

## The Transnational Cult of Mount Wutai

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# The Transnational Cult of Mount Wutai

*Historical and Comparative Perspectives*

*Edited by*

Susan Andrews  
Jinhua Chen  
Guang Kuan



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## Abbreviations Used in the Footnotes

- DBZ* *Dai Nihon Bukkyō Zensho* 大日本佛教全書 [Complete Collection of Buddhist Texts, Great Japan], compiled by Bussho kankō kai 佛書刊行會, Tokyo: Daiichi Shobō 第一書房, 1979.
- J* *Jiaxing Canon* 嘉興大藏經 [Jiaxing Buddhist Canon]. Taipei: Xinwenfeng 新文豐, 1987.
- STGS* *San Tendai Godai San ki* 參天台五臺山記 [The Record of a Pilgrimage to the Tiantai and Wutai Mountains]. References made to the DBZ edition.
- T* *Taishō shinshū daizōkyō* 大正新修大藏經 [Buddhist Canon Compiled during the Taishō Era (1912-26)], 100 vols. Eds. Takakusu Junjirō 高楠順次郎 and Watanabe Kaigyoku 渡邊海旭, et al. Tokyo: Taishō issaikyō kankōkai 大正一切經刊行會, 1924-1932.
- X* (*Wan*) *xu zangjing* 卍字續藏經 [Man Extended Buddhist Canon]. 150 vols. Xinwenfeng chuban gongsi 新文豐出版公司, Taipei 臺北, 1968-1970. Reprint of Nakano Tatsue 中野達慧, et al., comps. *Dai Nihon zoku zōkyō* 大日本續藏經 [Extended Buddhist Canon of Great Japan], 120 cases. Kyoto: Zōkyō shoin 藏經書院, 1905-1912



# Introduction

*Susan Andrews and Jinhua Chen*

Sacred place is an essential component of any religious tradition. In the case of Buddhism, the religion's spread throughout Asia and across the globe can be viewed as a protracted process in which sacred sites were created and recreated in new cultural settings. While in many cases practitioners reproduced the most important Buddhist sites of India throughout the expanding religious world, in other instances the meeting of translocal tradition and autochthonous practice gave rise to what were initially highly novel conceptions of Buddhist holy territory. Continuity with the past and substantial breaks with tradition have been, at least insofar as the transnational cult of Mount Wutai (Wutai shan 五臺山) is concerned, integral to the making and re-making of Buddhist territory.

As its name suggests, Mount Wutai—literally the Mountain of Five Plateaus—is a collection of five principal (and many minor) peaks. It stands on the northern reaches of the Taihang 太行 range in today's Shanxi province, China. Perhaps from the early fourth century, as work by Birnbaum and Robson among others has shown, the site has been an object of local religious significance.<sup>1</sup> Long before it was created as a Buddhist place, Mount Wutai was believed to be a territory where powerful drugs might be collected and on which mountain spirits (*shanshen* 山神) and immortals or transcendents (*xian* 仙) dwelled. One of the best-known early anecdotes about the site holds, for example, that in the fourth century one hundred individuals took refuge in the mountain to escape chaos in their nearby home region and subsequently achieved immortality there.<sup>2</sup> “A Daoist scripture,” the same seventh-century source tells us, “says Mount Wutai is called ‘Purple Palace’ (Zifu 紫府) [because] it often has purple vapors. Immortals,” the text declares, “dwell there.”<sup>3</sup>

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1 On this dimension of the mountain's history, see Raoul Birnbaum, “The Manifestations of a Monastery: Shen-ying's Experiences on Mount Wu-t'ai in T'ang Context,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 106, no. 1 (1986): 110–137, and Raoul Birnbaum, “Secret Halls of the Mountain Lords: The Caves of Wu-t'ai Shan,” *Cahiers d'Extrême-Asie* 5 (1989–1990): 116–140. Also important here is James Robson, “Changing Places: The Conversions of Religious Sites in China,” In *Images, Relics, and Legends: The Formation and Transformation of Buddhist Sacred Sites*, edited by James Benn, Jinhua Chen, and James Robson, 90–111 (Oakville, Ontario, Canada: Mosaic Press, 2012).

2 T. 2098, 51: 1093a12–13. Birnbaum, “The Manifestations of a Monastery,” 122.

3 T. 2098, 51: 1093a13–14.

Buddhism's introduction to the region in the sixth and seventh centuries entailed the fusion of these pre-existing visions of the territory's significance with imported imaginings of the mountain's value. Tang (618–907) dynasty pilgrims and residents, for instance, venerated a stūpa purportedly erected by Indian King Aśoka in the third century B.C.E. and a Mount Wutai counterpart to the famous Gṛdhrahakūṭa-parvata (Vulture or Eagle Peak) of Buddhism's homeland at the same time that they esteemed grottoes held to be the residences of immortals. A unique blending of translocal and autochthonous traditions gave shape to the mountain cult that continues to flourish on these peaks today.

Within scholarship on the mountain, the processes through which seventh-century Buddhists constructed Mount Wutai as the dwelling place of the powerful deity of wisdom Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī (Wenshu pusa 文殊菩薩) has received much attention. Initially, the notion that a bodhisattva resided in a particular locale constituted one of many innovations in Buddhist sacred geography that attended the religion's eastward transmission. In India, locales affiliated with Śākyamuni Buddha and, later, his important disciples constituted the principal pilgrimage centers. Yet as with other transnational traditions, Buddhist notions of sacred place developed in relation to the new forms of practice and belief encountered in its movement across the globe. Over time, three other Chinese sites came to be venerated as the realms (*daochang* 道場) of bodhisattvas: Mount Emei (Emei shan 峨眉山), Mount Jiuhua (Jiuhua shan 九華山), and Mount Putuo (Putuo shan 普陀山). Since perhaps the mid-seventeenth century, these locales have been celebrated as the “Four Great Mountains” (*Sida mingshan* 四大名山), home to Puxian 普賢 (Samantabhadra), Dizang 地藏 (Kṣitigarbha), and Guanyin 觀音 (Avalokiteśvara) respectively.<sup>4</sup>

The fact that Mount Wutai's importance has spanned a millennium and a half helps to explain the considerable attention scholars have devoted to understanding its past and present. Much of this work has focused on the period of its emergence as a holy Buddhist place. In his seminal “Mañjuśrī,” Étienne Lamotte called attention to the role that scripture played in this development. Proponents of the mountain cult, Lamotte and others have shown, creatively interpreted a triad of sūtras as predicting the Bodhisattva's appearance at the mountain.<sup>5</sup> In so doing, practitioners provided scriptural authority for the novel practice of venerating a mountain as Mañjuśrī's realm.

4 Marcus Bingenheimer, *Island of Guanyin: Mount Putuo and its gazeteers* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 196.

5 These are Buddhahadra's 佛馱跋陀羅 (fifth century) ca.420 translation of the *Huayan jing* 華嚴經 (*Avataṃsaka sūtra*), the *Wenshu shili fabaozang tuoluoni jing* 文殊師利法寶藏陀羅尼經 [*Mañjuśrī dharma ratnagarbha dhāraṇī sūtra*] translated into Chinese by Bodhiruci



At the same time, miracle tales and imagery spread the idea that Mañjuśrī could and did appear to residents and pilgrims. As Birnbaum, Gimello, and Stevenson have stressed, accounts of the Bodhisattva's appearances before devotees confirmed for communities near and far that the territory was indeed an extraordinary place.<sup>6</sup> Many of the early accounts of Mañjuśrī's manifestations at Mount Wutai appear in a triad of pre-twelfth century gazetteers devoted to this site.<sup>7</sup> Miracle tale collections, diaries, hagiographies, Buddhist histories and encyclopedias also preserve accounts of extraordinary happenings that help us to understand early visions of Mount Wutai.<sup>8</sup>

While canonical sources of this type have much to teach us, texts never recognized in this way—as contributors to this volume remind us—also greatly enrich our understanding of the mountain. Recent work by Cartelli and Schaeffer, for instance, highlights how non-canonical poetry collections provide a

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菩提流志 (672?–727), and the *Wenshu shili ban niepan jing* 文殊師利般涅槃經 [*Mañjuśrī parinirvāna sūtra*]. Étienne Lamotte, “Mañjuśrī,” *T'oung Pao* 48 (1960): 1–96.

- 6 In addition to the articles by Birnbaum referenced above, on this topic readers should consult Robert Gimello, “Chang Shang-ying on Wu-t'ai Shan,” in *Pilgrims and Sacred Sites in China*, edited by Susan Naquin and Chünfang Yü, 89–149 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992) and Robert Gimello, “Wu-t'ai Shan during the Early Chin Dynasty: The Testimony of Chu Pien,” *Chung-Hwa Buddhist Journal* 7 (1994): 501–612. Also see Daniel B. Stevenson, “A Sacred Peak,” in *Buddhist Scriptures*, edited by Donald S. Lopez, 84–89 (London: Penguin; New York: Penguin Putnam, 2004).
- 7 These are Huixiang's 慧祥 (seventh-century) *Gu Qingliang zhuan* 古清涼傳 (Ancient Chronicle of Mount Clear and Cool), Yanyi's 延一 (998?–1072) *Guang Qingliang zhuan* 廣清涼傳 (Extended Chronicle of Mount Clear and Cool) and Zhang Shangying's 張商英 (1043–1122) *Xu Qingliang zhuan* 續清涼傳 [Continued Chronicle of Mount Clear and Cool]. From the twelfth century, these sources circulated together in a Jin edition (1115–1234) with a preface by Yao Xiaoxi 姚孝錫. See Gimello, “Chang Shang-ying,” 126. From an early date, Zhu Bian's 朱弁 (d. 1144) *Taishan ruiying ji* 臺山瑞應記 [Record of Auspicious Response at Mount (Wu)] tai], a personal account of his time at the place composed during the period of his captivity in nearby Datong 大同 during the Jin (1115–1234), was also appended to these sources.
- 8 Examples of other sources that preserve miracle tales set at early Mount Wutai include Daoshi's 道世 (?–683) mammoth *Fayuan zhulin* 法苑珠林 [Pearl Grove of the Dharma Garden], the writings of his contemporary Daoxuan 道宣 (596–667) such as the *Ji shenzhou sanbao gantong lu* 集神州三寶感通錄 [Collected records of the Three Treasure miracles in China] and the *Xu Gaoseng zhuan* 續高僧傳 (Continued Biographies of Eminent Monks), as well as Fazang's 法藏 (643–712) *Huayan jing zhuan ji* 華嚴經傳記 [Record of the *Avatamsaka sūtra*'s Transmission] and his *Huayan jing Tanxuan ji* 華嚴經探玄記 [Record of the Search for the Profundities of the *Avatamsaka sūtra*]. The well-known travel diary of Japanese cleric Ennin 圓仁 (794–864)—the *Nittō guhō junrei gyōki* 入唐求法巡禮行記 [Record of a Pilgrimage to China in Search of the Law]—also preserves accounts of extraordinary happenings at pre-tenth century Mount Wutai.

window into the religious world of Mount Wutai.<sup>9</sup> In this volume, examinations by Borgen and Charleux of diaries produced by Japanese and Mongol pilgrims to the site reveal the locale's larger East Asian significance. And, studying Ming (1368–1644) inscriptions preserved there, Guang Kuan, for example, reconstructs the contours of local monastic organization from this period, a history largely excluded from official gazetteers. Moving beyond the boundaries of Buddhist canons in these and other contributions we gain access to new vantage points from which to consider the territory's later and pan-Asian importance.

Writing is of course but one form of material culture that attests to the cooperation and contest between diverse groups at the site during its more than fifteen-hundred-year history. The earliest known reference to the visual presentation of Mount Wutai appears in the seventh-century *Gu Qingliang zhuan* 古清涼傳 [Ancient Chronicle of Mount Clear and Cool].<sup>10</sup> The text asserts that following Huize's 會蹟 (seventh-century) imperially-commissioned journey to Mount Wutai the monk submitted a report and map of the mountain (*shantu* 山圖) to the throne. Though their content—and the content of the small screen (*xiaozhang* 小帳) that Huize had fashioned based upon the map—remain unknown to us, the text stresses that these holy traces “increased [Mount Wutai's] reputation in the capital city and surrounding domain.”<sup>11</sup> As these lines indicate, visual materials played a profound role in creating and sustaining Mount Wutai as a holy site, a point that Wong, Heller, Chou, and Lin among others have emphasized.<sup>12</sup>

9 Mary Anne Cartelli, *The Five-Colored Clouds of Mount Wutai: Poems from Dunhuang* (Leiden: Brill, 2013); Kurtis R. Schaeffer, “Tibetan Poetry on Wutai Shan,” *Journal of the International Association of Tibetan Studies* 6 (2011): 215–242.

10 Natasha Heller and Dorothy Wong point out that this *shantu* constitutes the first reference to a visual representation of the site. Natasha Heller, “Visualizing Pilgrimage and Mapping Experience: Mount Wutai on the Silk Road,” in *The Journey of Maps and Images on the Silk Road*, edited by Philippe Forêt and Andreas Kaplony, 29–50 (Lieden; Boston: Brill, 2008). See also Dorothy C. Wong, “A Reassessment of the Representation of Mt. Wutai from Dunhuang Cave 61,” *Archives of Asian Art* 46 (1993): 27–52.

11 T. 2098, 51: 1098c.

12 Similarly, statuary helps us to reconstruct the locale's history. The earliest written accounts of the mountain include multiple references to depictions of Mañjuśrī and other figures, including the *Gu Qingliang zhuan* passage about the cleric Kuiji's 窺基 (632–682) time at the mountain. A disciple of Yogācāra master Xuanzang 玄奘 (602–664), the text holds that Kuiji and his party of more than 500 people repaired an image of Mañjuśrī on the Middle Terrace after which they “perceived the scent of incense and the sound of a bell” (T. 2098, 51: 1094a17–18). Passages like this one establish that from the beginning imagery played a fundamental role in the religious life of Mount Wutai. Though early sources include numerous references like this one, it is not until the ninth century that we

Indeed, visual sources provide some of the strongest evidence of the Mount Wutai cult's geographical expansion. As Peijung Wu has shown, the existence of statue-sets and woodblock prints depicting Mañjuśrī astride a lion and accompanied by a child and a groom in Japan indicate that by the tenth-century imaginings of the Bodhisattva of Wisdom originating at Mount Wutai were known in the archipelago.<sup>13</sup> Imre Hamar's contribution to this volume discusses similar presentations of Mañjuśrī found at Dunhuang that suggest the mountain's significance among the Khotanese. Studying some of the very same visual materials, Wei-cheng Lin endeavours to understand the implications of Mount Wutai's remaking in Xixia territory. Like the transmission of writings, the circulation of statues, maps, calligraphy, and other objects promoted the Mount Wutai cult of Mañjuśrī within and well beyond China's shifting borders.

While scholarship has revealed much about Mount Wutai's early history, the territory's enduring and pan-East Asian religious significance is less well understood. This is despite the fact that the first records of the site reference the arrival of foreign travellers there.<sup>14</sup> Beginning in the tenth century, religious practitioners endeavoured to recreate the mountain's landscapes in new geographical contexts. While studies by Andrews, Cho, and Guthrie have begun to explore this topic, much work remains to be done in this area and the studies of Chinese, Japanese, Khotanese, Korean, and Xixia remakings of Mount Wutai presented here deepen our appreciation of the ways that sacred geography is made and remade in new places and times.<sup>15</sup> The contributions should be of

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find a detailed description of a Mañjuśrī statue at Mount Wutai in Ennin's diary. The text suggests that this image at the famous Huayan si 華嚴寺 (Avatamsaka Temple) presented the deity astride his lion (DBZ 113: 233). See Wen-shing Chou, *Mount Wutai: Visions of a Sacred Buddhist Mountain* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2018) and Wei-cheng Lin, *Building a Sacred Mountain: The Buddhist Architecture of China's Mount Wutai* (Seattle: University of Washington, 2014).

13 Peijung Wu, "The Mañjuśrī Statues and Buddhist Practice of Saidaiji: Iconography, Interior Features of Statues, and Rituals Associated with Buddhist Icons" (PhD diss., University of California at Los Angeles, 2002).

14 The seventh-century *Gu Qingliang zhuan*, for instance, describes the South Asian cleric Shijiamiduoluo's 釋迦蜜多羅 (Śākyamitra?, b. 569–?) arrival at the mountain in the Qianfeng 乾封 period (666–668). T. 2098, 51: 1098c.

15 Susan Andrews, "Shenji de fuzhi yu nizhuan: Jianshi Shi Diaoran shengtū zhuan zhong de Wutaishan miaoshu" 神跡的複製與逆轉: 檢視釋耄然聖徒傳中的五臺山描述 [Miraculous Replications and Reversals: An Examination of the Mountain of Five Plateaus' Depiction in the Cleric Chōnen's Hagiography], *Shensheng kongjian; Zhongguo zongjiao zhong de kongjian yinsu* 神聖空間: 中古宗教中的空間因素 [Sacred Space: Spatial Factors in Medieval Chinese Religions], edited by Jinhua Chen and Yinggang Sun, 379–398 (Shanghai: Fudan daxue chubanshe, 2015) and Susan Andrews, "Representing Mount Wutai's 五臺山 Past: A Study of Chinese and Japanese Miracle Tales about the Five Terrace Mountain" (PhD diss., Columbia University, 2013). See also Eun-su Cho,

interest to students not only of Buddhism and Asian Studies but also sacred space more generally.

And yet, Mount Wutai is more than simply a case study for students of sacred geography. Its international significance, as well as its status as a place of interreligious encounters provide fertile scholarly ground in which to explore a constellation of issues. As the papers collected in this volume demonstrate, researching the mountain's present and its past allows us to explore intersections such as those between commercial and religious life, the miraculous and the material, the state and sites of devotion. It is here—with a series of four papers illuminating connections between the court and the mountain cult—that we begin.

## 1 Court Patronage and State Politics at Mount Wutai

Scholars of Mount Wutai have devoted considerable attention to the role that imperial patrons played in its development as a Buddhist place. Addressing the roles of Northern Wei (386–534) rulers, especially Emperor Xiaowen 魏孝文 (r. 471–499), in this process, Raoul Birnbaum called attention to Mount Wutai's proximity to the reigning family's homeland Datong 大同. By promoting the mountain's status as a significant place, he argued, members of the ruling family simultaneously enhanced the prestige of their native region and their family.<sup>16</sup> The activities of Empress Wu Zetian 武則天 (r. 690–705) and Emperor Kangxi 康熙 (r. 1661–1722), in particular, have attracted the attention of scholars in our field. The former played a pivotal role in the locale's transformation from

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"Manifestation of the Buddha's Land in the Here and Now: Relic Installation and Territorial Transformation in Medieval Korea," in *Images, Relics, and Legends: The Formation and Transformation of Buddhist Sacred Sites*, edited by James Benn, Jinhua Chen, and James Robson (Oakville, Ontario, Canada: Mosaic Press, 2012), 138–165, as well as Elizabeth Kim Guthrie, "Smoke Gets in Your Eyes: The Blurred Lines of the Secular and Sacred at the Cham Shan Temples in Canada" (M.A. thesis., Queen's University, 2015).

<sup>16</sup> On this topic, Birnbaum explains that in the centuries leading up to and coinciding with its veneration as Mañjuśrī's dwelling place, the city had close ties to the throne. His argument concerns not only the Northern Wei court but also the Tang line. Mount Wutai is located roughly between Datong, site of the old capital of the fourth-fifth century Wei rulers, and Taiyuan 太原, the ancestral seat of the ruling family of the Tang. The implications of this location should not be ignored, for it appears that the first royal patron of religious activities there was the late-fifth century ruler Xiaowen ... and such activities rose to a special flourishing height under the generous patronage of eighth and ninth century Tang rulers, most prominently Daizong 代宗 (r. 762–780). Birnbaum, "Manifestations of a Monastery," 121.

a territory of regional importance to the foremost sacred site of the Tang, as work by Tansen Sen, Jinhua Chen, and, here, Yinggang Sun illuminates.<sup>17</sup> Scholars including Köhle and Tuttle have examined the Kangxi emperor's engagement with this place.<sup>18</sup>

In "From Mount Wutai to the Seven Jewel Tower," Sun Yinggang reconstructs the now forgotten role of a highly influential cleric in Empress Wu Zetian's court, as well as the Mount Wutai cult she patronized lavishly. Through careful study of fragmentary sources, Sun shows that the monk Degan 德感 (7th–8th centuries)—a disciple of cleric Kuiji 窥基 (632–682) and second-generation disciple of Xuanzang 玄奘 (602–664)—played a key role in Buddhist affairs of the late seventh and early eighth centuries. The paper illuminates a hitherto little known relationship between a cleric, Wu Zetian's court, and the mountain cult. By showing that individuals affiliated with the Faxiang 法相 (Yogācāra) school played important roles in Wu Zetian's regime and the inchoate Buddhist mountain cult, Sun's work provides strong evidence that the emperor obtained the support of the contemporary *mainstream* Buddhist sangha, in which members of Xuanzang's lineage figured prominently.

Geoffrey Goble's work focuses on Tang Daizong's 代宗 (r. 762–80) patronage of the territory. Well-known to scholars in the field, Daizong maintained a close relationship with Esoteric master Amoghavajra (Bukong 不空, 705–774). Following Birnbaum and Weinstein, scholars have generally explained the ruler's involvement at Mount Wutai as a consequence of Amoghavajra's influence, emphasizing the monk's alleged devotion to Mañjuśrī. This line of interpretation, Goble shows, misreads extant materials. In addition to calling into question the level of Amoghavajra's devotion to the Bodhisattva of Wisdom, the author demonstrates that it was Daizong's interest in Mount Wutai as a place of longstanding imperial activity that drew both him and thus the cleric to patronize this locale. Examining communications between the emperor and Esoteric master, Goble asserts that Amoghavajra responded to Daizong's interest in Mount Wutai and, later, Mañjuśrī as part of a larger attempt to align

17 Jinhua Chen, "Śarīra and Scepter: Empress Wu's Political Use of Buddhist Relics," *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 25, no. 1-2 (2005): 33–150 and Jinhua Chen, *Philosopher, Practitioner, Politician: The Many Lives of Fazang (643-712)* (Leiden, The Netherlands; Boston: Brill: 2007), as well as Tansen Sen, *Buddhism, Diplomacy, and Trade: The Realignment of Sino-Indian Relations, 600–1400* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2003).

18 Natalie Köhle, "Why did the Kangxi Emperor go to Wutai Shan? Patronage, Pilgrimage, and the Place of Tibetan Buddhism at the early Qing court," *Late Imperial China* 29.1 (2008): 73–119, and Gray Tuttle, "Tibetan Buddhism at Wutai shan in the Qing: The Chinese-language Register," *Journal of the International Association of Tibetan Studies* 6 (2011): 163–214.

the Esoteric practices he promoted with successful governing. This provocative new reading of a well-known relationship between the state and site demands that we reconsider our visions of rulers vis-à-vis religion. The women and men who sat on the throne were not, as sometimes imagined, led blindly by clerics; they were religious actors with individual motivations who, as the articles in this section of the volume show, shaped Mount Wutai's history profoundly.

While a large body of scholarship explores Mount Wutai in the Tang, less has been written about Ming period developments there. Papers by Guang Kuan and Dewei Zhang begin to fill this scholarly gap. Guang Kuan's article uses extant Ming period inscriptions to reconstruct Mount Wutai's monastic official system during the period. The author notices considerable variation both in the ways that officials were appointed to their positions and the powers they exercised at the mountain vis-à-vis their clerical counterparts in the capital. "The data..." he writes, "indicates that there was not a fully functioning system established to administer Mount Wutai Buddhism." Rather, individuals close to the emperor exerted great influence at the site. Personal relationships and, in particular, proximity to the throne, Guang shows, mattered in the sixteenth century just as they did in Amoghavajra's time. This chapter not only sheds light on the specific ways that power was organized and exerted at the mountain at a particular time but also calls attention to the importance of examining extracanonical materials for historians of Buddhism. In this example, inscriptions provide a window into the lives of monastic officials largely excluded from the official gazetteers produced in the Ming.

How and why did the Jiaxing canon come to be carved at Mount Wutai? This intriguing question lies at the heart of Dewei Zhang's article. Here once again imperial relationships are important; Zhang argues convincingly that the cleric Mizang Daokai 密藏道開 (?–1594?) initiated his project at this site in 1589 in large part because he anticipated that he would receive ample support from Empress Dowager Cisheng 慈聖 (1545–1614) and other scholar-officials in nearby Beijing. When for the reasons that Zhang carefully outlines, Daokai failed to secure this support he relocated the carving project south four years later. There the canon remained unfinished for more than one hundred years. Like the other papers presented in this section, Zhang's highlights the critical role that the court played in the life of Mount Wutai. His study of letters exchanged among clerics and between monastics and their (potential) patrons draws attention, once again, to the significance of extra-canonical materials for the reconstruction of Mount Wutai's past.

## 2 Pilgrims and Sacred Sites at Mount Wutai

“Mount Wutai,” writes Guang Kuan in his contribution to this volume, “was unique insofar as it was as a site where individuals from across the Buddhist world came together.” As references to the arrival of South Asian cleric Shiji-amiduoluo 釋迦蜜多羅 (Śākyamitra?, b. 569–?) in the Qianfeng 乾封 period (666–668) establish, from the seventh century visitors travelled to Mount Wutai from both near and far.<sup>19</sup> Today, the UNESCO World Heritage site attracts pilgrims and tourists from every corner of the globe.<sup>20</sup> And, though most certainly significant to millions of these believers as Mañjuśrī’s home, now as in the distant past practices that fall within and well beyond Buddhism’s scope remain important at this place.<sup>21</sup> For 1500 years, pilgrims have journeyed from great distances to this site of interreligious and international meeting.

The early international character of Mount Wutai comes to the fore in Robert Borgen’s “A Japanese Pilgrim’s Visit to Wutai in the Winter of 1072.” The article offers a careful introduction to the Japanese monk Jōjin’s 成尋 (1011–1081) record of the site: *San Tendai Godai San Ki* 參天台五臺山記 (The Record of a Pilgrimage to the Tiantai and Wutai Mountains). When Jōjin arrived at Mount Wutai in the late eleventh century, he was one in a line of Japanese pilgrims who had journeyed to this place since the eighth century. That Jōjin carried with him diaries of some of his Japanese predecessors is but one example of the ways individuals’ Mount Wutai itineraries inform and are shaped by the experiences of other pilgrims.<sup>22</sup> During Jōjin’s lifetime Mount Wutai’s significance not only motivated his Japanese contemporaries to journey to the mountain but, as Andrews discusses below, also led them to create local counterparts to the distant, Chinese site. From an early date, Mount Wutai, as Borgen shows, exerted a great hold on the religious imagination of the Japanese.<sup>23</sup>

19 T. 2098, 51: 1098c–1099b.

20 In 2009, the mountain was inscribed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. “Mount Wutai.” United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization. <<http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1279>> (accessed June 10, 2019).

21 Hurelbaatar Ujeed’s work on the popular or “folk” practices alive at the site makes this point plain. Hurelbaatar Ujeed, “Making Folk Beliefs in the Buddhist Holy Land Wutai-shan.” Paper presented at the The Mountain of Five Plateaus Conference, Mount Wutai, August 2015.

22 During his time at Mount Wutai, the cleric visited the remains of one of his Japanese monastic predecessors: the monk Ryōsen 靈仙 (ca. 759–ca. 827). He carried the diary of previous Mount Wutai pilgrim Chōnen 儵然 (938?–1016) and Enchin 圓珍 (814–891) with him on his journey. Other items with which Jōjin travelled—locks of hair, robes, a mirror given to him by his compatriots to deposit at the site—also indicate the importance of Mount Wutai to Japanese of the period.

23 We are following Borgen’s language closely here.

Seven centuries later, Isabelle Charleux's work demonstrates, Mount Wutai's religious landscape was no less diverse than it had been in Jōjin's time. As with the previous paper, the record of one individual's life and relationship to Mount Wutai lies at the heart of Charleux's piece. Duke Miγvačir (1893–1958)—a writer, traveller, artist, poet, and pious Buddhist from Inner Mongolia—travelled to the mountain with his younger brother in 1938. The account of his journey, Charleux shows, reveals much about early 20th century Mongol practices at and representations of Mount Wutai. It indicates, for instance, that Mongols held particular sites and stories in special esteem such as the Daybo qutuγtu and Manibarada-yin süme. The remains of Japanese monk and Mount Wutai pilgrim Ryōsen 靈仙 (ca. 759–ca. 827)—important to ninth, tenth, and eleventh century Japanese practitioners—provide an early parallel that illuminates how religious practitioners from around the Buddhist world made Mount Wutai their own. Though one mountain, today as in the past Mount Wutai is a place assigned a range of sometimes overlapping, sometimes competing meanings—a dimension of the locale's history we miss when our scholarship focuses solely on materials produced and preserved within the borders of the territory we today call China.

