



Fig. 4 Leshan Maitreya.

of the *Đông Dương* Buddha is very unusual and has only been found on some of the largest Buddhist sculptures in Chinese history in the Sichuan province, southern China. These include one in Shi Fo Temple in Chengdu, dated to 771 CE (Fig. 2); one located in Ban Yue Mountain, Zi Yang city, dated to 793 CE (Fig. 3); and the Leshan giant Maitreya, the largest stone Buddha in China. Work on the last figure, carved from a river bank cliff and 71 m high, was started in 713 CE and completed in 803 CE (Fig. 4).

Other Buddhist sculptures found at *Đông Dương* exhibit features associated with the art of Tang China, including crouching Bodhisattvas, devoted monks standing or kneeling, and fearsome *Dharmāpālas*. Two Cham Bodhisattvas are carved in the royal ease posture (*rājatilāsana*) and adorned with large spear-shaped haloes (Fig. 5. Cat.19 BTC 186-3.6).²¹ As Baptiste noted, their postures, the richness of the halo and the fact of being a pair, could relate to some Bodhisattva iconography in Mogao grottoes at Dunhuang. Baptiste further describes their haloes as *flamboyer de mille feuillages baroques* (ablaze with thousand-fold baroque foliage).²²

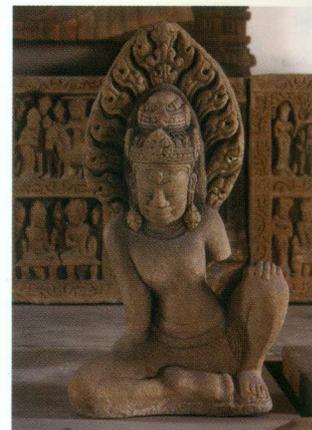
This 'flame pattern' has become a standard decoration on haloes in Chinese Buddhist iconography from the Northern Wei period

(386-534 CE) and still popular later during the Tang dynasty (Fig. 6).²³ This Sinicized 'flame pattern halo' spread to Tibet and the Nanzhao kingdom of Yunnan during the Tang dynasty. It adorned the Ajaya Avalokiteśvara (*Acuoye Guanyin*) depicted in the *Illustrated History of Nanzhao*, dated to 947 CE.²⁴

Two types of monk sculptures provide further testimony of the Chinese influence. A (headless) standing monk holding a lotus with both hands is dressed in a pleated two layered robe and Chinese-style sandals.²⁵ These disclose his identity as Mahākāśyapa, a *bhikṣu* who flanks



Fig. 6 Flame pattern halo, Tang dynasty, Longmen caves. (Photo: Grace Chiao-Hui Tu)

Fig. 5 Sitting *Đông Dương* Bodhisattva (Cat.19 BTC 186-3.6). (River Books)