

Unit 16
Reading B

Cave Temples 《石窟寺》

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1 The earliest remains of Buddhist architecture existing in China today are the cave temples. Unquestionably, the conception was imported from India, having its prototypes in Karli, Ajanta and elsewhere in India. Although rock-cut tombs were already hewn during the Han Dynasty, possibly shortly after the beginning of the Christian era, and some of them were given architectural treatment, nevertheless they were used exclusively for the dead. Although cave dwellings, like those just mentioned above, undoubtedly were in use even before the hewing of the rock-cut tombs, yet they made no pretension for monuments. It was not until the arrival of the Indian idea that the cave ascended to architectural prominence.

现今中国现存的最早的佛教建筑遗迹是石窟寺。毫无疑问，这个概念是从印度传入的，其原型在印度的卡尔利、阿旃陀以及其他地方。尽管在汉朝时期，可能在公元纪年开始后不久，就已经开凿了石墓，其中一些还进行了建筑处理，但它们完全是为死者而用的。虽然石窟居所，就像上面刚刚提到的那些，无疑在开凿石墓之前就已经在使用了，但它们并没有成为纪念性建筑的意图。直到印度的理念传入，石窟才在建筑上占据重要地位。

2 In the middle of the fourth century, Buddhist believers started hewing caves as places for worship, and the practice was continued till the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644). The high tide was reached during the Northern Wei, Northern Qi, Sui and Tang Dynasties, from the middle of the fifth to the latter part of the ninth centuries, assuming the scale of a nationwide “movement” of great popularity. It was only during the earlier years, approximately up till the middle of the seventh century, that the caves were treated architecturally. Gradually, the idea of opening up a cave was replaced by that of carving niches on the rock cliffs and became mere objects of sculpture. Architecturally speaking, the most important caves are those at Dunhuang, Gansu Province, Yungang, Shanxi Province, the Maiji Mountains, Tianshui, Gansu Province, Tianlong Shan, Taiyuan, Shanxi Province and Xiangtang Shan, Cixian, Hebei Province.

在四世纪中叶，佛教信徒开始开凿洞窟作为礼拜之地，这一做法一直持续到明朝（1368 - 1644）。高潮出现在北魏、北齐、隋和唐时期，即从五世纪中叶到九世纪后半叶，形成了全国性的、广受欢迎的“运动”规模。只是在早期，大约直到七世纪中叶，洞窟才在建筑上得到处理。渐渐地，开凿洞窟的想法被在悬崖峭壁上雕刻佛龛的想法所取代，变成了纯粹的雕塑对象。从建筑角度来说，最重要的洞窟有甘肃敦煌的洞窟、山西云冈的洞窟、甘肃天水麦积山的洞窟、山西太原天龙山的洞窟以及河北磁县响堂山的洞窟。

3 In most of these caves, with the exception of the last mentioned, the architectural treatment shows surprisingly little influence from India and the architecture is essentially Chinese. The only noticeable indications of foreign influence are the concept of the caves itself and the Greco-Buddhist motifs in the ornaments, such as the acanthus leaf, the egg-and-dart, the swastika, the garland, the bead, etc. These motifs have enriched, and have since taken their permanent positions in the vocabulary of Chinese ornamental motifs.

在这些洞窟中的大多数（最后提到的那个洞窟除外），其建筑处理方式显示出受印度的影响

小得惊人，而且其建筑本质上是中国的。唯一明显的外国影响迹象是洞窟本身的概念以及装饰中的希腊—佛教图案，如茛苕叶饰、卵锚饰、卍字饰、花环、串珠等。这些图案丰富了中国装饰图案的词汇，并自此占据了永久的位置。

4 The architecture of these caves may be studied from two aspects: firstly, the caves themselves, including the architectural treatment of the exterior and interior; and secondly, contemporary timber and masonry architecture depicted in the reliefs decorating the walls of the caves. Among the latter are depicted numerous halls and pagodas, replicas of the structures that once rose in great numbers all over the plains and hills of North and Central China.

这些洞窟的建筑可以从两个方面进行研究：首先，洞窟本身，包括其外部和内部的建筑处理；其次，洞窟壁面上的浮雕所描绘的同时代的木构和砖石建筑。在后者中描绘了众多的殿堂和佛塔，它们是曾经大量出现在中国北方和中部平原与山丘上的建筑的复制品。

5 These caves have preserved in stone faithful copies of the wooden architecture of their time. Among the salient characteristics we notice that the columns in most cases are octagonal, with capitals in the shape of a dou (the block in the dougong). Above the capital is placed the architrave, which, in turn, is to receive the principal dou of the set of dougong. This arrangement was in later ages modified by mortising the architecture directly onto the upper end of the column, thus making the dou on the column to function at the same time as the principal dou of the set of dougong.

这些洞窟在石头上保存了当时木构建筑的忠实复制品。在显著的特征中，我们注意到在大多数情况下柱子是八角形的，柱头呈斗（斗拱中的斗）的形状。在柱头上方放置阑额，阑额反过来又要承接斗拱组中的主要斗。这种布置在后来的时代被改变了，通过将建筑构件直接榫接到柱子的上端，从而使柱子上的斗同时起到斗拱组中主要斗的作用。

6 In the architectural treatment of these caves, the element most informative to posterity is the presentation of the timber construction in stone carving. Here we notice that the dougong is ever the dominant decorative feature. . .

在这些洞窟的建筑处理中，对后世最具启示意义的元素是用石雕呈现木构建筑。在这里我们注意到斗拱始终是主要的装饰特征.....