Wen-shing Chou's "Miracles in Translation" compares the foremost Tibetan-language guidebook to Mount Wutai with the Chinese-language mountain gazetteer on which she shows it was largely based. The author's careful reading of these related accounts demonstrates how by rewriting, omitting, and restructuring material compiler Rölpe Dorjé (1717–1786) and his later counterparts crafted pre-existing Wutai material for a new Tibetan (as well as Mongolian-language) audience. Inserting Mount Wutai into an Indo-Tibetan cosmology and placing familiar Mount Wutai actors alongside important Tibetan figures associated with Mañjuśrī, Chou demonstrates, were but two of many ways the guidebook's authors "not only reinserted the most important transcultural sacred site of the Qing empire [Mount Wutai] into the larger topography of Tibetan sacred sites, but also introduced the substance of Buddhist teachings and history in China into a Gelukpa Buddhist worldview..." A beautiful, close reading of two critical sources for the study of Mount Wutai, this article addresses the ways that local tradition is made meaningful in new times and places.

The focus shifts from Tibetan to Uigur-language accounts of Mount Wutai in Peter Zieme's study. To date, he explains, "no systematic study of Mañjuśrī in the Old Uigur tradition has been written." Zieme's introduction to Uigur language sources related to the deity and mountain thus constitutes a major contribution to the field. Readers familiar with *The Five-Colored Clouds of Mount Wutai*, Mary Anne Cartelli's marvellous study of Mount Wutai poetic traditions



preserved at Dunhuang, will no doubt be interested in Zieme's discussion of the ways passages first rendered in Chinese were later translated for Uigur audiences. Like the parallel gazetteers studied by Chou, these fragments from the St. Petersburg Collection offer us a unique window into the ways that diverse communities constructed Mount Wutai's significance. Together with the epithets and inscriptions Zieme analyzes, the praise poems he examines attest to the Mountain of Five Plateaus's great influence long after and far beyond the borders of the Tang.

It was not only individuals and communities dwelling far at a remove from Mount Wutai that put forward novel, sometimes competing visions of the site's significance. As Timothy Barrett's work shows, Chinese women and men—like their Uigur and Tibetan counterparts—set out diverse imaginings of this place. Alongside the substantial body of material celebrating the site's illustriousness, Barrett's article reminds us, circulated records denying Mount Wutai's specialness, oftentimes affiliated with Chan Buddhism. Barrett demonstrates that these accounts of masters challenging the territory's pre-eminence—and the significance of pilgrimage and sacred place generally—are even more widespread than earlier scholarship by Heine and others indicates. The “vehement denial” exhibited in these sources, he explains, “was as much a marker of importance as the copious literary and artistic production in praise of Wutais-han” that we encounter throughout this volume.

### 3 Changing Practices at Mount Wutai

During the course of its fifteen-hundred-year history, women and men have engaged in highly diverse forms of practice at Mount Wutai. Beginning with Sheng Kai's study of Tang period master Fazhao 法照 (8th century), the papers assembled in this section introduce three of these. Well-known through the work of Daniel Stevenson among others, the Pure Land patriarch Fazhao is closely associated with a series of miraculous visions that tradition holds he obtained before founding the Zhulin si 竹林寺 there.<sup>24</sup> After situating the cleric's activities in his larger eighth century context, Sheng Kai introduces a less well-known dimension of the monk's history: his status as the object of devotion. Relying on comparatively unfamiliar material preserved at Dunhuang,

24 Sources such as the *Guang Qingliang zhuan* (Extended Chronicle of Mount Clear and Cool) celebrate Pure Land master Fazhao's entry into a *huasi* 化寺 (visionary monastery) on which, Daniel Stevenson explains, tradition holds the earthly Zhulin si's construction was based. See Stevenson, “Visions of Mañjuśrī.”

the author explains that accounts of Fazhao's last words held he could and would return to protect and instruct devotees. The recitation of Fazhao's name, according to Sheng Kai, forms part of a larger turn in his career that the author argues rendered Buddhism a "this-worldly" and "social" form of practice open to a broad audience.

Fazhao's hagiography remains important in Beth Szczepanski's study of a type of temple music unique to contemporary Mount Wutai. Though the origins of these traditions remains obscure, today practitioners attribute them to the fourth Pure Land Patriarch, as well as Ming period Chan master Jin Bifeng 金壁峰 (14th century). The origin story invests the Chinese form of wind and percussion music (*shengguanyue* 笙管樂) performed at Shuxiang si 殊像寺 and Nanshan si 南山寺—two among perhaps fifty active temples at the mountain—with a prestigious past. And though, as Szczepanski writes, "the attribution of local developments in Buddhist chant and instrumental music at Mount Wutai to the eminent monks Fazhao and Jin Bifeng lacks historical credibility," it nevertheless has much to teach us about the critical roles that hagiography and the writing and rewriting of Mount Wutai's past plays in its still unfolding history.

Finally, Ester Bianchi's article concerns twentieth century master Nenghai 能海 (1886–1967), who promoted a distinctive type of Sino-Tibetan practice at Mount Wutai. While the mountain has always, Bianchi notes, been a place where varied religious traditions coexisted, Nenghai's tradition is unique, she explains, insofar as it synthesizes seemingly disparate Chinese and Tibetan forms of practice. Like work by Szczepanski, Bianchi's contribution teaches us much about the ways that post-Cultural Revolution religious life is taking shape at Mount Wutai. The piece, like articles by Goble on Daizong and Amoghavajra, as well as Zhang's study of Mizang Daokai, emphasizes the critical role that individual actors often play in the reshaping of Mount Wutai's religious landscape.

#### 4 Replicating Mount Wutai

As the recreation of Mount Wutai's landscapes in new locales demonstrates, the site's geography has been no more fixed than its past, written and rewritten by pilgrims and residents to serve their diverse needs. By the tenth century, the articles collected here show, Buddhists endeavoured to establish counterparts to the Mountain of Five Plateaus throughout East Asia. A multiplicity of motivations, they demonstrate, stood behind the activities of the women and men who created Mount Wutai counterparts around the globe, solving a perennial

problem faced by practitioners: how does one make a religious home in new territory?

The focus of Sun-ah Choi's article is the Qing period reign of Qianlong 乾隆 (r. 1735–1796), a ruler whose fascination with Mañjuśrī and Mount Wutai are well known.<sup>25</sup> The author examines Qianlong's creation of a "surrogate mountain" nearby the capital; she considers why the ruler, having recreated the famous Pusa ding 菩薩頂 at this locale a decade earlier, chose to build a local version to the less famous Shuxiang si there. The answer, in short, seems to be that the latter Mount Wutai temple housed the sole true visage (*zhenrong* 眞容) of Mañjuśrī. Readers will no doubt find Choi's discussion of the concept "true visage" overtime and in different Buddhist contexts fascinating. In her work the practice of replicating a mountain is made understandable as part of the larger process of constructing and reconstructing true likenesses of "original" entities.

Visual sources are also key in Imre Hamar's study of the roles that Khotanese actors played in the transnational Mount Wutai cult. Highlighting the considerable links between Khotan and the site, Hamar contends that Khotan may well have been the place where the *Avataṃsaka sūtra*—the scripture long identified as fundamental to the locale's construction as a Buddhist site—was composed. Though Khotanese practitioners did not endeavour to rebuild Mount Wutai within the Central Asian territory, a rendering of the Chinese site and its resident bodhisattva together with Khotan's Niutou shan 牛頭山 preserved at Dunhuang suggests a radical reimagining of the relationship between these territories—one in which Mount Wutai constituted the eastern of two peaks in an arrangement that put Central Asian and Chinese practitioners on equal footing. Links of the type Hamar identifies suggest that we must devote more attention to the roles of non-Chinese actors in the Wutai cult. As is the case today, artisans, clerics, rulers, and, we can imagine, individuals excluded from these elite circles who dwelled far beyond China's borders were key participants in the establishment and continuation of this decidedly pan-Asian devotional cult.

In her contribution to this volume, Andrews explores the founding legends about one hub of the transnational cult of Mount Wutai in Japan. Since the twelfth century, a thirteen-level pagoda atop Tōnomine 多武峰 (also known as Tanzan Shrine 談山神社) has been celebrated as a local version of a structure that stood at China's Mount Wutai. Narratives alleging this connection assert that the seventh-century Japanese cleric Jōe 定慧 (643?–665, 714?) fashioned

25 David M. Farquhar, "Emperor as Bodhisattva in The Governance of the Ch'ing Empire," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 38, no. 2 (1978): 5–34.

the replica following his return from Mount Wutai and as a memorial to his recently deceased father Fujiwara no Kamatari 藤原鎌足 (614–669). Though there is good reason to believe we are dealing with fiction rather than fact in this material, these elaborate accounts of the pagoda's origins highlight the range of ends that the mountain cult served in the archipelago. In this instance, the refashioning of the Chinese mountain's earliest history in records of Tōnomine's founding both facilitated the growth of a local founder cult and contributed to the sense that sites in Japan constituted legitimate places of Buddhist practice that rivalled Mount Wutai in importance.

As its title suggests, Sangyop Lee's "The Emergence of the 'Five-Terrace Mountain' Cult in Korea" examines what is perhaps the best-known replica of Mount Wutai: Odaesan 五臺山. Records of the site's purported connection with Mañjuśrī and China's Mount Wutai including those preserved in Iryon's 一然 (1206–1289) *Samguk Yusa* 三國遺史 [History and Legends of the Three Kingdoms], Eunsu Cho emphasized, facilitated its emergence as a holy place. Studying parallel accounts in Min Chi's 閔漬 (1248–1326) *Odaesan sajök* 五臺山事蹟 [Traces of the Past Events of Mount Odae], Lee sheds light on the religious environment in which the Odaesan cult formed. "Despite their stories' claims," Lee argues, "the cultic practitioners of Mount Odae do not seem to have had close contact with elite Korean or Chinese culture. Far from being an example of elite, royal, cosmopolitan Silla Buddhism, the cult appears to have begun as a locally confined religious movement of the mountain." The early Mount Wutai cult centered at Odaesan was far less cosmopolitan than the narrative traditions might lead us to believe.

While the establishment of a Xixia version of Mount Wutai forms the backdrop of his study, Wei-cheng Lin does not aim to outline the history of this place. Instead, his work considers the implications of Mount Wutai's replication there for understanding visual material related to Mañjusri and the Mountain of Five Plateaus. He asks: how did the founding of Xixia Mount Wutai shape presentations and interpretations of the mountain and deity, including those preserved at Dunhuang? "The iconography of the flying bodhisattva and the changing imagery of Mount Wutai," he argues, "should be considered anew, as its function in the caves reveals a different concept and religious content of Mount Wutai after the Xixia Mount Wutai was established." Reproduction of the sacred site, Lin's work makes clear, has implications for the ways "originals" associated with the cult came to be interpreted throughout Asia.

## Concluding Remarks

Since the time of its initial construction as Mañjuśrī's dwelling place, the Mount Wutai cult has continued to develop in new and interesting ways that scholars are only beginning to appreciate. Both within China's changing borders and at the far reaches of the Buddhist world, practitioners have read, written, and reconstructed the site and the saint's significance in dramatically different ways. The seventeen papers collected here consider the locale's importance not only during the Tang dynasty but over the course of its extensive history, including two case studies that illuminate the less-studied contemporary situation at the mountain. Combining the analysis of canonical texts with the examination of written and visual materials never categorized in this way, contributors explore the roles of local and non-Chinese actors in the making and remaking of the pan-Asian Mount Wutai cult. Their work demonstrates the diversity of ends which participation in the religious traditions of this place have served across the Buddhist world.

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**PART 1**

*Court Patronage and State Control*





## From Mount Wutai to the Seven Jewel Tower: Monk Degan and Political Propaganda of the Wuzhou Period

*Yinggang Sun*

The relationship between Wu Zetian's regime in the Wuzhou (690–705) period and Buddhism was an intimate one. Yet while this point is widely known in the academic world, there remains much confusion about many aspects of the important historical circumstances in which this relationship developed. This is due in part to the fact that later histories repeatedly reconstruct the past. Furthermore, misunderstandings born of misinterpretations of these materials persist in work produced by modern scholars. Figures who maintained close relationships with Wu Zhao have emerged as popular subjects in contemporary research. These include individuals such as Xue Huaiyi 薛懷義 (?–694) and Huifan 惠範 (?–713), who became entangled in “wicked” political drama, and the famed foreign translators Bodhiruci and Śikṣānanda. However, as we will see in the careful study of a single eminent monk involved in Wu Zetian's court—the cleric Degan 德感 (7th–8th century)—when we discard “common knowledge” about the past we oftentimes come to have a dramatically different picture of a person and the events in which she or he was involved.

Though largely forgotten in historical memory, the monk Degan played an important role in the formation of Wu Zetian's regime. Like Xue Huaiyi, he was a monk in the palace shrine in Luoyang. His name appears in the *Dayun jing shu* 大雲經疏 (The Commentary on the Great Cloud sūtra) and on the list of people involved at the translation workshop for Bodhiruci's new translation of the *\*Ratnamegha sūtra* (*Baoyun jing* 寶雨經). For a long time he served as abbot of Foshouji si 佛授記寺 in Luoyang and after Wu Zetian's return to Chang'an he was recalled to the capital where he took up the abbotship of the Qingchan si 清禪寺, managing monastic affairs in the city. Late in Wu Zetian's reign he represented her on pilgrimage to Mount Wutai. He presided over the construction of the Qibao ta 七寶臺 (Seven Jewel Tower) at Guangzhai si 光宅寺, which was the most important religious monument in the late period of the regime. He furthermore crafted an Eleven-Faced Avalokiteśvara (Guanyin 觀音) image for the blessing of the regime. However, even though he played a leading role in Buddhist affairs in the period, his name has almost vanished from relevant literary accounts and modern research.

What explains this situation? One reason that Degan appears as such an ordinary figure in secular and Buddhist documents may be that he lacked the splendid qualities of his contemporary Xue Huayi. It is also very clear that following the regime's overthrow, Degan's image was reformulated. This is apparent when we examine Zanning's 贊寧 (919–1001) *Song gaoseng zhuan* 宋高僧傳 (Song Biographies of Eminent Monks). The *Degan zhuan* 德感傳 (Biography of Degan)—the sole monastic biography of Degan—does not even mention Wu Zetian. In this source, Degan comes across as quite an “ordinary” though surely eminent Buddhist monk. He was an authority on scriptures such as the *Yogācārabhūmi-sāstra* (*Yuqie shidi lun* 瑜伽師地論; Discourse on the Stages of Contemplation Practice). He long served as a leader in the Buddhist sangha. However, despite this prosaic later account of Degan's life, the cleric was by no means a mediocre man. Quite the opposite, this eminent monk, who according to the *Song gaoseng zhuan* was praised by the ruler as “next to Nāgārjuna and equal to Aśvaghōṣa,” seems likely to have directed affairs related to religious politics in the Wuzhou period. Equally important, combing through historical materials we discover that his guru and dharma lineages were by no means ordinary. In contrast to Xue Huayi, who literature portrays as having been born to a peddler in Luoyang, Degan was a disciple of Kuiji 窺基 (632–682) and was thus a second-generation disciple of Xuanzang 玄奘 (602–664). This supports Antonino Forte's view that monks of the Faxiang 法相 (Yogācāra) school played important roles during the regime of Wu Zetian.

Exploring new information related to Degan of this type changes our entire historical picture; it forces us to see that eminent Buddhist monks appointed by Wu Zetian were both in name and in reality Buddhist leaders of their time. This discovery indicates that Wu Zetian obtained the support of the contemporary mainstream Buddhist sangha. It reveals, further, that the monastic community of Xuanzang's lineage did not disappear following the political frustrations in his last decade of life. To the contrary, in the Wuzhou period Xuanzang's second-generation disciple Degan came to stand at the forefront of history.

## 1 Essential Literature Related to Degan

Although in life Degan was a figure of great importance, there remain only scattered references to him. Degan served as abbot of important temples (the Foshouji si in Luoyang and Qingchan si in Chang'an). He undertook the heavy responsibilities of pilgrimage, translation and temple construction—closely linked to the regime and political propaganda of his day. Nevertheless, even

among contemporary academic work, it seems there is not a single paper exploring the cleric's position and role on the contemporary religious and political stages. His guru and scholastic lineages remain unclear in both these early and contemporary sources.

The only monastic biography of Degan appears in the *Song gaoseng zhuan* by Zanning. It is simple and, moreover, full of errors.

Shi Degan's surname was Hou. He was a man of Taiyuan. ... He was quite proficient in lecturing on the *Yogācārabhūmi śāstra*. The Emperor [Empress] appointed him as a translator monk. He participated in Yijing's 義淨 (635–713) translation workshop together with Seungjang (Shengzhuang 勝莊, d.u.) and Dayi 大儀 (d.u.) and others. ... The Emperor was pleased and soon after bestowed onto him Lordship Founding-Duke of Changping County, accumulating fields [amounting to] three thousand households. The Emperor praised him with the verses, “The jewel of the Yellow and Fen rivers, the outstanding of the lofty mountains! Quickly dispelling worldly burdens and swiftly undoing the tassels of the dusty world! The black robed [monks] look up to his virtue! His fame is heard of in Buddhist temples! He is next to Nāgārjuna and equal to Aśvaghōṣa!” The reigning royalty esteemed him like this. This royal composition became widely known and those who occupied the monastic ranks honored him. Later he served as rector at Foshouji si in Henan. Later in life he rose to abbot. In and out of [the court] he was respected. He died at over sixty years of age. His work *Yimen* circulated in the world. He could change people's minds with his seven expedient means. As to the doctrines of sudden and swift realization, he was foe to Dharma Master Zhan, thus they withdrew upon engagement.<sup>1</sup>

釋德感，姓侯氏，太原人也。..... 於瑜伽論，特振聲彩。天皇大帝，徵為翻經大德，又與勝莊、大儀等，同參義淨譯場。..... 帝悅，尋授封昌平縣開國公，累計田至三千戶。帝為讚曰：“河汾之寶，山嶽之英，早祛俗累，夙解塵纓，緇門仰德，紺宇馳聲，式亞龍樹，爰齊馬鳴。” 為時君之所貴，為若此也。御製風行，緇伍榮之。後充河南佛授記寺都維那，晚升寺任，中外肅然。終年六十餘。著《義門》行于世；如其七方便、人迴心、漸頓悟義，與湛法師為勍敵耳，故交綏而退焉。

1 T 2061, 50: 731c12–24.

The *Song gaoseng zhuan* provides some basic information, such as the fact that Degan hailed from Taiyuan. However, it omits the most important information related to Degan. This includes his participation in Wu Zetian's compilation of the commentary on the *Dayun jing*, as well as in Bodhiruci's new translation of the *\*Ratnamegha sūtra* and Śikṣānanda's translation of the *Avataṃsaka sūtra* (*Huayan jing* 華嚴經; Flower Ornament sūtra). Further, the biography of Degan never mentions Wu Zetian.

It is quite clear that the matters related to Wu Zetian in Degan's biography were incorrectly attributed to Gaozong 高宗 (r. 649–683). Gaozong had passed away already in 683. At this time Yijing had not yet returned to China and Degan could thus not have participated in Yijing's translation workshop at this time. Further, Degan was granted the title of Founding-Duke of Changping County (Changping xian kaiguo gong 昌平縣開國公) for his tributary offering of the commentary on the *Dayun jing*. This occurred at the time of Wu Zetian's rule. We know, therefore, that it was not, as the *Song gaoseng zhuan* holds, Gaozong who presented him this title. Similarly, though the praise of Degan clearly came from Wu Zetian, the *Quan Tang wen* 全唐文 [Complete Texts of the Tang Dynasty] attributes this poem to Gaozong.<sup>2</sup>

In 685, Degan, like Xue Huayi, was already an important member of the palace shrine under Wu Zetian in Luoyang. He undoubtedly played an important role as a political theorist from the maturation period of Wu Zetian's regime. His name often appears alongside the infamous Xue Huaiyi. The pair appears to have collaborated closely, composing the commentary on the *Dayun jing* and the new translation of the *\*Ratnamegha sūtra*.<sup>3</sup> In 690, Degan was given the title Founding-Duke of Changping County participating in the drafting of the commentary on the *Dayun jing*. It is worth pointing out that Degan was from Taiyuan and was, it seems, not connected to Changping (present day Changping district in Beijing). Antonino Forte expressed difficulty in understanding the title.<sup>4</sup> However, as we will shortly discuss, this title was in no way an arbitrary reward. There actually existed a relationship between Degan and Changping stemming from his early years studying under the great master of *cittamātra* Kuiji. This title actually points to his scholastic lineage, which

2 *Quan Tang wen* 全唐文, ed. Dong Gao 董誥, fasc. 15 (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju 中華書局), 178. For preliminary treatment of Degan's biography see Antonino Forte, *Political Propaganda and Ideology in China at the End of the Seventh Century* (Italian School of East Asian Studies, 2005), 129–143.

3 *Jiu Tang shu* 舊唐書, fasc. 183, 4741–4743.

4 Antonio Forte, *Political Propaganda and Ideology in China at the End of the Seventh Century: Inquiry into the Nature, Authors and Function of the Dunhuang Document S. 6502, Followed by an Annotated Translation* (Napoli: Istituto Universitario Orientale, 1976), 87–170.

extended from Xuanzang to Kuiji. Degan's scholarly position within the Buddhist sangha at least in part led Wu Zetian to promote him as a religious leader. While this position—with its strong political tones—might have allowed Degan to remain a Buddhist leader for a long time during the regime, following its overthrow his religious and scholastic positions were overturned. His legacy was, moreover, meticulously eliminated even to the extent that his relationship to Xuanzang and Kuiji was erased from historical sources.

Piecing together the past we discover that Degan played an important role in religious affairs throughout the Wuzhou period. In year 2 of the Changshou 長壽 reign era (693) of the Great Zhou dynasty (Dazhou 大周) (i.e., Wu Zetian's dynasty), we find the following among those listed at the translation workshop for the \**Ratnamegha sūtra* at Foshouji si: "Foshouji si Rector and Founding-Duke of Changping County the śramaṇa Degan [as] scribe" (佛授記寺都維那昌平縣開國公沙門德感筆受).<sup>5</sup> Beginning in 693 or even possibly from 685, Degan served as rector (*duweina* 都維那) of Foshouji si and later (by 695 at the latest) he had been promoted to abbot. He served as abbot until 701. On lunar month 10/24 in 695 (year 1 of Tiance Wansui 天冊萬歲), the abbot of Foshouji si Degan and others proposed to the throne that some Buddhist works be entered into the canon.<sup>6</sup> He also participated in Yijing's translation workshop and acted as a proofreader (*zhengyi* 證義) alongside Fazang 法藏 (643–712).<sup>7</sup> On lunar month 9/23 in year 1 of reign era Dazu 大足 (701), Degan was still serving as abbot of Foshouji si.<sup>8</sup> Later, as a result of Wu Zetian returning to Chang'an from Luoyang, the Buddhist leader Degan was also recalled to Chang'an and served as abbot of Qingchan si.<sup>9</sup> It is clear that Degan played an ongoing and important role in the translation of Buddhist scriptures in the Wuzhou period. From 689 (year 1 of Yongchang 永昌) to 691 (year 2 of Tianshou 天授) he served as proofreader at the translation workshop of Devēndraprajña (Tiyunbore 提雲般若; d. 690 or 691).<sup>10</sup> Degan also participated in the translation workshop of Mañicinta (Baosiwei 寶思惟; d. 721) from 693 to 706.<sup>11</sup> Mañicinta's translation workshop translated a large number of esoteric texts with Degan acting as scribe. It seems he was somewhat

5 T 660, 16: 292b8.

6 T 2153, 55: 442b1–10.

7 T 2061, 50: 710c2–3. T 2154, 55: 568c5–6.

8 Ikeda On 池田溫, *Chūgoku kodai shamon shikigo shūroku* 中國古代寫本識語集錄 (Tōkyō: Tōkyō Daigaku Tōyō Bunka Kenkyūsho 東京大学東洋文化研究所, 1990), 258–259.

9 For treatment of the three monastic directors of Foshouji si see Forte, *Political Propaganda and Ideology in China at the End of the Seventh Century*, 180–182.

10 T 2154, 55: 565b17–24.

11 T 2152, 55: 369c28–370a12.

influenced by this experience, which perhaps helps us to understand his thoughts and religious motivations for providing support to craft an Eleven-Faced Avalokitēsvara image.

The eighty fascicle *Avataṃsaka sūtra*, the revised translation of the \**Ratnamegha sūtra*, and the commentary on the *Dayun jing* together constituted the principal textual foundation for Wu Zetian's Buddhist ideology. In the Wuzhou period, Śikṣānanda from Khotan was requested to organize a translation workshop at Foshouji si to retranslate the *Avataṃsaka sūtra*. Those eminent monks who participated included men like Bodhiruci, Yijing, Hongjing and Fazang. Degan, as abbot of the monastery, also participated in the project. In the same month after the *Avataṃsaka sūtra* was translated, Wu Zetian issued an order asking the eminent monk Fazang to lecture on the meanings of the new translation at Foshouji si. As Fazang was lecturing on the sūtra, Luoyang experienced an earthquake right when Fazang was discussing the sea shaking in the sūtra.<sup>12</sup> The earthquake was consequently interpreted as a miraculous event associated with the sūtra and a response to Wu Zetian's benevolent rule. After the earthquake occurred, the abbot of Foshouji si Degan reported this event to Wu Zetian.<sup>13</sup>

## 2 Translation of the Eighty-Fascicle *Avataṃsaka sūtra* and Degan's Pilgrimage to Mount Wutai in 702

In year 2 of the Chang'an 長安 reign era (702), religion and political propaganda under the Wuzhou regime became linked surprisingly closely with Mount Wutai. This detail relates to changes in policies on Buddhism and the caliber of political propaganda under the regime. Moreover, it helps us to understand an important turning point in which Mount Wutai in the medieval period became a Buddhist center. The religious and political importance the regime attached to Mount Wutai continued into the following year from the fifth lunar month of 702. The *Guang Qingliang zhuan* 廣清涼傳 [Expanded Chronicle of Mount Clear and Cool] offers the following detailed and accurate description of this development:

12 T 2054, 50: 281c2–5.

13 See X 221, 03: 594b20–22. Chengguan records a similar event at T 1736, 36: 114a9–13. For the political, religious and intellectual background of this incident see Sun Yinggang 孫英剛, "Fojiao dui bentu yinyang zaiyishuo de huajie—yi dizhen yu Wuzhou keming wei zhongxin" 佛教對本土陰陽災異說的化解—以地震與武周革命為中心, *Shilin* 史林 6 (2013): 53–63.



Qingliang si gets its name from the mountain. It is situated alongside the cliff. In front of it flow mountain streams and stands a gully and above clouds and rainbows. On lunar month 5/15 in year 2 of reign era Chang'an, Prince Jian'an [Wu Zetian's nephew Wu Youyi] served as minister in Bingzhou. He presented a memorial for rebuilding and repairs. By imperial decree Great Venerable Degan personally visited Mount Wutai. On the twentieth day of the seventh lunar month he climbed a peak of a terrace. More than a thousand monks and laypeople together witnessed the appearance of the Buddha's hand in clouds of five colors. White foxes and deer approached them ahead. Sanskrit chanting [was heard] on the wind and flowing light [appeared] in the valley. There was an unusual aroma scenting everyone far and near. They also saw a great monk—his body a purplish-gold color—standing ahead of them. They further saw a bodhisattva adorned with strings of jewels appear on the western ridge. The Venerable then drew a picture and reported this to the throne. The Emperor [Empress] was greatly pleased and subsequently granted the Venerable the title of Founding-Duke of Changping county with a territory of one-thousand households. He was asked to take up [leadership] of Qingchan si and to manage the monastic affairs in the capital.<sup>14</sup>

清涼寺，依山立名，託居巖側，前通澗壑，上接雲霓。長安二年五月十五日。建安王（武則天的侄子武攸宜）仕并州長史。奏重修葺。敕大德感法師。親謁五臺山。以七月二十日，登臺之頂。僧俗一千餘人，同見五色雲，中現佛手相。白狐白鹿，馴狎於前。梵響隨風，流亮山谷。異香芬馥，遠近襲人。又見大僧，身紫金色，面前而立。復見菩薩，身帶瓔珞，西峰出現。法師乃圖畫聞奏。帝大悅，遂封法師昌平縣開國公，食邑一千戶，請充清禪寺，主掌京國僧尼事。

Interpreting this *Guang Qingliang zhuan* entry, it is important to note that during this period Wu Zetian returned from Luoyang to the former capital Chang'an. From lunar month 10 in 701 (Dazu 1) to lunar month 10 in 703 (Chang'an 3), Wu Zetian was actually handling the government from Chang'an. This point is quite crucial to understanding related historical details.

The earliest sūtra reference to Mount Wutai appears in the sixty-fascicle *Avatamsaka sūtra* translated by Buddhahadra in the Eastern Jin and Liu-Song period. The "Chapter on the Bodhisattva Abodes" (Pusa zhuchu pin 菩薩住處品) mentions the abode of Mañjuśrī Bodhisattva: "In the eastern land there is a bodhisattva abode called Qingliangshan 清涼山 (Clear and Cool Mountain).

14 T 2099, 51: 1107a21–b1.

Past bodhisattvas always resided there. There appeared a bodhisattva named Mañjuśrī with a retinue of ten-thousand followers. He constantly preaches the Dharma.”<sup>15</sup> However, here it only mentions Mañjuśrī Bodhisattva’s abode as “Clear and Cool Mountain” situated in the northeast. Mount Wutai is not identified explicitly as Mount Qingliang.

