and brutal capture of wild animals, including some in human female form, by demons under the command of Sìchuan god, Èrláng of Guankôu, often identified with Qín general Lî Bing.[118]This last displays the anatomical mastery and muscular dynamism found in Déníng Hall's Flying God,its contorted struggling frenzy reminiscent of the famed Laocoôn from Greek sculpture. (fig. vi-b)

This degree of realist conflict may be further compared to Leonardo da Vinci's lost Battle of Anghiari (celebrating the 1440 victory of the Florentine republic) known to us from his sketches. It conveys a sense of physical violence more often associated with Japanese art.

Though the hunted mountain animals and snake or fox spiritladiesare held to represent evil, the viewer's sympathy is with them not their cruel captors. Thus it may represent a satire on the depredations on the people, and indeed the natural environment, of

licensed governmental forces. Court painter Lî Zài (fl. 1430) of Míng painted an interpretation of these scenes in spirited ink-play. The theme has been traced back as far as Sòng dynasty painting and may well be earlier.[119] These demons bear striking affinities to the flying god of Qûyáng. They are characteristics of a style traditionally attributed to Wú Dàozî style.

After An Lùshan's revolt of 755 and rout of loyal imperial forces, art-loving emperor Mínghuángand his court fled for a while to to Sìchuan, a formidably mountainous region with whose dramatic scenery Wú had already experienced at first-hand. Thus a direct connection to Wú seems plausible.

Among hallmarks of this 'Wú Dàozî style' of martial figure painting, are flowing hair depicted in individual lines, open mouth showing tongue and teeth, bushy eyebrows shown as areas of compacted dots, muscular limbs with armbands and bracelets, and extended leg with upturned bare foot to reveal the sole.In short, they display a rare mastery of human, and animal, anatomy in motion. All of these features are shared by our Déning Hall flying god on a grand scale and the demons in the hunting scenes of *Dàozî Ink Treasures*.[120]They typify the classic Táng of the time of

Wú Dàozî. A readily datable example is the ‘warrior’ figure in the mural of Dunhuáng’s late Táng Cave 112. (fig. vi-a)

The viewer on entering the North Mountain Ranges Temple’s Déníng hall, visibility, light and grime permitting, finds himself cast in a panorama of gushing streams and waterfalls, luxuriant leafy forests where he can freely meet with celestial beings from ground level up to the skies. Crowning the eastwall a lightning goddess flashes her mirror while a dog-headed god of thunder rolls his wheel drums, as a giant dragon with glittering golden scales dives head first downwards. ‘Heavenly dog’ (Tian gôu) is an early term for some type of celestial being, but extant depictions of the thunder god, post c.a.1300, show him in other guises. A piece of negative evidence for the prior date of the murals by content is the absence of any hint of the seven immortals popularized by Quánzhen Daoism which peaked during the Jurchen Jin and Mongol Yuán dynasties.

To the west a yaksha-like half-naked strong man of Indian ilk, hair and drapes streaming from athletic exertion, shoulders a long pole axe, and glares out over the world as if on the look out for trouble below. With a touch of humour, a whiskered sage cranes his neck round to gaze up in amazement.

This is the demonic figure of which a 1602? (the date has been almost entirely defaced) late Míng engraving generated rubbings that made it world famous and has become iconic of the temple itself.[121] A second engraving of 1847 after the First Opium War, in late Qing, was orderedby the prefect to be made from the mural to replace the first, worn from repeated rubbings,is more accurate in proportions but carved with less sensitivity. The Wànlì late Míng engraving reads: “(Táng) Wú Dàozî’s brush. Prefect of East Lû (Shandong), Zhào Dài had this engraved on stone:

Heng Mountain-Range’s essential spirit,
the demon baron reveals his form.
He holds fast with radiant physique
his halberd swift as wind and lightning.
He quells Satan and executes the violent,
Enforcing stern heavenly punishments.
Covertly he guarantees the national land,
its people and society’s eternal tranquiliity.

Great Míng, Wànlì … year, Scholar Cui reverently composed.

唐吳道子筆
知縣事東魯趙岱刻石
恆岳鐘靈鬼伯呈形抱凝

皓魄戟迅風霆降魔誅

暴揚厲天刑幽贊國土民社永寧

Dàmíng Wànlì … 催生敬題

Yuán Yôugen has discovered that Zhào Dài is known to have left inscriptions at two other locations dated 1601 and 1602.[122] The inscription is accompanied by another by Qûyáng's prefect, indicating government interest in the Northern Range Temple and concern for national security. There was good reason. The treasury was exhausted from the Korean campaign 1592-1598 to repel Hideyoshi and the Manchu threat was looming.

Recently a poem of appreciation by (Míng) Táo Chéng of Huáinán on "Viewing the Mt Heng Range Temple murals by Wú Dàozî of the Heavenly Court" has come to light in the National Library. The Bêiyuèmiào administration is currently (1 December 2012) re-engraving it on a stele.[123]

No original by Wú is generally said to survive, though his style can be gauged by numerous literary appreciations and copies of uncertain reliability. It has been stated by experts that this engraving carries the best impression that we can now form of his work. If so, what is to be said of the mural on which it was based, and which still miraculously survives? Until the present time, these

murals have never been adequately published for the world methodically to appraise them and make its considered judgement.

