



Interior of main chamber, Cave 61

Student Work Sample 4

The Symmetrical Composition of Miraculous Events in the Painting of Mt Wutai 五台山圖, Mogao Cave No. 61

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The Mogao Cave 61, famously known as the Manjusri Hall, is constructed as an offering exclusively to Manjusri bodhisattva, and is considered as important evidence of the wide-spread Manjusri belief during the late-Tang and Five Dynasties periods. Portraying Manjusri's mountain abode Mt Wutai, the painting at the west wall of the cave's main chamber is by any definition a masterpiece of artwork. The study analyzes the pictorial composition of the painting, arguing the massive amount of the miraculous events - comparing to other Mt Wutai Painting in Dunhuang - is a way to manifest the salvational power of Manjusri. Moreover, the symmetrical arrangement of these miraculous scenes is mature and standard format that the painters developed under the rule of the Cao Family in the Five Dynasties. On the other hand, the symmetrical composition is also produced under the influence of sutra illustration 經變畫.



Mt Wutai Painting, West Wall, Main chamber

