Beginning from late sixth century, momentous changes took place in the history of Chinese Buddhism. With imperial patronage, Buddhism began to spread in all walks of life, in the social, political, economic, cultural and intellectual realms. Magnificent temples rivalling Imperial palaces were built all over the country. Scores of monks of whom some became famous like Xuanzang went westwards to India and brought back valuable manuscripts of Buddhist classics and literature which were in due course systematically translated.

Buddhism itself went through a significant evolution. Different schools of Buddhism gave place to different Buddhist sects like Tiantai, Huayan, Chan, Sanjie, Pure Land etc. Sects like Huayan went further and tried to harmonize the three different doctrines then prevalent—Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism. The Chan school which advocated attainment of "instant enlightenment" made a radical departure in declaring that Buddhahood must be made within one’s nature and this found immense appeal to the common people. Thus the Indian Buddhism which was "foreign" in the initial stages, was thoroughly nationalised.

There were dramatic changes in Buddhist art too. Images which were Indian prototypes gave place to purely Chinese types. A new element—Tantric Buddhism made its impact in the arts. Representations of deities
particularly of Guanyin were no longer bound by the strict Buddhist canonical texts. New forms like Water and Moon Guanyin (Shuiyue Guanyin), White Robed Guanyin (BaYi Guanyin), Guanyin with a child like the Madonna (Songzu Guanyin), became popular objects of worship. A new Guanyin cult began to emerge which transcended the social, cultural and economical levels. This cult survived despite the anti-Buddhist wave of which the last, in 845 AD was the most extensive and severe. Local folk-lore, legends, stories of visions of the compassionate Guanyin saving people from disasters, granting them their wishes etc got inter-woven in the Guanyin cult, thus making it ever more popular. The visual impact of such images was tremendous and people's understanding of the concepts, stories and beliefs in such images grew. Thus the symbol of Indian Avalokitesvara which was transformed into the Chinese Guanyin grew out of all proportions, reaching out to every aspect of the life of the Chinese people.

The Tang caves of Binglinsi have some of the best Bodhisattvas displaying both male and female traits. The triad in niche no.34 shows a seated Buddha flanked by two Bodhisattvas which is a good example to point out the feminization of Bodhisattvas (Pl.50). This set is well preserved. The right hand of the Buddha holds the shawl and the left is placed on the left knee. The Bodhisattvas on either side of the Buddha have slender figures showing a tribhanga stance. The hair is parted in the middle and tied quite high like a jatamukuta. Just above the forehead where the hair is parted, the
hair is coiled as if to keep it in place. The bodhisattvas wear necklaces, arm bands and bracelets. The upper torso is bare, and the lower portion is wrapped in a dhoti which is tied at the waist. The Bodhisattva to the left of the Buddha has a fly whisk in the right hand and a vase in the left. The Bodhisattva to the right of the Buddha holds a lotus bud in the left and the end of the shawl by the right hand. The ūrna mark is visible on the foreheads of the Bodhisattvas. The halos of all the three are similar to Wei halos although they are not so pointed as the Wei ones.

The Bodhisattva in Cave No.4 is well proportioned with broad shoulders, bare chest (Pl.51). The hair is well arranged with the front portion being braided and the back tied in a top knot. It is a full face with thin arched eyebrows and big eyes. The nose is long and sharp and the mouth is small. There is a slight curve in the stance with the right knee slightly bent. The left hand is held near the slender waist and the right holds the shawl. The statue has the mark of Tang Dynasty's sculpture.

The Bodhisattva in niche No. 38 (Pl.52) resembles the attending Bodhisattvas of the triad in Niche No. 34. The right hand holds a lotus bud and the left hangs down. The body curves gently. The ūrna is absent and a halo is behind the head. This statue does not have the beauty of the attending Bodhisattvas in niche no.34.

In Longmen the small niche on the north side of the corridor in Wanfodong, Tang Dynasty (Yonglongyuan year) has images of Guanyin (Pl. 53) which are small as
compared to other statues seen in Longmen. This cave was hewn by a host of people who had faith in Guanyin for there are small images of Guanyin seen in the niche. This image (Pl. 54) is on the south wall outside the entrance of Wanfodong. The image of Guanyin was donated by a Bhikshuni Zhen Zhi of Yifengsi, Xu Zhou. It was completed in the second year of Yanglong Era (681 AD).