What allowed for Mount Wutai to be constructed as Mount Qingliang? For one, its cold climate matched the description of the Buddhist sūtra. Just as important, it was northeast of Chang’an. That is to say, this point of reference looking to the northeast was actually the center of politics and religion in the medieval period: Chang’an. Hence the *Gu Qingliang zhuan* 古清涼傳 [Ancient Chronicle of Mount Clear and Cool] by śramaṇa Huixiang 慧祥 (seventh century) of Langu 藍谷 in the Tang dynasty describes Mount Wutai’s position as follows: “the mountain is more than 1,600 *li* northeast of Chang’an.”<sup>16</sup> The *Xu Qingliang zhuan* 續清涼傳 [Continued Chronicle of Mount Clear and Cool] states, “Mount Qingliang is in the northeast of the Great Tang and southwest of Yanzhao. The mountain is named Zifu and the land is named Qingliang. It is a land of bodhisattva practice and a place where dragons and gods long abide.” It further states, “To the northeast one can clearly view the great sea and to the southwest see a short way off Chang’an.”<sup>17</sup> With respect to how Mount Wutai was determined to be Mount Qingliang, at present it requires continued investigation. Lü Cheng 呂澂 speculated that the association between Mount Qingliang in the *Avatamsaka sūtra* and Mount Wutai might have already formed in the earlier period of its development in the “Western Regions.”<sup>18</sup> Regardless, in many instances Tang literature relates Mount Wutai and Chang’an—Mount Wutai is northeast of Chang’an and from Mount Wutai one can see a short way out to Chang’an in the southwest. It is interesting that Wu Zetian dispatched Degan to go on pilgrimage to Mount Wutai after she relocated to Chang’an from Luoyang in lunar month 10 of Dazu 1.

The political-religious propaganda that developed around Mount Wutai starting the following year reflects the increasing connections between Mount Wutai and Chang’an. The Buddhist monasteries of Chang’an city played the most important role in this movement. The new translation of the *Avatamsaka sūtra* (eighty fascicles) was a great project in the late period of the Wuzhou. For Wu Zetian, the grand and magnificent Flower Ornament Realm as pictured in the sūtra was very much like the prosperous situation of the Great Zhou. She

15 T 278, 09: 590a3–5.

16 T 2098, 51: 1093b13.

17 T 2100, 51: 1129c15–1130a6.

18 Lü Cheng 呂澂, *Zhongguo foxue sixiang gailun* 中國佛學思想概論 (Taipei: Tianhua Chuban Gongsi 天華出版公司, 1991), 400.

personally attended to the translation workshop and provided titles for texts. Bodhiruci and Yijing together recited the Sanskrit original while Fuli 復禮 (?–706?) and Fazang participated as scribes and in enhancing the texts. In lunar month 10 of 699 (year 2 of Shengli 聖曆) the translation was completed. The increase in status of the *Avataṃsaka sūtra* corresponded with the elevated position of Mañjuśrī Bodhisattva and facilitated the expansion of the Mañjuśrī cult. Also as a consequence of this, Mount Wutai attained great importance as the shrine for Mañjuśrī Bodhisattva. The greatest promoters of the Mañjuśrī cult were the founder of the Huayan School Fazang and the monks from the “Western Regions” Śikṣānanda and Bodhiruci, all of whom were favored by Wu Zetian. The *Huayan jing zhuanji* 華嚴經傳記 [Record of the Transmission of the *Avataṃsaka sūtra*] compiled by Fazang often refers to Mañjuśrī Bodhisattva and Mount Wutai, insisting that the mountain is Mañjuśrī’s shrine or center (*daochang* 道場).<sup>19</sup>

Regarding Degan’s pilgrimage activities to Mount Wutai, some scholars have suggested they constituted important political propaganda by Wu Zetian who attempted to rule with the identity of a Wheel Turning Monarch (*cakravartin*).<sup>20</sup> In the absence of evidence we cannot make such conjectures. However, Degan’s pilgrimage to Mount Wutai seems to have been related to the translation of the eighty-fascicle *Avataṃsaka sūtra*. The scripture’s re-translation bolstered Mount Wutai’s status as Mañjuśrī’s shrine. Subsequently Wu Zetian dispatched the Buddhist leader Degan on pilgrimage to Mount Wutai and a portrait of the Empress was made and sent there. It was also following these events that Wu Zetian renamed the Dafu Lingjiu si 大孚靈鷲寺 on the north side of central Mount Wutai the Da Huayan si 大華嚴寺 (Great Flower Garland Monastery) and had it renovated.<sup>21</sup> The direct adoption of “Flower Garland” into the name of the temple also demonstrates the role played by the new translation of the *Avataṃsaka sūtra* in the pilgrimage movement at Mount Wutai at the time.

Degan clearly played the most significant role in important religious-political activities at the end of the Wuzhou dynasty. After Degan and the others climbed Mount Wutai, they witnessed many auspicious and odd sights such as “clouds of five colors”, white foxes, white deer, great monks, the image of the Buddha’s hand and an emanation of Mañjuśrī Bodhisattva. Degan and the

19 See T 2073, 51.

20 Gu Zhengmei 古正美, *Cong Tianwang chuantong dao Fowang chuantong: Zhongguo zhongshiji Fojiao zhiguo yishi xingtai yanjiu* 從天王傳統到佛王傳統：中國中世紀佛教治國意識形態研究 (Taipei: Shanzhou Chubanshe 商周出版社, 2003), 400–402.

21 Zhencheng 鎮澄 (1546–1617), *Gazeteer of Mount Qingliang (Qingliangshan zhi 清涼山志)*, fasc. 3, *Zhushi mingji* 諸寺名跡, ed. Shen Huiyun 沈慧雲 (Taiyuan: Shanxi Jiaoyu Chubanshe 山西教育出版社), 51.

others also collated the reports of auspicious sightings of the Tang and Zhou dynasties and had them depicted in illuminated manuscripts to be brought back to Chang'an and presented to Wu Zetian. The political propaganda of the Wuzhou regime actively merged concepts found in traditional Chinese political theory such as auspicious sightings and yin-yang/five-elements theory with further systematized Buddhist theories.

To sum up, the motivations behind the pilgrimages of Degan and others to Mount Wutai were both religious and political. Their activity further helped revitalize religious life at Mount Wutai; according to the *Guang Qingliang zhuan*, "it was due to these auspicious sights that Mount Wutai was rejuvenated."<sup>22</sup>

The purpose of writing the *Guang Qingliang zhuan* was to promote and venerate the Mount Wutai cult and we must bear this interest in mind when interpreting materials related to Degan. The *Guang Qingliang zhuan* assertion that Wu Zetian granted Degan the title of Founding-Duke of Changping County as a result of his pilgrimage to Mount Wutai makes this plain. Though much past research based on its account assumes that the title Degan was awarded indicates that Mount Wutai had come to possess the status of the center of Buddhism for the whole country, this was not so. In actuality, as discussed above, Degan had already received this title in 690 when along with Huaiyi and others he presented the commentary to the *Dayun jing* to the throne. It must be pointed out that it was the Qingchan si and not Qingliang si that he came to oversee. This was a temple in Chang'an and not at Mount Wutai.

Degan himself was from Taiyuan and this was quite possibly a significant reason for him being selected by Wu Zetian to go to Mount Wutai. Li Yong 李邕 (678–747) in his stele inscription for Qingliang si on Mount Wutai refers to Degan as a "National Teacher" (*guoshi* 國師).<sup>23</sup> This is a historical memory further in accordance with the historical reality. After his pilgrimage to Mount Wutai, Degan was recalled to Chang'an where he continued both serving as abbot of Qingchan si and administering Buddhist affairs in the capital. At this time Wu Zetian was in Chang'an. Degan's office also corresponded to his abbacy of Foshouji si when he was in Luoyang. In the following year in Chang'an he presided over the construction of the Qibao tai 七寶臺 (Seven Jewel Tower), which was an important monumental building in the late Wuzhou period.

<sup>22</sup> T 2099, 51: 1106c26.

<sup>23</sup> Li Yong 李邕, *Wutaishan Qingliang si bei* 五台山清涼寺碑, in *Quan Tang wen* 全唐文, fasc. 264 (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju 中華書局, 1983), 2679–2680.

### 3 Examining the Building of the Seven Jewel Tower: The Political Structure and Religious Spaces of Chang'an in the Late Wuzhou Period

After Degan returned from Mount Wutai, Wu Zetian quickly ordered him to take on the major responsibility of constructing the Seven Jewel Tower of Guangzhai si. Guangzhai si in Chang'an was located south of the Daming gong 大明宮 (Daming Palace), east of the Taiji gong 太極宮 (Taiji Palace) and north of the Hengjie 橫街. It was the Buddhist temple nearest to the Imperial Palace (Huang gongcheng 皇宮城). In 677 (year 2 of Yifeng 儀鳳),

the diviner of clouds and mists said this division of the city had special *qi*. It was ordered that a stone vessel be dug out. Inside the vessel were more than ten thousand grains of Buddha relics, whereupon they established Guangzhai si and built the Seven Jewel Tower.<sup>24</sup>

Dividing the relics and building stūpas was an important political convention on the part of a Wheel-Turning King (*cakravartin*) in Buddhism, the significance of which need not be elaborated upon here. It is worth pointing out that the narrative of relics being found at Guangzhai si was taken up in the commentary on the *Dayun jing* which praised Wu Zetian.<sup>25</sup> That is to say that this event in which relics were discovered at Guangzhai si was already foretold in the *Dayun jing*. This was to prove that Wu Zetian's rule over the realm was pre-ordained. Wu Zetian ordered the construction of Guangzhai si and had the relics distributed among the temples in the capital. She also provided forty-nine grains of relic material to each province. This clearly emulated Aśoka and Sui Wendi 隋文帝 (Yang Jian 楊堅; r. 581–604) who both distributed relics in such a fashion.<sup>26</sup>

24 Song Minqin 宋敏求, *Chang'an zhi* 長安志 (Taiwan: Chengwen Chubanshe Gongsī 成文出版社公司, 1931), 176. *Zengding Tang liangjing chengfang kao* 增訂唐兩京城坊考, fasc. 3, 72.

25 There are two versions of the *Dayun jing shu* 大雲經疏 among the Dunhuang documents. They are respectively S.2658 and S.6502. See Huang Yongwu 黃永武, *Dunhuang baozang* 敦煌寶藏, no. 22 (Taipei: Xinwenfeng Chuban Gongsī 新文豐出版公司, 1982), 45–54 and no. 47, 498–506. For related research see Yabuki Keiki 矢吹慶輝, *Sankaikyō no kenkyū* 三階教之研究 (Tōkyō: Iwanami Shoten 岩波書店, 1927), 686–747; Lin Shitian 林世田, “Wu Zetian cheng di yu tuchen xiangrui—yi S.6502 *Dayun jing shu* wei zhongxin” 武則天稱帝與圖讖祥瑞——以 S.6502 〈大雲經疏〉為中心, *Dunhuangxue jikan* 敦煌學輯刊 2 (2002): 64–72. “*Dayun jing shu* chubu yanjiu” 大雲經疏初步研究, *Wenxian* 文獻 4 (2002): 47–59; Jin Yingkun 金滢坤 and Liu Yonghai 劉永海, “Dunhuang ben *Dayun jing shu* xinlun” 敦煌本大雲經疏新論, *Wenshi* 文史 4 (2009): 31–46.

26 For a detailed study on the distribution of the Guangzhai relics and their relation to the Renshou relics movement see Jinhua Chen, “*Śarīra* and Scepter: Empress Wu's Political

Records of the structure suggest it may have had a special relationship with Mount Wutai. *Sita ji* 寺塔記 (The Chronicle of Monasteries) by Duan Chengshi 段成式 (803?–863) states, “The Hall of Samantabhadra at Guangzhai si in Guangzhai ward was originally the dressing hall of Empress Wu Zetian. When the grapevines had grown, the Empress came to visit the Hall.”<sup>27</sup> In actuality, this temple was the closest temple to the Daming gong. The *Song gaoseng zhuan* records that “this temple was originally the Qibaotai si—therein was the tower built by Empress Wu Zetian.” It also records that “Shi Sengjie 釋僧竭 ... constructed the Mañjuśrī Hall in imitation of the sacred characteristics of Mount Wutai.”<sup>28</sup> In other words, the Mañjuśrī Hall constructed at Guangzhai si was actually modeled on the sacred features of Mount Wutai. Although we cannot speculate whether Guangzhai si was definitely influenced by Mount Wutai as such, from this account it seems that Guangzhai si indeed possessed some elements related to the Mount Wutai cult. It was due to the important political characteristics that Guangzhai si possessed that it received particular attention from Wu Zetian who went a step further in building the Seven Jewel Tower there and also renaming the temple Qibaotai si.

The political implications of the Qibao tai have been examined by numerous scholars and shall not be further elaborated upon here.<sup>29</sup> In the two years between lunar month 10 of Dazu 1 (701) and month 10 of Chang’an 3 (703), Wu Zetian administered the court and government from Daming gong in Chang’an. The Qibao tai was built in these two years. It might be said that it was a representative monumental building of the late Wuzhou dynasty. However, it was Degan who presided over its construction. Guangzhai si was also renamed to Qibaotai si as a result of said tower being built. The status of the Qibaotai si was also quite important in the late Wuzhou period, so much so that its influence also extended outside Chang’an. Regarding Xiuxing 秀行 (d.u.)—the abbot of Dayun si 大雲寺 in Anxi in 727 who was originally a monk affiliated with

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Use of Buddhist Relics,” *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 25, no. 1-2 (2002): 35–150.

27 T 2093, 51: 1023c18–19.

28 T 2061, 50: 878b19–c2.

29 See Yan Juanying 顏娟英, “Wu Zetian yu Tang chang’an Qibaotai shidiao foxiang” 武則天與唐長安七寶台石雕佛像, *Yishuxue* 藝術學 1 (1987): 41–47; “Tang Chang’an Qibaotai shike de zai xingsi” 唐長安七寶台石刻的再省思, in *Shanxisheng kaogu suobian Yuanwangji Shanxisheng kaogu yanjiu suodan sishi zhounian jinian wenji* 陝西省考古所編《遠望集——陝西省考古研究所誕四十周年紀念文集》, vol. 2 (Xi’an: Shaanxi Renmin Meishu Chubanshe 陝西人民美術出版社, 1998), 829–842; Yang Xiaojun 楊效俊, “Chang’an Guangzhai si Qibaotai fudiao shi qunxiang de fengge, tuxiang ji fuyuan tantao” 長安光宅寺七寶台浮雕石群像的風格、圖像及復原探討. *Kaogu yu wenwu* 考古與文物 5 (2008): 69–83.

Qibaotai si in Chang'an<sup>30</sup>—for example, Rong Xinjiang speculates, “perhaps [he] was the one dispatched by Wu Zetian or her regime to Anxi at the same time the construction of Dayun si was ordered in the Western Regions.”<sup>31</sup>

After Wu Zetian returned to Chang'an, Degan was also recalled from Luoyang to Chang'an to take up an appointment as abbot of Qingchan si. Qingchan si was east of the southern gate in Xingning ward (Xingning fang 興寧坊) in Chang'an. Xingning ward was in the northeast corner of the city next to the Tonghua men 通化門 (Tonghua Gate). Looking at it geographically, Xingning ward together with Guangzhai ward are both located in the northeast section of Chang'an, bordering both palaces (the Daming gong and Taiji gong). From these locations it would have been convenient to come and go from the court and receive instructions from Wu Zetian. Moreover, the two wards are close to one another, being no more than two thousand meters apart. It thus would also have been convenient for Degan to monitor the construction of the Seven Jewel Tower from Qingchan si. However, what is most important is that in these two years when Wu Zetian had returned to Chang'an, Qingchan si actually played the role of being the most important official center of Buddhism. It corresponded to Foshouji si in Luoyang, engaging in some meritorious activities such as sūtra translations, which had been relocated from Foshouji si.

Qingchan si from the start of the Sui dynasty had received energetic support from Emperor Wen 文帝 (r. 581–604), as well as Empress Dugu 獨孤皇后 (544–602) and Emperor Yang 煬帝 (r. 604–628). During this period, it was the center of meditative practices in Chang'an.<sup>32</sup> Daoxuan 道宣 (596–667) commented that “there is none greater than this temple in the capital by way of its great number of masters.”<sup>33</sup> It was the temple in Chang'an in the best economic state. After Wu Zetian returned to Chang'an, Qingchan si became an important center of Buddhism. For instance, Śikṣānanda “translated sūtras such as the *Prophecy of Mañjuśrī* in the western capital at Qingchan si and the eastern capital at Foshouji si.”<sup>34</sup> The eminent monk Fazang also worked at this temple.<sup>35</sup> In year 2 of Chang'an, Qingchan si was actually the headquarters of Buddhist activities for the whole of Chang'an. The importance of Degan also goes

30 See Paul Pelliot and Haneda Tōru 羽田亨, eds., *Huichao wang wu Tianzhu guo zhuan canjuan* 慧超往五天竺國傳殘卷, in *Tonkō isho* 敦煌遺書, first edition, Tō-a Kōkyūkai 東亞考究會 (1926), 9–10.

31 Rong Xinjiang 榮新江, “Tangdai Xiyu de hanhua fosi xitong” 唐代西域的漢化佛寺系統, *Guici wenhua yanjiu* 龜茲文化研究 1 (2005): 130–137.

32 See T 2060, 50: 580a4–23 and T 2060, 50: 577a26–b8.

33 T 2060, 50: 697c12–13.

34 T 2073, 51: 155a20–21.

35 Fazang himself states, “In Chang'an 2 in the capital at Qingchan si I had to translate the sūtras. ... 長安二年於京清禪寺翻經之暇.” T 1712, 33: 555a17–18.

without saying. As will be discussed below, it was Degan who supervised the construction of the Seven Jewel Tower.

Of the temple's thirty-two extant stone engraved images, the majority ended up in the collection of the Hosokawa 細川 household in Japan. The others are either in the Ming pagoda of Nanmen 南門, the Beilin Museum 碑林博物館 in Xi'an, or the United States of America. A number of inscriptions remain from the images constructed, though among the small part of those inscriptions which can be confirmed as original the most eye-catching are those of Yao Chong 姚崇 (651–721). A Maitreya triad of the Seven Jewel Tower crafted by Yao Chong has an inscription which states it was crafted by Yao Yuan 姚元 in Chang'an 3.<sup>36</sup> His younger brother Yao Yuanjing also crafted a Maitreya triad there.<sup>37</sup>

What is interesting is that although Yao Chong rose to a higher position and was of greater importance than his younger brother, the Maitreya statuary set he crafted was smaller than that of Yao Yuanjing, one being 67.9 cm tall and the other 104.5 cm. Yao Chong's relationship with Buddhism was quite complex. From the late Wuzhou period to the early period of the Kaiyuan reign era of Xuanzong, he seems to have been the most powerful advocate for restricting Buddhism. For instance, in year 2 of Kaiyuan (714), it was at his request that "officials carefully investigated and defrocked thirty-thousand monks and nuns in the realm who had ordained to avoid taxation and labor duties." However, at the same time he seems to have had a deep understanding of Buddhism as, for instance, he thought that "the Buddha is not external—closely look to the mind."<sup>38</sup> Yet it would be overly simplistic and perhaps untrue to simply conclude that his creation of the images was done for personal reasons. We must consider the political elements related to the creation of images in so important a monumental Buddhist building project that was strongly tinted with political considerations. The Seven Jewel Tower represented a creation of images carried out jointly by both monastics and laypeople at the national level in the Wuzhou period. It was a monument to Wu Zetian and her dynasty. In reality, as Yang Xiaojun acutely pointed out, Wu Zetian used its construction as

36 長安三年九月十五日，銀青光祿大夫行鳳閣侍郎兼檢校相王府長史姚元之造。

37 The Maitreya triad crafted by Yao Chong is at the Asian Art Museum in America. For the inscription see Yang Xiaojun (2008): 320–321. The Maitreya statuary set crafted by Yao Yuanjing is at the Tōkyō National Museum in Japan. See Yao Xiaojun, 322–323.

38 *Tang huiyao* 唐會要, fasc. 47, *Yi Shijiao* 議釋教 (Shanghai Guji Chubanshe 上海古籍出版社, 1991), 980–981. Chen Zuolong 陳祚龍 believes that Yao Chong was approving of Buddhist doctrine, though was disapproving of the excesses of monasticism. See Chen Zuolong, "Li Tang mingxiang Yao Chong yu Fojiao" 李唐名相姚崇與佛教, *Zhonghua Foxue xuebao* 中華佛學學報 2 (1988): 241–264.



an opportunity to again prop up the links between two great groups of her dynasty.

The sponsors of the construction were the sangha represented by Degan and the bureaucrats represented by Yao Chong. They were perhaps required to display their loyalty to the regime through the creation of images and inscriptions.<sup>39</sup> As a leader of the Buddhist sangha, it is fortunate that Degan's images have been preserved. The same can be said of Yao Chong who represented the imperial supporters of Li Dan 李旦 (r. 684–690; 710–712), Prince of Xiang. In the late Wuzhou period, they were faced with the problem of imperial succession. The Buddhist sangha, individuals associated with the Wu family who supported Wu Sansi 武三思 (?–707) (the Wu heir had already died), and those aligned with the Li family who rallied around Li Dan together produced a temporary and frail balance. As Zhongzong had for a long time been banished, what actually formed in the center was complex with the Li Dan faction possessing formidable strength. This political faction also became the final victor, in the end forcing the imperial succession to shift over to Ruizong's 睿宗 (Li Dan) lineage. Given that Yao Chong had his inscriptions, we might imagine that other leading figures of political factions should also have had their own, including those associated with both the Wu and Li families. Everyone took oaths to safeguard the Wuzhou regime, hoping for Wu Zetian's long health and well being. Li Dan's residence directly faced Guangzhai si. In 710, when he was now emperor, he turned this residence into Anguo si 安國寺. As Yang Xiaojun has inferred, we can discern the intimate link between Buddhism and politics in Chang'an in the period from the Wuzhou period to Ruizong's time from the close proximity between Guangzhai si, Anguo si and the Daming gong.

In Kaiyuan 23 (735) in order to commemorate the completion of Xuanzong's commentary on the *Jin'gang jing* 金剛經 [*Vajracchedikā sūtra*; Diamond sūtra], the monastic assembly of Chang'an requested the building of a Bore tai 般若台 (Prajñā Platform). Rong Xinjiang has speculated that this was within the precincts of Anguo si.<sup>40</sup> It is clear from this that the "Prajñā Platform" at Anguo si during the High Tang and the Seven Jewel Tower at Guangzhai si in the Wuzhou period geographically formed a kind of corresponding

39 See Yang Xiaojun, "Wuzhou shiqi liangjing diqu de Fojiao shijue wenhua" 武周時期兩京地區的佛教視覺文化, *Tangshi luncong* 唐史論叢 12 (2010): 265–280. Also Yang (2008): 69–83.

40 See Rong Xinjiang 榮新江, "Sheng Tang Chang'an yu Dunhuang—Cong Ecang Kaiyuan nianjiu nian (741) shou jiedi tanqi" 盛唐長安與敦煌——從俄藏〈開元廿九年(741)授戒牒〉談起, *Zhejiang Daxue xuebao* 浙江大學學報 (Renwen-Shehuikexue ban 人文社會科學版) 5 (2007): 15–25.

relationship, becoming two noteworthy buildings representative of national Buddhism.<sup>41</sup>

#### 4 Creation of the Eleven-Faced Avalokitēśvara Image: Motivations Related to Buddhist Faith and Philosophy

No trace of the Seven Jewel Tower remains today. The related stone carvings are scattered across China, Japan and America. It is noteworthy that among these stone carvings seven are standing images of the Eleven-Faced (*ekādaśamukha*) Avalokitēśvara.<sup>42</sup> Only one of them bears an inscription, which is presently kept at the Tōkyō National Museum in Japan. The extant inscription mentions none other than the eminent monk Degan discussed in this paper. It reads as follows:

Overseeing the construction of the Seven Jewel Tower and acting as abbot of Qingchan si, Founding-Duke of Changping County, the translator monk Degan offers to the country the respectful creation of one Eleven-Face Avalokitēśvara image. May the foundation of the imperial [house] be forever solid and the empress' sacred life free and long. Day 10 of lunar month 9 in Chang'an 3 (703).<sup>43</sup>

檢校造七寶台、清禪寺主、昌平縣開國公、翻經僧德感奉爲國敬造十一面觀音像一區，伏願皇基永固，聖壽遐長。長安三年九月十日（日）。

The titles of the inscription again confirm Degan's leadership of Buddhist affairs in the late period of the Wuzhou period. He was not only abbot of Qingchan si, the heart of official Buddhism in Chang'an at this time, but also shouldered the major responsibility for building the Seven Jewel Tower for Wu

41 See Yang Xiaojun (2008, 2010). Much of the discussion here draws on Yang's research.

42 For descriptions see Wang Jingfen 王靜芬, "Qi, ba shiji Guanyin zaoxiang de fanyan" 七、八世紀觀音造像的繁衍, in *Yishushi zhong de Han-Jin yu Tang-Song zhi bian* 藝術史中的漢晉與唐宋之變, eds. Shi Shouqian 石守謙 and Yan Juanying 顏娟英 (Taipei: Shitou Chuban 石頭出版, 2014), 193–224.

43 Ōmura Seigai 大村西崖, *Shina bijutsushi chōsohen* 支那美術史彫塑篇 (Tōkyō: Bussho Kankōkai Zuzōbu 佛書刊行會圖像部, 1917), 571; Sekino Tadashi 關野貞 and Tokiwa Daijō 常盤大定, eds., *Shina bukkyō shiseki* 支那佛教史跡, vol. 1, plate 28 (Tōkyō: Bukkyō shiseki kenkyūkai 佛教史跡研究會, 1925); Jin Shen 金申, ed, *Fojiao diaosu mingpin tulu* 佛教雕塑名品圖錄 (Beijing: Beijing Gongyi Meishu Chubanshe 北京工藝美術出版社, 1995), 320, 321.

Zetian. The Eleven-Faced Avalokiteśvara image was produced at his individual request. His two aspirational statements in the inscriptions reflect the fast and unexpected changes in the political situation. “May the foundation of the imperial [house] be forever solid” expresses the hope that the Eleven-Faced Avalokiteśvara—associated with protecting the country—would preserve the foundational stability of the Wuzhou dynasty, while “the empress’ sacred life free and long” conveys the hope that Wu Zetian, who had then become aged and suffered a number of illnesses, could live long and well.<sup>44</sup> More than a year later, the Wuzhou regime was on the verge of being toppled. We do not know if Degan, whose fate was intimately tied to this regime, sensed this coming upheaval.

In the late seventh century, faith in the esoteric school was already widespread and moreover rapidly developed as a result of vigorous royal support. As abbot of Foshouji si, Degan served as a scribe for translation projects and it is believed that he was familiar with ideas in this material. However, this was perhaps not the main reason for him being able to hold fast in faith and craft the Eleven-Faced Avalokiteśvara image. The decision may instead have been related to his own lineage. There are altogether four translations of the *Shiyi mian guanyin jing* 十一面觀音經 [Eleven-Faced Avalokiteśvara sūtra]. The earliest was the *Foshuo shiyi mian guanyin shenzhou jing* 佛說十一面觀世音神咒 [Buddha Teaches the Eleven-Faced Avalokiteśvara Dhāraṇī sūtra] translated by Yaśogupta (Yeshejueduo 耶舍崛多, sixth century) in year 4 of Baoding (546) in the Northern Wei. Under Gaozong in the Tang in year 4 of Yonghui 永徽 (653–654), Atikūṭa (Adijuduo 阿地瞿多 d.u.) translated the *Shiyi mian guanyin shenzhou jing* 十一面觀世音神咒經 [Eleven-Faced Avalokiteśvara Dhāraṇī sūtra], fasc. 4 of the *Tuoluoni ji jing* 陀羅尼集經 [Dhāraṇī Collection sūtra]. These two sūtras describe the iconographic features and altar rites of the Eleven-Faced Avalokiteśvara, but the latter’s altar rites are more complete and introduce twenty-eight *dhāraṇīs*. In year 1 of Xianqing 顯慶 (656), Xuanzang retranslated Yaśogupta’s version of the sūtra, the *Shiyi mian shenzhou xin jing* 十一面神咒心經 [*Avalokiteśvaraikādaśamukha dhāraṇī*; Sūtra of the Spiritual Dhāraṇī of the Eleven-Faced Avalokiteśvara] at Dacien si 大慈恩寺.<sup>45</sup> Prior to Amoghavajra’s translation, Xuanzang’s translation was the primary one in

44 Yang Xiaojun acutely points out the earlier relationship between Degan’s creation of the image and the political situation of the late period of Wu Zetian’s reign. See Yang Xiaojun, *Wu Zhou shiqi de Fojiao zaoxing—yi Chang’an Guangzhai-si Qibaotai de fudiao shifo qunxiang wei zhongxin* 武周時期的佛教造型——以長安光宅寺七寶臺的浮雕石佛群像爲中心 (Beijing: Wenwu Chubanshe, 2013), 303.