462 : Dîfûjun-zhi Bei

“Tàiwû huángdì (424-452) tông wànshì-zhi zi,gòu tongxiao-zhi ji” (62)

557.4.8 Gaojùn Bîqiuseng Biaoxiu Dìngguó Sì (63)

735 Zhèng Zîchun: Dà Táng Bêiyuè Shénmiào-zhi bei

“zâohuì biaojiao”; “huìshì hòusù, zhaozhang xìyàn…” (117-118)

748: Lî Quán: Dà Táng Bêiyuè Hengshan feng Antian Wáng-zhi Míng

“An gong yue Lùshan, Guó-zhi ying-yê…” (748-749)

855.4.21 Chén Péngnián: Bêiyuè Antian Yuánshèngdì Beimíng

“Bêwiyuè Antian Wáng kê zenghào Bêiyuè Antian Yuánshèngdì”; “danshu lyùtú-zhi rùi” (94-95)

991.8.9 Wáng Yúcheng: Dà Sòng chóngxiu Bêiyuè Antian Wáng Mìao-zhi bei

“Xióngnú-zhi fànsài, lái yì cíyû, bû –qí jíxiong, -bùcóng huá Xiá-zhi xin, suì zong liáoyuán-zhi huô…” (107-108)

721 Wéi Xuxin: Dà Táng Dìngzhou Bêiyuè Hengshan Língmiào-zhi Bei

Records sighting in 713.3.26

(68-69)

1050.1.19Hán Qî: Dà Sòng Chóngxiu Bêiyuè Miào-zhi Jì

“Antian Yuánshèng” “Rìfeng yuèyû, -yî tà wéi lòu. Gong dà, fèi guâng, jiû-yan –bùjî… mànshén dúlî…” (123)

1537.ii Xû Zàn: Quyáng-xiàn Chóngxiu Bêiyuèmiào Beiwén
(110)
1506.4.15 Báiyán Shanrén: Deng Hengshan 6-shôu
“Quyáng feishí shì ying qí” (111)
1893.4 Xiè Jiànlî: Gù Tínglín xiansheng: Bêiyuè Biàn
Bêiwèi Míngyuán Dì 419, Tàiwû 435, 443, 450, 460, 461 imperial sacrifices.
“Sòng-chu miào wéi Qìdan-suô fén, Chúnhuà 2-nían chóngjiàn, -ér Táng-zhi beikè –wèicháng huî…” (72-73)

viii. Copying

Although Chinese art is known for the perpetuation of antique models, exact copies except for purposes of fraud and commercial gain are rare. Since wall paintings in the past were rarely negotiable instruments or commodities of mercantile exchange, the question of outright forgery may be excluded. The general practice for artists schooled in a particular style would be to express their own idiosyncratic vision by re-working the vocabulary inherited from past masters with a contemporary flavour. Patrons no doubt wished to set a certain seal of original creativity on works they sponsored, not merely duplicate what everybody or anybody already knew to exist. Gesterkamp remarks that the observed duplication or near-duplication of images in murals is limited to fragments but does not extend to entire designs.[124]

Artists are known to produce preliminary sketches before embarking on a final version. Tales are told of Wú Dàozî working as if spontaneously from memory without the the aid of sketches. Indeed he

was famed for his sureness of line with the mastery of a calligrapher, leaving the colouring to assistants, at least in his later years. The art of calligraphy has been the most highly esteemed in China and its connection with painting close. In fresco painting the application of colour generally followed the drawing of an ink outline.

The Northern Range murals appear to show places in which colour has been applied directly, as in the rendering of trees and foliage. In others traces of gold dust for important figures and gilt papier-maché for embroidered hems may be observed. Most remarkably calligraphic brush strokes in ink, without over-painting, can be discerned, for example in individual hairs, eyebrows and even facial bristles. The murals of the late Táng Fóguangsì in the Wû-Tái mountain enclave show comparable spontaneity.

From the Sòng dynasty, the growth of connoisseurship and scroll painting collection in imperial and private circles created a fashion to value ink sketches of human figures in the manner of small mural drafts in their own right. Sarah Frazer traces this development to the actual workshop sketches as produced by Táng or Five Dynasty temple artists which survived by accident in the desert conditions of the sealed cave archive at Dunhuáng.

Frazer attributes what she calls the “deliberately awkward” manner of these sketches for which Lî Gonglín of Northern Sòng was renowned. This cartoon-like eccentricity reached its zenith in the exaggeratedly distorted figures of Chén Hóngshòu in the late Míng.

In addition Frazer identifies a style she translates as ‘skeletal painting’ (xiûhuà) derived from preparatory mural production. Actually

a more literal translation of the Chinese word would be ‘decayed/rotten painting’. The written character for ‘rotted’ (xiû) and ‘plaster’ (wu) are almost identical. I propose therefore that the correct connotation of the term refers to ‘plaster painting’ (wuhuà) or ‘plaster brushwork’ (wubî) used to describe the tracing of a preliminary outline on the plaster with which a first-rate artist might prefer to dispense.