The face is damaged with only the nose and mouth visible. The figure is slim and erect and has a well-developed chest and slender waist. The raised right hand holds a fly whisk and the left shows a nectar vase. Pearl strings which crisscross in front of the waist adorn the body. Workmanship of the statue is rated as excellent.

Seen in the small niche on the west wall of Yuanhongji dong are two beautiful images of Guanyin which are very feminine (Pl. 55). The lower set of images are standing in a tribhanga pose with one hand raised and the other holding a vase. These figures exhibit grace and beauty.

Coming to Yungang the Tang statues display workmanship of high quality. (Pl. 56) shows the triad in Cave NO. 17. The Buddha sits in ardha padmasana with the right hand in abhaya mudrā and the left showing a damaged wrist. The Buddha is full of kindness. Four layers of halo are visible. The one closest to head is a petal shaped halo followed by one with Buddhas, the third halo is also one with Buddhas and the outermost one is a flaming halo. The Buddha is in a niche flanked by two Bodhisattvas who are half the size of the Buddha. Both
wear a high headgear with three pearls having a Buddha figure. The statues are clothed in a diaphanous material through which the stocky legs are seen. Some outside influence is notable in the Bodhisattva (Pl. 57) to the right of the Buddha for his jewellery specially the one with snake head is similar to the one in Cave No. 13. The left hand holding the pearl is close to the chest and the right holds the shawl. The Bodhisattva has a natural air and looks gorgeous.

The huge statue in Cave No. 19.1 is 448 cms in height (Pl.58). The crown bears the figure of Buddha, the hair falls on the shoulders. The left hand holds a vase and the right is held near the chest. The upper torso is covered by ornaments and a shawl. The folds of the robe are realistic. He stands with feet apart and has an imposing personality as that of Guanyin alone.

Moving to Dazu as one of the attending Bodhisattvas Guanyin of the pure water (Pl. 59) is in Cave No. 10, an Early Tang cave, along with Mahāsthāmaprāpta as the other attending Bodhisattva (Pl. 60). The two Bodhisattva statues in this cave are the best amongst those in the Guangyuan caves. Guanyin of the pure water has a precious stone on the head in which is the image of a standing Buddha. Mahāsthāmaprāpta also has a precious stone showing a bowl with flower on his headgear. Each one wears a long string of pearls which go below the knee, a beautiful flower, a simple fruit, added to which is a flowery belt round the waist making them, all the more beautiful.

A spectacular statue of the Lotus-in-hand Guanyin
(Padmapani) (Pl. 61) from High Tang is seen in the Guangyuan Qianfoya. Wearing bracelets and armlets the Bodhisattva stands holding a lotus in both hands. The figure has the bearing of a beautiful and graceful woman and is attired in rich clothes. There is a semblance of a smile which makes her look like a shy and charming young girl.

A triad of Maitreya and attending Bodhisattvas is seen in Guangyuan Qianfoya from High Tang (Pl. 62). The construction period of Guangyuan Qianfoya Botangsi (on the upper right corner of Rochana Buddha niche) is 723-725. Maitreya seated in the middle has two attending Bodhisattvas. The one on the left of the Buddha has a willow branch in his left hand and a nectar vase in the right. The one standing on the right side of the Buddha holds the scarf by his left hand and holds something resembling a vajra in his right hand. All the three have lotus base. The Bodhisattvas have high crowns similar to the Indian Jatāmukuta. They are short and stout and have no feminine looks. Their bodies are covered by pearl strings which go below their knees. Maitreya’s right hand is damaged and Mahāsthāmaprāpta/Vajrapāṇi’s nose is chipped. Otherwise the statues are preserved in good condition. The Buddha’s and the Bodhisattvas robes are shown in the Gandharan style and the Bodhisattvas have the typical look of Tang art.

As one of the attendants of Bhaiṣajyaguru Buddha, (Pl. 63) in Bazhong shiningsi in Cave No. 1 of the Bhaiṣajyaguru Buddha caves, Guanyin is seen on the right side of the central figure holding a willow and a nectar
flask. The Bhaisajyaguru Buddha holds a staff in the right hand and a bowl in the left. Both the Bodhisattvas are in princely garments and are bejewelled. Flanking the two Bodhisattvas are two fierce looking guardians.