45 See Li Song 李淞, *Chang’an yishu yu zongjiao wenming* 長安藝術與宗教文明 (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju 中華書局, 2002), 169.

circulation. This can be proven from the first appearances of Eleven-Faced Avalokitēśvara images in great numbers in the late seventh century through to the beginning of the eighth. Moreover, among the Dunhuang documents, there exist various copies of Xuanzang's translation including S.3007, S. 3185V, S.3432, P.2952 and P.7353.

From the mid-seventh century, following the rise and popularity of esoteric Buddhism, the esoteric form of Avalokitēśvara—otherwise called the transformed Avalokitēśvara (*bianhua* Guanyin 變化觀音)—became more and more popular. Among the various types of 'transformed Avalokitēśvara,' the Eleven-Face Avalokitēśvara was popular first. This was especially so in the time of Wu Zetian when such single images appeared in great numbers.<sup>46</sup> This can be seen in the Western Regions, Dunhuang and at both Tang capitals (Chang'an and Luoyang). Looking at literary accounts, this was clearly connected to the imagery and ideology related to protecting the country. A work from Dunhuang stored in Japan from year 2 of Chuigong 垂拱 period (686) has an epigraph by Wu Zetian who acted as a sūtra copyist. It states, "In year 2 of Chuigong on day 4 of lunar month 12, the Empress of the Great Tang offered to Emperor Gaozong the honored crafting of one-thousand embroidered Eleven-Faced Avalokitēśvara Bodhisattvas. ..." <sup>47</sup>

At present the earliest known extant Eleven-Faced Avalokitēśvara image is the single image crafted by Xiaomen Shang Hujun 孝門上護軍 (a military title) Du Shanwei 杜山威 from year 2 of Tianshou 天授 (691) under the Wuzhou dynasty. This almost life sized stone image was unearthed in Luoyang in the time

46 For a comprehensive discussion of the spread of esoteric Buddhism in East Asia, see Charles D. Orzech, Henrik H. Sørensen and Richard Payne, eds, *Esoteric Buddhism and the Tantras in East Asia* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2010); Hamada Takashi 濱田隆, "Mikkyō kannon-zō no seiritsu to tenkai" 密教觀音像の成立と展開, in *Nyorai Kannon* 如來、觀音, eds. Sawa Ryūken 佐和隆研 and Hamada Takashi 濱田隆 (Tōkyō: Asahi Shinbunsha 朝日新聞社, 1984), 192–200. For research on the imagery of the Eleven-Faced Avalokitēśvara in the Tang, see Peng Jinzhang 彭金章, "Mogao ku di 14 ku Shi'yi Mian Guanyin jingbian" 莫高窟第 14 窟十一面觀音經變, *Dunhuang yanjiu* 敦煌研究 2 (1994): 89–97; Yen Chüan-ying, "The Sculptures from the Tower of Seven Jewels: The Style, Patronage and Iconography of the Monument" (Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 1986); Yan Juanying 顏娟英, "Tangdai Shi'yi Mian Guanyin tuxiang yu xinyang" 唐代十一面觀音圖像與信仰, *Foxue yanjiu zhongxin xuebao* 佛學研究中心學報 11 (2006): 87–116; Li Ling 李翎, "Shi'yi Mian Guanyin xiangshi yanjiu—yi Han-Zang zaoliang duibi yanjiu wei zhongxin" 十一面觀音像式研究——以漢藏造像對比研究為中心, *Dunhuangxue jikan* 敦煌學輯刊 2 (2004): 77–80; Liu Fuxing 劉復興, "Cong guanzang zaoliang kan Tangdai tianshui diqu mijiao Shi'yi Mian Guanyin xinyang" 從館藏造像看唐代天水地區密教十一面觀音信仰, *Sichou zhi lu* 絲綢之路 10 (2014): 43–45.

47 Ikeda, *Chūgoku kodai shamon shikigo shūroku*, 235.

of Emperor Guangxu 光緒 (r. 1875–1908) in the Qing. The inscription gives the following explanation for the image's crafting:

Above for the divine Emperor, may they limitlessly transform others in accord with the dao and may the dynastic foundation be forever preserved. Below may seven generations of parents, the common beings of the Dharmadhātu and all beings ride the force of this merit and encounter virtuous friends while generating *bodhicitta*, together simultaneously attaining buddhahood.<sup>48</sup>

It does not emphasize the supernatural power of the esoteric practices associated with the deity. Moreover, looking at its modeling, there are two levels of bodhisattva faces on the surface of the head: six above and three below. The nine faces are all of one expression and identical with the primary face. This does not really match up with the content of Xuanzang's translation of the *Eleven-Faced Avalokitēśvara sūtra*.

Xuanzang's second-generation disciple Huizhao 慧沼 (648–714) in the relevant commentary *Shiyi mian shenzhou xin jing yishu* 十一面神咒心經義疏 [Commentary on the *Eleven-Faced Avalokitēśvara Dhāraṇī sūtra*] has the following interpretation of the eleven faces:

As to the eleven faces, the first three are of a kind aspect, looking at the virtuous beings, moreover generating a kind mind, great kindness and the delivery of joy. The three faces on the left are wrathful faces looking at wicked beings, moreover generating a compassionate mind, great compassion and liberation from suffering. The three to the right have white teeth running upwards. The faces see those with pure karma, generating uncommon praise and encouraging progress on the Buddhist path. The final one face is one of explosive great laughter, seeing those beings of mixed virtuous and wicked qualities, moreover generating strange laughter to turn the wicked to the path. The Buddha face on the crown sometimes teaches Dharmas and the ultimate Buddhist path to those with the

48 See Osvald Siren, *Chinese Sculpture from the Fifth to the Fourteenth Century*, vol. III (London: Ernest Benn, 1925), pl. 379AB. For the inscription see “Zhou Du Shan Weidi Shan Zang hejia jingzao Guanshiyin Pusa xiangming” 周杜山威弟山藏合家敬造觀世音菩薩像銘, *Shike shiliao xinbian* 石刻史料新編, vol. 3 (Taipei: Xinwenfeng Chuban 新文豐出版, 1986), 195; “Guanshiyin Pusa xiangming” 觀世音菩薩像銘, *Beijing Tushuguan zang Zhongguo lidai shike taben huibian* 北京圖書館藏中國歷代石刻拓本彙編, vol. 17 (Zhengzhou: Zhongzhou Guji Chubanshe 中州古籍出版社, 1989), 157. For related discussion see Yan Juanying, “Tangdai Shi'yi Mian Guanyin xinyang,” 98.

capacity to practice the Mahāyāna, which is why it appears as a Buddha face.

十一面者，前三面慈相見善眾生，而生慈心大慈與樂；左三面瞋面見惡眾生，而生悲心大悲救苦；右三面白牙上出面見淨業者，發希有讚勸進佛道；最後一面暴大笑面見善惡雜穢眾生，而生怪笑改惡向道；頂上佛面或對習行大乘機者，而說諸法究竟佛道，故現佛面。<sup>49</sup>

Each of these eleven faces has a use, especially the wrathful three faces on the left which are implements used to subdue enemies.

The Eleven-Faced Avalokitēśvara was closely linked to the idea of protecting the country. In the Wuzhou period, this cult and ideology with its strong esoteric Buddhist features was not only present at the theoretical level, it was even used to resolve immediate political and military crises. In year 1 of Shengong 神功 (697), in order to suppress the Khitan, Wu Zetian ordered the eminent monk Fazang to build an altar for the Eleven-Faced Avalokitēśvara according to sūtric teachings. It was to destroy the enemy:

In year 1 of the Shengong era, the Khitan disobeyed orders and [Wu Zetian] dispatched troops to attack them. A special decree was issued ordering Fazang to halt the rebellious chaos in accord with sūtric teachings. A memorial [by Fazang] was presented. It stated, "If we are to destroy the enemy, please permit [employment] of practices of the Left Path." A decree was issued permitting this. The Dharma Master bathed and changed attire before setting up an altar for the Eleven Faced [Avalokitēśvara] where he placed images of the deity and carried out the rites. After a few days, the barbarians saw countless deity kings [under the] imperial army while some saw a floating image of Avalokitēśvara in the sky. Groups of dogs and goats continually harassed them. In a month [the imperial army] prevailed and news of this was reported [to the empress]. The Empress kindly rewarded [Fazang] and in a decree stated, "Outside Kuaicheng, the soldiers heard the sound of celestial drums. In Liangxiang county the enemy mass saw an image of Avalokitēśvara. The sweetness of wine was spread throughout the [friendly] ranks while chariots of immortals pulled banners at the head of the army. The sweeping away [of the enemy] by this divine army was aided by the benevolent power [of Buddhist deities]."

49 T 1802, 39: 1004b23-cl.

神功元年，契丹拒命，出師討之。特詔〔法〕藏依經教遏寇虐，乃奏曰：“若令摧伏怨敵，請約左道諸法。”詔從之。法師盥浴更衣，建立十一面道場，置光音像行道。始數日，羯虜睹王師無數神王之眾，或矚觀音之像浮空而至。犬羊之群相次逗撓，月捷以聞。天后優詔勞之曰：“蒞城之外，兵士聞天鼓之聲；良鄉縣中，賊眾睹觀音之像。醴酒流甘於陳塞，仙駕引轟於軍前，此神兵之掃除，蓋慈力之加被。”<sup>50</sup>

This military victory left a deep impression on the Wuzhou elites regarding the Eleven-Faced Avalokiteśvara's great protective power. As a result of these events, Wu Zetian renamed the reign era Shengong 神功 (Divine Merit).<sup>51</sup>

The sūtric teachings that Fazang drew on here were mostly from Xuanzang's translation of the *Foshuo shiyi mian Guanshiyin shenzhou jing* 佛說十一面觀世音神咒經 [*Avalokiteśvara ekadaśamukha sūtra*]. As will be discussed shortly, Xuanzang's translation already held a leading position in the Wuzhou period after having been promoted by Xuanzang's second-generation disciple Huizhao and his commentary on the text. Fazang's colleague Degan was a fellow student with Huizhao. The two men studied under the great master Kuiji. While the factors in any historical event will sometimes be quite complex, it would not be too problematic to speculate that Degan's construction of an Eleven-Faced Avalokiteśvara image was partially influenced by his guru lineage. The description of rites related to subduing of enemies in Xuanzang's translation of the *Avalokiteśvaraikādaśamukha dhāraṇī* and the cited account by Ch'oe Ch'iwŏn 崔志遠 (857–?) of Fazang's use of the deity to subdue to the Khitan provides more detailed information:

Again, if enemies from elsewhere seek to come and invade our borders, one should take a portion of sparrow fat [rouge] and recite this dhāraṇī one hundred and eight times while adorning this image. If the wrathful face on the left side faces the direction [of the enemy], it will prevent the enemy army from advancing.

復次，若他方怨賊欲來侵境，應取燕脂一顆，誦此咒咒之一百八遍，莊點此像。左邊瞋面正向彼方，令怨賊軍不得前進。<sup>52</sup>

50 T 2054, 50: 283c16–25.

51 Jinhua Chen also gives a detailed discussion on the incident of the Eleven-Faced Avalokiteśvara repelling the Khitan. See Jinhua Chen, *Philosopher, Practitioner, Politician: The Many Lives of Fazang (643–712)* (Leiden: Brill Academic Publisher, 2007), 244–251.

52 T 1071, 20: 154b15–17.

The Eleven-Faced Avalokiteśvara image that Degan created was located in the Seven Jewel Tower, a site that in the late period of the Wuzhou dynasty possessed a high degree of political and religious significance. The idea behind it was also similar to how Fazang used an altar with the image to protect the country and drive away the enemy. One scholar believes that the Eleven-Faced Avalokiteśvara image's protective power for guarding over the country—such as the protection of Wheel-Turning Kings and the elimination of enemy armies and dispelling of national calamities—captured royal attention; he believes this is why the seven extant images of the Seven Jewel Tower of Guangzhai si were probably positioned at the gate or at the sides and center as symbolic Buddhist images and why a group of such images is associated with the Wheel-Turning King. The Eleven-Faced Avalokiteśvara images constituted a protective group.<sup>53</sup> This sort of speculation is based on the idea that the deity protected the country and expelled demons. Further evidence for this reasonable interpretation appears in the images at the Mogao caves at Dunhuang. The Eleven-Faced Avalokiteśvara figures of the early Tang at Mogao are all painted on the side of the entrance of the eastern wall in the main chamber, reflecting their protective function.<sup>54</sup>

## 5 Issues Surrounding Degan's Guru and Scholastic Lineages

The commentary on the *Avalokiteśvaraikādaśamukha dhāraṇī* by Xuanzang's second-generation disciple Huizhao was an important work for the Eleven-Faced Avalokiteśvara cult. He was also at the same time an important monk in the Buddhist world of this period. Like Xue Huaiyi, he served as abbot of Baima si 白馬寺 in the Wuzhou period. Huizhao entered the monastic life in 662 (year 2 of Longshuo 龍朔) and studied under Kuiji, otherwise known as Cien Dashi 慈恩大師 (Great Master of Compassion).<sup>55</sup> According to the account given in a stele inscription by Li Yong 李邕 (678–747),<sup>56</sup> Huizhao served under Kuiji and Puguang 普光 (7th century), receiving training in *cittamātra* (*weishi* 唯識) and logic (*yinming* 因明, *hetuvidyā*). He was promoted as the foremost disciple. In 700 (year 1 of Jiushi 久視) he took on the job of verifying meanings in translations at the translation workshops of Yijing and Bodhiruci. His works

53 Yan Juanying, "Tangdai Shi'er Mian Guanyin tuxiang yu xingyang," 100–101.

54 Wang Huimin 王惠民, "Wu Zetian shiqi de mijiao zaoxiang" 武則天時期的密教造像, *Yishushi yanjiu* 藝術史研究 1 (1999): 258.

55 See *Song gaoseng zhuan* 宋高僧傳: T 2061, 50: 728c1–14.

56 See *Tang gu Baima si zhu fanyi Huizhao shenta bei bingxu* 唐故白馬寺主翻譯惠沼神塔碑并序.



include commentaries on the *Lotus sūtra* (*Fahua xuanzan yijue* 法華玄贊義訣) and *Sūtra of Golden Light* (*Jingguangming zuishengwang jing shu* 金光明最勝王經疏).<sup>57</sup> It is worth pointing out that Huizhao's commentary on the *Avalokiteśvaraikādaśamukha dhāraṇī* is an interpretation of his guru forefather Xuanzang's translation of the text, but his commentary on the *Sūtra of Golden Light* is a commentary written at the same time and coordinated with Yijing's new translation. The common point between the two is an emphasis on the relationship between the Buddhadharma and royal authority. The core thought of the latter commentary explains the mutual protective relationship between the Buddhadharma and the Wheel-Turning King. Until the early eighth century, one major concern of eminent Buddhist monks was to use Buddhadharma—which in this case was not just for transcendental purposes—as a kind of ideological tool to spread their faith to every corner of society. Huizhao's interpretation in his commentary on the *Avalokiteśvaraikādaśamukha dhāraṇī* specifically links together the merit of practicing the Eleven-Faced Avalokiteśvara rites together with the ideology of the cakravartin and national interests. This appears to be representative of the view taken by the contemporary mainstream Buddhist sangha with respect to the beliefs surrounding the Eleven-Faced Avalokiteśvara.<sup>58</sup> Huizhao and Degan were contemporaries who collaborated. For instance, Degan participated at Yijing's translation workshop. Huizhao in the same period translated sūtras and wrote commentaries under Yijing. They were both disciples of Kuiji and they were also second-generation disciples of Xuanzang. This scholastic lineage clearly influenced their intellectual and spiritual backgrounds and this also extended to their roles on religious and political stages.

There are few accounts of Degan's guru lineage, beliefs and intellectual endeavors and, moreover, it is difficult to reconstruct them. However, a crucial passage is cited in the aforementioned *Song gaoseng zhuan*: "He was foe to monk Zhan, thus they withdrew upon engagement." Antonino Forte and Chen Jinhua have differing views about the identity of this "Dharma master Zhan" (Zhan Fashi 湛法師). The former believes it possibly was Tiantai patriarch Zhanran 湛然 (711–782) while the latter asserts that it was the abbot of Fuxian si 福先寺, the calligrapher Zhanran 湛然. However, when Forte was publishing his works related to Buddhism and Wuzhou period political propaganda, he

57 See Saeki Jōin 佐伯定胤 and Nakano Tatsue 中野達慧, eds., *Sanzō shishi den sōsho* 玄奘三藏師資傳叢書, vol. 2. *Wanzi xu zang jing* 卍字續藏經, vol. 88, 383. Also see Yan Juanying (2006) for a related discussion.

58 See Yan Juanying (2006) for a related discussion.

was unaware of Chen's interpretation.<sup>59</sup> This account is not insignificant. It is a key piece of historical material for uncovering Degan's intellectual lineage.

Here the "Dharma master Zhan" in question is neither the Tiantai Zhanran nor the calligrapher Zhanran. Their dates do not fit with Degan's. Here "Monk Zhan" is actually Degan's colleague the Monk Mingzhan 明湛. Kuiji authored a commentary on the *Lotus sūtra* (*Fahua jing xuanzang* 法華經玄贊; T 1723)<sup>60</sup> in ten fascicles in which he interprets the *Lotus sūtra* based on Yogācāra scholasticism. The text often cites the works of Vasubandhu and is quite faithful to the original work. There are the following commentaries to this text: the *Fahua xuanzan yijue* 法華玄贊義決 (1 fasc.), *Fahua xuanzan sheshi* 法華玄贊攝釋 (4 fasc.), *Fahua xuanzan jueze ji* 法華玄贊決擇記 (8 fasc.) and *Fahua jing xuanzan yao ji* 法華經玄贊要集 (35 fasc.). The *Fahua jing xuanzan yao ji* by śramaṇa Qifu of Jingshui si 鏡水寺 in fasc. 3 describes the interaction between Kuiji and his disciples:

The commentator [Kuiji] on that day composed the commentary in Dingzhou. Later he lectured in Youzhou [at what is] now the Shanjue si 善覺寺 in Fanyang. After lecturing, he asked his student Mingzhan to summarize points and Degan to prove them. At that time ... it was widely known that Mingzhan was good at literary writing while Degan was morally upright. ... Mingzhan insisted on sudden realization while Degan insisted on gradual realization. Their approaches were different and they argued against each other.

疏主（窺基）當日製疏在定州，後講在幽州，即今范陽善覺寺。講會之次，令學士明湛法師三義、令學士德感法師徵也。時人傳云，..... 湛法師足文詞，感法師端正。..... 湛法師取曾發二心曾修二行，迴心向大，是頓悟攝；感法師取曾發二心曾修二行迴心，是漸悟攝，此是兩師所爭。<sup>61</sup>

59 Jinhua Chen, "One Name, Three Monks: Two Northern Chan Masters Emerge from the Shadow of Their Contemporary, the Tiantai Master Zhanran 湛然 (711–782)," *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 22, no. 1 (1999): 54, note 143; Antonino Forte, *Political Propaganda and Ideology in China at the End of the Seventh Century* (Italian School of East Asian Studies, 2005), 130.

60 This text was composed no earlier than 673 and no later than 682. See Chu Taisong 儲泰松, "Kuiji *Miaofa lianhua jing xuanzan suo ju yunshu kao*" 窺基〈妙法蓮華經玄贊〉所據韻書考, *Gu Hanyu yanjiu* 古漢語研究 4 (2011): 13–19.

61 X 638, 34: 229b21–c5.

According to the above account, Kuiji's two major disciples Mingzhan and Degan had clear differences. Mingzhan was adept with letters while Degan had a fine character. Mingzhan insisted on sudden realization while Degan insisted on gradual realization. This is why there were debates between the two men and thus the *Song gaoseng zhuan* states, "As to the doctrines of sudden and swift realization, he was foe to monk Zhan." So far we are in basic agreement that Degan, Huizhao and Mingzhan were all disciples of Kuiji. This point completely confirmed Forte's impression: the Yogācāra (Faxiang school 法相宗) monks played an important role in Wu Zetian's political propaganda.<sup>62</sup>

There is much scattered information regarding Degan and I have endeavored to bring it together here. Firstly, we saw that after presenting the commentary on the *Dayun jing* he acquired the title of "Founding-Duke of Changping County," which was not at all an arbitrary choice. This was quite possibly related to his experience of having studied under Kuiji at Shanjue si in Youzhou or this was the place where he studied in his early years. Next, we understood why the *Song gaoseng zhuan* states he was "quite proficient in lecturing on the *Yogācārabhūmi śāstra*;" Degan was especially knowledgeable on the *Yogācārabhūmi śāstra*, though this was a representative work of Xuanzang. It is unremarkable that Degan, as a second-generation disciple, was knowledgeable on this treatise. Third, we can understand why Wu Zetian praised him as "next to Nāgārjuna and equal to Aśvagoṣa." Nāgārjuna and Aśvagoṣa were both eminent monks of Mahāyāna Buddhism. In the study of *cittamātra*, the works of Vasubandhu are particularly emphasized. To equate Nāgārjuna and Aśvagoṣa with Degan was an affirmation on the part of Wu Zetian of Degan's scholarly status and also directly indicates his scholastic lineage. We additionally saw a continuous succession of transmission or lineage from Xuanzang's translation of the *Avalokiteśvaraikādaśamukha dhāraṇī* to Xuanzang's second-generation disciple Huizhao's commentary on the text and Kuiji's disciple Degan's crafting of an Eleven-Faced Avalokiteśvara image. Prior to his disciple Degan's pilgrimage to Mount Wutai, Kuiji had already gone on pilgrimage there himself and "at [Mount] Wutai he crafted a jade image of Mañjuśrī Bodhisattva and copied in gold letters the *Prajñā sūtra*." Many supernatural experiences also attended his visit there.<sup>63</sup>

It is worth noting that the inscription from year 5 of Kaiyuan in the cave of Lingquan si 靈泉寺 at Baoshan 寶山 also points to Degan. According to the

62 I am disinclined to use the term Faxiang, but it can be understood as carrying out *cittamātra* studies and was closely related to Xuanzang's lineage. For related discussion see Forte, *Political Propaganda and Ideology in China at the End of the Seventh Century*.

63 T 2061, 50: 726b8–9.

inscription, Linghui 靈慧 (d.u.) of Dayun si in Anyang was “retainer” to “Dharma Master Gan the translator of sūtras” (Fanjing Gan fashi 翻經感法師) between approximately 685 to 690. The location was Foshouji si in Luoyang around the time when Degan was serving as rector and abbot. Later Linghui went to Anyang to serve as rector of Dayun si. The Buddhist texts that he studied under Degan included the *Samdhinirmocana sūtra* (*Jie shenmi jing* 解深密經) (Xuanzang’s translation), the *Lotus sūtra*, *Strīvartavyākaraṇa sūtra* (*Chuan nusheng jing* 轉女身經) and the *Vijñaptimātratāsiddhi śāstra* (*Chengweishi lun* 成唯識論).<sup>64</sup> Forte was hesitant as to whether or not this “Dharma Master Gan the translator of sūtras” was Degan discussed in this paper, but in actuality there is basically no problem with this claim. If we understand that Degan was a monk under Xuanzang’s lineage, we see that the scriptures studied by disciple Linghui were clearly in line with Degan’s scholastic background. Moreover, as one of nine monks to present the commentary on the *Dayun jing*, it would also seem unsurprising that his disciple would take up a post as rector at Dayun si in the countryside.

## 6 Postscript

Although almost all of the materials related to Degan vanished due to political sensitivities, we are fortunately able to partially reconstruct the identity of this eminent monk who played a leading role in political and religious realms based on key fragmentary information. Through the above collation and analysis of historical materials, we primarily confirmed that Degan was a second-generation disciple to Xuanzang and direct disciple to Kuiji. Degan, who was an eminent monk who played a leadership role in Buddhism especially in the late period of the Wuzhou period, can even be compared with figures like Xue Huayi and Fazang in terms of the importance of the role he played in the religious-political propaganda in the Wuzhou period.

Degan was an important monk in Xuanzang’s lineage. Liu Shufen 劉淑芬 discussed Xuanzang’s final decade and reformed our earlier impression that Xuanzang received royal favors, presenting him instead as frustrated politically and spiritually distressed. As Liu discussed, Gaozong and Wu Zetian also included Xuanzang among the senior ministers that needed to be purged as a result of falling into a political storm in which Gaozong had seized political

64 Ōuchi Fumio 大内文雄, “Hōzan Reisen-ji sekkutsu tōmei no kenkyū” 寶山靈泉寺石窟塔銘の研究, *Tōhō gakuho* 東方學報 69 (1997): 323–325. For related discussion see Forte, *Political Propaganda and Ideology in China at the End of the Seventh Century*, 140–143.

authority from assisting senior ministers. In year 6 of Yonghui (655) there was an incident involving Lü Cai 呂才 (d. 655) of the imperial medical office attacking Xuanzang's monks and later the obstruction of six ministers supervising a joint translation of sūtras. Xuanzang was further placed under home surveillance with no close access to his disciples or companions. During Xuanzang's lifetime, the disciple Huili thus dared not show the *Ci'en zhuan* 慈恩傳 [Biography of Ci'en] to anyone. The primary reason for hesitation on the part of Yancong 彦悰 (7th century) when he later received it was concern that Xuanzang's secret activities late in life might be connected to early Tang politics.<sup>65</sup> If Liu Shufen is correct, it seems that Xuanzang suffered political disappointment in his late years.

Degan in his political rise adds a further page to this intriguing historical narrative. Degan was one of the high monks most intimately linked with royal authority in the late seventh and early eighth century. He might be thought of as a political successor to Xuanzang. Following Xuanzang's political demise, his Faxiang lineage did not completely retreat from the political stage. One eminent member was Degan who in the period of Wu Zetian—especially in the late period of the Wuzhou period—once again stood at the fore of history. In Degan's biography as reconstructed here we can discern a rich colorful drama that saw one of Xuanzang's key successors play a central role in the entangled realms of faith and politics, the Buddhadharmā and royal power.

*Translated by Jeffrey Kotyk*

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65 Liu Shufen 劉淑芬, "Xuanzang de zuihou shi nian (655–664)—Zongzhang er nian (669) gaizang shi" 玄奘的最後十年 (655–664)——兼論總章二年 (669) 改葬事, *Zhonghua wenshi luncong* 中華文史論叢 3 (2009): 1–97.

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# Faith and Realpolitik: Tang Dynasty Esoteric Buddhism at Mount Wutai

*Geoffrey C. Goble*

## 1 Introduction

It is broadly recognized that the Buddhist establishment of Mount Wutai was notably enriched by the imperial patronage of Emperor Daizong 代宗 (r. 762–779) and it is commonly held that this support arose at the behest of Amoghavajra (Bukong Jin'gang 不空金剛; 704–774). As the result of a series of memorials submitted to the Tang ruler between the years 766 and 769 by Amoghavajra, repair and expansion of the Jin'ge 金閣 (Golden Pavilion) and Yuhua 玉華 (Jade Flower) monasteries were funded by the imperial government and monks ordained by Amoghavajra were installed in each of the five major monasteries at Wutai. Amoghavajra's actions and apparent interest in Mount Wutai have been consistently interpreted as indicative of the Esoteric monk's personal devotion to Mañjuśrī—an interpretation seemingly supported by Amoghavajra's requests to also construct a Mañjuśrī pavilion in Taiyuan 太原, to establish Mañjuśrī cloisters throughout the imperium, and also to take the bodhisattva as a replacement for Piṇḍola as the patron of monastic refectories. Regardless of the widespread acceptance of this interpretation, it is a theory that is built on rather tenuous evidence and on *a priori* expectations that Amoghavajra's activities issued primarily from his personal beliefs or devotional practices. Shifting our interpretative frame away from theories predicated on the assumption of devotional faith as primary motivation and by reevaluating the documentary evidence, this essay approaches the expansion of the Buddhist establishment at Wutai as an exercise in Sinitic statecraft driven by Emperor Daizong, which Amoghavajra took as an opportunity to establish Esoteric Buddhism in Tang China. Through careful consideration of extant communications between Amoghavajra and Emperor Daizong, I argue that the expansion of the Buddhist presence on Mount Wutai and its *de facto* establishment as a center of Esoteric Buddhism was predicated on Daizong's political concerns and investment in Mount Wutai rather than Amoghavajra's personal devotion to Mañjuśrī.

## 2 Amoghavajra and Mañjuśrī

Although Amoghavajra's involvement in the expansion of the Buddhist complex at Mount Wutai had been noted in Western scholarship as early as Chou Yi-liang's 1944 dissertation (published in 1945 in the *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*),<sup>1</sup> Raoul Birnbaum's 1983 study of the Mañjuśrī cultus in East Asia and Stanley Weinstein's *Buddhism Under the T'ang* (1987) have proved the most influential. Weinstein's work essentially provided the view that Amoghavajra sought to disseminate the Mañjuśrī cult throughout the Tang imperium and Birnbaum supplied the dominant explanatory theory for Amoghavajra's motivation.<sup>2</sup> In Birnbaum's view, Amoghavajra's activities vis-à-vis Mount Wutai are taken to be reflective of Mañjuśrī's central importance in the Esoteric Buddhism propagated by Amoghavajra in China and a special, devotional relationship that Amoghavajra had with the bodhisattva. Amoghavajra's Wutai-related actions have subsequently been read according to this theory.<sup>3</sup> While Birnbaum's and Weinstein's theses may be compelling *prima facie*, I believe that it is high time to reevaluate them and the evidence on which they are based.