Ráo Zìrán (c. 1340) mentions three stages: charcoal outline (tanxiu 炭朽=wu 朽?), light ink (small beginning of the brush) and free painting. Gesterkamp equates them to charcoal design, underdrawing and overdrawing.[125]

We know that copy-books were in use and that images were sometimes traced from a sketch by means of tamping or pouncing.[126] This involved pricking holes in a sheet of paper along the outline of the master images. Once this paper was mounted on the wall to be painted, charcoal dust would be blown onto it so that charcoal dots would mark the wall in the positions of the pricked holes. Examples of such ‘dust markers’ (fênbên) have been recovered from the cave library at Dunhuáng. They were certainly an essential tools in the mass-production of religious icons and handy guides in transferring preliminary outlines to a wall. It is a device also employed in Europe and doubtless other parts of the world.[127]

Another quasi-mechanical aid deployed in the production of large-scale murals is the miniature version (xiâo yàngbên). By this means a large mural may be produced by the enlargement of a portable blueprint, and conversely a souvenir copy may be manufactured from a massive wall painting. Such reduced images were doubtless in much demand by pilgrims, the ancient equivalent of tourists, at the holy sites of Buddhism,

a religion for which the veneration of icons and relics was paramount. This demand for images and the infinite propagation of texts and mantras doubtless acted as a catalyst for the invention of printing, thought to have begun about 700 AD.

One of the earliest known examples, printed from engraved wood-blocks in 868, is the Diamond Sûtra which happened to be the favourite reading of Wú Dàozî himself. This copy, recovered from the famous cave library at Dunhuáng, is now in the British Museum. Not only is it a superb example of the printed book, it also features as its frontispiece an engraved picture of the Buddha preaching in the garden of his Jetavana monastery. It has all the air of a huge wall painting, scaled down from yards to inches, with the life-like interactive figures of a Wú Dàozî original.

Another example comes from the opening page of the Tripitaka sûtras of Guângshèng monastery, also famed for its wall paintings, in Shanxi printed three centuries later.The temple was destroyed by an earthquake in 1303 and itshuge Medicine Buddha mural in colourful but formalistic style presently adorning New York's Metropolitan Museum dates from shortly after this time.

WDZ colour print (black, grey, green) of Dongfang Shuo. Xi'an Beilin (discovered in 1973 inside stele with coins up to 1158), 12th c. Jin.

A parallel but more ancient method of transmitting images in the age before photography is the stone engraving from which ink rubbings may be taken, a do-it-yourself prototype of printing. Indeed this is the very means by which the Northern Range temple has become known throughout the world, if only as the place from which the famed rubbing

of the Quyáng demon originated. Though proclaimed as a copy of a work by Wú Dàozî, and widely accepted as most convincingly reflecting his style as described by critics who witnessed originals, few experts have been tempted to enquire further.

If the rubbings and engravings are worthy of international interest, it can hardly be maintained that the murals from which they were made are insignificant. Yet such must be the current assumption upon which the current stalemate on their further exploration by the art world rests. If the murals reflect the style of Wú Dàozî, as described in past records, better than any other know example, the onus must be on sceptics to offer an alternative hypothesis that better fits the facts. This can only be done by further investigation of what in any case is a monument of unique importance in China's cultural history.

If it is finally established that the existing paintings represent an unprecedently faithful copy of a Táng original, say by Wú Dàozî or a top disiciple, then the work may be said to be in effect a virtual Wú Dàozî. If on the other hand, we consider from presently available information, that the production of such a perfect copy is both technically unfeasible and culturally improbable, we should conclude for now that the murals are indeed a Táng original by his Wú Dàozî or his undiscovered twin. Science is built on statistical probalities and the elimination of alternative explanations.

Now that we come to consider the implications of copying in art, it may be said that critics will not dismiss a photograph for not being the original. This is because it does not claim to be such nor can it deceive anyone into thinking that is such. The matter is different where an artefact is sold for profit. Naturally a certificate of authenticity will

command a higher price. Yet for most practical and even aesthetic purposes a fine copy will serve equally well. For purposes of display it may indeed be superior since there will be less fear of damage or theft and being new it may allow close inspection and viewing in a light not possible for the original.

In the present case, fairly good copies of the east and west wall murals, albeit much reduced in size, are now available at the site. This at last permits the visitor a general idea of the iconography and landscapes depicted without increased risk to the originals. As was the case recently with Rome's Sistine Chapel, cleaning paintings can be a controversial business. In the effort to restore a painting to its supposed pristine condition and colours, later restorations, good or bad, will be inevitably destroyed. Layers of the original artist's work and revisions may also be inadvertently forfeited. Extreme caution protracted deliberation are advisable.

Fortunately, modern techniques of photography should allow detailed images to be obtained, problems of dirt and wear notwithstanding. Such are the scientific pre-conditions for any physical intervention, whether of cleaning or restoration. In the interests of international appreciation and cooperation in developing knowledge of what deserves recognition as a world heritage site, it is hoped that necessary visual data be made publicly available, as it has been for other important historical sites.

Conclusion

If no one had seen the murals but merely heard about their size and integrated composition on this scale, only one painter in Chinese history

would come to mind. The evidence of the engraved stone 'demon' transmitted by ink rubbings was enough to convince art critics across the world that it must represent the style of that same artist, celebrated in numerous literary appreciations whose original work is feared lost for ever.

Yet what if someone had seen his genuine traces, what would it need to convince experts of its authenticity? Surely it would require detailed examination, the publication of state-of-the-art images in colour, not to mention scientific analyses using the latest equipment available. Given this painter's pivotal and seminal role in the world history of art, can there be any reason to prevaricate?

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[8] 河北省古代建筑研究所.昭化寺［M］.北京：文物出版社，2007.

