



Fig. 7 Monk in sandals (cat. 20).
(River Books)

the Buddha with Ānanda in Chinese Buddhist art (Fig. 7 Cat. 20 BTC 174-44.258). Two monks carrying an offering and squatting on their heels (Figs. 8 and 9. Cat. 21, 22: BTC 172 44.15 a; BTC 173-44.15b) also belong to the Chinese tradition as found in Buddhist shrine assemblages during the Sui and Tang dynasties.²⁶

Dvārapāla or *Dharmapāla*?

Another striking similarity is the unusual composition demonstrated by those fearsome giant statues – their wide-opened legs outstretched and bent, trampling in victory on an animal or a figure (Cat. 25, 26: BTC 174-9. 11; BTC 175-912). The composition of these demigods, known either as *dvārapālas* (gate keepers) or *Dharmapālas* (guardians of the law or *Dharma*), is unique in the Indianized art of Southeast Asia.²⁷ However, it occurred in Chinese Buddhist art as early as the examples seen in cave 427, Mogao grottoes, dated to the Sui dynasty (581-618 CE). From the early Tang dynasty onwards, it has appeared regularly in the Chinese Buddhist altar assemblage – the most well-known example is still *in situ* at the Fengxian Temple, Longmen Caves (Fig. 10), the carving of which started in 672 CE under the imperial patronage of the Tang court.

The deity closer to the main Buddha is known as *Tian Wang* ('Heavenly King' or *lokapāla* in Sanskrit) in Chinese iconography, a sub-category of *Dharmapāla*. The figure standing next to him and at the edge of the cave is *Li Shi* ('powerful warrior'), equivalent to a *dvārapāla*. In the Chinese iconographic tradition, only the *Dharmapāla* tramples on defeated animals

or figures, representing evil spirits, in order to manifest his role as the protector of *Dharma*. The name for these Cham fearsome giants is still debated.²⁸ (Cat. 25, 26)

Although these stunning Cham sculptures have a Buddhist inheritance from Chinese *Dharmapāla* and *dvārapāla*, the degree of absorption and adaptation is such that they do not look in the least Chinese and could hardly be more Cham in all stylistic features. Dupont thought the assemblage of the altar at Đông Dươ̄ng was possibly owed something to Chinese models.²⁹ Apart from the giant *Dharmapālas*, who originally guarded the south *gopura*, other Buddhist sculptures were assembled around the large Buddha seated in Maitreya's position with pendant legs. The Bodhisattvas with a flame pattern halo in some way flanked the Buddha, with the standing monk and kneeling monks with offerings in attendance. Chinese examples of such compositions are found in Mogao cave 205 c. 7th century (Fig. 11) and cave 384 c. 8th century (Fig. 12), or presented as a portable miniature altar group, i.e. one gilt bronze altar in the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco (c. 650-750 CE).³⁰

Tribute and trade

Cham devotion to Buddhism in the 9th to early 10th centuries was recorded in the 9th century Chinese official history *Tangshi* ('History of Tang'): 'They rejoice in the Way of the Buddha, and smelt gold and silver for images, the largest sometimes ten spans around.'³¹ Some of the sources of inspiration for building their own huge Mahāyāna complex appear to have been the

Figs. 8 and 9 Kneeling monks with offerings (cat. 21, 22).
(River Books)

