Preface

The *Grotto Art of China: A Sourcebook* is designed to provide an up-to-date summary of fundamental information about the art of Chinese Buddhist grottoes. Divided by cave complexes and geographical regions, each chapter includes descriptions of cave sites, a selected bibliography, and a glossary.

The initiation of this volume was informed by the need for an up-to-date survey that offers fundamental information with a factual summary and resources for further reading and research. Prof. Wu Hung launched the project with a scholarly workshop convened at The University of Chicago in May 2019, where guidelines were created for the structuring of the chapters and their contents, organized by cave complexes and regions. We agreed that the art of Chinese Buddhist cave temples is of great interest to many people and that there is a need for greater understanding of the grotto sites. Given the remarkable diversity in regional geographical features, the unique characteristics of cave groupings, variations in construction timelines, and differing states of preservation, each author was tasked with making informed decisions regarding the scope and selection of materials for their respective chapters. Their expertise and experience at cave sites provide a wealth of information useful for scholarly researchers and for ordinary visitors. This book is the first single-volume compilation of systematic studies on complexes of cave shrines created in many regions of China to be published in both English and Chinese. While many of the most important Chinese grotto sites are included here, much remains to be done in this rich field of research. Many

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grotto sites await further investigation, and many caves have yet to be discovered.

We are fortunate that The Chinese University of Hong Kong Press recognized the potential of such a publication and has helped us to coordinate our efforts to create a volume that can be both informative for scholars and portable for travelers. We appreciate the professional advice of our editors, their patience, and their moral support as we have painstakingly assembled the chapters over these last several years. A translated Chinese edition is also planned. The translation work has also extended to two of the chapters in the English volume that were authored in Chinese. We especially thank Prof. Zhang Zong, Deputy Director of the Department of Religious Culture and Art in the Institute of World Religions, the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS), for his considerable contributions to translation work and for recommending translators for the English chapters.

Finally, we are grateful for support from the Bei Shan Tang Foundation and from David and Addy Dewey. Their generous financial backing of the project has made this dream a reality.

Katherine Renhe Tsiang and Wu Hung

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