[9] 聂金鹿，林秀珍.曲阳北岳庙德宁之殿壁画维修技术［J］.古建园林技术，1989（1）：30-34，71.

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[1]Gesterkamp 2011: 123 citing Jin Wéinuò "mínjian wényì."

[2]Cary Liú 2011: 192-197, 197: Figures 5-6.

[3]Xú Beihóng colophon attached to the painting.

[4]Sirén 1933: 74, plate 48-2. 1956-1958: 114 remarks that the Abe Collection in Ôsaka has two 'Quyáng Demon' engraving rubbings, the later dated 1847.

[5] Liú Dézun 1935: passim. De Takacs 1948: 70 speaks of the 'tou-wang-tien' (Dòuwáng Diàn) murals which he attributes to Wu Dàozî. He reproduces two black and white photographs of the west wall murals from the Commission of Monuments at Peking. Of the 'God of the Winds (Fig. 5)' engraving he remarks: "The magnificent original of this painting does not exist any more. Its present copy was painted – in a rather coarse manner – in Yuan or Ming times. Nevertheless, it furnishes, even in this state, a document of primary importance for studies in Wu-Tao-tzu's art." 1937: 162-165.

[6]Mèng 2009: 168.

[7]Mèng 2009: 224 cites painters' inscription dated 1562. It has a stele of 1446 dating the temple's completion.

[8]Mèng 2009: 120. Xinhuá chubânshè 1998: *Quyáng Xiànzhì*, Dà Shìjì.

[9] (Míng) Xû Zhònglín: *Fengshén Yânyì* gives the god's name as Cui Ying 崔英. Xuè and Wáng 2000: 39, 94. Mèng 2009: 88-89 cites earlier attested names as Chén È, Chéng Huìtíng, Deng Seng or Fú Tongméng and his general as Mòhuì.

[10] Huáng Miáozî 1991: 63-65 on Quyáng, Bêiyuè Miào 'Tianguan tú'.

[11]Hú Mán 1949.4: "Bêiyuèmiào Wú Dàozî Zhenjì" in Huáng Miáozî 1982 (*Zhongguóhuà Yánjiù* iii): 241. Yuán Yôugen 2002: 137.

[12]Gesterkamp 2011: 121 cites Liú Dunzhen 劉敦楨(1897-1968): 204.

[13]Mèng 2009: 168.

[14]Steinhardt 1998: passim.

[15]Xuè and Wáng 2000: 30 states these copies are kept by Hébêi Wenwùjú at Shíjiazhuang. Lî and Zhou 1985: 78-79 figures. Niè 1989: 28. Gesterkamp 2011: 121; 273 footnote 221; Drawings4A and 4B. Wáng Dìnglî omits two figures above the dragon's tail on the west wall andtwo tridents borne by figures next topole-axe bearing soldiers at bottom-right east wall.

[16]Xuè and Wáng 2000: 33-41; Wáng Lìmîn 2006: 30-34 on the murals.

[17] Gesterkamp 2011: 6; 124.

[18]Wáng Lìmîn 2000: 36.

[19]Yuán Yôugen 2002: 138-139, 144, 146.

[20]Yuán Yôugen 2002: 140, 144-145.

[21]Yuán Yôugen2002: 147.

[22]Yuán Yôugen 2002: 149-150.

[23]Gesterkamp 2011: 5.

[24]Hóng Huìzhèn 2004.1: 64ff with a plate of the rubbing.

[25]Gesterkamp 2011: 5 compares the Yônglè Gong in Shanxi to the Vatican's Sistine Chapel.

[26]Mèng 2009: 176 "Dàcháo Zhìyuán 7-nián, Zhèngyuè 1-rì shizhû jiàn." Lî and Zhou 1985: 78 identify the author as "Quánzhen Daoist Chéngmíng Zhenrén", i.e Zhang Zhìjìng. Gesterkamp 2011: 264-265 footnote 193.

[27] Gesterkamp 2011: 160-161; 225.Gesterkamp reckons sixteen to seventeen bays of 3.5m "two bays on the east end part of the front [7m], eight or nine bays to the east [31.5m], and six bays [21m] on the rear wall. [total 59.5m]" This would fit a hall (13x3.5) 45.5m long by (9x3.5) 31.5m deep. *Chaoyuan Xianzhangtu* , Liu Zirui, Tianjin Renmin Meishu 2007: silk handscroll "59cm x 930cm". Gesterkamp 2011: 225 "777.5 cm in length and 58cm in height, but this includes the colophons and the mounting. [Stephen Little 2000: *Taoism and the Arts of China* 240]... original scroll with images" 580cm x 44.3cm [Zhongguo Meishu Quanji huihuabian 3, 1987: Songdai huihua 8.]" *Bashiqi Shenxian juan*, Renmin Meishu, Chen Lin 2009: paper handscroll "32cm x 292cm."

[28]According to Gesterkamp's figures, the solid walls of Yônglè Gong main hall measure 2.37m east front (1 bay) by 14.32m sides (4 bays of 3.58m) and 11.23m east rear (3 bays of 3.7m). This makes 22.46m plus backdoor say 3.5m = 25.96m length. Their murals are 4.38m high.

[29] Xuè andWáng 2000: 35. Niè 1985: 28.

[30] Peter A. Boodberg, Edward Schafer. See: Kenneth Rexroth: Haquelebac, *China Literature* April 20, 2010.

[31]*GJTJ* 449-c.

