

# Study of the Impressions of the Guanfo Statues in the Longmen Grottoes and Social and Cultural Changes

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## ABSTRACT

The Dharma seal expressed in the Buddha statues is according to certain rules. The image of the provider represented is not only the image of the Buddhists who make and worship Buddha statues, but also an image for them to establish their own existence as a subject of the emperor, a member of the state. The image of the provider represented is not only the image of the Buddhists who make and worship Buddha statues, but also an image for them to establish their own existence as a subject of the emperor, a member of the state and society. The role of Dharma seal originated from the Shakya sect in ancient India, and in the early Mahayana Buddhist portraits and statues, There are usually only five impressions. This paper expounds the main types of Buddhist statues (taking the statues in the Longmen Grottoes Museum as an example) and summarizes their main functions. This paper expounds the main types of Buddhist statues (taking the statues in the Longmen Grottoes Museum as an example) and summarizes their main functions. By taking part in the field investigation, the author finds out the similarities and differences between the same By taking part in the field investigation, the author finds out the similarities and differences between the same type of prints by using the method of comparative historical argumentation, summarizes the social and cultural changes in the history of art, and puts summarizes the social and cultural changes in the history of art, and puts forward a new viewpoint.

## KEYWORDS

Longmen Grottoes; Northern Dynasty; Sui and Tang Dynasties; Print.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

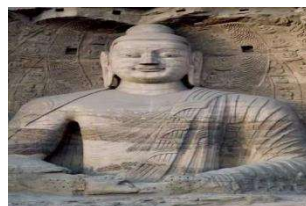
In art history, both Buddhist and Taoist seals have been passed down for a very long time, but after searching for research, the earliest research was a theoretical overview of Taoist seals. For example, in 2001, Mr. Hong Baijian, Mr. Li Yuanguo wrote "on the function and cultural value of the Taoist seal" is mentioned, but it should be noted that the seal here and the interpretation of Buddhism is not the same, Taoism has as a magic weapon seal and practice gestures are named Fa Yin. In Buddhism, there are no seals or other magic instruments used for the practice of dharma. In Buddhist art mostly refers to the Chinese Buddha statue of the pedestal above the statue of the palm is also often seen in the performance of the statue of the format sample of the seal (for unity, the following uniformly referred to as the seal phase), the statue of the various seals on behalf of the statue of the different identities as well as the different significance of 2020 Mr. Huang Xia Nian mentioned in his thesis, "North and South Dynasty Dharma seal sutra" : "Buddhism imported into China by India In the case of the simple Dharma Yin Sutra of the Northern and Southern Dynasties, there have been four different translations discussing the seal phase of the classics, and the one involved takes the seal phases of the two Northern and Southern Dynasties' classics as an example to study their different variations." The Northern Western Jin translation of the Buddha's Sutra on the Holy Dharma Seal by

Zhu Falu deals with the idea of the so-called "I am empty and the Dharma is not empty," which is an early definition of what is meant by "I am empty and the Dharma is not empty. Thus, the tone of research was mainly formulated from the direction of the meaning of form and style theory, and no systematic research was carried out in the field of sociology. In 1995, the Japanese scholar Matsubara Saburo briefly elaborated on the influence of the Buddha's face and attire on the society in his book *The History of Buddhist Sculpture of the Northern Dynasties*, but regrettably, the influence only stayed in the more superficial social historical analysis.[1-3] Unfortunately, such influence only remains at the superficial level of social historical analysis, and does not point out very clearly its role in various social strata. Objectively speaking, however, the role of religious art in the various strata of historical society at that time is really a valid point of view for discussing social historiography in the context of art history. But before we really start to discuss the sociological problems, we must fully introduce the history of the seal phase in Buddhist art, in 1990 Chen Chonghui in the "Dharma seal theory in a more specific account: in the Sakyamuni sect, see a total of five: the fearless seal, with the wishing of the seal, the seal of the descending of the devil, the seal of the meditative seal, the seal of the sayings,, "Sakyamuni five seals". However, when Buddhism was first introduced to indigenous China, there were many variations in the form of seals, including hundreds of seals in the Tantric sects, which were very diverse. This needs to take into account a practical problem, that is, the historical span of the sample needs to be large enough, so the author finally set the sample in the beginning of the Northern Dynasties has begun to carve, has continued to the Qing Dynasty Longmen Grottoes, although since the Song Dynasty, the sample of the grottoes is gradually reduced, but it is still a good sample of the study of the seal phase of the sample of the place, the author explored the grottoes in the caves from 1 to 280, summarized the inclusion of the five seals of the Sakyamuni in the field study, will be discussed in depth below. The following will be discussed in depth.

