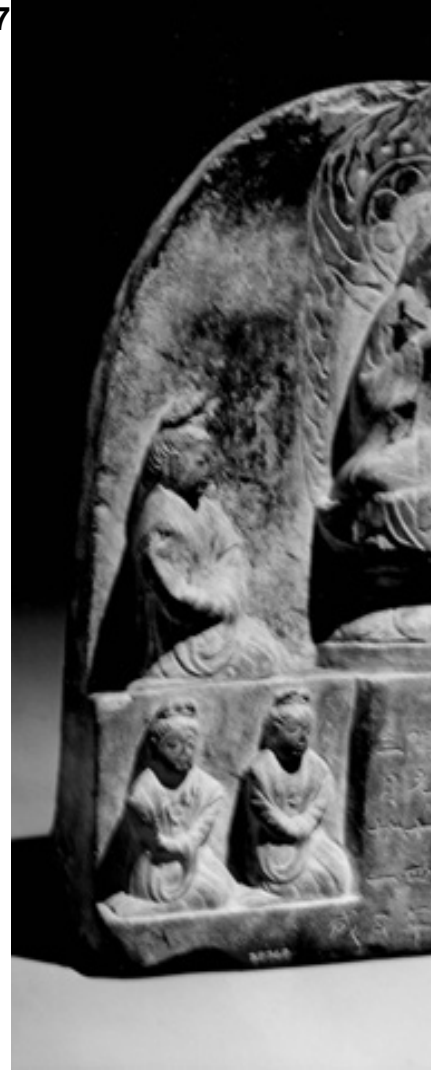


The First Donation by a Chinese to a Museum in the Midwest? -- 1907



This stone stele (FM #32362) was donated to the Field Museum by the imperial Chinese commissioner Duan Fang in 1907, the year after he visited the U.S. He wrote this note on the back, in Chinese and English. It reads: "

'In the Tang Dynasty, 14th reign of the Emperor Kaiyuan, 3rd moon, this image of the supreme god Yuen Che Tin Chun was dedicated by Yangchen to invoke the blessings on his deceased daughter Ling Kung, his seven generations, past and present, his family and the people of the universe.'

"This carving is exceptionally fine and a rare specimen of art.

"During my travels as Imperial Chinese High Commissioner in the United States of America, I visited the museum at Chicago which was being built, and as a token of my pleasant remembrance of the trip, this historic stone is presented as a souvenir.

"Duan Fang,
Viceroy of Liang Kiang Provinces,
Minister of Trade for Southern Ports to Ching Dynasty H.I.M. Kuang Hsu
33rd year, 4th moon, Nanking, China"

We believe that other U.S. museums have ancient sculpture donated by Duan Fang. One such museum is the St. Louis Art Museum, which he must have visited in connection with the closing of the Chinese government exhibits at St. Louis World's Fair of 1905.