The thousand-armed Guanyin carved on the wall in Cave No. 64 of Danlengzheng shan can be described as a showpiece of the art of High Tang (Pl. 64). The Buddhist caves of Zhengshan have sixty-seven niches with over a thousand statues. Formerly there was the thousand Buddha cave on the left side. This statue has a female form, high topknot, long ears, kind eyes, plump face and the neck has three folds. Workmanship of fine pearl strings adorn the chest - the body is draped in kasaya covering the shoulders. The upper two hands are clasped in front of the chest. The lower two are placed one on top of the other on the knees. The statue is shown sitting cross-legged on a round pedestal. Two hands are raised behind the shoulders and on the crown is a small image of Buddha. Around the image there are twenty hands some of which are damaged, and are holding things like the precious wheel etc. Beginning from the lotus throne are small hands arranged in an aureole displaying thousand arms of Guanyin. The statue also has a dignified bearing with boundless supernatural powers of saving all living things. Above, on either side of the thousand-armed statue in symmetrical arrangement are the four venerable ones, the six-armed bodhisattvas, to the right is carved a meditating one in ardha padmasana and the images are extremely vivid. As compared with the thousand-armed and thousand-eyed murals of Dunhuang’s Cave No. 3 of Yuan
Dynasty the basic difference one notices is that the Dunhuang one is a mural and the Zhengshan one is a carving from different periods. The mural exhibits thousand eyes too while the Zhengshan statue is called the thousand-armed Guanyin without the eyes in the palms. Both are intricate works of art. Vimalakirti and Śrī are shown on the two sides of the mural, but the carving has Buddhas in groups and six-armed figures on both sides of the principle figure.

Cave No.68 has a separate niche for Hāritī (Guizi mu) surrounded by eight of her offsprings whose postures are not the same, while she holds the one seated on her lap (Pl.65). Hāritī is completely sinicized in this representation. Her hair is tied up in a knot to show her Buddhahood. Both mother and children look Chinese. The engraving in the south niche mentions her as Demoness Mother Buddha. She does not have a halo and the figure resembles a common woman. This is an example of the secular trend which set in Tang sculpture.

Anyue Qianfo zhai's Cave No. 56 has a Guanyin statue (Pl.66) on the left wall from Late Tang. This image resembles a Tang Dynasty image and occupies the centre of the left wall in the cave. The lower half of the body is damaged. The head carries an ornamental crown, the body is decorated with pearl strings lending magnificence to

---

Qianfozhai is situated in the western suburbs of Anyue and is five kilometres half way up Dayun mountain. Stone carving was begun in the Kaihuang Era, Sui Dynasty (581-600AD). The total area covered by all the statues is about 705 metres. At present there are 105 big and small caves and niches. Statues carved total 3061.
the statue. The well-rounded feminine face wears an extremely solemn look, exuding tenderness and love drawing people's attention. Looking at the workmanship of the statue, some people are of the opinion that it must have been carved any time between the Five Dynasties and Song period.

Pl. 67 Shows a beautiful statue of Guanyin in the Rulai niche No. 10. This belongs to the end of Tang period. The statue is inside the niche on the left side of the Buddha along with heavenly guardian. The Bodhisattva appears grand in all the finery of a celestial being. The lotus which goes over the shoulder is held in the right hand, barefooted, he himself stands on a lotus base.

In Dunhuang, during Early Tang, the Bodhisattva statues looked more sensuous. In Cave No. 204 the Bodhisattva statue is very beautiful like a Roman goddess with half closed eyes but having a steady gaze and hands in the āñjali mudra (Pl.68). Traces of moustache and beard can be seen but this does not mar the soft girlish look. Standing on a lotus base with the body slightly leaning forward giving it an "s" shape, is an alms-offering Bodhisattva. The flowing ribbons and the long skirt like dhoti make the figure graceful.

The attending Bodhisattva in Cave No.57 (Pl.69) is representative of one of the most beautiful Bodhisattva images and is comparable to the Padmapāni Avalokiteśvara of Ajanta. It is true that he does not hold a lotus but in all other aspects he is similar to the Padmapāni of the Ajanta mural. He is easily identifiable as Guanyin
with the image of Buddha on his crown. Just as the Ajanta Padmapañi has both male and female demeanour so too does this Bodhisattva who has long and slender eyebrows, a fine nose, red lips, exquisite skin and a graceful (woman’s) bearing. The figure resembles a very pretty mortal.

In the same cave, Guanyin is seen along with Kasyapa, the right and left hands in the vara and abhaya mudras respectively. The half closed eyes look down benevolently, but there is not much of the female element in this figure.