## 2. SIMPLE CATEGORIZATION AND SIGNIFICANCE OF PRINTS

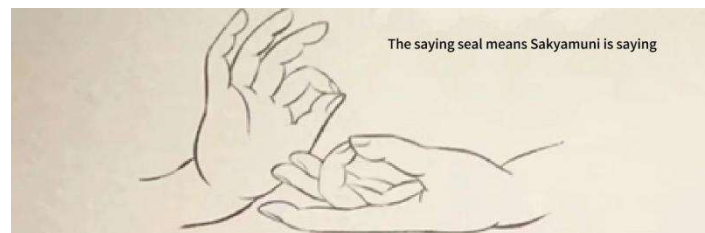
The word "yin" is also translated into Sanskrit as mudra, and is also known as "yin" or "yinqi". In Buddhism, the seal is a very important existence, is an indispensable part of the practice and the art of statue making, but also an important exit to explain the social significance of the statue itself. In the investigation, the author found that the grottoes can be divided into specific Buddhist statues Fa Yin as follows [4].

(1) Meditation Seal: Both hands, palms up, are placed on the knee, the right hand is placed on top of the left hand, and the two thumbs are connected. Indians believe that the right hand is pure and the left hand is impure, so the right hand is on top. The seals made by the Buddha during his teachings. Take the thumb and the middle finger, and the rest of the fingers are naturally spread out. This seal is based on the Dharma Wheel This seal is also known as the "Dharma Wheel Seal", which is used to destroy troubles and purify the body and mind. As we all know, whether it is ancient India or nowadays, the caste system has always been the root of the Indian political system, the so-called upper class people can decide the fate of the lower class people, whether it is India at that time or China's feudal dynasty is very appropriate, it seems to be a catalyst to break down the trouble, the body and mind purification of the seal in the society at that time, but most of them are the upper caste of the aristocrats can only be used, to a certain extent, the seal is also a tool to divide the class. To a certain extent, the seal was also a tool for class division. (Figure 1).



**Figure 1.** Statue of Sakyamuni Buddha, Cave 20, Yungang Grottoes, 17 meters high.

(2) Saying Seal: The seal made by the Buddha when he was saying the Dharma, with the thumb and the middle finger <or index finger and ring finger> twisted together and the rest of the fingers naturally stretched out. [2,3,5] According to legend, Sakyamuni used this handprint when he first turned the wheel of the Dharma in Deerfield Park, so the Saying Seal is also known as the "Wheel of the Dharma Seal", which means that the Buddha preached the Dharma and transformed all beings. Unfortunately, this type of seal can only be obtained through the records of the Luoyang Museum. It is found that this is also the most common form of seal in the royal temples of the feudal dynasties in China, and that educating the people was one of the most important purposes that the feudal rulers needed to achieve at that time, which is why in the study of the history of religions there is always the sound of ancient religions being the tools of the rulers (Figure 2).