[32]Zhang Jìzong (1700 AD) i-9 'To Aid Oppressive Sunshine Red Pine Bestows Rain…': 21a-b.

[33] Zhu Jîngxuán: *Tángcháo Mínghuàlù* (c. 842). Fraser 2004: 202 "Wu also painted five dragons for the inner [palace] hall, with scaly armor that seemed to be moving in flight. On days when it was about to rain, a mist would rise from them."

[34] Simâ Qian: *Shîjì: xxviii Fengshànshu*.

[35]Xuè and Wáng 2000: 26, 40.

[36]*Dìngzhou Fûzhì* xviii: Zhèngdiân Jìsì: Hàn Xuan sacrificed at Shàng Qûyáng. *Sanguó Zhì*: Wúzhì: Sun Cè zhuàn. *Sanguó Yânyì*: xxix.

[37]Xuè and Wáng 2000: 95-96 "Dîfûjun-zhi Bei… Dà Wèi, Hépíng 3rd year." Wáng Lìmîn 2010: 2 'Dî Yuánmíng Bei' (Dîfûjun-zhi Bei).

[38]Wáng Lìmîn 2010: "Gù Tínglín xiansheng Bêiyuè Biàn" 72-73.

[39]Wáng Lìmîn 2006: 68. GJTS 448-b: "500 AD (Jîngmíng Yuánnián) Mt Hengsshrine disaster." Xuè and Wáng 2000: 40; 91-92. Niè 1985: 28.

[40](Qing) *Dìngzhou Fûzhì, Zhílì* province: xviii Zhèngdiân Jìsì: 13 Bêiyuèmiào:"During the Táng Zhenguan reign period (627-649) suddenly a flying stone (meteor) landed at the county's west side so they built a shrine accordingly at full moon to worship it."

[41]*GJTJ* 448-c: Sìshèng 2nd year.

[42]*GJTJ*448-c: at Hengyáng.

[43]Xuè and Wáng 2000: 101-103 *Dà Táng Bêiyuè Fûjun-zhi Bei*. Wáng 2010: DàTáng Dìngzhou Bêiyuè Hengshan Língmiào-zhi Bei.

[44] Lagerwey 2010: 36.

[45]*GJTJ*: 448c (Táng) Kaiyuán 22nd year.

[46]Xuè and Wáng 2000: 107. (Táng) Zhèng Zîchun stele: *DàTáng Bêiyuè Shénmiào-zhi bei*. Wáng Lìmîn 2010: 117.

[47]Hansen 2012: 98, 107, 157.

[48]Lî Quán 李荃(筌) was a prolific writer on Daoist and military subjects. Among other works he authored commentaries on Sun Zî's *Art of War* and the mystic *Yinfú Jingshu* 陰符經疏 and composed themonumental*Tàibái Yinjing* 太白陰經 which deals in detail with all military matters including siege engines, warships and divination by the stars. Needham 1959 iii 20. Astronomy: 426; 1971 iv 28. Bridges 159; 29. Shipping 424, Nautics 618, 685.

[49]Xuè and Wáng 2000: 50-51; 109-110 stele text in full; 2006: 78-80 on An Lùshan.

[50]Steinhardt 1997: 34; 410: endnotes 8. Liáng Sichéng (1932a, 16) and 9 Susan Naquin personal communication.

[51]New Táng History. Gesterkamp 2011: 120, 299-300, 320 proposes to identify the military donor figure as Sòng emperor Tàizong. He further suggests late Táng Daoist saint Lyû Dòngbin as a possible model for the "Central Peak deity".

[52] Xuè and Wáng 2000: 92 states that in 946 AD "Jìn Kaiyùn 3-nián: Qìdan gongzhàn Quyáng. Bêiyuèmiaò -bèi fén." Gesterkamp 2011: 294. Wang Lìmîn 2006: 22 gives the destruction date as 922 AD; 102 gives the dates as "Northern Sòng's first year/s" ("Bêi Sòng chunián").

[53]Gesterkamp 2011: 285.

[54]*GJTS*Shanchuan Diân xliv: Hengshan-bù Jîshì: 448-449, *Jiù Wû-Dài Shî: Jìn* and *Xin Wû-Dài Shî* (1976 Zhonghuá Shujú edition) annals mention no destruction or fire at the Northern Range Temple.

[55]*Jiù Wû-Dài Shî* lxxxiv:Jìnxi: 1108.

[56]*Jiù Wû-Dài Shî* lxxxiv:Jìnxi: 1123.

[57]*GJTJ Fangyú Huìbian: Shanchuan Diân xliv* Hengshan-bù (clxxxvi-cè: 40): 421, 968 AD "[Sòng] Tàizû Qiándé 6-nián ding jì Bêizhèn –yú Dìngzhou Bêiyuècí."

[58]*Da Sòng chóngxiu Bêiyuè Antian Wáng miào beiming*.Mèng 2009: 66,179.

[59]Xuè and Wáng 2000: 117. *GJTS Shanchuan Diân xliv* Hengshan-bù Jîshì: 449-a says merely "In 990 AD Liáo (i.e. the Khitans) wishing to invade prayed at the [Northern] Range Temple. [The oracle] denied them." (Sòng Tàizong Chúnhuà Yuánnián, Liáo yù rùlyuè, dào –yú Yuèmiào. –Bùkê.)

[60]Mèng 2009: 181.

[61] Mèng 2009: 222. Gù Yánwû: "Bêiyuè Biàn."