Weinstein took Amoghavajra's scriptural corpus as a primary basis for suggesting that he was invested in disseminating the Mañjuśrī cult.

Bukong's [i.e. Amoghavajra's] determination to disseminate the Wenshu [Mañjuśrī] cult in China is apparent from the tantras that he selected for translation. Of the eighty-three texts said to have been translated by him no less than ten were concerned primarily with the worship of Wenshu.<sup>4</sup>

Here Weinstein draws the total number of texts Amoghavajra produced from Feixi's *Stele Inscription*<sup>5</sup> to arrive at the conclusion that some twelve percent of

1 Yi-liang Chou, "Tantrism in China," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 8, no. 3/4 (1945): 241–332.

2 The currency of Weinstein's interpretation of Amoghavajra being primarily concerned with the dissemination of the Mañjuśrī cult is reflected, for example, in Paul Copp's recent study of dhāraṇīs. Paul Copp, *The Body Incantatory: Spells and the Ritual Imagination in Medieval Chinese Buddhism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014).

3 Birnbaum's thesis was adopted by Stanley Weinstein, who wrote "to Bukong [Amoghavajra], himself a devotee of Wenshu [Mañjuśrī], the as yet unfinished Jin'ge si represented a natural center for his own brand of Tantric Buddhism with its emphasis on the worship of Wenshu." Stanley Weinstein, *Buddhism under the T'ang* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 80.

4 Weinstein, *Buddhism Under the T'ang*, 80.

5 *Da Tang gu dade kaifu yitong sansi shi honglu qing suguogong daxingshan si daquangzhi sanzang heshang zhi bei* T. 2120, 52: 849a14–15.

Amoghavajra's textual corpus concern Mañjuśrī. This is somewhat misleading, since the ten scriptures that Weinstein identifies are contained in the modern Taishō canon and it is by no means certain that Feixi included all ten of these in his calculation.<sup>6</sup> Feixi does not provide an itemized catalogue of Amoghavajra's scriptures, but Amoghavajra did. In November of 771, Amoghavajra presented a catalogue of seventy-one scriptures that he requested be entered into the state-sanctioned canon of Buddhist texts.<sup>7</sup> Of these seventy-one scriptures, three (approximately 4%) feature Mañjuśrī as their central figure.<sup>8</sup> These are the same three Mañjuśrī-centered texts listed in Yuanzhao's *Continuation of the Kaiyuan Catalogue*.<sup>9</sup> However, Yuanzhao's list provides seventy-seven titles produced by Amoghavajra, thus causing the Mañjuśrī scriptures to appear even more insignificant. By way of comparison, of the seventy-one scriptures Amoghavajra submitted in 771, eight focus on Avalokiteśvara and there are four Samantabhadra scriptures. Taking Amoghavajra's scriptural production as our guide suggests that Mañjuśrī may not have been an insignificant figure in the Esoteric Buddhism represented by Amoghavajra's scriptural corpus, but it certainly does not provide sufficient evidence that Mañjuśrī was either personally important to Amoghavajra or that Mañjuśrī was a figure of central importance to the Esoteric Buddhist tradition that Amoghavajra represents. If scriptural production is our primary evidence, then Avalokiteśvara and Samantabhadra were more significant than Mañjuśrī to Amoghavajra.

Scriptural production, however, is not the only evidence available. While Weinstein's theory rested primarily on Amoghavajra's textual corpus, Birnbaum's evidence was drawn principally from communications between Amoghavajra and Emperor Daizong that are preserved in the *Memorials and Edicts of the Venerable Tripitaka Monk Dabian Zheng Guangzhi* (Dabian Zhengguang zhi 大辨正廣智), *Bestowed [with the title] Minister of Works by the Daizong* 代宗 Court (hereafter *Memorials and Edicts*).<sup>10</sup>

One of the striking aspects of these documents [the *Memorials and Edicts*] is the frequency with which Mañjuśrī and Wutai shan are

6 The ten scriptures identified by Weinstein are T nos. 319, 1171, 1172, 1174, 1175, 1176, 1177, 1195, 1276, and 1299.

7 *Daizongchao zeng sikong dabian zhengguangzhi sanzang heshang biaozi ji* T.2120, 42: 839a25–840b20.

8 *Jīngāngdīng yǔjiā wénshùshìlǐ púsā jīng yìjuān* 金剛頂瑜伽文殊師利菩薩經一卷, *Wénshù wèn zīmǔ pǐnjīng yìjuān* 文殊問字母品經一卷, and *Wénshù zān fāshēn lǐ yìjuān* 文殊讚法身禮一卷. The correspondence of these titles to extant scriptures in the Taishō Canon, if any, is uncertain.

9 *Da Tang zhenyuan xu kaiyuan shijiao lu* T. 2156, 55: 748c21–749c19.

10 *Daizongchao zeng sikong dabian zhengguangzhi sanzang heshang biaozi ji* T. 2120, 52.

discussed. On the basis of these materials, it seems clear that a major goal of the public teachings and activities of the last decades of Amoghavajra's life was the vigorous propagation of the cult of Mañjuśrī.<sup>11</sup>

Birnbaum builds his theory on evidence drawn from a series of five memorials concerning Mount Wutai and four involving the worship of Mañjuśrī in the imperium generally. However, reading these memorials as evidence of Amoghavajra's devotion to Mañjuśrī disregards alternative analyses by assuming *a priori* the primacy of personal religious attitudes and relies on a decontextualized reading of a very small sample of Amoghavajra's communiqués.

The *Memorials and Edicts* records sixty-three memorials that Amoghavajra submitted to the Tang courts of Emperors Suzong (r. 756–762) and Daizong (r. 762–779) and another forty-five from his leading disciples. Approximately ten percent of Amoghavajra's memorials concern Mount Wutai. A nearly equal number involve Mañjuśrī—the translation of texts, the construction of Mañjuśrī halls, etc. Such percentages are not insignificant, but they are hardly striking. If we consider only the frequency of topics addressed in the *Memorials and Edicts*, Amoghavajra's thanks to the emperors for various gifts and bestowals (ten documents) and his congratulations to the emperors on various occasions (six)—both reflecting his personal relationships within the inner court—appear to be at least of equal significance. And while Amoghavajra's activities related to Mount Wutai and to Mañjuśrī cannot be disregarded, they would seem to be at least coequal with his evident concern for the production of officially approved scriptures (eight memorials) and subordinate to his interest in the ordination and installation of monastic Buddhists in particular locations (twelve memorials).<sup>12</sup> This cursory statistical analysis—especially taken in conjunction with the information about Amoghavajra's textual corpus above—argues for suspending any assumption that Amoghavajra's actions should be understood as motivated by personal devotion to Mañjuśrī and suggests instead that they should be read within the larger context of his career. Placing any assumption about Amoghavajra's personal religious devotions aside, we should take a closer look at the documents in the *Memorials and Edicts* that concern Mount Wutai.

11 Raoul Birnbaum, *Studies on the Mysteries of Mañjuśrī* (Boulder: Society for the Study of Chinese Religions, 1983), 30.

12 For a summary of the contents of the *Memorials and Edicts* see Raffaello Orlando, "A Study of Chinese Documents Concerning the Life of the Tantric Buddhist Patriarch Amoghavajra (A.D. 705–774)," Ph.D. dissertation (Princeton University, 1981).

### 3 Amoghavajra, Daizong, and Mount Wutai

The bulk of the *Memorials and Edicts* is correspondences between Amoghavajra and Emperors Suzong and Daizong beginning in December of 757 through the monk's death in July of 774. Amoghavajra's first memorial concerning Mount Wutai, dated June 12, 766, is addressed to Emperor Daizong, some four years into his reign. This is the oft-cited request to fund the construction of the Golden Pavilion Monastery.

The monastery [mentioned] above, [for which] the Prior Sage<sup>13</sup> wrote the monastery plaque (*e* 額) [when] the eaves were not yet complete, was officially permitted in 736/7 (24th year of Kaiyuan 開元) [when] the Quzhou 衢州 monk Daoyi 道義 saw the monastery revealed (*ji* 迹) by the sage Mañjuśrī at Mount [Wu]tai. Its public name was the Golden Pavilion Cloister. There were to be thirteen residences for the assembly of monks,<sup>14</sup> said to be ten-thousand people. The terraces, halls, gates, and buildings (*lou* 樓) were to be made of gold. At the time, the plan was drawn up in one volume and entered into the Inner [Court], everybody in the world wanted the Golden Pavilion Monastery to be completed. What person would not wish [this]? It was commanded that the Zezhou 澤州 monk Daohuan 道環 daily carry supplies to the mountain. Admiring the matter seen by meditation master Daoyi, I open my heart and present that the Golden Pavilion Monastery [should] be built for the kingdom. The number of courtyards and eaves is just as that which was seen [in Daoyi's vision]. This summer the work began, craftsmen operated and managed the sundry matters themselves and will soon fulfill the Ancestral Sage's imperial plaque and completely accomplish Daoyi's intention. The vision (*guan* 觀) of this monk's intention is not trifling. Some say it is that which Mañjuśrī bestowed for cultivating the cause of victory.<sup>15</sup>

Presently there are five [imperial] plaque monasteries on the numinous mountain Wutai: Clear and Cool (Qingliang 清涼), Flower Adorned (Huayan 華嚴), Buddha Light (Foguang 佛光), and Jade Flower (Yuhua 玉花). These four monasteries were built previously. Only the Golden Pavilion has not yet been finished. Since this was revealed by the sage [Mañjuśrī], who would not have reverence (*zhan* 瞻) [for it]?

13 *Xiansheng* 先聖: i.e., Xuanzong 玄宗 (r. 712–756)

14 I take it that Amoghavajra is relating the monastery as it was revealed by Mañjuśrī and planned by Daoyi.

15 *Shengyin* 勝因: i.e. the good roots or causes leading to soteriological attainments

Amoghavajra wishes that alms be given to aid Daohuan in building and establishing the magnificent affair. I am terrified that [because of] age I will not personally participate, failing (*qian* 愆) in my cherished intention. Time and again my memorials have been heard by the indulgent Heavenly Beneficence. Now, as it is a revelation of the sage Mañjuśrī, sages [should] act as overseers (*zhu* 主). In the construction of the Golden Pavilion, if it is not Your Majesty then who? Ridgepoles and roof beams—a great building depends on these. Ministers are that on which a leader relies,<sup>16</sup> together becoming one body, the ten thousand states are harmonized and united. The Golden Pavilion—this is its sublime [purpose]. Without a distinguished steward<sup>17</sup> assisting and supporting the accomplishment, the Inspector of Armies<sup>18</sup> assisting and aiding, and the one hundred Officers<sup>19</sup> all joining the thousand Officials in together esteeming [the undertaking], then how can the perfection (*mei* 美) or the lords and servants be manifested by the radiance of the Golden Pavilion's greatness?

The great virtuous śramaṇa Hanguang 含光 (d. ca. 767–797) of the Longevity Maintaining Monastery received a dispatch to return to Mount [Wu]tai to reverently practice merit. Humbly, I hope to receive the proclamation for the means (*bian* 便) by which the monastery will be built. With deep sincerity for the Sage's Command of that which I pray and that the multitudes of numinous deities will brightly illuminate in order to establish a realm of blessings and well-being, pacifying the universe, and personally assisting the Sage.

Should the Heavenly Beneficence consent to this request, proclaim it to the Bureau of the Secretariat-Chancellery.

上件寺 先聖書額寺宇未成。准開元二十四年衢州僧道義至臺山所見文殊聖跡寺。號金閣院。有十三間居僧眾。云有萬人。臺殿門樓茲金所作。登時圖畫一本進入在內。天下百姓咸欲金閣寺成。人誰不願。

16 *Gugongzhe yuanshou suo tuo* 股肱者元首所託: the metaphor reads “thighs and arms are that on which the head depends.” In the following line Amoghavajra makes use of the dual reading by describing the constituent parts as forming a single body, which, in accordance with the political meaning, harmonizes all subordinate states.

17 *Zai* 宰: the term occurs in official titles and originally referred the overseer of a fief. Charles O Hucker, *A Dictionary of Official Titles in Imperial China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1985).

18 Reading *junrong* 軍容 for *junke* 軍客. Hucker, *Dictionary*, 202.

19 *Liao* 寮: generally referring to a modest dwelling, based on context it seems here to mean men holding low-level posts in territorial administrative units; cf. *liaoshu* 寮屬. Hucker, *Dictionary*, 311.

令澤州僧道環日送供至山。慕道義禪師所見之事。發心奉爲國家依圖造金閣寺。院宇多少一如所見。今夏起手工匠什物茲自營辦。將滿先聖御額終成道義感通。觀夫此僧志願非小。或謂文殊所假俾樹勝因。且五臺靈山寺額有五。清涼·華嚴·佛光·玉花·四寺先成。獨唯金閣一所未就。既是聖跡。誰不具瞻。不空願捨衣鉢隨助道環建立盛事。嘗恐歲不我與。愆于宿心。屢亦奏聞天恩矜允。夫以文殊聖跡聖者爲主。結構金閣非陛下而誰。棟梁者大廈是依。股肱者元首所託。共成一體和協萬邦。金閣斯崇。非夫宰輔贊成軍客匡助百寮咸續千官共崇。則何以表君臣之美。以光金閣之大也。保壽寺大德沙門含光奉使。迴臺恭修功德。伏望便於造寺所奉宣。聖旨祈所厥誠。庶靈神照明。以介景福康寧寰宇保佑聖躬。如天恩允許請宣付所司。<sup>20</sup>

There are a number of notable elements to this memorial, but it does not present us with much evidence that Amoghavajra was promoting Mañjuśrī. The bodhisattva is undeniably praised, but the terms in which he is lauded suggest that his position as a venerated Buddhist worthy was already well established. An argument valorizing Mañjuśrī appears to have been unnecessary. In any case, Amoghavajra's appeal for state funding does not rest on any particular quality of the bodhisattva. Instead, the memorial makes the case for funding the construction of the Golden Pavilion Monastery for political purposes; he appeals consistently to imperial precedent and the established view that state support of Buddhist institutions results in supernormal protection of the imperium and the emperor. In other words, Amoghavajra appeals to basic elements of medieval Sinitic statecraft.

By Emperor Daizong's reign, Mount Wutai had long been the site of a Buddhist state cult. Huixiang 慧祥, the author of the *Gu Qingliang zhuan* 古清涼傳 [Ancient Chronicle of (Mount) Clear and Cool],<sup>21</sup> suggests that imperial sponsorship of Buddhist institutions on Mount Wutai occurred as early as the third century, when the Wei (220–265) Emperor Wen 文帝 (r. 220–227) constructed Fu Monastery (Fusi 孚寺).<sup>22</sup> This imperial support continued and increased in subsequent generations, especially during the Northern Wei 北魏 Dynasty (386–534) when Mount Wutai appears to have become an important imperially sponsored Buddhist site. The reasons behind this sponsorship are not clear, though the theory that it reflects the mountain's proximity to the Wei dynastic capital in Datong 大同 (then called Pingcheng 平城) seems

20 *Daizongchao zeng sikong dabian zhengguangzhi sanzang heshang biaozi ji* T. 2120, 52: 834a08–b02.

21 *Gu Qingliang zhuan* T. 2098, 51.

22 *Gu Qingliang zhuan* T. 2098, 51: 1094a25.

reasonable.<sup>23</sup> Whatever the reasons, Mount Wutai emerged as an important center for imperial Buddhism in the fourth century and remained so during the Tang Dynasty. There were some two hundred Buddhist monasteries and temples on Wutai by the time of the Northern Qi Dynasty (550–577).<sup>24</sup> By the middle of the eighth century, Mount Wutai was the preeminent site of state-sponsored Buddhism.<sup>25</sup> Both Qingliang and Foguang Monasteries had been established by Emperor Xiaowen 孝文 (r. 471–500) of the Northern Wei Dynasty.<sup>26</sup> In the mid-eighth century, the Golden Pavilion Monastery was the most recent addition to Mount Wutai's landscape. In his memorial to Emperor Daizong, Amoghavajra asks Emperor Daizong to follow established imperial precedent: the Golden Pavilion was approved and sanctioned by Emperor Xuanzong 玄宗 (r. 713–756) some thirty years prior to the submission of this memorial. The completion of the construction by Daizong would, therefore, be the realization of his grandfather's intention, in addition to following the model of previous dynasties. Amoghavajra also mentions that the plans for the monastery had been entered into the Inner Court, thus indicating bureaucratic approval in addition to Xuanzong's personal endorsement. Furthermore, the memorial is shot through with references to the state-protecting power of Buddhism: the express purpose of the Golden Pavilion Monastery is to stabilize and harmonize the imperium. Amoghavajra is simply making the case for the continuation of established imperial projects.

Furthermore, it appears that Amoghavajra is not *encouraging* Daizong to take up an interest in Wutai. Rather, it would seem that Amoghavajra is *responding* to Daizong's interest in Mount Wutai. It is noteworthy that Hanguang , arguably Amoghavajra's leading disciple at the time, had been dispatched to Wutai in order to cultivate merit (*gongde* 功德)—certainly for Emperor Daizong's personal benefit and the benefit of the imperium—by the emperor *prior* to this memorial. Amoghavajra's investment in Mount Wutai was not predicated on any evident personal devotion to Mañjuśrī or on the bodhisattva's importance within Esoteric Buddhism at the time. Rather, it was a reaction

23 See James M. Hargett, *Stairway to Heaven: A Journey to the Summit of Mount Emei* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2006): 161. Also see Wei-Cheng Lin, *Building a Sacred Mountain: The Buddhist Architecture of China's Mount Wutai*, (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2014), 62–64, 82.

24 Robert Gimello, "Chang Shang-ying on Wu-tai Shan," *Pilgrims and Sacred Sites in China*, eds. Susan Nanquin and Chün-fang Yü (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1992), 99.

25 Mark Edward Lewis, *China's Cosmopolitan Empire: The Tang Dynasty* (Cambridge, Mass: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2009), 215–216.

26 *Gu Qingliang zhuan* T. 2098, 51: 1095b13–14



to Emperor Daizong's investment in Mount Wutai as the locus of an established imperial Buddhist site.

Some six months later, on December 27 of 766, Amoghavajra submitted another memorial to Emperor Daizong concerning Mount Wutai. This time it was a request to fund the repair of the Jade Flower Monastery, one of the five imperially sanctioned Buddhist establishments at Wutai mentioned in the previous memorial. Whereas Amoghavajra's first memorial was fairly lengthy and ornate, this request is decidedly more straightforward and brief.

The monastery [mentioned] previously (i.e. Jade Flower Monastery) was permitted by edict on October 18, 758. The production of the Golden Pavilion Monastery was similarly established. Amoghavajra earlier requested accordingly that alms be given in order to make a start [of the construction]. I humbly hope that the Elder (*shangzuo* 上座) Xingman 行滿 will be dispatched to the monastery. The example of the permission to construct the Golden Pavilion has been inspected by the Secretariat-Chancellery.

前件寺准乾元元年九月十一日 敕。興金閣寺同置。不空先請自捨衣鉢以爲創首。伏望差當寺上座行滿。准金閣例檢按營造。<sup>27</sup>

Aside from its brevity—suggesting that there was no need to convince Daizong of the value of this project—what is perhaps most notable about this memorial concerning Mount Wutai is that it does not mention Mañjuśrī at all. Rather, Amoghavajra's request is again supported by reference to imperial precedent. And again, Amoghavajra's memorial appears to be predicated on an established investment in Mount Wutai by Emperor Daizong.

On March 20, 767 Amoghavajra submitted another memorial to Daizong, this time requesting material and craftsmen to be sent to work on the Golden Pavilion Monastery and at the Jade Flower Monastery. This request to send specific craftsmen—their names are given by Amoghavajra, though not quoted below—to repair and improve the monasteries does not provide any evidence of personal devotion to Mañjuśrī. The bodhisattva is not referenced at all. However, as in Amoghavajra's initial memorial concerning Mount Wutai, it is evident that this request was again in response to an earlier command by Emperor Daizong:

<sup>27</sup> *Daizongchao zeng sikong dabian zhengguangzhi sanzang heshang biaozi ji* T. 2120, 52: 834b17–19.

As for the previous Compassionate Command ordering Hanguang to inspect and repair the aforementioned monastery and to generally provide for its maintenance and management, there must be wood and material suitable for the mountain itself and skilled craftsmen for the affairs of this numinous trace (*ji* 跡). Send the previously [mentioned] craftsmen, both those that are near and far, and presently the orderly sequence of construction will be seen at the mountain. I fear that perhaps in the counties of Ying 營 Prefecture there are [some] in the corvée—I especially hope that the Heavenly Beneficence will allow the completion of this meritorious action (*gongde* 功德).

先奉恩命。令含光檢校造前件寺及普通供養處。其所須材木當山自有。既是靈跡事資巧匠。前件匠等並遠近所推。今見在山修造次第。恐所營州縣或有迫呼。特望天恩許畢功德。<sup>28</sup>

Again, this memorial suggests that Amoghavajra's activities vis-à-vis Mount Wutai should not be read as evidence of the monk's personal religious devotions, but instead as a reaction to established imperial interest. Additionally, we should understand that Amoghavajra's actions here vis-à-vis Mount Wutai were part of a much larger series of projects, for on the same day that he submitted this memorial to Emperor Daizong, he also sent a request to transfer fourteen particular monks who were suitably trained in the performance of Esoteric Buddhist ritual to Huadu Monastery in Chang'an:

Humbly, comparing the kingdom-protecting Hall of Myriad Bodhisattvas in the Monastery of Conversion and Salvation with that which was revealed by Mañjuśrī on Mount [Wu]tai—the elephant drawn cloud chariots soaring above the columns and roof beams and the radiant luster of the filled halls—it is not different from the Golden Pavilion [Monastery]. I received the Compassionate Command on January 27, 767 and a bestowal of incense along with the proclamation of the Oral Edict commanding Amoghavajra to select great worthies to chant and then [You] commanded the Abbot (*sizhu* 寺主) Zhizang 智藏 to specially inspect a ritual platform.<sup>29</sup>

28 *Daizongchao zeng sikong dabian zhengguangzhi sanzang heshang biaozi ji* T. 2120, 52: 835b07–11.

29 *daochang* 道場: generically a site for practicing the Way (whether the Buddhist or Daoist Way), this term is often used to indicate the site of Śākyamuni's practice and attainment of Buddhahood. Here, however, it refers to a *maṅḍala*.

The great worthies [mentioned] previously—sometimes performing the splendid mantra (*zhenyan* 真言) and studying the discipline, sometimes propounding the marvelous teaching and reciting (*zhuandu* 轉讀) the [scriptures of] True Vehicle (*zhencheng* 真乘)—hope to be selected to reside in this, the center [of the Empire].

Every year there is the three-month-long period of absention (*zhai* 齋). There is chanting for the protection of the kingdom at the purely constructed ritual platform. Surely this is the reason why the temples<sup>30</sup> are accordingly always full.

伏以化度寺護國萬菩薩堂。並依臺山文殊所見。乘雲駕象凌亂楹梁。光明滿堂不異金閣。奉去年十二月二十三日 恩命。賜香兼宣 口敕。命不空簡擇念誦大德。及命寺主智藏專檢校道場。其前件大德等。或業茂真言學通戒律。或敷宣妙旨轉讀真乘。望抽住於此中。每年三長齋月。精建道場爲國念誦。必有事故隨闕續填。<sup>31</sup>

Several aspects of this document help to shed light on Amoghavajra's activities in general and, in turn, on his involvement with the establishment at Wutai. Again with this memorial we see that Amoghavajra is not strictly initiating the action, but is instead responding to an imperial command, again indicating that Emperor Daizong is the motive actor here. Also noteworthy is the fact that Amoghavajra explicitly compares the Hall of Myriad Bodhisattvas to the Golden Pavilion at Wutai. Both are expressly represented by Amoghavajra as centers of kingdom-protection, well-established functions for both Wutai and Huadu Monastery in the eighth century. What is novel here, though, is the specific nature of the Buddhism that is to be enacted at these kingdom-protecting centers of Buddhism. Amoghavajra clearly aligns the ideals of state Buddhism with the practice of Esoteric Buddhism here. I suggest that this move concerning Huadu Monastery was a multifaceted development, the implications of which may be extended to Mount Wutai. For Emperor Daizong, the command to install monks hand-picked by Amoghavajra was an attempt to remake the monastic establishment in conformity with the dictates of the imperial state. For Amoghavajra this was an opportunity to establish Esoteric Buddhism in an important imperially-sponsored monastic complex.

<sup>30</sup> *Que* 闕: frequently indicating the gates to a city or palace, and therefore a reference to cities and palaces, the term is also used in reference to temples, which is how I take it here.

<sup>31</sup> *Daizongchao zeng sikong dabian zhengguangzhi sanzang heshang biaozi ji* T. 2120, 52: 835a01–09.

For several generations Huadu Monastery had served as the headquarters for the Inexhaustible Treasury (*wujin zang* 無盡藏)<sup>32</sup> of Xinxing's 信行 (540–594) Three Stages Teaching (*sanjie jiao* 三階教).<sup>33</sup> Continuing the policies of Emperor Wen of the Sui and Empress Wu Zetian 武則天 (r. 690–705), Emperor Xuanzong initiated a series of moves in 713 that were meant to suppress or abolish the Three Stages Teaching, outlawing the Inexhaustible Treasury and the practice of housing adherents of the teaching in separate monastic chambers. These measures were followed by the exclusion of texts relating to the Three Stages Teaching in the *Kaiyuan Catalogue* completed in 730. The suppression of the Three Stages Teachings had occurred off and on since its inception in the sixth century, but appears to have been finally effective in the mid-eighth century.<sup>34</sup>

It is difficult not to see the installation of monastic practitioners of Esoteric Buddhism in Huadu Monastery as a continuation of the imperial suppression of the Three Stages Teaching. Assuming Huadu to have been typical in size, fourteen monks trained and selected by Amoghavajra would have established Esoteric Buddhism as a significant, if not dominant, presence in Huadu. In any case, Emperor Daizong's command that fourteen hand-picked practitioners of Esoteric Buddhism be installed in Huadu Monastery suggests his intention: in essence, Huadu Monastery ceased to be a center of Three Stages Teaching, becoming instead an institutional home of Esoteric Buddhism. If this reading is accurate, Esoteric Buddhism was employed as a means of suppressing other Buddhist teachings and traditions in China. This reading also carries entailments for our understanding of Mount Wutai. It appears that Emperor Daizong considered Amoghavajra's Esoteric Buddhism as a form of Buddhism in line with imperial prerogatives and designs. In other words, Daizong considered Esoteric Buddhism to be the ideal form of state-sponsored Buddhism. The expansion of the Buddhist establishment at Mount Wutai was for Emperor Daizong the expansion of state-sponsored Buddhism. For Amoghavajra it was the expansion and establishment of his Esoteric Buddhism. This move to pack

32 For a more detailed discussion of the Inexhaustible Treasury, see Jacques Gernet, *Buddhism in Chinese Society: An Economic History from the Fifth to the Tenth Centuries*, translated by Franciscus Verellen (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 210–217.

33 For a thorough study of the Three Stages Teaching, see Jamie Hubbard, *Absolute Delusion, Perfect Buddhahood: The Rise and Fall of a Chinese Heresy* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2001).

34 This is suggested by the fact that there is no evidence of the sect's survival in later Buddhist sources and there are no more formal or direct Imperial attempts at suppressing the sect after the reign of Xuanzong. See Mark Edward Lewis, "The Suppression of the Three Stages Sect," in *Chinese Buddhist Apocrypha*, ed. Robert E. Buswell, Jr., (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1990): 207–238.

a monastery in Chang'an with practitioners of Esoteric Buddhism was quickly replicated at Mount Wutai.

One month after the requests to commit craftsmen to the work at Mount Wutai and to transfer monks to Huadu Monastery, on April 29, 767, Amoghavajra submitted one of his most significant memorials concerning Mount Wutai: a request for the ordination of monks to fill the imperially-approved monasteries of Mount Wutai. The content of the memorial is provided here in full.

From the distant past the revelation of the sage Mañjuśrī has been esteemed. Now it has occurred that Your Majesty has specially promoted the construction of the purely established *saṃgha-ārāmas*.<sup>35</sup> [Your] Compassionate Commands have thickly accumulated; this permits the hundred deities to [provide their] blessings and the myriad sages to come and return [people to the correct teaching].<sup>36</sup> The numinous revelation has been [re]created and this has made abundant flourishing (*sheng* 盛). The regions already adorned and purified! The people at ease!