**Figure 2.** Schematic diagram of the Saying Seal (due to the age of the Longmen Grottoes there is no actual diagram)

(3) Fearlessness Seal: The right little arm is raised, palm outward, fingers naturally upward. It is often performed in conjunction with the Seal of Wishes. It means "one who reassures and calms". It symbolizes giving to all beings without fear. This hand seal expresses the Buddha's great compassionate wish for the relief of all sentient beings. It is said to bring peace of mind to all sentient beings without fear, so it is called "Giving without Fear". The Dharani Sutra of the Guardian of the Realm of the State says, "This seal gives all sentient beings peace and fearlessness." It indicates that the Buddha brings inner peace to the believers through his wisdom. According to Chang'an County Records 756 years contained: Xuanzong Anshi Rebellion period, Chang'an around the temple believers multiplied linearly, kneeling to worship for the casting of the seal of fearlessness of Shakyamuni, the temple monks and nuns through the statement to make the believers stabilize the mentality, only to let Chang'an to retain a portion of the inhabitants. From the above, it can be seen that the special seal can make the masses reach a special psychological expectation, thus reducing the possibility of riots.[3,6] (Figure 3).



**Figure 3.** Cross-legged Buddha in the Northern Wei Dynasty, Longmen Grottoes

(4) Seal with Wishes: (also known as Seal of Giving Wishes and Seal of Fulfilling Wishes) The left hand is naturally downward, palm outward, and the ends of the fingers hanging down. It indicates that the Buddha and Bodhisattva can grant all sentient beings the fulfillment of their wishes, so that all their prayers can be fulfilled. This seal is often used in conjunction with the Seal of Fearlessness because of its compassionate nature. The Seek and Hear Holding Dharma says, "The right hand repeats the Seal of With All Wishes, with the five fingers hanging down and the present palm facing outward, which is the Seal of With Wishes." The Sutra of Regaining Truth says, "The third seal is the seal of granting all wishes, stretching the five fingers of the right hand and tilting the palm upward, thinking that from between the five fingers it will rain the Ruyi Jewel, and that all the pleasures of all sentient beings will be perfected, and that this seal is called the seal of being able to perfect the

pleasures loved by all sentient beings." At the same time, it is written in Dainichi Sutra 16: "With the wishing hand, stretching the fingers and tilting the palm upward, nectar water flows downward." [5] This is the origin of the Seal with Wishes. This type of seal was the most frequently encountered throughout the expedition, but it is worth noting that the Wishing Seal is not a product of Mahayana Buddhism, but rather a missionary from another country at the time, which, on another level, represents the fact that at a certain period of time in history, there were frequent religious and cultural exchanges between China and other countries that were ultimately integrated into one's own culture. (Figure 4).



**Figure 4.** Cross-legged Bodhisattva, Northern Qi Dynasty, Luoyang Museum Collection

(5) Demon Subduing Seal: The right hand is placed over the right knee, palm inward, naturally drooping, fingertips touching the ground, also known as "Touching the Ground Seal". According to legend, when Shakyamuni was practicing to become a Taoist, some evil demons came to disturb him, and the Buddha made this seal to make them fearful of being subdued. In the reform of Emperor Xiaowen of the Northern Wei Dynasty, a series of initiatives such as using Chinese characters, believing in the Han religion, wearing Han clothes, and so on, stabilized the political situation at that time, and it is not difficult to conclude that the Buddhist seal at that time was a kind of political tool for stabilizing the people's hearts, and the people's hearts obtained by the recognition of beliefs were far more reliable than the use of force to suppress them. (Figure 5).



**Figure 5.** Cross-legged Bodhisattvas, Northern Wei dynasty, outside the caves.

### **3. HISTORICAL FLUX OF PRINTING RESEARCH--TAKING LONGMEN GROTTOS AS AN EXAMPLE**

In the course of my fieldwork, I found that most of the statues of Buddha in the Northern Wei Dynasty have two prints, while those in the Sui and Tang dynasties have one combined print. Especially after the Tang Dynasty, this is undoubtedly related to the eastward journey of Jianzhen, the combination of Japan's native religion with Chinese and Indian Buddhism, which resulted in the so-called combination of seals and gradually evolved into the so-called Three Dharma Seals, as well as the Four Dharma Seals. The Three Dharma Seals are derived from the Dhammapada: "The one who has attained the Dharma Seal of the Buddha has attained unobstructed access to the Buddha's Dharma; if one has attained the Seal of the King, there is no difficulty in attaining the Dharma Seal. Q: What are the Dharma seals of the Buddha? Answer: There are three Dharma seals of the Buddha: first, all existing dharmas, the thought of birth and death are impermanent; second, all dharmas have no self; and third, silence and nirvana. The names of the three Dharma seals are 'the impermanence of all actions', 'the non-self of all dharmas', and 'the silence of Nirvana'. [6] In some cases, the phrase 'all sufferings are suffering' is added to the impermanence of all actions to make the Four Seals. It is