[62]Mèng 2009: 168.

[63]Lî and Zhou 1985: 77, 78.

[64]Gesterkamp 2011: 264-265.

[65]Gesterkamp 2011: 285, 294.

[66]Wáng Lìmîn 2006: 22 attributes Khitan burning of the temple to 990; 102 gives the date as the first year/s of the Northern Sòng dynasty (960-1126). Xuè and Wáng 2000: 92 give 946 AD.

[67]Gesterkamp 2011: 137; 303.

[68]Lî and Zhou 1985: 80. Xuè and Wáng 2000: 34.

[69]Wáng Lìmîn 2006: 103.

[70]Xuè and Wáng 2000: 124-125 'Dà Sòng Chóngxiu Bêiyuèmiào-zhi jì'. *GJTJShanchuan Diân xliv* Hengshan-bù Jîshì: 449-a "*Zhendìng Fûzhì*: An Xî ordered Wèi Gui to engrave a stele to celebrate Hán Zhongxiàn's meritorious achievements.

[71]Mèng 2009: 33-34. Shên Gua: *Mèngqi Bîtán* xxiv.

[72]Mèng 2009: 70.

[73]Xuè and Wáng 2000: 41 give the date as 724 without substantiation. Gesterkamp 2011: 125-127 cites the gazeteer dated 1680 on Liú Bóróng 劉伯榮 of nearby Púzhou on this demon guardian grasping a quiver of arrows in his left hand and a snake in his right. *Quyángxiàn Xinzhì*1680: iii-14b. *Dìngzhou Xiànzhì*1849: v-24. It seems there was a stele inscription with it which Dông Tào 董濤 in the 1904 gazeteer claims is listed in a Táng collection dated 751. *Chóngxiu Quyáng Xiànzhì*: xi 72b. Finally Gesterkamp cites a Yuán work preserved in Tenri Central Library, Nara, Japan. *Xuánfeng Qìnghuìtú* 玄風慶會圖 1346, prefaced 1274, has Quánzhen sect illustrations by Liú Bóróng copied by Xú Zongrú 徐宗儒. Lucille Chia 2011: "The Uses of Print in Early Quanzhen Daoist Texts" in *Knowledge and Text Production in an Age of Print: China, 900-1400*, Brill: 198-199, footnote 89.

[74]Niè 1985: 28. The two Yuán dynasty reign dates are 'Zhìyuán 5' for 1268 and 'Zhìyuán 7' for 1270. Yuán also had a second 'Zhìyuán 5' equivalent to 1339 but no second 'Zhìyuán 7' which suggests that the earlier dates apply here.

[75]Zhang Lìfang 2004.5: 13.

[76]Steinhardt 1998: 69.

[77]Steinhardt 1998: 69; 71 compared to Lî Jiè 1103: *Yíngzào Fâshì* xxxi; 72 The dôu capitals have sixfold puzuò corbel bracketing. Yônglè Gong's San-Qing Diàn terrace measures 15.6m wide x 12.15m deep, and hall 28.44m x 15.28m.

[78]Steinhardt 2002: 220, Figure 6.14; 234 compares Yônglè Gong's San-Qing Diàn to Quyáng Bêiyuèmiào's Déníng Diàn.

[79]Steinhardt 2002: 101-102 Hányuán Diàn, Figures 4.6 and 4.7; 115 Wû-Tái Fóguang Sì Figure 4.21; 235-236 Yônglè Gong, Figure 6.32.

[80]Liú Dunzhen (posthumous) 1982: 107.

[81]Steinhardt 1997: 49 and Figure 6 on the zâojîng sunken ceiling of the Dúlèsì Guanyin'gé of Jìxiàn, Hébêi dated to 984 in Northern Sòng.

[82]Gesterkamp 2011: 285.

[83] Xuè and Wáng 2000: 140-141 Míng imperial stele.

[84]Xuè and Wáng 2000:164 Xû Zàn: *Quyángxián Chóngxiu Bêiyuèmiào Beiwén* 1537. Zhào Wêi 2003 dates the murals to this time. Gesterkamp 2011: 128.

[85]*GJTJ*449-b *Hengyuè Zhì.* 449-c Hengshan Zálù Daoist book *Fúdì Jì* 'Blessed Land Record' says Hengshan has divine herbs in ninety varieties. If you ingest them you can save the world.

[86] Wáng Lìmîn 2010: 72-73 "Gù Tínglín xiansheng Bêiyuè Biàn."

[87]Gesterkamp 2011: 129.

[88] Gesterkamp: 2011: 299, 302-303.

[89]Gesterkamp 2011: 142 on the 'Three Officials'.

[90]Ladies in the centre of both east and west walls also burn incense in long-handled censers with lotus bowls. The long-handled censer (bîngxianglú or shôulú, Japanese egôro) is depictedfrom the Egyptian Middle Kingdom in the form of a bowl resting on a hand attached to an extension used for burning incense to the gods. It survives in the Greek Orthodox Church as the katzion. It has been reported in Buddhist sculpture from Gandhara of the second century and may have been used in Persian Zoroastrianism or Manichaeanism. In China it was popular in the Táng dynasty as seen in many Dunhuáng murals and scrolls. It was transmitted to Japan where it remains in use. In China it appears twice each in the 'Eighty-seven Immortal Procession' and its parallel 'Paying Court to the Prime' scrolls though to derive from a Wú Dàozî mural. In Yuán and early Míng murals its use is limited to divine emperors, such as the Yônglègong and Pílúsì South Pole Emperors and the latter's Brahma. It became sinified into dragon or rúyì scepter shapes.