The preaching scene on the east wall above the entrance in Cave No. 322 with Buddha as the principal figure, two Bodhisattvas and two disciples, is the one where the Bodhisattvas are strongly feminine. The figures are accurately sketched with well-proportioned body and hands arranged in a lively gesture. The Bodhisattvas appear to portray kind and gentle ladies from real life (Pl.70).

In Cave No.220 the preaching scene on the east wall above the entrance consists of Buddha, Mahāsthāmaprāpta and Guanyin. All three figures are totally male. As the painting has been damaged the expression is not clear. There is a difference in the costume of the Bodhisattvas of this scene as compared to that of the earlier ones. The apparel worn looks more like a dhoti than a skirt. All three figures show the vitarka mudrā in the right hand, and vara mudrā in the left. This shows that although feminization of the Bodhisattvas had been underway for quite sometime, there were paintings of
Bodhisattvas which were completely male (Pl.71).

The earliest Tantric form of Guanyin is seen in Cave No. 321 (Pl.72). The Bodhisattva appears with eleven heads and six arms, standing on a lotus pedestal while two trees form a ratna canopy. A nectar vase is in one hand and a willow branch in the other. On either side is an attending Bodhisattva who is standing. The principal hands are in the vitarka and Buddhasramana mudrās. This particular painting is very similar to the Hindu deity Karthikeya with his two wives.

A portrait of the eleven-headed Guanyin with two attendant Bodhisattvas appears very much like a Hindu goddess with her attendants in Cave No.334 (Pl.73). The sitting posture, and the almost fully covered upper torso, jewellery very similar to that of a woman, makes it very feminine. The eleven heads are arranged in three tiers of three heads, the fourth tier with two heads and the last tier shows a single Buddha head. The main face has the image of the Buddha on its crown. Sitting on a lotus in a pond the right hand is in the vitarka mudrā and the left rests on the knee. All the eleven faces have a compassionate look.

Cave No. 71 has an illustration of the Amitabha Sutra on the north wall (Pl.74). A portion of the Sutra shows Guanyin sitting in ardha-padmāsana on a lotus platform. The right and the left hands are in the mudrās and respectively. An image of his spiritual father can be seen on the crown. The upper torso is almost bare with only the shoulders covered by a
shawl and the Bodhisattva is manly in this painting.

In Cave No. 217, the portrait of Mahāsthamaprapta on the west wall stands with hands locked in front of the waist in all the finery, and chest partially bare. The dhoti resembles a skirt giving it a feminine appearance. This is indicative that feminization was not restricted to Guanyin alone.

A scene showing Guanyin and a donor is on the north side of the west wall in Cave No. 205 (Pl. 75). According to the Chapter on the Universal Gate of Avalokiteśvara of the Saddharmapundarīka Sūtra, Guanyin manifests himself in thirty-three forms to save people from disasters. One has only to call out his name, and the Bodhisattva removes all obstacles soon after hearing the voice of the suffering being. In the Paradise of Bhaisajyaguru, Guanyin is also one of the eight Saint Usher Bodhisattvas, one who responds promptly. In this depiction the awesome figure of Guanyin is seen stretching out a rosary to the woman from the mortal world. The significance of it is that the Bodhisattva is ushering. The woman holds an incense burner, the attendant who is seen behind the woman is praying piously. In the same cave there are statues of Bodhisattvas which are sitting in lalitāsana but are damaged. These statues give a feeling of being strong and majestic. These have not been identified as yet, but from the posture they are likely to be Guanyin. The statues in this cave are lifelike.

The set of statues in Cave No. 45 can be said to be a representative work of High Tang (Pl. 76). The Buddha
sitting cross-legged with the right hand in the "fear not" abhaya mudrā and the left in the bhumisparsa mudrā has a very peaceful expression and a smiling countenance. The face shows arched eyebrows and half closed eyes. The upper torso is partially bare. Ananda is fully Sinicized. The Bodhisattvas are dressed in princely clothes- they too have long arched eyebrows, half closed eyes, a semblance of a smile and they stand with the body curved like an "s" looking more womanish. These statues are unidentified but from the company they are seen with, they could be Guanyin and Mahāsthāmaprāpta. The south wall of this cave illustrates the Guanyin Sutra, a representative art during High Tang. Guanyin is seen here standing in all the finery, with the image of Amitābha Buddha on the crown. With long arched eyebrows and half closed eyes, the Bodhisattva stands under a ratna canopy as if waiting for the call of a suffering being. The left hand carries a nectar vase and the right does the vitarka mudrā which is not clearly visible. If the male attributes of moustache and beard are ignored in this painting, the portrait looks more feminine (Pl.77) and is in contrast to another Guanyin image which is more masculine in appearance in the same cave.