therefore crucial to understand in detail the role of the main types of Dharma seals and their elaboration in the Buddhist scriptures of the time, which obviously plays a great role in summarizing their socio-cultural changes. In the author's opinion, the style and significance of the Dharma seals are inextricably linked to the history of the time, history creates society, and social and cultural changes are summarized mostly out of history. [7] Since a single type of Fayin has already expressed to us a more obvious "social voice", is there a larger study of the individual to better reveal the value of the statue in sociology and to interpret the social significance of Fayin itself?

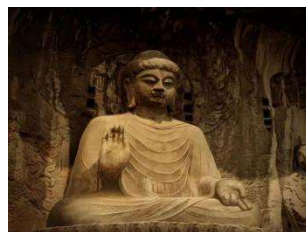
#### **4. THE CHANGE OF THE SHAPE OF THE SEAL RESEARCH--TAKING THE LONGMEN GROTTOS AS AN EXAMPLE**

The author has adopted an archaeological approach to research, taking the form of fieldwork, research. The site of this field trip is located in Luoyang City, Henan Province, Longmen Grottoes, is one of China's famous grottoes, built in the Northern Wei Dynasty Huangshi three years, the grottoes were excavated in about 1,400 years, spanning the Northern Wei Dynasty, the Eastern Wei Dynasty, the Western Wei Dynasty, the Northern Qi Dynasty, Sui and Tang Dynasty and other more than ten dynasties, the size of the grottoes 2,345 niches, more than 110,000 stone statues, more than two hundred statues of the Buddha obtained in the investigation of the samples, it seems that there is a kind of Among the 200-odd samples of Buddha statues obtained during the expedition, there seems to be a program, even if they were carved in different dynasties, the basic form of the seal seems to have been determined, and each seal has its own different historical origin and social significance. [8] However, the conclusion reached after the collation is indeed a different one. At least in the case of the Longmen Grottoes, from the Northern Wei to the Sui and Tang dynasties, there are mostly single handprints, as mentioned above. There are no particularly complex and unrecognizable forms of seals. At the same time, only in the Northern Dynasties period, there was a similar "Binyang North Cave", which does not belong to the above summary of the special form of the seal. After the Tang Dynasty, the form has been basically determined. At the same time, from the figure we can see that the Northern Wei, Sui and Tang dynasties built in these two periods of the Buddha's face is a very big gap between the characters of the five features, the length of the fingers are relatively obvious gap, but the basic seal program has not changed much (in addition to the special form of the seal), this time with the Longmen Grottoes sampling of 200 different periods of the Buddha's statue, it can be concluded that after the Tang Dynasty, there is no basic form of the special form of the seal! At the same time, after the Tang Dynasty statues, a total of 58 statues, including the use of the wish to print and fearlessness seal this combination of sealing of the statue will occupy 43, which can be basically deduced that after the Tang Dynasty seal form has been basically stabilized. This can also be communicated with the social situation at that time, which shows that basically in the Northern Wei Dynasty when the carving began, the basic seal system was already formed until after the Tang Dynasty, the stabilization of social relations, to a certain extent, affects the creation of religious formulas. It is emphasized here again that the sociological impact of the formation of the seal cannot be ignored.