Ever since the difficulties<sup>37</sup> [the number of] monks has gradually decreased; some save beings and live among them, some in accordance with conditions dwell in solitude,<sup>38</sup> taking refuge in their places. Consequently, the rituals at [various] times are deficient. The meditation niches beneath the trees are all obscured by cobwebs. Because the field of blessings is not yet extensive, there is shame in the Sage's intention.<sup>39</sup>

Humbly I beseech the Heavenly Beneficence to first put on the mountain practitioners and youths who have for a long time labored strenuously and to ordain fourteen people for each of the monasteries and also to select seven monks who practice the Way from all the prefectures [so that] every monastery will each have twenty-one people to practice the Way for the kingdom and the palace (*que* 闕), that they will be continuously filled and the kingdom-protecting *Humane King* and the

35 *qielan* 伽藍: an abbreviation of the full transliteration *sengqielanmo* 僧伽藍摩. A *saṃgha-ārāma*, literally "a garden for a group of monks," simply refers to a pure and peaceful monastery.

36 Alternately, the line could be read as the myriad sages return to the capital in order to aid the Emperor.

37 Probably a reference to the rebellion of An Lushan and the attendant upheaval in the Tang.

38 *lanruo* 蘭若: an abbreviation of *alanruo* 阿蘭若 (Skt. *āraṇya*), a forest separated from populated areas and therefore quiet and suitable for contemplative practice.

39 The Sage referred to here is probably Mañjuśrī insofar as the establishment of Mount Wutai as a center for Buddhist practice was held to be ordained by the revelation of the Golden Pavilion Monastery and other auspices.

Scripture of [the Pure Land] Densely Adorned<sup>40</sup> scriptures will be constantly recited (*zhuan* 轉) [at] the five monasteries such as Golden Pavilion. Also, the Wumozhi Monastery is not suitably named. I hope for You to make it the Monastery of the Great Chronometry Law Flower and that the *Law Flower Scripture* be constantly recited for the kingdom. Similarly, as in the case of the [other] five monasteries, [I request that You] relieve and send ordained persons to the Wumozhi Monastery.

I hope that You will appoint the Yunjing 雲京 General of the Ancestral Phoenix Court and the Imperial Commissioner<sup>41</sup> Wei Mingxiu 魏明秀 and also that the śramaṇa Hanguang 含光 be selected to practice virtue. I hope without ulterior motives that the construction of the Great Sage Mañjuśrī pavilion at Clear and Cool Monastery will be completed. Humbly I hope for the Heavenly Beneficence to deign to write an official plaque [for the Great Sage Mañjuśrī pavilion at Clear and Cool Monastery] to forever illuminate future generations.

文殊聖跡自古攸仰。今遇陛下特更增修精建伽藍 恩命稠疊。是可百神潛祐萬聖來歸。靈蹤建興於斯為盛。處既嚴潔。人亦宜然。艱難已來僧徒漸少。或經行化物便住人間。或蘭若隨緣。周栖他處。遂使時中禮懺鐘梵遞虧。樹下禪龕蛛網交闌。福田未廣有愧聖心。伏乞天恩先在山中行人童子久精苦者。寺別度二七人。兼諸州抽道行僧一七人。每寺相共滿三七人為國行道。有闕續填。金閣等五寺常轉仁王護國及密嚴經。又吳摩子寺名且非便。望改為大曆法花之寺。常為國轉法花經。同五寺例免差遣其所度人。望委雲京將軍宗鳳朝與中使魏明秀。又修功德沙門含光簡擇。冀無偷濫。又清涼寺為大聖文殊造闍已畢。伏望天恩賜書一額永光來葉。<sup>42</sup>

There are a number of elements to this memorial that give some indication of Amoghavajra's general project as it concerns Mount Wutai, but one thing that is particularly noteworthy here is again the relative absence of any reference to Mañjuśrī, aside from the opening allusion to revelations from the bodhisattva. Once again, the rhetorical force of this document does not rest in an appeal to the transcendent majesty of the great bodhisattva and the great fortune of his

40 *Miyan jing* 密嚴經: the the Scripture of [the Pure Land] Densely Adorned was translated first in the late seventh century by Divākara (Dipoheluo 地婆訶羅; Rizhao 日照, 613–687) (T. 681, 16) and again by Amoghavajra (T. 682, 16).

41 *zongshi* 中使: a reference to anyone dispatched as a representative of the Emperor. Hucker, *Dictionary*, 192.

42 *Daizongchao zeng sikong dabian zhengguangzhi sanzang heshang biaozi ji* T. 2120, 52: 835b22–c09.

locus of activity being found in the Middle Kingdom. Rather, Amoghavajra's request to provide monastic practitioners is couched (1) in reference to precedent imperial activity in the form of construction projects, (2) an ongoing deficiency in those projects (i.e. that the monasteries are not suitably staffed), and (3) the purpose and future benefits of correcting this deficiency. The purpose of staffing the official monasteries with monastic practitioners is clear: for the protection of the imperium via the recitation of the *Benevolent Kings* and the *Scripture of [the Pure Land] Densely Adorned Scriptures*. In other words, rather than a personal investment in Mañjuśrī, as has been assumed, Amoghavajra's interest in Mount Wutai instead reflected his desire to align himself and his Buddhism with state-Buddhism.

The last memorial concerning Mount Wutai that Amoghavajra submitted to the Throne is dated July 24, 769 and, though more brief than the previous memorial, is substantively similar.

[I] submit that Huiyin is Amoghavajra's disciple and that for the sake of the kingdom the aforementioned melted metal be supplied to the monasteries such as the Golden Pavilion for their general support. For that which is the residence of Huiyin, I request to fill Mount [Wu]tai with the smelted metal for grand meritorious service and to deliver offerings to the assembly of traveling monks who stop and stay. I also [request] the command that Huiyin be presented with [the position of] the true Sage of Mount [Wu]tai to perpetually make offerings in the hope of blessing the Imperial Throne and that the Sage's [i.e., the Emperor] longevity will be without limit.

奏惠隱是不空弟子。爲國鑄前件 [木 \* 開] 充五臺山聖金閣等寺普通供養。其惠隱所居院。請充臺山鑄鴻功德。及送供眾僧來往停止。又令惠隱送聖至臺山。永爲供養。冀福資皇祚。聖壽無疆。<sup>43</sup>

Once again, Amoghavajra does not couch his request in reference to imperial precedent or to Mañjuśrī. Rather, he appeals to an understood expectation that the activities on Wutai will result in blessings for the Imperium and the longevity of the emperor. This outcome, we should understand, is not separable from the presence on Mount Wutai of Amoghavajra's disciples and their practice of Esoteric Buddhism.

43 *Daizongchao zeng sikong dabian zhengguangzhi sanzang heshang biaozi ji* T. 2120, 52: 2.837a17–21.

## 4 Daizong and Mañjuśrī

In addition to the memorials concerning Mount Wutai, there are also a number of documents contained in the *Memorials and Edicts* that concern Mañjuśrī and the expansion of his role in the Buddhist establishments of the Tang. These texts, like those concerning Mount Wutai, have been read as evidence of Amoghavajra's devotional relationship with the bodhisattva and of the centrality of Mañjuśrī to the Esoteric Buddhist tradition propagated by Amoghavajra. However, as with those concerning Mount Wutai, when read in context these Mañjuśrī memorials suggest an alternative explanation: that it was Emperor Daizong rather than Amoghavajra who held Mañjuśrī in particular esteem. The first of these memorials is Amoghavajra's request in January of 770 to replace the figure of Piṇḍola with that of Mañjuśrī in monastic refectories,<sup>44</sup> though Mañjuśrī would be quickly elevated to a national deity. In August, Amoghavajra submitted a formal request to establish a hall for the veneration of Mañjuśrī at Zhide si 至德寺 in Taiyuan and fourteen monks to staff it.<sup>45</sup> Amoghavajra was probably in the vicinity of Taiyuan at the time, given that he was instructed to establish an enormous *zhai* sponsored by the emperor there on July 31.<sup>46</sup> Two years later in November of 772, Emperor Daizong issued an edict establishing Mañjuśrī cloisters throughout the imperium.<sup>47</sup> In 773 Amoghavajra completed and submitted a translation of the *Dasheng Wenshuhili pusa foshagongde zhuangyan jing* 大聖文殊師利菩薩佛利功德莊嚴經 [Scripture of the Ornaments and Virtuous Practice of the Buddha-field of the Great Sage Mañjuśrī Bodhisattva]<sup>48</sup> and in January of 774 he sent his thanks to Emperor Daizong for supplying the ceremonies marking the raising of the roof beams for the Mañjuśrī pavilion at Xingshan monastery.<sup>49</sup> The development of the Buddhist establishment at Mount Wutai was a project largely confined to the years 766–9, but from 770 onward the concern is evidently with the augmentation of Mañjuśrī as a figure of devotion throughout China. Though not

44 *Daizongchao zeng sikong dabian zhengguangzhi sanzang heshang biaozi ji* T. 2120, 52: 837a26–b18.

45 *Daizongchao zeng sikong dabian zhengguangzhi sanzang heshang biaozi ji* T. 2120, 52: 837c07–15.

46 *Daizongchao zeng sikong dabian zhengguangzhi sanzang heshang biaozi ji* T. 2120, 52: 837b19–29.

47 *Daizongchao zeng sikong dabian zhengguangzhi sanzang heshang biaozi ji* T. 2120, 52: 2.841c08–19.

48 *Daizongchao zeng sikong dabian zhengguangzhi sanzang heshang biaozi ji* T. 2120, 52: 2.842c13–843a02.

49 *Daizongchao zeng sikong dabian zhengguangzhi sanzang heshang biaozi ji* T. 2120, 52: 2.843b07–22.



unrelated, this represents a shift in the activities of Amoghavajra and Daizong. The cause of this shift away from Wutai in particular and toward Mañjuśrī as a figure of national veneration was the appearance of a comet.

A perihelial comet appeared in the northern night sky May 30, 770 and did not disappear from view until July 30. Following the basic tenets of Chinese astronomy, the appearance of this comet was exceptionally anxiety producing. To begin with, the comet was white. This color indicated, and divinations confirmed, that it was produced by Grand White (*Taibai* 太白; i.e. Venus). Conceived as a General-in-Chief, Grand White was the “envoy of provocation and turmoil,” it was the “lord of weaponry and war horses,” the master of warfare and slaughter.<sup>50</sup> The comet’s location and movement were equally troubling. It first appeared in or near the constellation Five Chariots (*wuche* 五車).<sup>51</sup> From this initial location the comet tracked northeast, passing through the Eight Grains (*bagu* 八穀) asterism before finally vanishing. The Five Chariots were the celestial counterparts of the five chariots employed in classical Chinese warfare and the Eight Grains are the astral simulacra of eight foodstuffs generally listed as rice, millet, barley, wheat, legumes, peas, corn, and hemp. In a more general sense Eight Grains represented abundance or famine and Five Chariots indicated war and preparations for war.<sup>52</sup> Furthermore, Five Chariots lies in the lodge Net (*bi* 畢) and Eight Grains is located within the Triple Enclosure (*san yuan* 三垣) in the Purple Palace (*ziwei yuan* 紫微垣). Following the Tang formulation of the Field Divisions (*fenye* 分野) system, according to which the administrative geography of the imperium corresponded to stellar bodies and astral locations, the lodge Net, in which Five Chariots was located, corresponded to southern Hebei and connoted the northern frontier and soldiers.<sup>53</sup> The Triple Enclosure and Purple Palace was held to correspond to the capital precincts and the imperial palace. Thus, the comet of 770 indicated the outbreak of war, the probable destruction of the imperial armies, famine, and held the potential to unseat the sovereign.

50 This is according to Li Quan’s memorial of submission accompanying the text of the *Taibai yin jing* 太白陰經, Li Quan 李筌, *Shen Ji Zhi Di Tai Bai Yin Jing* 神機制敵太白陰經 (*Divine Instruments for the Defeat of Enemies; the Scripture of Venus and Yin*). In *Baibu congshu jicheng* 百部叢書集成 6, case no. 8 (Taipei: Yi wen, 1968).

51 Liu Xu 劉詢, *Jiu Tang Shu* 舊唐書 [*Older Tang History*], 16 vols, (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju 中華書局, 2002) vol. 11: 296; Ouyang Xiu 歐陽修, *Xin Tang Shu* [*Newer Tang History*], 20 vols, (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju 中華書局, 2002): vol. 32: 838.

52 Gustaaf Schlegel, *Uranographie Chinoise*, (Taipei: Ch’engwen Publishing Company, 1967), 378–379.

53 Edward H. Schafer, *Pacing the Void: T’ang Approaches to the Stars*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977); Ouyang, *Xin Tangshu*, 2.32–3; Liu, *Jiu Tangshu*, 2.36; Schlegel, *Uranographie Chinoise*, 557–558.

This was not a welcome development for Emperor Daizong, who had inherited an empire already rent by rebellion, invasion, and chaos. When not deployed to put down mutinous troops and rebellious generals in the provinces, what remained of the imperial armies in the aftermath of An Lushan's rebellion were heavily engaged in repulsing yearly invasions by Tibetan and Uighur forces. Thus, Daizong was impelled to employ the services of Amoghavajra, who by then was well-known for his abilities to command ferocious deities for the purpose of safeguarding the state and killing its enemies.<sup>54</sup> Therefore, when the particularly baleful comet of 770 appeared, Emperor Daizong dispatched Amoghavajra to Mount Wutai. This event is reported in Zhaoqian's 趙遷 *Account of Conduct* hagiography for Amoghavajra.

In the fifth month of the summer of the fifth year (770) there was an edict requesting the Great Master to go to Mount [Wu]tai of Taiyuan to practice merit.<sup>55</sup> That year there was a comet that emerged. When the affairs of the Law were completed the wicked star vanished.<sup>56</sup> In the autumn the Master [returned] to the capital and the Emperor, by means of a chariot curbed by the Imperial saddle and bit, sent an Imperial Commissioner to go out of the city and welcome the Great Master. The Great Master resolutely declined but the Benevolent command would not permit it, so he accordingly mounted the chariot. The Emperor was greatly pleased and the monastic and lay disciples were all bestowed with a *zhai* meal inside the palace and bestowed with bolts of fine silk.

五年夏五月。詔請大師。往太原臺山修功德。是歲也有彗出焉。法事告終。妖星自伏。季秋屆于京師。皇上以所乘師子。聽并御鞍轡。遣中使出城迎大師。大師固辭。恩命不許。乃乘之入對。皇上大悅。并僧俗弟子。咸賜內殿齋飯。錫賚束帛甚厚。<sup>57</sup>

Daizong's dispatch of Amoghavajra to Mount Wutai reflected not only the assumption by the emperor that Amoghavajra was a particularly efficacious

54 For discussion of Amoghavajra's military assistance to the Tang emperors, see Geoffrey Goble, "The Legendary Siege of Anxi: Myth, History, and Truth in Chinese Buddhism," *Pacific World: Journal of the Institute of Buddhist Studies* 3, no. 15 (2013): 1–32.

55 The edict establishing the celebratory *zhai* was proclaimed July 31, 770. See T. 2120, 52: 837b19.

56 Although it is slightly ambiguous, the context suggests that the Amoghavajra was sent to Taiyuan because of the appearance of the comet.

57 *Da Tang gu dade zeng sikong dabian zhengguangzhi bukong sanzang xingzhuan* T. 2056, 50: 293b28–c04.

ritual specialist, but also that Mount Wutai was the site at which that efficacy would be most strongly amplified. In other words, it indicates Daizong's perception of Mount Wutai as the primary locus for state-protecting Buddhism. When the ill-omened comet disappeared from the sky Amoghavajra and the local monastics in the vicinity of Wutai were the first to be recognized and rewarded with the enormous *zhai* of July 31 mentioned above. But it was Mañjuśrī who received the emperor's on-going gratitude, first in the form of establishing the Mañjuśrī Cloisters throughout the imperium in 772 and then by commissioning Amoghavajra's production of the *Scripture of the Ornaments and Virtuous Practice of the Buddha-field of the Great Sage Mañjuśrī Bodhisattva* in 773. The events surrounding the comet of 770 and Daizong's response to it also inform his response to Amoghavajra's thanks for establishing the Mañjuśrī Cloister when he says:

The great sage Mañjuśrī long ago ascended to correct awakening, rescuing beings in the triple world and guarding against poisonous dragons on Five Peaks (i.e. Mount Wutai). His benevolent way is deep. His magnanimous works are extensive.

大聖文殊久登正覺。拯生人於三界。鎮毒龍於五峰。慈悲道深。弘濟功遠。故令釋眾同此歸依。三藏梵域宗師。當深慰愜也。所賀知。<sup>58</sup>

Daizong's statement regarding Mañjuśrī guarding against "poisonous dragons" (*dulong* 毒龍) may be taken variously. Read literally, it simply refers to fierce and destructive dragons. In a Buddhist context "poisonous dragons" typically translates the Sanskrit *viṣa-nāga* and often alludes to a story concerning the perfection of morality (*Śīla pāramitā*) in the *Commentary of the Great Perfection of Wisdom* (*Dazhidu lun* 大智度論; Skt *Mahāprajñāpāramitāsāstra*) by Kumārajīva.<sup>59</sup> However, read figuratively, as I take it here, the Chinese phrase "poisonous dragons" indicates those who are cruel and vicious in exercising their power. Daizong's statement, when read in relation to his various projects involving the expansion of the Buddhist establishment at Wutai, his development of Mañjuśrī into a figure of national veneration, and the implications of the comet in 770 suggest that Daizong saw Mañjuśrī as protecting the Tang imperium against a variety of threats, including those posed by enemy armies. The established theory that the development of the Buddhist establishment

58 *Daizongchao zeng sikong dabian zhengguangzhi sanzang heshang biaozi ji* T. 2120, 52: 842a12–14.

59 *Mohe panruoboluomi jing shilun* T. 1509, 25: 162a08–b18.

on Mount Wutai and the expansion of the Mañjuśrī cult in Tang China were the result of Amoghavajra's devotional relationship with the bodhisattva and Mañjuśrī's outsized significance in Esoteric Buddhism cannot be sustained. It appears instead that it was Daizong who was personally invested in Mount Wutai as a means of promoting supernormal state-protection and that investment eventually blossomed into imperial devotion to Mañjuśrī.

## 5 Conclusion

It is typically assumed that imperial faith in Buddhism was driven by monks who through a variety of means convinced their imperial patrons to promote Buddhism. This has certainly been the case regarding Daizong's interest in Wutai and Mañjuśrī, where it has long been assumed that the primary instigator of this investment was Amoghavajra. Such a reading is predicated in part on the assumption that Buddhist monks must surely have been motivated by their personal religious convictions and devotions whereas Chinese emperors were motivated by political concerns and that their own religious convictions were those of the official, Confucian-inspired state cult. Such readings as these are certainly reinforced by the standard histories, especially in the case of Daizong. The *Older Tang History* explicitly represents Daizong's interest in Buddhism and the influence of Amoghavajra as the result of meddling ministers who lead the emperor astray from his appropriate ritual observations:

At first, Daizong delighted in the ancestral temple and deities and did not lay much importance on the Buddha, but Yuan Zai 元載, Du Hongjian, and [Wang] Jin delighted in [providing] meals for monks. Daizong once inquired as to the affairs of blessing and karmic retribution, so Zai and the others therefore produced a memorial. Daizong was converted by this memorial. He once commanded that food for 100 monks [be provided], that Buddha images be laid out in the central palace, and that the recitation (*niansong* 念誦) of scriptures be practiced. He called it the Inner [Palace] mandala (*daochang* 道場). Those meals that were provided were generous and of exceedingly rare [dishes]. Coming and going, [the monks] rode horses of the [Imperial] stables. The Ministry of Revenue (Duzhi 度支) provided them with an allowance from the Granary. Whenever the Tibetans (Xifan 西蕃) invaded [Daizong] would necessarily command the monks to recite the *Scripture for Humane Kings*, by means of which the invaders would be resisted and captured. If there happened to be the good fortune of those [invaders] retreating, then [Daizong] would unreasonably bestow gifts.

The barbarian (*hu* 胡) monk Amoghavajra's governmental appointment reached the rank of Chief Minister (Qingjian 卿監), [the title of] Duke of State<sup>60</sup> was conferred on him, it is generally recorded that he entered the forbidden central [apartments of the palace], he had the power to remove Palace Ministers (Gongqing 公卿), he strove to arrogate more power to himself, vying even with the sun itself. Usually the fields around the capital's precincts were perfectly plentiful, [but] many belonged to monasteries and temples, so officials were unable to manage them. As for the associates of the monks, although they were thieves and lechers who sowed disorder and although they would kill one another, Daizong's faith did not change. Further, there was an edict that the government officials of the imperium could not flog or drag off monks and nuns.

初，代宗喜祠祀，未甚重佛，而元載、杜鴻漸與縉喜飯僧徒。代宗嘗問以福業報應事，載等因而啓奏，代宗由是奉之過當，嘗令僧百餘人於宮中陳設佛像，經行念誦，謂之內道場。其飲膳之厚，窮極珍異，出入乘廄焉，度支具廩給。每西蕃入寇，必令群僧講誦《仁王經》，以攘虜寇。苟幸其退，則橫加錫賜。胡僧不空，官至卿監，封國公，通籍禁中，勢移公卿，爭權擅威，日相凌奪。凡京畿之豐田美利，多歸於寺觀，吏不能制。僧之徒侶，雖有賊奸畜亂，敗戮相繼，而代宗信心不易，乃詔天下官吏不得箠曳僧尼。<sup>61</sup>

However, we must bear in mind the fact that representations such as these are didactic in nature and reflect the ideological imperatives of, in this case, the court literati of the tenth century. Once pointed out, the *a priori* assumptions of these court intellectuals are readily apparent and it becomes thereby easier to avoid taking such representations as veridical historical accounts. Our own assumptions are rather more difficult to uncover. The conventional wisdom regarding Amoghavajra and Mount Wutai is arguably the result of the post-enlightenment construction of religion as pertaining to the private sphere. Following this model, religion is something personal, as opposed to public, and predicated on matters of belief first and foremost. It is to be understood as something distinct from its counter concepts such as the “secular” or the “political.” These expectations have arguably provided the foundation for interpreting the expansion of the Buddhist establishment at Wutai as predicated on

60 *Gougong* 國公: The Duke of State was a title of nobility behind only Prince (*wang* 王) and Commandery Prince (*junwang* 君王). Hucker, *Dictionary*, 298.

61 Liu, *Jiu Tangshu*, 118.3417.

the personal devotions of a Buddhist monk (Amoghavajra) rather than the religious-cum-political designs of an emperor (Daizong).

As a result of Amoghavajra's manipulations of Daizong's investment in Mount Wutai, the monastic establishment at Wutai was undeniably enriched and the Mañjuśrī cultus was disseminated throughout Tang China. However, these effects were largely unforeseen outcomes of Amoghavajra's actions, which appear to have been guided by a concern to establish Esoteric Buddhism as the official Buddhist tradition in China. Amoghavajra attempted to establish Esoteric Buddhism in the most significant centers of state Buddhism through appealing to imperial precedent and arguing for the special state-protecting powers of Esoteric Buddhism. Mount Wutai was significant to this program simply because it was the seat of a major imperial Buddhist establishment. Mañjuśrī was consequently put forward as a figure of significance.

The establishment of Wutai and of Mañjuśrī in the Tang and their subsequent dissemination throughout Asia ultimately was the result of a dynamic between Amoghavajra, who sought to coopt the state cult at Wutai in the service of his program of establishing Esoteric Buddhism, and Emperor Daizong, who was responsible for the dissemination of the Mañjuśrī cultus throughout China and, arguably, East Asia. Through revisiting the evidence concerning Amoghavajra, Mount Wutai, and Mañjuśrī, it becomes apparent that it was not Amoghavajra who held a special devotional relationship with Mañjuśrī. Rather, it was Emperor Daizong. Amoghavajra certainly facilitated and took advantage of this development to propagate Esoteric Buddhism in the Tang, but the development and expansion of Mount Wutai and the Mañjuśrī cultus was not so much an expression of faith as it was the operation of realpolitik.

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# Monastic Officials on Mount Wutai under the Ming dynasty

*Guang Kuan*

From the start of his reign, Zhu Yuanzhang 朱元璋 (1328–1398) established governmental bodies to enhance control over Buddhism. The first government institution designed to oversee Buddhism was the Bureau of the Buddhist Patriarch (Shanshi yuan 善世院). In 1382 a more systematic administrative institution—the Central Buddhist Office (Senglu si 僧錄司)—replaced the Bureau of the Buddhist Patriarch and Buddhist offices were also created at the prefectural, sub-prefectural, and county levels at the same time. Investigating varied Mount Wutai inscriptions from the period, this paper will examine how these Buddhist offices functioned on the mountain. Using Nanjing’s Buddhist office as a model, we shall try to reconstruct the Mount Wutai monastic official system during the Ming dynasty. By comparing and contrasting these two Buddhist centres, this paper will further illuminate how different Buddhist monasteries were organised.

## 1 The Beginning of the Monastic Official System

In the first government institution for Buddhism, known as the Bureau of the Buddhist Patriarch, a monk called Shi Huitan 釋慧曇 (1304–1371) was appointed as the Bureau head, and he was given an official rank of 2a.<sup>1</sup> Though this initial system was set up soon after the Ming dynasty was founded, at this preliminary stage it did not extend down to provincial levels.<sup>2</sup> In 1381 the Ministry of Rites sent a memorandum to the first Ming emperor suggesting the creation of new bodies to control religious affairs. The Ming emperor approved the suggestion and set up the Central Buddhist Office in 1382. Chün-fang Yü, Timothy

1 *Ming Taizu Shilu* (Taipei: Zhongyang yanjiuyuan lishi yuyan yanjiusuo, 1963) Vol. 29, 500.

2 Anne Gerritsen, “The Hongwu Legacy: Fifteenth-Century Views on Zhu Yuanzhang’s Monastic Politics,” in *Long Live the Emperor! Uses of the Ming Founder Across Six Centuries of East Asian History*, ed. Sarah Schneewind (Minneapolis: Society for Ming Studies, 2008), 57–58; also see Xie Chongguang, *Zhongguo Sengguan Zhidu Shi*, (Xining: Qinghai Renmin Chubanshe, 1990), 238.



Brook and Anna Gerritsen have discussed the motivations behind the establishment of this new monastic administrative system.<sup>3</sup>

This institution was responsible for the registration of Buddhist monks and monks' certificates, and for the administration of monasteries. However, government departments could intervene in Buddhist affairs if a monk broke the secular law. There were eight monastic officials in the Central Buddhist Office. Their posts were Left and Right Worthies (Shanshi 善世); Left and Right Instructors (Chanjiao 闡教); Left and Right Lecturers on Sūtras (Jiangjing 講經); Left and Right Enlighteners (Jueyi 覺義). The monastic officials' duties were as follows:

1. The Left Worthy held the official seal (Zhangyin 掌印) and the Right Worthy was in charge of affixing the seal (Fengyin 封印). Any major statement issued from this office had to be authorised with the official seal, which meant both Worthies had to be in agreement. Moreover, in order for the statement to be valid the remaining six officials had to witness this act.
2. The Left Worthy was also responsible for monks' meditation practice. He had to guide monks by studying cases of enlightenment. In fact, he was in charge of all affairs relating to Buddhist practice.
3. The Left and Right Instructors assisted Worthies in supervising Buddhist practice.
4. The Left and Right Lecturers of Sūtras took charge of receiving lay patrons, and propagating the Buddha's teaching.
5. The Left and Right Enlighteners were responsible for upholding monastic regulations and ensuring that those who broke the monastic rules were punished accordingly. They were also in charge of the finance and property of the Tianjie si 天界寺 (where the Central Buddhist Office was located) and various donations. They had to keep clear records and accounts, which were subject to external inspection.
6. All monastic officials were expected to attend monks' examination boards.<sup>4</sup> These examination boards were set up to assess whether or not certain monks' abilities and capability qualified them for the post to which they were assigned.

Under this central body, additional Buddhist offices were established at different levels of government administration. For instance, at the provincial level

3 Chün-fang Yü, *The Renewal of Buddhism in China* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1981), 166–170; Timothy Brook, *The Chinese State in Ming Society* (London; New York: Routledge Curzon, 2005), 142–6; Anne Gerritsen, "The Hongwu Legacy: Fifteenth-Century Views on Zhu Yuanzhang's Monastic Politics," 56–62.

4 Huanlun (Ming), *Shishi Jigu Lue Xuji* (Yangzhou: Guangling Guji Keyinshe, 1992), 159.

TABLE 3.1 Structure of the Buddhist Offices

Office Ranks	Central Buddhist Office Senglu si 僧錄司	Provincial Buddhist Office Senggang si 僧綱司	Prefectural Buddhist Office Sengzheng si 僧正司	County Buddhist Office Senghui si 僧會司
6a	Left Worthy Right Worthy			
6b	Left Instructor Right Instructor			
8a	Left Lecturer on Sūtras Right Lecturer on Sūtras			
8b	Left Enlightener Right Enlightener			
9b		Supervisor	Regulator	Coordinator

(*fu* 府) there was an office known as the provincial Buddhist Office (Senggang si 僧綱司) staffed by a Supervisor (Dougang 都綱) and an assistant Supervisor (Fu dougang 副都綱). At the prefectural level (*zhou* 州) there was an office known as the Prefectural Buddhist Office (Sengzheng si 僧正司) with a Regulator (Sengzheng 僧正). At the county level (*xian* 縣) there was an office known as the County Buddhist Office (Senghui si 僧會司) with a Coordinator (Senghui 僧會). These local Buddhist officials did not receive any stipend from the government.<sup>5</sup>

## 2 Mount Wutai Monastic Officials

If the Great Wall was evidence of conflicts between Chinese and northern people in China, then the Buddhist activities on Mount Wutai provided evidence of the amity among these groups. Mount Wutai was recognised as a holy place by Chinese, Mongolian, Tibetan, Nepalese, Japanese, Korean and many other Buddhists long before the Ming dynasty. All these Buddhists believed it was the Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī's earthly home. Therefore, different Buddhist traditions

<sup>5</sup> Zhang Tingyu, *Ming History* Vol.74 (Taipei: Guofang Yanjiuyuan), 778.

built their own monasteries on this mountain. In a way religious activities on Mount Wutai were quite like those of Jerusalem. However, unlike Jerusalem there was no conflict among different Buddhist traditions on Mount Wutai. They cooperated and coexisted quite peacefully. Because of its unique character, the monastic official system during the Ming dynasty on this mountain was also unique. There were two types of monastic officials on Mount Wutai—honouris causa monastic officials and administrative monastic officials.