An inscription reading "Saviour from perils, Bodhisattva Guanshiyin" is found in Cave No. 66 (Pl.78). The image is fully decorated with jewellery, and the diaphanous dhoti reminds one of the Indian Kathak dancer who wears clothes of similar material. Although the limbs are not well proportioned, the ornaments and other decorations are pleasing to the eye.
Buddha sitting flanked by two Bodhisattvas, Guanshiyin and Mahāsthāmaprāpta is seen on the south wall of Cave No. 444 (Pl.79). Guanshiyin is to the left of Buddha who is preaching. The left hand holds a nectar vase and the right a full blown lotus. On his crown is the image of the Buddha. All the three have a benevolent gaze. The portrait of Guanshiyin does not display any feminine trait. The difference in the body structure even among the murals of the same period is noticeable.

On the south side of the western wall in Cave No. 320, is a painting of a Bodhisattva which may well be Guanyin for there is the small image of Buddha on the crown, the right hand carries a willow branch and the left the nectar vase, and all the three symbols are of the Bodhisattva Guanyin (Pl.80). During Early and High Tang, it was the practice to have the figures of Guanyin and Mahāsthāmaprāpta outside the niches of the caves. This one is outside the niche in Cave No. 320. This figure is long limbed, and stands wearing a gauzy material, though the face and body have changed colour, the beard and the moustache are clear. It gives the appearance of feminine and not so feminine look at the same time.

An unmistakably feminine Bodhisattva statue is the one in Cave No. 194 (Pl.81). This statue was perhaps modelled after an aristocratic lady, for it resembles a plump and prosperous looking lady. The very beautiful arched eyebrows, the three-quarter closed eyes, the sharp nose and the small mouth, all seen in a round and fleshy face are part of the beauty. The Bodhisattva is dressed
in a robe without sleeves. Actually it looks more like a long embroidered gown. The artist has not spared this statue of the beard and moustache but these are visible only on close scrutiny.

An equally beautiful statue with rich look and grace is in Cave No. 159, the "s" shaped stance of the statue coupled with the delicateness exhibited, gives it a feminine touch. This need not be Guanshiyin but it is a Bodhisattva who is feminized (Pl.82).

Cave No.220 appears to belong to four periods, namely, Early Tang, Middle Tang, Late Tang and Five Dynasties. The mural in (Plate 83) is from Middle Tang. It shows a preaching scene. Bhaiṣajya-guru Buddha is flanked by two disciples and two bodhisattvas. To the right of the Buddha is Guanyin. In contrast to Mahāsthāmaprāpta holding an incense burner in his right hand who is markedly masculine, Guanyin on the other hand looks very much feminine.

The first appearance of the thousand armed and thousand eyed Guanyin is seen as a ceiling decoration in Cave No. 161 (Pl.84). (Mañjuśrī had appeared earlier with thousand arms holding thousand bowls.)

A representative work of Late Tang is contained in Cave No. 14 on the north wall (Pl.85). This is the painting of the Cintāmaṇi-Cakra Avalokiteśvara or Ruyilun Guanyin. The Bodhisattva is a product of Tantric Buddhism which was established by Late Tang. A look at the mural would make anybody refer to it as "she" for there are all the feminine traits and charm in the painting. She is seen here sitting with her head tilted
to a side, six arms, the left hand holding the wish-fulfilling gem or the Cintamani and the right hand in the vitarka mudrā. She is sitting on a lotus attended upon by two Bodhisattvas standing in the pond below. Above her head is the ratna canopy under which are three seated Buddhas. They are the Buddhas of the past, present and future. The image of the spiritual father is on the crown. Heavily decked, she sits with the right knee raised and the left leg bent, a posture similar to that of the Śimhanāda Avalokiteśvara. The picture shows a narrow waist and broad hips, essential features of a woman.

Another interesting picture of Guanyin is seen in the same cave on the south wall’s western side. The figure is solemn and is not multi armed like the previous one. The upper torso is partially bare. The Bodhisattva is adorned with jewellery. The head bears the image of the Buddha, the face shows arched eyebrows and beautiful eyes which are half closed with a benevolent gaze. It is broad chested with narrow waist, sitting erect on a lotus in the padmāsana. The hands are joined in the dhyāna or samādhi mudrā. It has double halo which adds to the solemnity of the figure (Pl.86).