See: Dunhuáng: ZGHH ii: 1: Plate1 Guanyin Púsà; 5: Plate 5 Fâhuá Jing; 9: Plate 9 Guanshìyin Púsà, Bìshamén Tianwáng; Plate 73 Báiyi Guanyin, black-hat official, vajra; 102: Plate 80 Yînlù Púsà (BM).

124, Plate 103 Xiángmó Chéngdào 'Buddha's Defeat of Mâra and Enlightenment' animal-headed humans, head-borne tributes.

ZGMS i Qín comb with two xiangpu wrestlers and referee, 1975 Fènghuáng Shan, Jianglíng Bówùguan, Húbêi. ii 16: Plate 8 Fúxi set-square Nyûwa compass, Uighur Museum, Xinjiang; 38: Plate 17 'Six Aryas'; 38: Plate 18 Turfan, (East Germany); 92: Plate 40 bodhisattvas, right of two with censer, BM. Wu Tung 1996: 45, Plate 3: *Guanyin as Saviour from Perils*, censer 975 AD (Maria Antoinette Evans Fund 27.570).

[91]100: plate 50 (British Museum: Dunhuáng) Tejaprabha Sun Buddha and five planets and (Táng) Liáng Lìngzàn: Five Planets and Twenty-eight Constellations (Bêijing, Palace Museum): West: Venus (Tàibái) female = metal, pípá and cock;.North: Mercury (Chén) female = water, writng materials, monkey; East: Jupiter (Suì) = wood, heroic power (háoxiá, shìlì), civil officials, flowers, boar; South: Mars (Yínghuò), fire, sword/ weapons wheel, horse/mule; Centre: Saturn (Zhèn/Sha) = earth, brahman, cart, ox.

[92]Yuán Yôugen 2002: 208-209. (Yuán) Tang Hòu: *Huàjiàn* 'Yínghuò xiàng' 湯垕: 畫鑒, 瑩惑像. *Sì-Kù Quánshu* 823-98. (Sòng) Su Xún: "Wú Dàozî huà Wû-Xing zàn" describes the five planets with standard post-Táng features. *Quán Sòng Wén* xxii 927: 166.

[93]Gesterkamp 2011: 135 identifies the five planets not as this entire group but only as the chief of seven figures to its extreme left. He thus expresses some puzzlement: "in the Baoning si paintings as an example, we see an old Buddhist pilgrim with a scepter - Saturn, also depicted in the Beiyuemiao murals but rather as a Daoist priest – and a warrior with wild hair – Mars, also in the Beiyue miao murals – but here the similarity ends. The figures of Mercury and Venus in their standard iconography are female figures, the first carrying a long thin sack and the latter a scroll and writing brush; but even though the Beiyue miao figures carry the same attributes they are rather depicted as male figures. Finally, the young man holding the tray should represent Jupiter, represented as a bearded official in the Baoning si paintings." 136 cites Little: *Taoism and the Arts of China* 132-137 on the Osaka scroll.

[94]*Kông Zî Jiayû* iii Guan Zhou: 1-2.

[95] Kuo 1984: 648-649.

[96] Kuo 1984: Figure 2.

[97] Acker, William 1954: Some T'ang and Pre-T'ang Texts on Chinese Painting, Leiden, E.J. Brill: 364.

[98] Kuo 1984 :.

[99] Frazer: 102-108.

[100] Lî Gonglín:*Vimalakirti's Teaching* (Wéimó Yânjiào) in Bêijing's Palace Museum; Zhang Wò: *Qu Yuán's Nine Songs*.

[101] Wang Renbo 1990: 80 gives the figures as 101 out of 206 painters were muralists. Wu Hung 1997: 57.

[102] Fong 1999 "Riverbank" 27-28. Dèng Chún: *Huàjì*. Wu Tung 1997: 173 Dông yóu: Guângchuan Huàbá (Jiong) on murals in Jade Hall and Ju Ran. 142 Compared WDZ paintings to sculpture. His "linework consists of minute curves like rolled copper wire."

[103]Hóng 2004: 171 *Tángcháo Mínghuàlù* records that Wáng Wéi's landscape rocks and pines resembled WDZ in style. (Sòng) Fàn Gongcheng: *Guòtínglù* relates that his ancestor Fàn Zhòngyân saw Wáng Wéi's *Jialíng jiangshantú*, which Wáng had copied and reduced from Wú Dàozî's Dàtóngdiàn's *Jianglíng*jiang landscape mural. *Cháng'anzhì* states that Jiayóu Guan's Jingsi Courtyard had Wáng Wéi, Zhèng Qián and Wú Dàozî murals. 178 Wáng Wéi's water-ink shuîmò landscape style derived from Wú Dàozî's landscape báimiáo 'plain sketching' style.

[104] Lî and Zhou 1985:18.*Guângchuan Huàbá* ii: Shu Sun Bái Shanshûi, Lùn Zhen Shuî. "Wângshí Quyáng miàobì yôu huà shuî, chuánshì wéi yì, gài shuîwén píngmàn, yîqî ruò liúdòng, hûnhûn.-bùxí."