### 2.1 Honouris Causa Monastic Officials

*Honouris causa* were highly respected monks. Because of their outstanding achievements, the Ming emperors awarded these men high honours. Their biographies can be found in various sources. From the imperial court records to the local gazetteers, they are well documented. The following list may not include all *honouris causa* monastic officials, but these clerics were among the most highly regarded.

In 1370, Bifeng Baojin 碧峯寶金 was granted the title ‘The great Chan Master of nirvana-illumination and perfect enlightenment’ (Jizhao yuanming da chanshi 寂照圓明大禪師)<sup>6</sup> when he was invited to Nanjing to preach the dharma to the first Ming emperor.

In the early years of the Yongle era (1403–1424), Karmapa (Gelima 葛里麻 1384–1415), a prominent Tibetan religious and political leader, was given the title of ‘the great treasure Dharma King of the *tathāgata*,<sup>7</sup> the independent Buddha of great compassion of Western Heaven’ (Rulai dabao fawang xitian dashan zizai fo 如來大寶法王·西天大善自在佛).<sup>8</sup> He did not live on Mount Wutai for long, but thanks to his influence Tibetan Buddhism revived there. Following the collapse of the Mongolian empire (and prior to his arrival at the mountain) Tibetan Buddhism had been in decline for nearly half a century.

Śāripūtrā (Shilisha 釋利沙, ?–1426) came to China in the early years of the Yongle era. He was summoned to the imperial Dashan Hall (Dashan dian 大善殿) to discuss Buddhism with the emperor. Emperor Xuande (宣德 1398–1435) granted him the title of “the great compassionate national master of

6 In “the Inscription of Restoration of Yuanzhao Monastery” (Wang Zhichao, 17) composed by the thirteenth Ming emperor, we read that the first Ming emperor bestowed this title on Chan Master Bifeng Baojin.

7 This title had been inherited by the Buddhist leader of the Tibetan *karma bka'-brgyud* sect throughout the Ming dynasty. See Hugh Richardson, “Halima,” in *Dictionary of Ming Biography*, 1368–1644, eds. L. Carrington Goodrich and Changying Fang (New York: Columbia University Press, 1976), 481–483

8 Zhencheng, *Qingliang Shanzhi*, Beijing: Zhongguo shudian, 1989, 82. Also see Yuqian, *Xinxu Gaoseng Zhuan*, in *Da Zang Jing Bubian* Vol.27, 385.

complete enlightenment, miraculous response and glorious model of assisting ruler of the country” (Yuanjue miaoying fuguoguangfan dashan guoshi 圓覺妙應輔國光范大善國師) and awarded him a golden seal.

In 1538, a stele praising the Chan master Baoshan 寶山 who restored Jin'gang ku 金岡窟 was erected at the mountain. The ceremony to celebrate the monastery's reopening was held in the 17th year of the Jiajing era and witnessed by Jiancan 堅參 (a Tibetan monk) the abbot of Yuanzhao si 圓照寺. This abbot had been granted the title of “the national preceptor of proclaiming the compassion of the Buddha, the great wisdom dharma king of Western Heaven” (Hongsi yijiao guoshi xitian fozi dahui fawang 弘慈翊教國師，西天佛子大慧法王).<sup>9</sup> Unlike most other Ming emperors who were great patrons of Buddhism, Emperor Jianjing was a Daoist who suppressed Buddhism. Supposedly Jiancan's “National Preceptor” title was not bestowed by Emperor Jiajing; rather it was given by Jiajing's predecessor, Emperor Zhengde (r. 1505–1521), who was a zealous follower of Tibetan Buddhism.

Miaofeng 妙峯 (1540–1642) was granted the title of “the real son of the Buddha” (Zhenzheng fozi 真正佛子) and given a purple robe and a golden hat.<sup>10</sup> Throughout the entire Ming dynasty, Miaofeng was the only Chinese monk who enjoyed this title. Even though some other monks born in China were given this type of title, they followed Indian or Tibetan Buddhist traditions. Zhiguang 智光 (1348–1435, Sahajaśrī's Chinese disciple), for instance, was granted the title “the Son of the Buddha of Western Heaven” (Xitian fozi 西天佛子). This title is lower only than “the Dharma King” which was only given to Tibetan religious leaders, such as Karmapa. Chinese monks were usually given the honourific title “Chan Master”, which is much lower than “the Son of the Buddha”. Miaofeng was given such an outstanding title because of his upbringing. He had a close relationship with a Ming prince Shanyin (山陰), who predicted when Miaofeng was still a teenage boy that he would be a great Buddhist master in the future. Taiwanese scholar Jiang Canteng regards Miaofeng as Prince Shanyin's Buddhist “substitute.”<sup>11</sup> Due to their close relationship, Miaofeng later gained Empress Dowager Li's favour. His achievements were many; he was not only a great Chan Master and a great architect but he was also a great philanthropist.

9 Wang Zhichao, *Wutai Shan Beiwén Xuanzhu* (Taiyuan: Beiyue Wenyi Chubanshe), 233–235.

10 Zhencheng, *Qingliang Shanzhi*, 90–92.

11 Jiang Canteng, *Wanming Fojiao Conglin Gaige Yu foxue zhengbian Zhi Yanjiu* (Taipei: Xin Wenfeng Chubanshe 1990), 94.

### 3 Administrative Monastic Officials

The administrative monastic official system was set up in 1382. However, there was no such office on Mount Wutai until the third year of the Yongle era (1405).<sup>12</sup> The establishment of the Buddhist Office on Mount Wutai was a result of the Karmapa's acceptance of the Yongle emperor's invitation to come to the Ming capital to perform an *abhiṣeka* initiation to him. When he accepted this invitation, Karmapa made a request to visit Mount Wutai, the earthly dwelling place of bodhisattva Mañjuśrī. A Buddhist office equal in importance to those of the provincial level was thus created at Mount Wutai to receive this important religious leader. When the first Ming emperor set up this system, the government did not pay monastic officials of this rank. However the Yongle emperor instructed that the Mount Wutai monastic official should enjoy a stipend, which was paid by the local prefectural government.<sup>13</sup>

On the reverse side of another edict stele appears the record of a case seeking tax-exempt status won by Mount Wutai monks against the local government.<sup>14</sup> The inscription reveals that over many generations Mount Wutai monastic officials were continually fighting for their rights as government posts changed hands. This stele is extremely important to this paper in that it illustrates the role played by monastic officials on Mount Wutai.

The stele also shows how these monastic officials succeeded one another. A Yingzong emperor edict on the front side of a stele indicates that a monk called Congling 从鈴 was give the title "Right Enlightener." On the reverse side, the description of the case pertaining to tax-exemption lists one after another four other monastic "Enlightener" officials from four different generations. All five were closely related either as master and disciple or as disciples of the same master. All of them were Enlighteners and each concurrently held the position of abbacy at Xiantong si 顯通寺, indicating that the monastic system at Xiantong Monastery was hereditary<sup>15</sup>. The following quotation shows how these five monk Enlightener officials were related:

In the thirteenth year of the Zhengtong era (1448), Congling held the post of Right Enlightener of the Central Buddhist Office, and he was imperially appointed to supervise monks on this mountain; he also concurrently

<sup>12</sup> Zhencheng, *Qingliang Shanzhi*, 36.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> "The [Yingzong] emperor's instructions on patronising Xiantong Monastery in Shanxi Wutai Shan" in Wang Zhichao, *Wutai Shan Beiwen Xuanzhu*, 1.

<sup>15</sup> The term for this form of appointment is *zisun conglin* 子孫叢林.

held the position of abbacy [at Xiantong Monastery]. In the seventeenth year of the Chenghua era (1482), Dingwang 定旺, a disciple of Congling, was promoted to the office of Right Enlightener of this [Central Buddhist] Office. In the twelfth year of Hongzhi era (1500), Puxian 普顯, a disciple of Dingwang, secured this job. In the tenth year of Zhengde era (1515), Mingxuan 明玄, a disciple of Puxian, took over his master's position in this office. In the twelfth year of Jiajing era (1533), Mingxu 明續, a junior fellow of Mingxuan, inherited this position as imperially appointed Supervisor of Mount Wutai.<sup>16</sup>

Ming Buddhist historians did not devote much attention to monastic officials. This was certainly the case in the *Qingliang Shanzhi* 清涼山志 [Gazetteer of Mount Clear and Cool] in which compiler Zhencheng 鎮澄 (1546–1617) included almost none of the Mount Wutai monastic officials. This attitude might have been influenced by a distinguished Buddhist historian—Huijiao 慧皎 (497–554). In his *Gaoseng zhuan* 高僧傳 [Biographies of Eminent Monks], he wrote:

If men of real achievement conceal their brilliance, then they are eminent but not famous; when men of slight virtue happen to be in accord with their times, then they are famous but not eminent. Those who are famous but not eminent are, of course, not recorded here; those who are eminent but not famous have been fully treated in the present work.<sup>17</sup>

This intentional exclusion of monastic officials makes it hard for us to get a clear picture of the Mount Wutai monastic official system from Buddhist historical books. It is thus fortunate that many Ming era Mount Wutai inscriptions have survived to this day. From these it is possible to partly reconstruct the system. Most of these inscriptions were erected to commemorate the construction or reconstruction of a monastery or a major event that occurred on Mount Wutai. Monastic officials were often listed on these steles as witnesses in order to legitimise or celebrate such occasions. The following description of monastic officials is given in chronological order.

The “Inscription of Imperially Bestowed Puji Chan Monastery (Chisi Puji Chansi beiji 敕賜普濟禪寺碑記),”<sup>18</sup> which was composed in 1487, recorded

16 Wang Zhichao, *Wutai Shan Beiwén Xuánzhū*, 3.

17 John Kieschnick, *The Eminent Monk: Buddhist Ideals in Medieval Hagiography* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1997), 4.

18 Wang Zhichao, *Wutai Shan Beiwén Xuánzhū*, 197.

that the opening of this monastery was witnessed by the abbot of Yuanzhao Monastery, the 21st patriarch of the Linji Chan school, great Chan Master Jingcheng 淨澄; the abbot of Xiantong Monastery, Puxian; Chan Master Qingxiu 清脩; the leading officer of the Mount Wutai Buddhist Office Baotian 寶天; and imperially appointed Mount Wutai Right Enlightener, Dingwang.

The above stele shows there were many levels of monastic officials coexisting on Mount Wutai: an Enlightener of the Central Buddhist Office, a Supervisor of the Mount Wutai Buddhist Office, as well as Chan Masters. What is more interesting here is that the list order does not reflect their official rankings. This could lead to confusion as to whom the superior monastic official was on Mount Wutai.

According to the “Inscription on the Restoration of Yuhua Pond-Imperially Bestowed Wanshou Chan Monastery” (Chongxiu Yuhua chi chici Wanshou Chansi beiji 重脩玉華池敕賜萬壽禪寺碑記),<sup>19</sup> erected in 1495, Dingwang was the Left Enlightener of the central Buddhist Office. Therefore between 1487 and 1495, Dingwang was promoted from the position of Right Enlightener to Left Enlightener. Luo-na-man-gan-la 羅納滿干刺 (a non Han Chinese monk’s name) was mentioned as the head of the Mount Wutai Buddhist Office on the witness list. This indicates that some time between 1487 and 1495, the head of Mount Wutai Buddhist Office, Baotian, was replaced by Luo-na-man-gan-la. In 1499, according to the records of cases related to tax exemption discussed above, Dingwang’s disciple Puxian had the title of Right Enlightener. In 1506 Dingwang’s title remained Left Enlightener according to the “Inscription of Restoration the Buddha Hall in Sanquan Monastery” (Chongxiu Sanquan si Fodian bei 重脩三泉寺佛殿碑).<sup>20</sup>

There must have been a power struggle among Buddhist monasteries on Mount Wutai because, as time went on, more abbots from different monasteries became Enlighteners. In the ninth year of Zhengde era (1514), a monk who was called Yuanju 圓聚 appears as an Enlightener on the witness list of “Restoration of Imperially Bestowed Puji Chan Monastery”(Chici Puji Chansi chongxiu beiji 敕賜普濟禪寺重脩碑記). On this same inscription of 1514, Puxian is identified as the Supervisor of Mount Wutai Buddhist Office. This is despite the fact that he enjoyed the higher-ranking title of “Enlightener” fifteen years earlier.

This confusion could be explained by Ming emperors’ instructions to demote monk officials in the Central Buddhist Office and reduce their overall number. A few entries in the *Ming Veritable Record* demonstrate that the

19 Wang Zhichao, *Wutai Shan Beiven Xuanzhu*, 203–206.

20 *Ibid.*, 212–215.

number of individuals in the Central Buddhist Office far exceeded what had been envisioned at the time of its creation. Soon after he ascended the throne, Emperor Hongzhi (1470–1505) granted a proposal to limit the staff put forward by the Ministry of Rites in 1487. According to this document there were 120 monastic officials in the Central Buddhist Office, originally designed to have a total staff of 8 individuals. Emperor Hongzhi ordered that the number be reduced to 9 monastic officials. The more than 100 remaining clerics were either demoted or were allowed to keep their ranking titles but not jurisdictional power and were no longer to receive a stipend.<sup>21</sup> The same situation occurred when Emperor Zhengde (1491–1521) died and his successor made 182 monastic officials in the Central Buddhist Office redundant.<sup>22</sup>

Also interesting, in 1514 there was a female Supervisor (*dugang* 都綱) on Mount Wutai, whose name was Jingyu 淨玉.<sup>23</sup> She was a very influential figure during her time on Mount Wutai as her social network was highly varied. In the thirteenth year of Hongzhi era (1503) she collected donations for casting Buddha images for Sanquan Monastery (Sanquan si 三泉寺), then she undertook three years of sealed meditation at Gufo Nunnery (Gufo an 古佛庵). Immediately following this period, between 1506 and 1509 she restored the dilapidated nunnery.

In 1515, when another imperially-sponsored monastery was completed, the emperor bestowed the name Guangzong 廣宗 on the monastery; he also appointed its abbot, Huishou 慧壽, as Right Enlightener, a post that would henceforth be held concurrently with the abbacy of this monastery. Together with Huishou, two Supervisors (*dugang*) of the Mount Wutai Buddhist Office were promoted as Right Enlightener at the same time.

In the same year, according to the record of cases related to tax exemption mentioned above, Mingxuan 明玄 inherited his master's place as Right Enlightener. This establishes that there were at least four Right Enlighteners on Mount Wutai in this year, illustrating once again the power struggle among Mount Wutai Buddhist monasteries.

In 1538, a stele praising Chan Master Baoshan's restoration of Jin'gang ku was erected. Listed among the witnesses are Jingyu, the nun who still held a Supervisor title, as well as Jiancan 堅參, the abbot of Yuanzhao Monastery, who had been granted the title of "the national master of proclaiming the compassion of the Buddha, the great wisdom dharma king of the Western Heaven" (Hongci yijiao guoshi xitian fozi dahui fawang 弘慈翊教國師, 西天佛子大慧法王). The

21 *Ming Xiaozong Shilu Vol.4*, 23rd year of the Chenghua era (1476), 56–57.

22 *Ming Shizong Shilu Vol.3*, 16th year of the Zhengde era (1521), 151.

23 Wang Zhichao, 218–223.



stele identified Mingzhao 明照, the abbot of Xiantong Monastery, as Left Enlightener.

However, the list of witnesses on the “Inscription on Restoration of the Mount Wutai Da Tayuan Monastery Śākyamuni Buddha Body Relic Pagoda Erected by Aśoka” (Wutai shan Da Tayuan si chongxiu Ayuwang suo jian Shijiawenfo zhenshen sheli baota bei bing ming 五臺山大塔院寺重修阿育王所建釋迦文佛真身舍利寶塔碑并銘), written by Zuyin 祖印, states that in 1538 the Left Enlightener of the Central Buddhist Office and abbot of Xiantong Monastery was Mingxuan. A comparison of the above two inscriptions (regarding the Jin’gang ku and Aśoka Pagoda) reveals that in 1538 there were two abbots of the Xiantong Monastery and both held the title of Left Enlightener. Furthermore, the record of the Aśoka pagoda’s reconstruction also names Mingxu 明續 as Supervisor (*dugang*) of the Mount Wutai Buddhist Office, a post that was usually held by the abbot of a monastery. Is it possible that there were three abbots (Mingzhao, Mingxuan, Mingxu) of Xiantong Monastery in 1538?

In 1541, on the stele commemorating the restoration of Youguo Monastery (Chongxiu Youguo si beiji 重脩佑國寺碑記),<sup>24</sup> the witness list identifies Gao’an as the abbot of Yuanzhao Monastery, as well as “the National Master of Proclaiming the Compassion of the Buddha” (Hongci yijiao guoshi 弘慈翊教國師). As mentioned above, a different inscription records that in 1538 Jiancan held this position. Did this pair of names refer to the same person or did the latter inherit the former’s title?

In 1582, the Wanli Emperor donated a great deal of gold to restore the Śākyamuni Buddha Real Body Relic Pagoda on behalf of his mother, the Empress Dowager Li. A stele was erected to commemorate this event. The list of witnesses shows that the Mount Wutai Buddhist Office had changed hands to Zhilong 志龍 and that the abbot of Tayuan Monastery was appointed as Left Worthy of the Central Buddhist Office, the highest monastic official.

Another stele,<sup>25</sup> composed 15 years later when the emperor bestowed a set of the tripiṭaka on Mount Wutai, confirms that Zhilong remained head of the Mount Wutai Buddhist Office and that Yuanguang, abbot of Tayuan Monastery, held the post of Left Worthy.

The following table lists all the administrative monastic officials that I have collected from various inscriptions:

24 Wang Zhichao, 245.

25 Ibid., 27–29.

TABLE 3.2 Ming Wutai Shan monastic officials

Dates in the office	Name of the official	Office	Title	Other occupation	Residency	Relation to the previous officer	Contemporary monastic officials	Source
1405		Mount Wutai Buddhist Office						鎮澄《清涼山志》
1448-1486	Congling	Central Buddhist office	Right Enlightener	Abbot of Xiantong si	Xiantong si		Dugang-Changlu	大顯通寺條 皇帝敕諭護持山西五臺山 显通寺碑文
1448-?	Changlu	Mount Wutai Buddhist office	Dugang (Supervisor)				Right Enlightener congling	皇帝敕諭護持山西五臺山 显通寺碑文
1458-?	Banmagumalo	Mount Wutai Buddhist office	Dugang (Supervisor)	Abbot of Yuanzhao si	Yuanzhao si		Right Enlightener Congling	皇帝敕諭護持山西五臺山 圓照寺碑文
1486-1495	Dingwang	Central Buddhist office	Right Enlightener		Xiantong si	Congling's disciple	Dugang Baotian	皇帝敕諭護持山西五臺山 顯通寺碑文 and 敕賜普濟禪寺碑記
?-1487-?	Baotian	Mount Wutai Buddhist office	Dugang (Supervisor)				Right Enlightener Dingwang	敕賜普濟禪寺碑記

?-1487-1495-?	Duanzhubandan	Chan master Qingxiu	Abbot of Yuanzhao si	Yuanzhao si	Left Enlightener Dingwang	重修玉華池 敕賜萬壽禪寺 碑記
?-1495-1506-?	Dingwang	Central Buddhist office	Left Enlightener	Xiantong si	Chan master Qingxiu; Left Enlightener Dingwang; Dugang-Puxian	重修玉華池 敕賜萬壽禪寺 碑記
?-1495-1506-?	Luonamanganla	Mount Wutai Buddhist office	Dugang (Supervisor) Abbot of Guangyuan si	Guangyuan si	Chan master Qingxiu; Left Enlightener Dingwang; Dugang-Puxian	重修玉華池 敕賜萬壽禪寺 碑記
?-1506-1514-?	Puxian	Mount Wutai Buddhist office	Dugang (Supervisor) Abbot of Xiantong si	Xiantong si	Dingwang's disciple	重修三泉寺佛 殿之碑記 and 敕賜普濟禪寺 重修碑記
?-1514-?	Yuanju	Central Buddhist office	Enlightener			敕賜普濟禪寺 重修碑記
?-1514-?	Daojing		Abbot of Yanjiao si			敕賜普濟禪寺 重修碑記
?-1514-?	Jingyu (female)	Mount Wutai Buddhist office	Dugang (Supervisor)			敕賜普濟禪寺 重修碑記
1515-?	Mingxuan	Central Buddhist office	Right Enlightener	Xiantong si	Puxian's disciple	皇帝敕諭護持 山西五臺山顯 通寺碑
?-1515	Duanzhu	Mount Wutai Buddhist office	Dugang (Supervisor)			廣宗寺碑文

TABLE 3.2 Ming Wutai Shan monastic officials (cont.)

Dates in the office	Name of the official	Office	Title	Other occupation	Residency	Relation to the previous officer	Contemporary monastic officials	Source
?-1515	Duanjin	Mount Wutai Buddhist office	Dugang (Supervisor)					廣宗寺碑文
1515-?	Huishou	Central Buddhist office	Right Enlightener		Guangzong si		Right Enlightener Duanzhu; Right Enlightener Duanjin	廣宗寺碑文
1515-?	Duanzhu	Central Buddhist office	Right Enlightener		Guangzong si		Right Enlightener Duanjin; Right Enlightener Huishou	廣宗寺碑文
1515-?	Duanjin	Central Buddhist office	Right Enlightener		Guangzong si		Right Enlightener Duanzhu; Right Enlightener Huishou	廣宗寺碑文
?-1538-?	Mingzhao	Central Buddhist Office	Left Enlightener		Xiantong si			寶山玉大和尚 緣起 行實功德碑文
?-1538-1541-?	Mingxuan	Central Buddhist Office	Left Enlightener	Abbot of Xiantong si	Xiantong si	Puxian's disciple	Dugang Mingxu	五臺山大塔院 寺重修阿育王 所建釋迦文佛 真身捨利寶塔 碑

並銘 and  
欽差敕建五臺  
山  
大萬聖佑國禪  
寺碑記

?-1538- 1541-?	Mingxu	Mount Wutai Buddhist Office & Central Buddhist Office	Dugang (Supervisor), Left Enlightener	Xiantong si	Left Enlightener Mingxuan	五臺山大塔院 寺重修阿育王 所建釋迦文佛 真身捨利寶塔 碑並銘 and 欽差敕建五臺 山 大萬聖佑國禪 寺碑記
?-1557-?	Daji	Central Buddhist Office	Left Enlightener			雲中代府張氏 齋僧 積善行實碑記
?-1582- 1607-?	Yuanguang	Central Buddhist Office	Left Worthy	Tayuan si	Dugang Zhilong	敕建五臺山大 塔院寺碑記 and 敕諭山西 五臺山碑文
?-1582- 1607-?	Zhilon	Mount Wutai Buddhist Office	Dugang (Supervisor)		Left Worthy Yuanguang	敕建五臺山大 塔院寺碑記 and 敕諭山西 五臺山碑文

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The table shows that all the Mount Wutai monks who held posts in the Central Buddhist Office were abbots of imperially-patronised monasteries. The closer their relationship with the imperial family, the chart reveals, the higher their ranks were. Among all of these individuals, the abbot of Tayuan Monastery Yuanguang received the highest rank, while Xiantong Monastery's abbots held the Enlightener posts for many generations, an indication that throughout the Ming dynasty it was most favoured by the Ming imperial family. In trying to understand why several monks might bear the same title, it is important to note that while these monks were administrative officials, some of them did not have any administrative responsibility in the Mount Wutai Buddhist Office. In these cases, the monastic official post was a marker of prestige.

Reconstructing the Mount Wutai monastic official system by collecting data from various inscriptions reveals that the official administrative system on Mount Wutai did not function as perhaps intended because there was no hierarchical order established among the Mount Wutai monasteries. Though there had been a Buddhist Office on Mount Wutai since the Yongle era, there were no clear rules for selecting the head of the Buddhist Office. Whether this Supervisor was selected according to his or her ability and moral conduct was not clear, as sometimes this post was handed down from master to disciple.

Several additional factors may have contributed to the failure of the monastic official system on Mount Wutai. The sale of the monastic official ranks by the Ming government corrupted this system throughout the empire. Furthermore, the complexity of Mount Wutai Buddhism, where different Buddhist traditions coexisted, made administering it under a single system very difficult. The different Buddhist traditions, customs and languages of the religious communities could be a major challenge for the head of the Buddhist office to overcome. Furthermore, power struggles among these monasteries may also have led to the system's failure. As mentioned above, the inscriptions imply that at one point as many as four or five individuals from different monasteries concurrently held the position of Enlighteners. This number does not even include *honouris causa* monastic officials of Mount Wutai.

#### 4 Monastic Official System in Nanjing

Initially the Central Buddhist Office was established in Nanjing's Tianjie Monastery with all monasteries in China under its direct control. When the Ming capital was moved to Beijing, the Nanjing Central Buddhist Office continued to function but its jurisdiction was limited to Nanjing and the surrounding area only. The Beijing Central Buddhist Office took overall control of the country. In the 23rd year of the Chenghua era (1465–1487), the emperor ordered

a reduction in the number of Buddhist and Daoist officials. Several monastic official posts in the Nanjing Central Buddhist Office were removed and only Right Worthy, right Lecturer on Sūtras and Left and Right Enlighteners remained.<sup>26</sup> According to the *Jinling Fancha zhi* 金陵梵刹志 (Gazetteer of Jinling's Buddhist Establishments), the court did away with additional monastic official posts in the Nanjing Central Buddhist Office, leaving only the Left Enlightener and three Right Enlighteners. These four monastic officials lived in four major monasteries, at Linggu si 靈谷寺, Tianjie si 天界寺, Baoen si 報恩寺 and Nengren si 能仁寺.<sup>27</sup>

In the early years of the Ming dynasty, the Ming emperor Taizu decreed that monastic officials and abbots should be selected through examination.<sup>28</sup> However, Emperor Hongwu directly appointed most of the monastic officials in the Central Buddhist Office himself. Clear evidence that Nanjing monastic officials were selected through examination is found in the Yongle era. When the capital was shifted to Beijing, the appointment of monastic officials and abbots of major monasteries in Nanjing occurred in three stages. First the Nanjing Ministry of Rites tested the nominees; then the list of chosen nominees was sent to the Central Ministry of Rites; finally, both the Central Ministry of Rites (*libu* 禮部) and the central Ministry of Administration (*shibu* 吏部) approved the appointments.<sup>29</sup>

In the middle period of the Ming dynasty, the monastic official system in Nanjing became corrupt. Huo Tao 霍韜 (1487–1540), the minister of the Nanjing Ministry of Rites, launched a campaign to tackle this issue:

Those monastic officials who were appointed to supervise the monks in the (southern) capital and its surrounding area, should not favour Nengren Monastery (when selecting monastic officials)... If there is a vacancy, the government should examine abbots of major monasteries and choose the most suitable one to fill the post. The monks in Nengren Monastery have subverted the system for years. If there is a vacancy (in Nanjing Central Buddhist Office), they only recommend (monks) from Nengren Monastery, and regard the post as their own property. The unfair selection leads to injustice.... Monks also use money to bribe government officials in order to get the license to administer the *yoga* sect, and thus to cheat innocent people. Crafty monks and greedy officials collude with each other, and the original examination system has fallen into disuse.

26 *Ming Xiaozong Shilu* Vol.5, 83–84. Also see He Xiaorong, *Ming Dai Nanjing Siyuan Yanjiu*, (Beijing: Zhongguo Shehui Kexue Chubanshe, 2000), 323–324.