With the advent of the Five Dynasties, Mañjuśrī gained more importance and there were more depictions of the Mañjuśrī Sūtra and the Wutai Shan. In Cave No. 220 Mañjuśrī is shown seated on a lion flanked by two Bodhisattvas (Pl.87). The inscription on the west side reads "Nanwu jiuku Guanshiyin pusa" and the one on the east side reads "Dasheng Wenshu shili pusa zhenrong". 
The image of Guanyin has undergone a change in the sense that beginning from the headgear to the lotus held in the left hand, the shape of the kundika or nectar vase, the general attire and the structure of the feet--everything is different from the previous dynasties. The face is no longer girlish and shows definite male characteristics. It was the period of cultural exchange and friendly relations between Khotan and Shazhou and this must have influenced artists too to give a new image of Mañjusrī as well as other Bodhisattvas.

In Cave No. 76 which is one of the big caves cut out during the Song Dynasty, there is an impressive image of the eleven-headed eight-armed Guanyin with scenes of the Bodhisattva rescuing people from dangers in the background on the north wall (Pl.88). Each of the eight hands has an eye in the palm, holding the sun, the moon, precious stick which has a trident head and precious pestle along with the "have no fear" (abhaya) mudra. The principal right and left hands hold a lotus each. There is an eye on the forehead. The heads are arranged in four tiers, the first tier has three heads with the side faces showing anger. The second layer of five heads have a calm expression, the third layer has two heads with an image of the Buddha in the middle and right on top is a single head which could be the head of the Buddha.

Two Bodhisattvas in Cave No. 165, Maijishan, from the Song Dynasty deserve our attention (Pl.89). The tall and stately bodhisattvas stand against Wei aureoles on the side walls. While the one on the left is definitely Guanyin, the right one could also be a Guanyin. Their
eyes are closed in meditation and they seem a little withdrawn. Between them and the Buddha are two female attendants (Pl.90) who seem to have taken the place of Ananda and Kasyapa. All the four figures are well proportioned with the drapery looking natural.

In Cave No. 136 of Beishan, Dazu, is a standing image of Baiyi Guanyin of Southern Song which is also known as Ruyizhu Guanyin, White-robed Great One, Baichu Guanyin (Pl.91). White colour signifies the purity of the bodhi mind. Although this image has a condescending look, a slight smile, glacial features and jade-like skin, yet appears to be warm with feelings, enabling people to transcend and go beyond the mortal world. A floral headgear is her crown. (The Bodhisattva by this time had been acknowledged as a goddess). Celestial robe adorns her body. The chest and the elbows are covered by pearl strings. The left hand holds the light emitting mani in front of the abdomen. She stands on a lotus which seems to have emerged from the water. The Indian counterpart Pandaravasini hardly has any representations except for a sketch or two. (Plate 92) shows a sitting Baiyi Guanyin from Anyue Huayan dong of Dazu. (Plates 93 and 94) show a set of Bodhisattvas from Cave No.180 of Beishan Dazu. These figures show the extent to which the bodhisattvas were feminized during the Northern Song.

In Cave No. 113, Beishan from Northern Song, is a sitting Shuiyue Guanyin beside a pool, as if looking at the moon's reflection in water. Her foot appears to be dangling in the pool water and she looks very human in
an informal way with scarves fluttering in the breeze (Pl.95).

Cave No. 125, Beishan, Song has a Guanyin with a rosary (Pl.96). This statue is reputed as the crown of Beishan carvings. The statue is so lovely that it came to be known as the "Charming Goddess of Mercy". It is like a maiden standing against a wall on a lotus, wearing a crown, eyes looking down a little, with a gentle smile and the scarves on the arms fluttering in the breeze. The statue looks as if the skin and muscles are tender. It is probably for this reason that it is called charming.

Another Rosary in hand Guanyin is seen in Cave No.136 of Beishan, Dazu (Pl.97). The figure wears a jewelled crown and a robe ornamented with jewelled strings on the chest and arms. It carries a rosary in right hand. The face and skin are so tender and white that the jewelled necklace colours her cheeks brilliantly.

Cave No.4 of Miaogaoshan, Dazu, Southern Song has a series of Guanyin statues and the cave itself is called "Guanyin cave. It has Guanyin with a willow branch, Guanyin with a precious stone, Guanyin with a lasso (Amoghapāśa Avalokiteśvara) and Guanyin of pure water (Plates 98 & 99).