[105]Xuè and Wáng 2000: 34. Oertling tr. 1997: 139 on engraving at Zhàozhou described by Xiè Zhâozhè in his *Wû Zázû*. Yuán Yôugen 2002: 151-168; 165ff cites Wáng Shìzhen (1526-1590) who mentions "Dìngzhou's two mural paintings of water whose marvels is unique in the world. You look at it as real water, rising and falling, circling and eddying. Their waves have a flooding myriad acre dynamic… The local gazeteer says they are by Wú Dàozî which is wrong… This monastery and wall are from the Tianfú reign (936-943 or 947 AD)." (*Sì-Kù Quánshu* 1279-cè 258-259).

[106]Chén Lín 2008. 10: preface. Shên Lì 2003.12: 2 gives the dimensions as 0.351 m x 2.50 m.

[107] Fong 1999: "Riverbank" 46: "Living in Sichuan and Dunhuang during the second World War, Zhang returned to Beijing in 1945…"

[108] Chén Lín 2008.10: end Xú Beihóng 1948.10: his own colophon to the scroll. Shên Lì 2003.12: 2.

[109] Shen C.Y. Fu 1991: 56-57 figs. 32 "Wu Zongyuan, detail, *Celestial Rulers of Daoism*. Handscroll; ink on silk; collection of C.C. Wang, New York", and fig. 34 "Chang Dai-chien, *Heavenly Females Scattering Flowers*, 1933. Hanging scroll; ink and colour on paper; collection unknown."

[110] Only Kyôto National Museum's *Vimâlakirti* AK397 (*Yuima Kyô*) shows the goddess' head turned back to her left. Bêijing Palace Museum's Vimâlakirti scroll and New York's Metropolitan Museum's similar scroll inscribed 'Wáng Zhènpéng, 1308', possibly forged by Zhang Dàqian, both show the goddess facing to her right. Bêijing's 1443 Fâhâi Sì mural shows a similar flower maiden face on.

[111]It bears a colophon by a 'Master Zhang' (Zhang Zî) dated 1172 (Qiándào 8th year) and Zhào Mèngfû of Yuán. Wû Zongyuán's painting is mentioned in Huizong's *Xuanhé Huàpû* and (Yuán) Tang Hòu's *Huàjiàn.*

[112] Huáng 2003: 239-245 on forged colophons on *Cháoyuán Xianzhàng*.

[113]Fong 1962 passim.

[114] Fong 1999: "Riverbank" 46-56 on Zhang Dàqian forgeries; 52: "In the early twentieth century many modern forgeries of early Chinese paintings were made by copying photographic facsimiles."

[115] Horsley 1997; 1999. Tan 2008.5.

[116]Shé Chéng 1982.3: 104.

[117]Shên Lì 2003.12.

[118] Martin 1913. Gyss 1991: 101. Gesterkamp 2008: 65.

[119]Lawton 1973: 152-155 no. 37 Míng dynasty *Clearing Out A Mountain Forest* of the Freer Gallery in Wú Dàozî style, possibly by Lî Zài. cf. 156-159 no. 38 *Taoist Divinity of Water*. Liáoníng Museum has an early *Soushan Tú*. Metropolitan Museum NY has a late Míng version by Zheng Zhong.

[120]Rèn Mènglóng 2008.10: e.g. 42-45 'Dàozî Mòbâo'-7.

[121] Sirén 1956-1958 i, 48, 114. Cahill 1988: 76-78, figure 52 "*Po-hsing, A Spirit of Heng Mountain*, after a design by Wu Tao-tzu, stone engraving on the terrace of Tung-yueh Miao at Chu-yang" and figure 53 "Wu Tsung-yuan (attrib.), *Procession of Heavenly Rulers*, handscroll (section), ink on silk, 57.8 cm high, C.C. Wang Collection, New York." Kuo Chi-Sheng 1984: 654-655.

[122]Yuán Yôugen 2002: 143-144.

[123] Táo Chéng 陶澄. Mèng 2009: 220 gives the name as (Míng: Huáinán) Táo Hui 陶徽: *Guan Hengyuemiào bìhuà Wú Dàozî Tian'gongtú.*Bêijing Library has been renamed the National Library.

[124]Gesterkamp 2011: 212.

[125]Gesterkamp 2011: 213.*Huìzong Shí'èr Jì*, Sì-Kù Quánshu vol. 816: 566. Bush, Susan and Hsiao-yen Shih 1985: *Early Chinese Texts on Painting*, 256, Cambridge, Harvard University Press. Tsang, Ka Bo 1992: "Further Observations on the Yuan Wall Painter Zhu Haogu and the Relationship of the Chunyang Wall Paintings to 'The Maitreya Paradise' at the ROM" *Artibus Asiae* 52, 94-118*,* 110-114 on Chinese techniques of preparing wall paintings.

[126]Frazer 2004: 102ff.

[127]Gesterkamp 2011: 218-220 cites Vasari (1511-1574) on *schizzo* (sketch of a part)*, disegno* (small-scale design)and *cartone* (full-scale). 216-217 quotes *Sòngcháo Mínghuà* 34-35 (Charles Lachman 1989: , Brill: *Evaluations of Sung Dynasty Painters of Renown*: *Liu Tao Ch'un's Sung-ch'ao ming-hua p'ing*, 41) on Gao Wénjjìn 高文進(c. 1000) copying mural "brushstrokes by means of a wax stecil (làzhî 蠟紙)."