

Cave #	Date/Dynasty	Characteristics / Special Notes
Notes: Caves #1-50 are on the SE cliff face; #51-191 on the SW cliff face; all R & L designations are from the [central] Buddha's perspective, not the viewer's		
	420-422 CE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Known history of Maijishan begins with arrival of a monk (Tanhung) from Ch'ang-an (perhaps fleeing the Sung army after the city's capture in 416). Joined by another monk 424-426 who brought 100 disciples to the mountain. Tu Fu writes "Mountain Temples" poem in 760 (?)
1		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Refurbished Nirvana Buddha</i>
2		<ul style="list-style-type: none">
3	N. Zhou	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Veranda shape Long row of 297 stone-cored clay Buddhas carved in relief in neat rows Inverted V-shaped ceiling (a type common at Dunhuang)
4	Wei	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Cave of the Scattered Flowers" Huge recess stretching across the SE face above the trinity in relief, 150 ft from the ground, orig. 8 stone pillars supported a roof (fell away when??) fierce 15-ft tall dvarapala (derived from Indian Yaksha) on lion bases in relief at each corner (powerful Tang style but drapery shows them prob. Sung); the Buddha figures in niches above them are of unknown date 7 Buddha Halls lead off the main hall, each with a seated Buddha flanked by standing bodhisattvas and attendants (nearly all Sung or Ming; only the Buddha in the central chamber has Tang features) hollowed out by a senior military commander in memory of his father, the subject of the dedicatory inscription written by 6C poet Yu Xin between 566 and 568 [now missing from the cave] Roof carved in relief in the rock above A section of wall painting was said to have been taken by a foreign missionary in 1920 (who? where today??)
5	Sui	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Cave of the Bull" on the eastern face Divides E from W half of the site Good Sung work Pure Land influence
6		<ul style="list-style-type: none">
7		<ul style="list-style-type: none">
8		<ul style="list-style-type: none">
9		<ul style="list-style-type: none">
10		<ul style="list-style-type: none">
11		<ul style="list-style-type: none">
12	N. Zhou	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3 seated Buddhas in a row on each of the side walls, perhaps the Buddhas of Past, Present and Future; restored, massiveness apparent under the Ming refurbishing <i>Reclining Buddha on top/lion dogs on corners</i>
13	Originally made in Sui (or early Tang) but clearly later damaged; present restoration is Ming (votive inscriptions 1517, 1519, 1633)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> **Great triad on the SE cliff face consists of a seated Maitreya 15.7 meters high with legs pendent and feet resting on 2 lotus buds, flanked by 2 standing bodhisattvas: (R) Guanyin and (L) ?? holds a lotus ?? Built of clay plaster over a core of rock Flat and awkward in appearance
14	Sui	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rough and provincial Sui pieces, unfeelingly restored in the Ming Dvarapala retains its original simplicity and power
15	N. Wei	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Seems to replicate the timber-frame structure of a gable-roofed building of the time. The chamber is rectangular, with transverse beams holding an inverted V bracket at both ends. The brackets in turn support a central cushion beam and ridge purlin...Use of transverse beams and brackets may well reflect the method of constructing small structures at the time, for one would expect a room of this size constructed of wood to require some central support, in this case made unnecessary by its being of stone. The inverted V-bracket or strut was widely used during this period, but its use can be traced back at least to the Western Han." eastern face Shows good Sung work
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17		<ul style="list-style-type: none">

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28	N. Wei	• Roof carved in relief in the rock above of the "hipped-roof style...[with] single-eaved, tiled hipped roofs with symmetrical inward-curving acroteria at the ends of the main ridge. Prostyle columnization and portico lead into the temple proper. The columns, four in each case, are octagonal and tapered, each face being fluted...a continuation of [Han] tradition."
29		•
30	N. Wei, Tang	• roof carved in relief in the rock above, see cave 28 notes • "3 rounded doorways with a flame decor at the top, each an entrance to a separate domed room which was placed a statue of a Buddha" [stone allowed departure from wooden bldg model] • Seated Buddha with egg-shaped head, slightly swelling abdomen and almost total disappearance of drapery to expose the legs tightly locked in a yogic pose, both soles uppermost. "Lion waist", massive shoulders Late Gupta influence (Southern connections?) • Also elegant chaitya arch enclosing the niche, very Indian
31		• A small niche on the cliff face • Contains 10 enthroned Buddhas modelled in relief in 2 rows (unrestored late 6C, may be the Buddhas of the Ten Quarters ? (altho rarely represented)
32		•
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34	Sui	• <i>Gupta-style robe?</i>
35	N. Zhou	•
36	N. Zhou	•
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43	Tang	• Former temporary tomb of an Empress • Unfinished, Sung dvarapala stands guard over the entrance • Roof carved in relief in the rock above • Maitreya seated with legs pendent, feet supported on lotus buds, drapery shows high-Tang realism (edge of throne shows between the Buddha's knees) • He sits against a wall on which 2 dragons are modelled in relief suggesting the wings of a throne, from behind which 2 celestial maidens rise up offering pearls – a strange group (water spirits?)