The Purple bamboo Guanyin (Pl.100) in Anyue pilu dong is very similar to the Water and Moon Guanyin, found in the Guanyin Hall and is carved on the cliff wall about four metres from the ground. The face is mellow and full, delicate eyebrows finely arched to the point of
being vertical, long and straight nose, with the body inclined and leg raised he/she sits on a lotus. The back rests on the purple or dark red bamboo. The left foot is on a lotus, the neck and shoulders exposed, pearl strings decorate the chest and abdomen. On the whole, the statue is elegant and seems to be earthly and is therefore called "The statue is Fengliu Guanyin".

In Cave No. 136, Beishan, Southern Song, the Guanyin statue is six-armed and sits on Sumeru throne (Pl.101). The six attributes in the six arms are a willow leaf and an arms bowl in the principal hands, the Sun and the Moon in the raised hands behind and a sword and axe in the third pair of hands. He has a plump face with beautiful brows and eyes, sharp nose, and a small mouth. The eyes are half opened having a down-cast gaze. On either side of the statue is a devout old man and a noble lady perhaps representing the older version of Shan Cai and Longniu standing in attendance on the Bodhisattva.

The thousand-armed Guanyin from Southern Song in Baoding shan Cave No.8 displays strength and richness (Pl.102). The thousand arms are arranged like a peacock tail around the less than three metre tall statue to the right and left and above and below. The thousand hands hold various types of musical instruments without any identical pose. Added to this is the golden colour making it resplendent and magnificent, demonstrating the inexhaustible wisdom and capacity of the thousand-armed Guanyin.

What is striking about this image is that the outstretched hands are pointing upwards showing the long
slender fingers. The headgear shows very intricate
design typical of Song Dynasty. The statue exhibits a
rigidity despite the fine carving. On either side of the
image are seen a pair of male and female with palms
joined as if in obeisance to the deity. These could be
the donor figures.

Seen in Cave No. 22, Dafowan, Southern Song is the
Vidyaraj as (Hayagriva) (Pl.103) that looks ferocious with
three heads and six arms (only two arms are visible).
The left hand holds something like an anklet or hand-cuff
while the right hand shows something which is not clear.
The Vidyarajas in this form is the incarnation of
Avalokitesvara to liberate the spirits in the state of
animal existence.

The Goddess of Fertility (Hariti) in Cave No. 9,
Shimenshan, Southern Song (Pl.104) is attired in rich
garments the statue has a kind and contended look with a
group of children playing around her.

In all these representations of Dazu discussed so
far, the Bodhisattva is shown with more feminine
features. The moustache and beard that were common in
the murals of Dunhuang are absent in these figures
lending them greater charm and feminity. Another feature
in these caves is that the other Bodhisattvas also look
graceful and lady-like. They resemble aristocratic
ladies. Either these statues were modelled after Wu
Zetian or artists of those times looked upto the court
ladies for modelling the statues or they thought that
giving the statues a feminine touch enhanced their
beauty. Whatever the reason may be, the outcome was
extremely pleasing to the eye.

Coming to Dunhuang, the first appearance of the *Shuiyue Guanyin* (Moon’s Reflection in Water or Water and Moon Avalokitesvara) is seen in Cave No. 237 of Western Xia (Pl.105). This painting appears on the west wall above the entrance in the ante-room. There is a large nimbus behind Guanyin sitting on a rocky surface with the hands over the knee. The nectar vase is beside the Bodhisattva who looks more feminine in this picture. The head is covered by a headgear and the background shows a cliff. The concept of the Shuiyue Guanyin arose from the eminent Tang Poet Bai Juyi’s poem "Ode to the portrait of Shuiyue Guanyin" expressing his devotion for the Moon’s Reflection in Water form Guanyin. The poem reads as follows.

> Floating in water,
> Clean and pure,
> As if hiding
> In the white light.
> When I set my sight
> All egos are vanishing.
> Your disciple Bai Juyi
> With devotion under your feet.
> Your are my cynosure
> Life after life - forever.