#### **5. STUDY OF THE INDEPENDENT SEAL OF THE GREAT BUDDHA OF RUSHENA**

The Rushena Buddha is the main cave of the Longmen Grottoes, located at Fengxian Temple on the southern hillside of Longmen West Mountain in Luoyang, Henan Province, and is shaped in the image of Wu Zetian, standing 17.14 meters tall. Its meaning in Sanskrit is sunshine pervasive, derived from the belief in the sun god of the ancient sun god cult . It is one of the most closely designed and largest statues in its entirety. According to its history, this Buddha statue is Wu Zetian's "retribution statue", excavated in the third year of Tang Emperor Xianheng, which was built by Tang Emperor Li Zhi to pray for the blessing of Tang Emperor Li Shimin, who was the Empress at the time, donated 20,000

Guan rouge money for this Buddha, so that it would be sculpted in accordance with the face of the Buddha. After the emergence of this argument, some people support, there are also people against. Supporters of the arguments held by the "Longmen Grottoes Art Exploration" an article for reference. However, due to the "Lushena statue" shows that the Buddha statue was built in different years. Here we still use "Longmen Grottoes Art Exploration" as a sentence 2 to start. But unfortunately, the hands of the Rushena Buddha, because of the successive years of war. Lost. Then we can only restore the imagination based on the prototype of the carving. Rushena Buddha's right hand has a slightly upward dynamic, higher than the left hand, the form of the left hand is gently down, close to the knee, this is a more critical information, from this point can be known that the right hand is higher than the knee, is not close to the knee, the possibility of the fearless seal <Figure 6>, this kind of handprints in the same period of time in other caves is very common. Analyzed here, we might as well examine what is the social significance of such a seal? As mentioned above: the Fearless Seal means: one who meditates and calms the mind. It shows the Buddha's compassionate mindset of relieving all living beings. Then from the broader sense of the speculation: the face and demeanor of Wu Zetian's Buddha for the people to worship, is it from the ideology of the people to the imperial power of faith as well as submission? Further in-depth study, "the old book of Tang" records: "Zetian empress Wu, taboo juju ... .. In May, the Empress Dowager was honored with the title of Holy Mother Goddess. Changed the "treasure map" said "heavenly authorization of the holy map", sealed Luoshui God for the saints, plus the position of special advancement, and set up temples." Here, the god of the Luo water, the god of water, that is, the gods in charge of the Luo water system. Then according to historical records at that time, the location of the Buddha carving had been debated, and then to: "the position of the god of the Luo Ziwei depending on" here the god of the Luo, and the above belongs to a person. [9] In addition, Wu Zetian's name for Jiu, then: in the "Dictionary" in the meaning of Nai, that is; days: in the "Dictionary" in the sky emperor, the sky spirit of the original meaning. Then her name Jyu, is more self-evident, the white moon in the sky, the light shines in the universe. And the translation of Rushena means exactly the light shining all over. It can be seen that the attitude of the rulers towards religion at that time was mostly a tool of nature, a kind of indoctrination of existence. And the Buddha statue of the seal phase, is a kind of psychological implication from the props, the significance of the seal symbol as well as the divine power, at that time that information is closed to the feudal kingship era, it is the feudal rulers of the world to educate a powerful way.



**Figure 6.** Imagination of the restoration of the Rushena Buddha, Tang Dynasty, Longmen Grottoes.

## 6. CONCLUSION

The above is the author's explanation of the function and significance of the seal phase of Buddhist statues in Longmen Grottoes as an example, and at the same time, he has made a new perspective on the social value of Buddhist statues in art history. In addition, the author believes that the seal phase, as one of the most powerful parts of the Buddha statue itself, should also have corresponding social significance, which should be elaborated in art history, and this should be one of the new entry points for future research. In any case, the meaning and function of the Buddha statue images are conveyed to the viewers through the vision, so in the future, we should study the works themselves on the basis of a detailed observation, and fully understand their social significance, as well as the meaning of the Buddha statues. Therefore, in the future, we should conduct research based on a detailed observation

of the works themselves, and at the same time fully understand their social significance, in order to do our best to make a detailed study of the history of art, so I will not repeat the details here.

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