44	W. Wei	• <i>Buddha on Sumeru throne</i>
45		•
46		•
47	Sui	•
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49		• Roof carved in relief in the rock above
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BELOW CAVES ON SOUTHWESTERN CLIFF FACE:		
51		•
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54	W. Wei – N. Zhou	•
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57	Later Qin	•
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60	W. Wei	• Open niche on the cliff face • 2 plaster heads of the Buddha's attendants later restorations

		trying to capture N. Wei style but probably 7C
61		• Open niche on the cliff face
62	<i>N. Zhou ?</i> Sui (1 inscription, 952), 2 nd half 5C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • **Some of the finest Sui work found here, particularly the bodhisattvas between the two Buddhas, that on the L (holding jewel in left hand, right hand poised over it) restrained in a typical stiff Sui frontal pose, his neighbour richly adorned reflecting the new "Indian" manner in the shape of head and crown, contour of cheek, tribhanga pose of mature Tang sculpture • note <u>innovation in scarf arrangement</u> falling in 2 loops over the knees • 3 niches each containing a seated Buddha flanked by standing bodhisattvas so arranged that to the viewer the central Buddha seems to have 2 pairs of attendants (Sui) • Square cave with a "dome of heaven" ceiling in which a hollowed dome-like effect is achieved by receding squares placed diagonally within each other (typical Western Asiatic type)
63		•
64		• Square cave with a "dome of heaven" ceiling in which a hollowed dome-like effect is achieved by receding squares placed diagonally within each other (typical Western Asiatic type)
65		• Square cave with a "dome of heaven" ceiling in which a hollowed dome-like effect is achieved by receding squares placed diagonally within each other (typical Western Asiatic type)
66		• Cave with bow-shaped ceiling and with a chaitya-arch lintel at the entrance
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69	One of the earliest images at Maijishan, probably no later than mid-5C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open niche on the cliff face • Seated Buddha pure Gandharan type with classical features, compactly formed, robe covers body Gandharan style (Central Asian influence), on throne flanked by standing bodhisattvas • Unusual throne (flap-like shapes = lotus petals?) • Attendant bodhisattvas more Chinese in feeling, well robed covering both shoulders
70		• Open niche on the cliff face
71		•
72	6C in style	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seated Buddha with flaming jewel on chest (unusual), standing attendant, 2 other attendant figures • Buddha's separated head crudely stuck back in place • Buddha's flesh protrudes over stomach • Lay figures (donors?)
72a		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • square chamber with 3 seated Buddhas flanked by bodhisattvas in high relief standing against the walls • Buddha with robe thrown over L shoulder in Gandharan manner • upper part of walls has Buddhas in small niches • Ceiling: angels flying around a central lotus
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74	<i>Later Qin</i>	•
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87	<i>Later Qin</i>	• monk disciples Ananda & Kasyapa
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90	Excavated in the Wei but mostly Sung restorations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • L of seated Buddha in the central niche is Mahakasyapa (on R Ananda?) • small Wei plaster figures of bodhisattvas and monks, fragments of wall painting but main figures remade in the Sung
91		•

92	Style is N. Wei, about 500 CE (no inscriptions)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Square lintel and flat ceiling • much of the front wall has fallen away and interior badly damaged • seated Buddha with standing bodhisattvas on either side; lesser monks (<i>bhikshu</i>, <i>bhikshuni</i>) as worshippers • 2 tiers of figures in relief on either side of the central Buddha
93	6C?, drapery is typical of late N. Wei	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • **2 seated figures on high seats: R has legs pendant crossed at ankles (Maitreya is a very popular N. Wei figure); L is in "contemplating prince" pose (Maitreya or Sakyamuni?)—intriguing departure from the orthodox canons of 6C image-making, early 6C? (closer to the late 5C work at Yungang than any other figures at Maijishan • 2 standing bodhisattvas in high relief on the side walls
94	Sui	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • **1 of the earliest caves at Maijishan were the simple triad increases to 5 figures (by adding 2 monks) • **Buddha's left leg lies over the right leg, a southern feature prob. imported from India by way of SE Asia (earliest example is 571 from Hopei) • Ananda seems to be holding a bodhisattva's vase
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98	Originally N. Wei??., Ming restoration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • **Most conspicuous work on the exterior of the western cliff—an incomplete triad: tall standing Buddha (clay moulded over rock core) with 2 flanking attendants
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100	1 st excavated in the Wei with later refurbishments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Square lintel and flat ceiling • seated central Buddha (Sung or later) in earlier niche • with 2 tall standing N. Wei original bodhisattvas flanking central figure (identical mirror-image figures); R bodhisattva has 3 images of Amitabha in headdress • 4 recesses contain 3 seated Wei Buddhas and a cross-legged Maitreya • Sung (late Sung) small standing attendant • lesser monks (<i>bhikshu</i>, <i>bhikshuni</i>) as worshippers
101	N. Wei (inscriptions of 937 and 1201 exist)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pose of this worshipper is borrowed from the cross-ankled Maitreya • No precedents anywhere in 6C China sculpture in the round for the fantastic elongation of the legs • Combination of elegant & crude