The poem was represented in a painting by the famous Tang artist Zhou Fang. Although it is one of the thirty three forms of Guanyin, it is not based on the scriptures. The Dunhuang manuscripts P.2055 mentions that Zhai Fengda copied the Sutra for Water and Moon as a mark of wishing good luck to his late wife. But unfortunately the original is no longer to be found.
There is no documented base for the Water and Moon Sutra in Buddhist scriptures and it is difficult to know if this sutra was the work of local people or if the sutra had been lost forever. The portrait of Water and Moon Guanyin first appeared in Middle Tang which is mentioned in Vol.X of Zhang Yanyuan’s *Lidai Minghuaji* (Record of famous paintings through the Ages).

The Water and Moon Guanyin was popular in Dunhuang Art in two stages. The first stage was during the Five Dynasties and the Song. The second stage was during the Xi Xia (Western Xia).

The special features of this form of Guanyin during the first stage was that these paintings were found in the ante-room and the corridor of the caves. The portraits do not show the moon. It was just an expression of looking at the moon.

It was in the main hall of the caves that the portraits of Water and Moon Guanyin were painted during the second stage. These paintings were thus more prevalent and enjoyed greater popularity. The moon was also shown as part of the painting.

The earliest painting of the Water and Moon Guanyin was in silk in 943 A.D. It is not clear as to why this concept became prevalent after hundred years of the mention of the image by Zhou Fang and the first appearance of this type of Guanyin was in the interior regions. It is quite likely that it took some time to catch the fancy of the artists of Dunhuang.

Though not in Dunhuang proper, the figure of Water-Moon Guanyin of Yulin Caves during Western Xia in Cave
No. 2 is of some importance as it is a typical landscape painting with the attributes of willow and the vase. It is seen on the north and south sides of the west wall.

A different looking Guanyin is seen in Cave No. 97 painted during Western Xia (Pl.106). The inscription written here is: "Nanwu dací dabei jiuku Guañsiyin pusa". Except for the small image of the Buddha, this painting does not have the nectar vase and willow branch usually seen in the paintings of the Guanshiyin. There is a flowery canopy above the head, the face is longish, the eyes are narrow and the nose is long. The upper torso is long and the hands and feet are short.

Although Cave No. 3 of Yuan Dynasty is small, its murals are of very high standard and it is the most important representative cave of Guanyin. The best depiction of the thousand-armed and thousand-eyed Guanyin is in Cave No.3 (Pl.107). Both the north and south walls are filled with the awesome figure of this form of Guanyin. The Guanyin image has eleven heads, forty large hands of which two hold up the image of the Buddha, two are joined in the anjali mudrā and two hold the bowl. Cave No.3 can be called a Guanyin cave for it is filled with the images of Guanyin.

No study of Guanyin in China will be complete without referring to the famous image at Putuo island. This place is believed to be the sacred residence of the Bodhisattva and was also the iconographic inspiration for later day paintings.

In Dazhong era of Tang Xuanzong (847-859 A.D.), an Indian Monk is said to have visited this place to
practise Buddhism. The term Putuo has thus been derived from the Sanskrit word Potalaka meaning "beautiful little white flower". There is a story that an eminent Japanese monk once tried to take home a revered image of Guanyin and set sail. But there was a storm on the way and the ship could not sail. It looked as if the image did not want to leave the "Guanyin pavilion."

The image of Putuo Shan Guanyin (Pl.108) has the appearance of a young girl who has her eyes closed with a gentle smile, hands in dhyana mudra and sits on a lotus base. Her ear lobes are long, almost touching the shoulder. The head is adorned with a crown bearing an image of the spiritual father. The vase is held by both hands. The overall impression of the image is one of Tibetan influence, though there are no princely garments and ornaments decorating the image. The back halo is like a tear drop but not of the Northern Wei type which has a pointed tip.

As a goddess associated with the sea and the dangers of the ocean, Putuo Guanyin became very popular. She is believed to have practised meditation for nine years in the island. As a Sea goddess she is also said to convey the souls in the "ship of salvation" to the Western Paradise."

The largest Chinese Buddhist bronze surviving today is the one at the Longxing temple in Chengting where it was cast in 971 (Pl.109). It is nearly 46 feet high. Originally it had forty-two wooden hands but these have been damaged, so what is left are the main hands. It must have been well-decorated in the past. The emphasis
is on the size and the elaborate ornamentation than on the spiritual feeling or aesthetic refinement.

One is amazed by the variety and the number of images of Guanyin spread all over the world. What has been attempted is to get a few representative figures and study them closely to understand the nuances and the significance of such images and how these helped in the popularization, expansion and entrenchment of Guanyin cult which we see even today.