

lightly covered by another robe called *saṅghāṭi*. All robes were incised with broad, uniform folds. This garment arrangement is also seen in sculptures of an *arhat* and monks unearthed at Đồng Dương, which Jean Boisselier classified under the category of 'Buddhist deities wearing monastic robes'. The treatment of the robe with the outer garment wrapping across the right shoulder, often (though not here) leaving the left shoulder and arm bare, indicates Sinitic influence rather than an Indic tradition. While Sri Lanka and southeastern Indian artists portrayed Buddhist deities wearing monastic robes having narrow and thin pleats, Chinese and Cham sculptors developed an artistic preference for the portrayal of robes with large folds.

The Buddha is seated with pendant legs (*bhadrāsana*), with hands lying flat on his knees. This hand gesture is very rare in Buddhist traditions in India and Southeast Asia. In China, it is found in large icons cut into cliffs or caves or in the grottoes of Dunhuang, Longmen and Yunguang.⁴ If the Đồng Dương Buddha was directly related to the Māra pedestal it was found beside, it might recall the moment just before the enlightenment of Śākyamuni, when he remained undisturbed in his deep final meditation despite constant disturbance of the demon Māra. However, measurements of the Māra pedestal and the Buddha's base do not match precisely,⁵ which thus casts doubt on the possibility that the statue represents Śākyamuni.

Concerning the Chinese Buddhist elements

found in Đồng Dương art, it should be noted that the unusual hand gesture, the sitting posture and the robe show affinities with statues of Maitreya, particularly under the Tang dynasty (618-907 CE). Most striking examples include the great Buddha at Banyueshan (Half Moon Mountain) in Ziyang city and the colossal Leshan Maitreya in Sichuan province. (Fig. 1) Both were carved out of the cliff facing a river. The first was sculpted in 793 CE, yet was not finished till 1131 CE, and the construction of the second lasted from 713 to 803 CE.⁶

The seated Buddha of Đồng Dương is dated to the 9th century CE, the period that witnessed the wide popularity of Maitreya images in Buddhist cave temples commissioned by the Tang royal families. From the iconographic similarities in hand gesture and sitting posture of these sculptures, we may speculate that the Đồng Dương Buddha probably followed some source images of Maitreya under the early Tang dynasty. Cham elites, envoys, merchants and missionaries could have visited China when strong trade links regularly opened travel opportunities. They may well have known the celebrated colossal Tang Buddhas at the time the giant Buddha was consecrated at the Đồng Dương Monastery. Travelling Chinese monks may also have been consulted. These assumptions are indirectly supported by historical records of diplomatic and trading activities between Champa and the Tang dynasty from 686 to 749 C.E.⁷

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Fig. 1 Leshan Maitreya Buddha (803 CE, Tang Dynasty).

françaises au Vietnam : les monuments du Champa : photographies et itinéraires, 1902-1904 (Paris: Indes savants-Etablissement public du Musée des arts asiatiques-Guimet, 2005), 127-9; Phạm Thuý Hợp, *The Collection of Champa Sculpture at the National Museum of Vietnamese History* (Hà Nội: 2003), 43.

- 3 Jean Boisselier, *La Statuaire de Champa: recherches sur les cultes et l'iconographie* (Paris: École française d'Extrême-Orient, 1963), 107-10.
- 4 Examples include the seated Buddha at Cave 272 of Mogao grottoes, Udayana Buddha Niche of Longmen Grotto 305, Seated Buddha of Yungang Grotto 6. See Xingyun, *Encyclopedia of Buddhist arts* (Los Angeles: Buddha's Light Publications USA, 2016), 671 (vol.6), 1086 (vol.8), 1670 (vol.9).
- 5 The Māra pedestal base is 89 cm wide while the bottom of the Buddha figure is 105 cm wide, which explains why the Māra pedestal is currently not assembled at the Buddha's feet in the museum assembly.
- 6 Measured at 71m high, the Leshan Maitreya is known as the largest Buddha in the world. It was commissioned by Haitang, a Chinese Buddhist of the Tang dynasty who wished to make a sculpture of Maitreya Buddha to control the river currents. See Hargett, James, *Stairway to Heaven: A Journey to the Summit of Mount Emei* (New York: State University of New York Press, 2006), 85-88; *Encyclopedia of Buddhist arts*, 110, 645.
- 7 See William Southworth, "The Origins of Champa in Central Vietnam - a Preliminary Review," (Unpublished PhD thesis, SOAS, University of London, 2001), 314-318; Kenneth R. Hall, *Maritime Trade and State Development in Early Southeast Asia* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1985), 178-181; Geoff Wade, 'Beyond the Southern Borders: Southeast Asia in Chinese Texts to the 9th centuries', in *Lost Kingdoms: Hindu-Buddhist Sculptures of Early Southeast Asia*, ed. John Guy (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2014), 26.