102	Late Wei	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cave with bow-shaped ceiling and with a chaitya-arch lintel at the entrance • central seated Buddha typically Wei (elongated elegant head with finely modelled features); good example of late Wei
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105	Late N. Wei	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A pair of worshippers • Guanyin holding a vase and on his left, a monk
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109		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Square lintel and flat-topped ceiling with sloping sides in the form of an upside-down rice measure (<i>tou</i>)
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112	Late N. Wei	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Square lintel and flat ceiling • 3 Buddha niches (central one unoccupied) • R Buddha typical late N. Wei except for hem of robe (looks like "fringe" ?!), nice examples of late Wei • dvarapala among earliest modelled in the round in Far Eastern Buddhist art
113		•
114		• Square lintel and flat ceiling
115	One of the earliest caves at Maijishan?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • tall slender bhiksu with slight bend at left knee, fluid drapery of type at beginning of 5C (face modelled separately and fixed on at a later date?) • **On the pedestal of the throne of the central Buddha is one of the earliest dated inscriptions: running 13 lines, 190+ characters, equivalent to 502 CE • Once richly decorated with wall paintings • On either side of the central Buddha an architectural framework with monks, animals and strange figures

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Xiwangmu sitting on mountain top to the left of Guanyin (who is on L of central niche) in relief? • Ceiling has coiled dragons
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117	Late Wei (but cave has inscriptions of 984 and 1283)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seated STONE Buddha carved between 550-575 on pedestal throne symbolic of world mountain Sumeru; hands in abhaya and vara mudra; sandstone figures testify to importance of patronage • worshipping monk with incense burner and vase in relief on R
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120		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cave with bow-shaped ceiling and with a chaitya-arch lintel at the entrance
121	1st hollowed out in W. Wei period, 6C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Square lintel and flat-topped ceiling with sloping sides in the form of an upside-down rice measure (<i>tou</i>) • 3 niches with dvarapala on either side of the entrance • Central Buddha (remade in the Sung) flanked by free-standing figures of the disciples Ananada and Kasyapa • Above them in 2 rows are small seated robed figures (5 to a side), probably Sung, who?? • Best feature is 2 pairs of worshippers who stand in the angles between the niches: a monk with clasped hands and female worshipper (R); (L) another lady and a Pratyeka Buddha
122	mid-6C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 seated Buddhas with 2 attendants (bodhisattvas) holding a vase (kalasa) and jewel (?) who seem to be communing with each other and not the Buddhas they attend • Lohan also present • Ananda and Kasyapa as monk disciples • Walls have rows of small Buddha plaques moulded in clay, resting on ledges
123	6C (but cave has Sung inscriptions)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 usual Buddha niches • L niche Buddha has Ananda and Kasyapa by his sides • **Pair of figures standing near outer corners of the side walls: (L) a boy, (R) a girl. Note "servant-style" necklines
124		•
125		•
126	Late Wei	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • enthroned seated Buddha with 2 attendants and dvarapala on both sides • Once 55 small moulded figures of seated Buddhas and standing monks & worshippers on walls, most now missing • Monk on R is Ananda but who is on L (?) a bodhisattva? – unusual flanking pair
127	W. Wei	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • **One of the earliest depictions of Amitabha's Pure Land above a Buddha's niche • W face cave with square lintel and flat-topped ceiling with sloping sides in the form of an upside-down rice measure (<i>tou</i>) • Bodhisattvas "swept up on either side of their Buddha, their robes and scarves dancing like flames...free rein to [the artist's] imagination"; one wears dress of bodhisattva but lacks the jewels and crown – "celestials"? • Sandstone sculptures show importance of patronage
128	Later than cave 100 but earlier than cave 115 which has a dated inscription of 502	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 usual niches containing seated Buddhas • on side walls small recesses holding seated Buddha figures • on main wall on either side, standing bodhisattva (Guanyin on L holding vase in right hand)
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133	Typical early middle decades of 6C Maijishan with exceptions as noted:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • **western face, largest of 3 of the most impressive early caves of Maijishan & one of the artistically most important • "Cave of the Steles" or "Hall of the Myriad Buddhas" • **Stone stelae lining the walls: 18 intact, 5 in fragments showing scenes from life of the Buddha (garudas transformed into phoenixes?); <u>originally painted</u>; stele #10 which illustrates the Birth, 7 Steps, Lustration, Attack of Mara, First Sermon, Parinirvana, Dipamkara Jataka, Vimalakirti and Manjusri of the Vimalakirtinirdesa Sutra, and the King Asoka legend; with Prabhutaratna appearing in stele top panel "Apparation of the Stupa" from Ch. XI Lotus Sutra (525-550); 6 Dynasties stele with Vimalakirti story; stele #26 (mid-6C) "Great Miracle of Sravasti" [again a testimony to importance of patronage] • main hall dominated by tall clay figure of Sakyamuni Buddha,

		3.5m high, standing on a lotus, R hand over monk's head (Tang, drapery beautifully remodelled at a later date, probably during Sung/N. Sung?)
