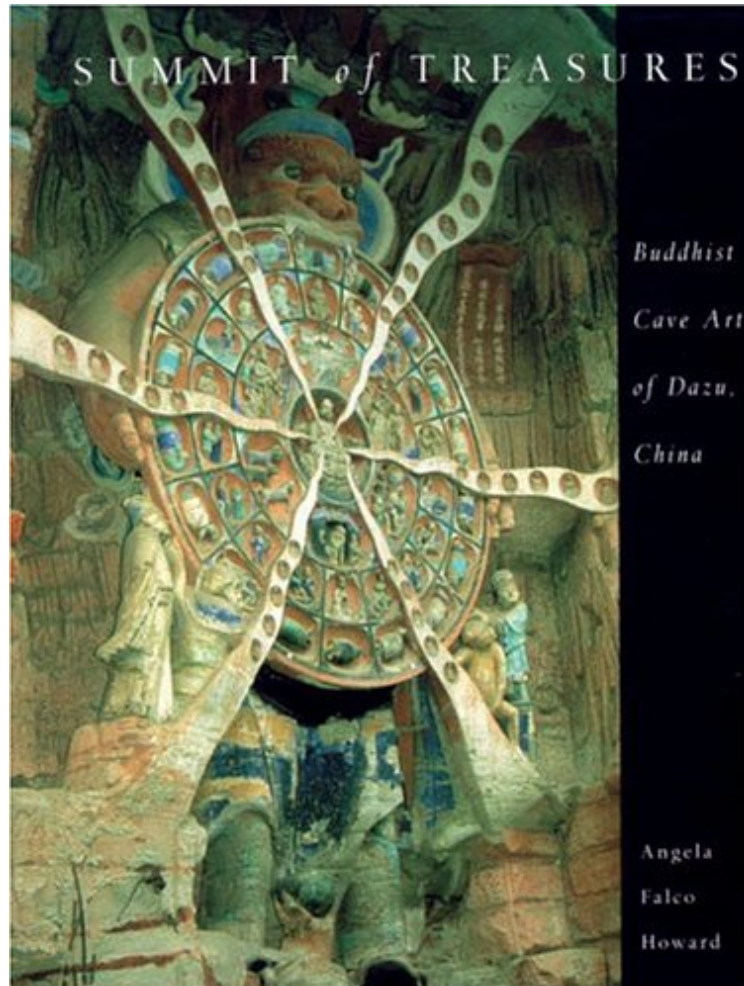


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Summit Of Treasures: Buddhist Cave Art Of Dazu, China

Angela Falco Howard

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Angela Falco Howard : Summit Of Treasures: Buddhist Cave Art Of Dazu, China before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Summit Of Treasures: Buddhist Cave Art Of Dazu, China:

9 of 9 people found the following review helpful. The Best English-Language book on Dazu By Michael Gunther Although the best-known cave-temples in China are located at Longmen and along the Silk Road (Dunhuang, etc.), the impressive cave reliefs in Sichuan are less visited and have been comparatively neglected. The beauty of the Song-dynasty sculptures at Dazu is matched equally by their interest as a fascinating amalgam of many different strands of Buddhist belief: Esoteric, Pure Land, Chan (Zen), and more. Angela Falco Howard's book, with its excellent color photographs and thoughtful text, gives us Dazu in all its beauty, together with her own significant contributions to the scholarship about the site. Tourists and casual visitors will appreciate her clear identification and explanation of

every major and minor personage and scene on the reliefs; students and scholars will spend many happy hours delving into the bibliography, notes, and intricacies of her interpretations. The major criticism I have of this book, is that it presupposes that the reader already understands some quite obscure details of medieval Buddhist philosophy and sects (Huayan/Kegon, etc.) It's all very well to inform us that "the Bodhisattva to the right of Vairocana is Samantabhadra," but if you don't know who Samantabhadra is, you'll probably still be left scratching your head. A glossary is not provided, but would certainly have been welcome. Readers who are not very familiar with Mahayana Buddhist deities may want to read an intro like "Buddhism," by Louis Frederic, before tackling Howard's book. Regardless, "Summit of Treasures" belongs in the backpack of anybody visiting Dazu, and in the library of any enthusiast of Chinese cave-temple art. Postscript: I think it is appropriate here to add a plug for the publisher, Weatherhill, who with this book has produced, once again, a great book about Asian art. I'm not affiliated with them at all, but over the years I can't help but noticing how many of their volumes are finding their way into my library. Weatherhill seems to combine the best authors with superb editing (it is almost impossible to find a typo in their books) and to-die-for production, with durable books and copious full-color photography. I'm almost to the point where I'll buy anything with the Weatherhill Mark on it, and I can't really say that about any other publisher, except maybe for Yale. This paragraph is my thank-you to them, for the quality of their books and for all the knowledge and enjoyment that they give us - scholars, tourists, and everybody in-between. 14 of 18 people found the following review helpful. Great place - bad pictures!!! By Ondrej Sekanina Dazu is a really great place. It is as stunning as Yungang caves in Shanxi and much more impressive than the famous Mogao caves in the Gansu province. And this makes probably just about every book on the place worthwhile. BUT half of the photographs in this book are so bad it is unbelievable. True, those caves tend to be dark and there is little room for you to step back when taking a picture etc... but one would assume that somebody who wants to publish a book about the place could do better than take average tourist-quality (and sometimes worse) pictures. Unfortunately, this seems to be the only book on the topic out there. So there is really no choice for you if you are interested in Dazu. The accompanying text is very detailed and seems very good but, let's face it, most of us don't get books of this type primarily because of the text - it is the photographs that really matter. In sum, think twice before you get this book.

The monumental cave complexes of the Baodigshan site at Dazu, in Sichuan province, and their vast treasure trove of Buddhist sculpture and painting have been little studied relative to other Buddhist cave art in China. This is the first English-language publication to reveal and explain the incredible artworks hidden in this remote site, dating from the Song dynasty and inspired by the profound tenets of Esoteric Buddhism. Using brilliant color photographs and detailed line drawings, Professor Angela Falco Howard presents the caves in the didactic order intended by their creators, explaining their iconography, symbolism, and the hidden meanings in both the individual elements and overall design. Finally, the author places this magnificent construction within the context of an indigenous style of Buddhist sculpture that flourished in Sichuan province between the 11th and 13th centuries.

"For students of art history and religion alike, Professor Howard's book is a treasure trove of later Chinese Buddhist sculpture, history, and popular culture for one of the richest and culturally most interesting regions of imperial China." Wen C. Fong, Professor Emeritus, Princeton University
About the Author Angela Falco Howard is an associate professor in the department of Art History at Rutgers University and a special consultant in the department of Asian Art of the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Author of *The Imagery of the Cosmological Buddha*, Professor Howard is an eminent authority on Buddhist sculpture and painting and has researched and published extensively on the Esoteric Buddhist cave art of Sichuan province.