134		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> double tier of niches with small seated moulded cast Buddhas Stone seated Buddha in another niche (mature Tang) Figure in its own niche with legs pendant and ankles crossed could be Guanyin or Maitreya as a bodhisattva Image of the "Little Monk" is in this cave
135	Late Wei	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Hall of Heaven" smallest accessible cave on the western section (8.88 x 5 x 4.29 meters) **3 pink sandstone carved figures: a central Buddha nearly 2m tall with 2 flanking bodhisattvas (headless) with plaster-clay restorations (Sung) – how did they get up here?? cross-ankled bodhisattva with exceptionally exotic jewellery almost certainly Maitreya (no parallels in the Buddhist art of N. China; shows southern influence)
136	N. Zhou	
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140	N. Wei	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Mural depicts a compound showing a tiled roof pitched front and back along its length tops the surrounding wall, to prolong the life of what was probably a stamped-earth structure. At each of the corners of the wall that are still visible, an acroterium (an architectural ornament placed on a flat base called the acroter or plinth, and mounted at the apex of the pediment of a building) rises from the ridge. There are scant indications of a front gate and perhaps a short bridge in front of it, with some flowers and trees behind." Shows good architectural detail of houses of the period including "inverted V brackets" and the "owl-tail" top of the roof.
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147	W. Wei	
148	N. Wei	<i>N. Wei Seated Buddha</i>
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165	Hollowed out in Wei Dynasty, Sung figures (shows shift from Buddha to the bodhisattva characteristic of popular later Buddhism in China)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> on the western rock face Open niche with only throne (of a seated Buddha) and the aureoles on the walls behind it and 2 bodhisattvas surviving with traces of 6C decoration to the L of the R-hand bodhisattva is a small beautiful stone bodhisattva of mid-6C 2 tall stately bodhisattvas stand against Wei aureoles on the side walls; L figure is probably Guanyin; R figure ?? Between them and central Buddha two female attendants or donors (not nuns) making us think this cave was perhaps sponsored by women (who were fond of Guanyin)
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169		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> open niche to the right of cave 69 missed & added later; between the two a small Buddha modelled in relief on the cliff face; below it the mythical ancestors Fu Xi and Nu Wa with human heads and serpent bodies Badly damaged but stil lovely and very exotic Bejewelled Maitreya cross-legged on throne supported by lions with very un-Chinese features (Dvaravati or other influence from the south?)
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191	Wei with renovations 11-12C (Sung?) (shows shift from Buddha to the bodhisattva characteristic of popular later Buddhism in China)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open niche in lower part of the west cliff with deep overhang Seated Sung life-size central Buddha with legs pendant, feet resting on lotus buds, with flanking bodhisattvas (N. Wei?) on lotus buds (on R figure survives) who are far more interesting perhaps showing emphasis moving from B to bvs **Directly below open niche is face of an "atlantid" with bulging eyes (Tang?) other figures used to exist (4 guardians, inner pair of lions) but only feet of the dvarapala (?) remain
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- Plain text notes excerpted from Michael Sullivan, *Cave-Temples of Maichishan*, 1969
- All quoted material ("xx") from Albert Dien, *Six Dynasties Civilization*, Yale University, 2007
- *Italics* – Patricia's notes from Summer 2009 on-site visit