27 Ge Yinliang, *Jinling Fancha zhi* (Taipei: Zongqing Tushu Chuban Gongsì) Vol.52, 467–468.

28 Ge Yinliang, *Jinling Fancha zhi* Vol.2, 52.

29 He Xiaorong, *Ming Dai Nanjing Siyuan Yanjiu*, 329–330.

Cunning monks take advantage of greedy ministers to line their own pockets. Nothing is worse than this.<sup>30</sup>

Ge Yinliang 葛寅亮 (1570–1646), the head of Nanjing Ministry of Rites between 1601 and 1608, further strengthened the anti-corruption campaign directed towards the Nanjing monastic official system. As he wrote:

According to his majesty's decree: five monasteries—Linggu, Tianjie, Tianxi, Nengren, and Jiming 雞鳴—are the major monasteries in the capital. From now on if the post of abbots in these monasteries is vacant, we must choose monks who have great virtue and examine them. Those who are accomplished in religious knowledge may be appointed as abbots of these five monasteries. Recommendations cannot be made without good grounds...recently the selections of monastic officials have been based on drawing lots. The monastic officials are in charge of monastic properties, provisions, justice, i.e. the most important roles in the Buddhist administration. At present, they are selected by drawing lots, and not according to their virtues.<sup>31</sup>

Ge Yinliang introduced new regulations for selecting monastic officials to prevent corruption in monasteries. According to the new regulations, if there was a vacancy for a Left Enlightener, the Nanjing Ministry of Rites gave a test on Buddhist sūtras to three Right Enlighteners and two of them were chosen as candidates. If there was a vacancy for a Right Enlightener, the Nanjing Ministry of Rites gave a test on Buddhist sūtras to the abbots of eight major monasteries and three of them were short-listed. If there was a vacancy for the abbot of a major monastery, a test was given to the abbots of three medium monasteries and one was chosen together with four sūtra expert monks (*tongjing seng* 通經僧), thus producing a shortlist of five. If there was a vacancy for a medium-sized monastery abbot, monks who were experts in the sūtras were tested and four of them were chosen as the candidates. At the second stage, the selected candidates were sent to the Nanjing Ministry of Rites to take the second test. After that the decision was made.<sup>32</sup>

Regulations were also made regarding the qualifications of the exam participants. Seniority was considered when choosing candidates and candidates

30 Huo Tao (Ming), *Huo Wenmingong Quanji* (Beijing: The National Library Of China), Vol.9.

31 Ge Yinliang, *Jinling Fancha zhi*, 52–53.

32 Ge Yinliang, *Jinling Fancha zhi*, 467. Also see He Xiaorong, *Ming Dai Nanjing Siyuan Yanjiu*, 330–331.



could not be those who came from the monastery where the vacancy occurred but rather had to be chosen from other monasteries. This was to avoid partiality. Those who had offended *vinaya* rules were disqualified from consideration.<sup>33</sup>

The following two examples testify the success of this anti-corruption campaign within the Nanjing monastic official system.

In the *Qixia xiaozhi* 棲霞小志 [Short Notes on Mount Qixia], “the Epigraph of Venerable Shan who was the Right Enlightener at the Nanjing Central Buddhist Office concurrently holding the abbacy of Da Tianjie Monastery; former abbot of Qixia Monastery; who followed the Song Shan [Shaolin Monastery] lineage of the Chan sect”<sup>34</sup> records how monastic officials were selected in that period:

Xingshan 行善, whose family name was Xue, was apprenticed to Ven. Dafang 大方 in a formal religious ceremony when he was fourteen ... He was fully ordained at the Tianjie Monastery.... In the 31st year of the Jiajing era (1552), he was recommended by Ven. Fahui 法慧 to be the abbot of Qixia Monastery and approved by the Nanjing Ministry of Rites. Qixia Monastery had been in decline for a long time at that point, and very few monks were living there. Xingshan made a huge effort to restore the monastery by building a meditation hall, and reinstating the dharma preaching tradition. In the first year of the Longqing era (1567), there was a vacancy for a Right Enlightener, and the Ministry of Rites set an examination for (abbots of) major monasteries and Xingshan came first. He went to the capital (to receive the official nomination). In the early spring of the following year, he was appointed as the abbot of Tianjie Monastery... and with other Enlighteners he presided over this monastery.<sup>35</sup>

In the *Wanli Yehuo bian* 萬曆野獲編 [Unofficial Collection of the Wanli (era)], Shen Defu 沈德符 (1578–1642) also described how abbots of Nanjing’s major monasteries were selected, though Shen disapproved of the contents of the examination papers:

Monks in the two capitals are subject to the Ministry of Rites. When an abbot’s post is vacant, the minister of the Ministry of Rites hold a competition among them and chooses the best one as the abbot. (I) went to

33 Ibid.

34 南京僧錄司右覺義兼住大天界寺前棲霞寺住持嵩山禪善公碑銘

35 Sheng Shitai (Ming), “Qixia Xiaozhi,” 313–314.

visit Jinling and saw that the bearing of the abbots of the three monasteries was very dignified. That is because Linggu, Taijie and Baoen are the three biggest monasteries, with several thousand monks...The abbot of Linggu Monastery is very young and his demeanour is upright. (Someone) showed me their exam papers, which are written in exquisite prose, no different from that of the great Confucian scholars.<sup>36</sup>

In conclusion, Nanjing monastic officials were given clear roles to play. Though at times during the mid-Ming dynasty the system was corrupt, an anti-corruption campaign led by the Nanjing government introduced new meticulous regulations, clarified the duties of monastic officials and established a selection process based on performance in examinations that largely remedied this situation.

## 5 Comparison of the Monastic Official System in Nanjing and at Mount Wutai

Unlike monastic officials in Nanjing Central Buddhist Office, who were selected through examination, the Mount Wutai Buddhist Office had no such tradition. Monastic officials were either appointed by emperors or inherited by disciples from their masters. Mount Wutai monks were appointed as Central Buddhist Office officials largely because they had been the abbots of imperial-patronized monasteries. Abbots of these monasteries would not only take over the abbacy from their predecessor but also inherit their rank at the Central Buddhist Office. The data we gathered from the Mount Wutai inscriptions indicates that there was not a fully functioning system established to administer Mount Wutai Buddhism. As a result, whoever was close to the emperor was dominant on Mount Wutai.

When the monastic official system was established in 1382, the Hongwu emperor made it clear that the Central Buddhist Office should be set up in Nanjing, the then capital, and that Senggang si (僧綱司) should be set up at provincial capitals. Mount Wutai was neither a national capital nor a provincial capital, but two offices, unparalleled in the empire, were nevertheless set up at Mount Wutai. This made it difficult for those officials to perform their duties. The situation in Nanjing was much better; when the Central Buddhist Office was established in Nanjing, the emperor specified that all Nanjing monasteries—as well

<sup>36</sup> Shen Defu (1578–1642), *Wanli Yehuo Bian* (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1959), 687–688.

as monasteries in the surrounding counties such as Shangyuan 上元 and Jiangning 建寧—were under the office's direct control.<sup>37</sup>

During the Ming dynasty, especially during the middle and end of the Ming period, the reputation of monastic officials deteriorated. An extremely learned monk, Yuancheng (1581–1626), described this corruption:

The emperor Taizu set up the monastic official system. There were eight officials in the central Buddhist Office, namely, Left and Right Worthies, Left and Right Instructors, Left and Right Lecturers on Sūtras, and Left and Right Enlighteners. Furthermore he set up provincial, prefectural and county Buddhist offices. Those who have not a thorough understanding about Confucianism are not qualified to be officials. How sad it is that Buddhism is subject to Confucianism...that made the real cultivated Buddhist monks despised as not worth a fig and [has led to their] abandonment. Worthless fellows [in order to get appointed as monastic officials] either bribe the relevant officials themselves or indirectly obtain the good offices of someone who is influential in the matter at hand. Have they ever thought about the sense of honour or of shame? They appeal to those officials like dogs appeal to their masters. The bad one models himself on the worse one. Have they ever studied the dharma and vinaya?<sup>38</sup>

The exclusion of these monastic officials by Ming Buddhist historians reflects, once again, the perspective apparent in Huijiao's remarks about the definition of eminent monks. It was believed that those who pursued fame and power were not great examples and therefore not worthy of mentioning in historical books. The eminent monks whose names are recorded in historical accounts of Mount Wutai from the Ming dynasty such as the *Qingliang shanzhi* did not occupy positions in the administrative officialdom and neither did those four outstanding eminent monks Lianchi Zhuhong 蓮池祿宏 (1535–1615), Hanshan Deqing 憨山德清 (a.k.a. Deqing 德清; 1546–1623), Zibo Zhenke 紫柏真可 (1543–1603), and Ouyi Zhixu 藕益智旭 (1599–1655). Those who had been recorded as eminent monks on Mount Wutai during the Ming dynasty were either great Chan masters or founders of big monasteries.

During the early days of the Ming dynasty the Central Buddhist Office was set up in Nanjing and high monastic officials were appointed to be abbots of major monasteries in Nanjing. When the political centre shifted to the north, more northern monks were appointed as high monastic officials and another

37 Ge Yinliang, *Jingling Fancha zhi*, 32.

38 Yuancheng (Ming), *Kaigu Lu*, X Vol.114, 730.

Central Buddhist Office was set up in Beijing, the northern capital, to take over the responsibilities of the Nanjing office. A half of all the Nanjing monastic official posts were withdrawn in the middle of the Ming dynasty.<sup>39</sup> In the late Ming, most of the high monastic official posts in Nanjing central Buddhist Office remained vacant.<sup>40</sup> In contrast, when the Mount Wutai Central Buddhist Office was set up, the highest monastic official there was Right Enlightener. In the late 16th century, the monastic official of Mount Wutai Buddhist Office was promoted to the highest rank as Left Worthy.

In Nanjing during the Ming dynasty all monastic officials lived in its three major monasteries and concurrently served as abbots of those monasteries. Monastic officials were not selected from monasteries in which vacancies appeared but rather had to be chosen from other monasteries in order to avoid corruption.<sup>41</sup> The way that abbots were chosen in Nanjing indicates that the Nanjing Central Buddhist Office controlled all monasteries in that territory. Further, a hierarchy was established and maintained among major, medium and small monasteries and monks did not necessarily belong to a particular monastery. Instead, all monasteries could be considered as part of a whole system with monks flowing from one to another.

Although there was also a Central Buddhist Office on Mount Wutai, the monasteries there did not follow the same monastic administration as in Nanjing. Rather there was a federal arrangement. The Mount Wutai Buddhist Office did not interfere in the affairs of individual monasteries but rather Mount Wutai monastic officials played the role of intermediary between the Ming government and individual monasteries on Mount Wutai.

Comparison of the ways that the monastic official system functioned in Nanjing and at Mount Wutai in the Ming suggests the considerable variation that existed between locales of Buddhist practice during this period. Both the ways that officials were appointed in these settings and the types of powers they exercised differed substantially. As the above discussion indicates, it is necessary to complement the exploration of standard historical materials for the study of Mount Wutai such as the *Qingliang shanzhi* mountain gazetteer with other, less well-known sources including the inscriptions examined here. Expanding the scope of our investigation in this way allows us to identify and then understand hitherto fore unfamiliar but highly fascinating aspects of the site's religious past. In this instance we see how the religious diversity of Mount Wutai and its distance from the administrative centres of the empire

39 *Ming Xiaozong Shilu* Vol.5, 83–84.

40 *Ibid.*

41 Ge Yinliang, *Jingling Fancha zhi*, 467.

contributed to the formation of a unique pattern of authority in which ties to the throne and links between masters and disciples—rather than examinations and regulations administered by imperial authorities—seems largely to have determined who occupied official posts.

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## Beyond Seeking for Sacredness: Shedding New Light on the Carving of the Jiaxing Canon on Mount Wutai

*Dewei Zhang*

The carving of a new edition of the Chinese Buddhist canon, to be known as the Jiaxing canon (Jiaxing zang 嘉興藏), began on Mount Wutai in Wanli 17 (1589). Once completed, this canon would contain more than 120,000 fascicles of Buddhist texts, more than any other edition of the canon produced in the pre-modern East Asian world.<sup>1</sup> The inclusion of nearly three hundred unique texts written by Chinese authors during the Ming-Qing dynastic transition has rendered this canon particularly valuable for modern scholars studying Buddhism, especially Chan in late imperial China.<sup>2</sup> While the canon itself is well known to scholars, the eventful history of its creation is less familiar. There are, moreover, a number of significant questions about its beginnings that remain unanswered. Of particular interest here is the timeline for the project's completion. When designing the carving project, the directors estimated that it would be completed within ten years. In reality, however, the majority of the canon was not finished until Kangxi 52 (1713) when more than one hundred and thirty years had passed since the project's initiation.<sup>3</sup> How could its

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- 1 So far, the most complete edition of the Jiaxing canon is that published by Mingzu chubanshe 民族出版社 in 2008. It has 2,350 texts that are contained in 380 cases (*han* 函). Historically, this canon never had a complete catalogue, which prevents us from knowing how many texts it exactly included. In fact, due to the complicated history of its carving and printing, this canon was never printed as a complete canon from the start to the end. See "Jiaxing zang (Jingshan zang) chongji jianjie," 嘉興藏 (徑山藏) 重輯簡介 (Beijing: Jiaxing zang zhengli chuban weiyuan hui 嘉興藏整理出版委員會, 2008), 16–20.
  - 2 Lan Jifu 藍吉富, "Jiaxing da zangjing de teshe jiqi shiliao jiazhi" 嘉興大藏經的特色及其史料價值, in *Fojiao de sixiang yu wenhua: Yinshun daoshi bazi jinliu shouqing lunwen ji* 佛教的思想與文化: 印順導師八秩晉六壽慶論文集 (Taipei: Faguang chubanshe, 1991), 255–66. This article was slightly revised and republished the following year, under the title "Jiaxing zang yanjiu" 《嘉興藏》研究.
  - 3 Although the majority of the canon was completed by the end years of the Kangxi period (1662–1722), the practice of adding new texts or emending old ones continued until the Jiaqing period (1796–1820). See Wang Lei 王蕾 & Han Xituo 韓錫鐸, "Cong Liaotu cangben renshi Jiaxing zang" 從遼圖藏本認識嘉興藏, *Zhongguo dianji yu wenhua* 中國典籍與文化 1 (2009): 67.



leaders have been so optimistic at the start? Why was the process so protracted? And, how and to what degree did this delay help shape the content and form of the canon produced? These are the principal questions around which the present article is built.

In an attempt to address these questions, this paper examines a significant event that has not received serious scholarly attention: the relocation of the carving project. In Wanli 21 (1593), the site on Mount Wutai that had been used for this purpose for four years was abandoned and the project was entirely relocated to Mount Jingshan 徑山 in the Jiangnan region. This was a move of more than one thousand miles, a great distance that suggests that the decision must have been a hard but deliberate one. After that, the carving project slowed down significantly and became much less organized. As a result, its completion was seriously delayed. To date scholars have only offered two simple explanations for this relocation that shaped the canon's fate in significant ways. First, Mount Wutai was too cold to carry out such a huge project and, second, the site was too far from Jiangnan, the place from which most human and material resources necessary for the project came.<sup>4</sup> But Mount Wutai did not become chilly all at once and, at least insofar as the start of the medieval era is concerned, it was well known in the Chinese Buddhist world for coldness even in the summertime. The individuals who initiated the carving project at Mount Wutai certainly knew this beforehand. What were their reasons for starting the project here in the first place? Moreover, why was it necessary to mobilize the

4 For studies on the Jiaxing canon, see Chen Yunü 陳玉女, *Mingdai fomen neiwai sengsu jiaoshe de changyu* 明代佛門內外僧俗交涉的場域 (Xinbei: Daoxiang chubanshe, 2010), chaps. 4 and 5; Cai Yunchen 蔡運辰, "Jiaxing da Zangjing ji xuzang, you xuzang mulu kaoshi" 嘉興大藏經及續藏、又續藏目錄考釋, in his *Ershiwu zhong zangjing mulu duizhao kaoshi* 二十五種藏經目錄對照考釋 (Taipei: Xin Wenfeng chuban gongsi, 1983): 509; Nakajima Ryüzō 中嶋隆藏, *Min Banreki Kakōzō no shuppan to sono eikyō* 明萬曆嘉興藏的出版とその影響 (Sendai, 2005); *idem*, "Kakōzō nyūzō butten to Mitsuzō Dōkai no tachiba" 嘉興入藏佛典と密藏道開の立場, *Tōhō gakuhō* 東方學報 113, no.1 (2007): 34–50; "Kakōzō daizōkyō kokuin no shoki jijo" 嘉興大藏經刻印の初期事情, *Nihon Chūgoku Gakkai hō* 日本中國學會報, 57 (2005): 118–32; Lan Jifu 藍吉富, "Jiaxing da zangjing de teshe jiqi shiliao jiazhi" 金申, *Fojiao meishu congkao* 佛教美術叢考 (Beijing: Kexue chubanshe, 2004): 286–88, 289–93, 294–99, and 300–303; Shi Fazhuang 釋法幢, "Jingshan kezang kaoshu" 徑山刻藏考述, *Zhonghua foxue yanjiu* 中華佛學研究 13 (2012): 53–89; "Keben da zangjing yanjiu de huigu yu zhanwang: Jingshan zang guoji xueshu yantaohui lunwen ji" 刻本大藏經研究的回顧與展望: 徑山藏國際學術研討會論文集 (Hangzhou: Jingshan chansi, 2015). Also see Hasebe Yūkei 長谷部幽蹊, *Min Shin bukkyō kenkyū shiryō* 明清佛教研究資料 (Nagoya: self-published, 1987): 22–34; Yang Yuliang 楊玉良, "Gugong bowuyuan cang Jiaxing zang chutan" 故宮博物院藏《嘉興藏》初探, *Gugong bowuyuan yuankan* (Beijing) 故宮博物院院刊 3 (1997): 13–24; Weng Lianxi 翁蓮溪, "Gugong cang Jiaxing zang" 故宮藏《嘉興藏》, *Zijin cheng* 紫禁城 1 (1999): 47–48.

resources from the distant Jiangnan? Why were local societies in Shanxi, where the mountain was located, virtually absent from the scene? And, what roles did other regions in north China, such as Beijing, play in the project? Exploring these issues teaches us not only about the history of this great canon but, in a broader view, also helps reveal the vitality and complexity of the late-Ming and early-Qing sangha in which the carving project was carried out.<sup>5</sup>

## 1 More than Carving a Canon

By the mid- sixteenth century, an urgent need for a new edition of the Buddhist canon was widely felt within the sangha and beyond. Yuan Huang 袁黃 (1533–1606; jinshi, 1586) was probably the first to propose the project. Buddhism enjoyed a short-term flourishing in the early Ming, but it fell into decline after the Yongle period (1403–1424) and the situation grew even worse during the Jiajing period (1522–1566) as a result of the purposeful restriction by the emperor.<sup>6</sup> Yuan Huang believed that this situation would be improved if people had more opportunities to access to Buddhist texts. In Wanli 1 (1573) when he met Huanyu Faben 幻余法本 (?–1598?), then an attendant of Master Yungu Fahui 雲谷法會 (1500–1575) in Dayun si 大雲寺, Yuan suggested the creation of a

5 For a survey of Buddhism in late Ming China, see Chün-fang Yü, “Ming Buddhism,” in *The Cambridge History of China*, vol. 8, *The Ming dynasty, 1368–1644. Part 2*, eds. Denis Twitchett and Frederick W. Mote (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1998), 927–52. In the past thirty years, the late Ming Buddhist revival has attracted much scholarly attention. For the most important studies in the field, see Chün-fang Yü, *The Renewal of Buddhism in China: Chu-hung and the Late Ming Synthesis* (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1981); Timothy Brook, *Praying for Power: Buddhism and the Formation of Gentry Society in Late-Ming China* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1993); and Jiang Canteng 江燦騰, *Wan Ming fojiao gaige shi 晚明佛教改革史* (Guilin: Guangxi shifan daxue chubanshe, 2006). Also see Chen Yunü, *Mingdai de fojiao yu shehui 明代的佛教與社會* (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 2011); idem., “Mindai bukyō shakai no chiiki teki kenkyū: Kajō, Manreki nenkan (1522–1620) o chūshin to shite” 明代佛教社會の地域的研究 - 嘉靖・萬曆年間 (1522–1620) を中心として. Ph.D. diss., Kyushu University, 1995; Dewei Zhang, *Thriving in Crisis: Buddhism and Political Disruption in China, 1522 - 1620*; Shengyan 聖嚴, *Mingmo fojiao yanjiu 明末佛教研究* (Taipei: Dongchu chubanshe, 1993); Hasebe Yūkei, *Ming Qing fojiao shi yanjiu xushuo 明清佛教史研究序說* (Kyoto: Dohosha Shuppan, 1993); Jiang Wu, *Enlightenment in Dispute: Reinvention of Chan Buddhism in Seventeenth-Century China* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 2008); Jennifer Eichman, *A Late Sixteenth-Century Chinese Buddhist Fellowship: Spiritual Ambitions, Intellectual Debates, and Epistolary Connections* (Leiden: Brill, 2016).

6 For the suppression of Buddhism launched by Emperor Jiajing and its consequences, see Chen, “Mindai bukyō shakai no chiiki teki kenkyū,” chap. 2; He Xiaorong 何孝榮, “Ming Shizong jinfa” 明世宗禁佛. *Mingshi yanjiu 明史研究* 7 (2001): 164–76; and Zhang, *Thriving in Crisis*, chap. 2.

new edition of the Buddhist canon. Also he suggested that it be made in the thread-binding form (*fāngcè* 方冊). In his view concertina binding (*fānjia* 梵筴), the conventional form in which the canon had been made, was too unwieldy to be circulated widely. According to Yuan, by employing the thread-binding form “the scripture would be easily spread everywhere and read by everybody. [Consequently,] people would tell what is right from what is wrong, and the orthodox Dharma would greatly flourish.”<sup>7</sup> This plan found a strong supporter in Faben.<sup>8</sup>

This suggestion of changing the form of the canon from the concertina binding to the thread binding, however, sparked heated debates. It is not surprising that Yuan Huang presented the idea, for Yuan had a clear utilitarian tendency in the religious field, as evidenced by the the ledgers of merit and demerit (*gongguo ge* 功過格) he advocated forcefully.<sup>9</sup> But some people feared that this change in the format of the Buddhist scripture would render them less respected.<sup>10</sup> The concertina binding imitated how Buddhist sūtras were first bound in India,<sup>11</sup> and for these individuals keeping this format was a way of paying respect to the Indian origins of Buddhism and thus sacred and unchangeable. In contrast, beginning in the Ming dynasty the thread-binding form was usually used in China to print secular books. These debates continued and were only resolved by Zibo Zhenke 紫柏真可 (1543–1603), one of the leading Buddhist masters in late Ming China.<sup>12</sup> Zhenke stressed the value of this change by highlighting its effectiveness in spreading Buddhism.

7 使處處流通，人人誦習，孰邪孰正，人自能辯之，而正法將大振矣 (Daokai, *Mizang Kai chanshi yigao* 密藏開禪師遺稿, J23nB118.1.5c12).

8 Zhenke, *Zibo zunze quanji* 紫柏尊者全集, X73, no. 1452, 13.252c23–253.

9 For Yuan Huang’s promotion of the *gongguo ge*, see Cynthia J. Brokaw, *The Ledgers of Merit and Demerit: Social Change and Moral Order in Late Imperial China* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991); Sakai Tadao 酒井忠夫, *Chūgoku zensho no kenkyū* 中国善書の研究 (Tōkyō: Kōbundō, 1960).

10 Before he was convinced by Zhenke, Daokai himself was one of the people who considered the concertina binding more respectful. See Zhenke, *Zibo zunze quanji*, X73, no. 1452, 13. 253, b2–3.

11 For studies on Zibo Zhenke, see Guoxiang 果祥, *Zibo dashi yanjiu* 紫柏大師研究 (Taipei: Dongchu chubanshe, 1987); Jonathan Christopher Cleary, “Zibo Zhenke: A Buddhist Leader in Late Ming China” (Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 1985); and Wang Qiyuan 王啓元, “Zibo dashi wanjie yu Wanli fojiao de shengcun kongjian” 紫柏大師晚節與萬曆間佛教的生存空間, *Shijie zongjiao yanjiu* 世界宗教研究, no.1 (2015): 28–41.

12 Zhenke, though widely respected as a Chan master, stressed the significant importance of doctrinal Buddhism to his religious achievements. See, for example, *Zibo zunze quanji*, X73, no. 1452, 9. 217a16–18: 破愚莫若智，智不徒生，必生於好學。學而能辨之，非智安至此？故曰：學非是道，然足以破愚。愚破智開，始可以入道矣。 Also see his confession in *ibid.*, 24.354c9–10: 虽宗门种草，若论见地，未始不以教乘为据证。

Although the sūtras in the concertina form are respectable, what benefits can you expect to obtain from respecting them if people do not understand their meanings? Even if [we admit that] the sūtras in the binding form are less reputable, they will be circulated widely because they will be cheap and easier to produce. [If so, shall we not expect that] one or two among millions of persons will understand their meanings? ... Even for the people who abhor sūtras with the binding form, [they] will [first] fall into the hell experiencing great sufferings and [then] return to the root after experiencing it. Once returning to the root, [they] will understand the reasons for their falling in the hell and [thus] correct their mistakes. Once correcting the mistakes, they will change [their attitude towards the sūtras] from contempt to respect.

使梵策雖尊重，而不解其意，則尊之何益？使方冊雖不尊重，以價輕易造，流之必溥。千普萬普之中，豈無一二人解其義趣者乎？..... 縱使輕賤方冊之輩，先墮地獄，受大極苦。苦則反本，反本即知墜地獄之因，知因則改過，改過則易輕賤為尊重。<sup>13</sup>

Obviously, like Yuan Huang, Zhenke understood the widespread circulation of Buddhist sūtras to be a means of revitalizing Buddhism in general.

Zhenke's bigger ambitions shaped the canon-carving project in significant ways. When in Wanli 7 (1579) Zhenke learned of Faben's plan to make a new canon, fundraising was a major problem. The estimated cost of the project was 30,000 taels of silver. Zhenke promised to help the frustrated Faben and, as a result of their connection, Mizang Daokai 密藏道開 (?–1594?) came to be involved in the project a few years later.

Daokai was Zhenke's most capable disciple. Before meeting Zhenke around Wanli 12, he had wandered through southern China where he learned from an epitaph that there had been as many as seven sets of woodblocks of the Buddhist canon in a single prefecture during the Yuan dynasty (1271–1368). Yet only two sets had been produced during the Ming. This deeply disappointed Daokai and thus when introduced by his master, Zhenke, to the carving project he was eager to take over the work. Daokai vowed, "If anybody donates thirty thousand taels of silver to carve this set of woodblocks, Daokai vows to offer that person my head, eyes, brain, and marrow. Henceforth, [Dao]kai's efforts will not cease before the completion of the carving of the woodblocks."<sup>14</sup> From

<sup>13</sup> Ibid, 13.253b5–13.

<sup>14</sup> 若有人舍三萬金刻此藏板者，道開發願以頭目腦髓供養是人。自今而後，藏板不完，開心不死。Ibid, 13. 253b19–21.

then on, the cleric served as the defacto leader of the project until his mysterious disappearance ten years later.

It took several years for Daokai to plan the carving project and to decide how to collect the necessary resources for it. At the start, Empress Dowager Cisheng 慈聖 (1545–1614) suggested sponsoring the entire project with her money. If it had been accepted, this proposal would have greatly simplified and sped up the carving project. But Zhenke rejected it on the grounds that the benefits of creating this new canon should be maximized by allowing as many people as possible to contribute to it.<sup>15</sup> This choice indicates, once again, that the project's goals were greater than simply creating a new canon.

Thus in the Spring of Wanli 14 (1586) after a discussion with Fu Guangzai 傅光宅 (1547–1604), then the Regional Inspector (Xun'an yushi 巡按御史) in Shanxi, Daokai made a plan to look for ten chief donors (*changyuan* 唱緣). Each of these individuals, together with three assistant donors (*zhuyuan* 助緣), would support the carving each year by drawing from their own salaries.<sup>16</sup> Shortly after, Daokai modified this plan, deciding to seek forty individuals who as the chief donors would donate one hundred taels of silver annually. Forty additional people would also be selected to step in should any of the chief donors abandon the project. Compared with Zhenke, Daokai's fundraising plan was more selective, involving a far smaller group of donors than the former cleric seems to have envisioned participating in the endeavor. It was flexible and had the advantage of sharing the daunting task among a relatively large but still manageable group of sponsors and potential substitute contributors.<sup>17</sup> In response to Daokai's appeal, in the first month of Wanli 15 (1587) nine scholar-officials together with the cleric made a vow at Beijing's Longhua si 龍華寺 to back the project financially and intellectually. The group made a record of the event that communicates their enthusiasm and best wishes for the project. Examining this source we can see their shared desire to save Buddhism by circulating the canon.<sup>18</sup>

15 Daokai, *Mizang Kai chanshi yigao*, J23nBu8, 1.2a23–26.

16 *Ibid.*, 1.3a30–3b02.

17 *Ibid.*, 1.17b05–06.

18 This great goal was clearly stressed once again by Hanshan Deqing a few years later. See Deqing, *Hanshan laoren mengyou ji* 憨山老人夢游集, X73, no. 1456, 19. 596b9–11: 斯刻之舉，不啻秦庭之哭，真有效軍拔幟之意，其恢復法界之圖，遠且大矣。

## 2 Choosing Mount Wutai

The relocation of the project from Mount Wutai to Jiangnan marked a turning point in the Jiexiang canon's creation, a process that can be divided into two distinct stages. In Wanli 17 (1589), allegedly at Cisheng's order, the carving formally began in Miaode an 妙德庵 (Miaode chapel) on Mount Wutai. During the following four years, more than one hundred people worked tirelessly in the chapel, completing more than one thousand fascicles of Buddhist texts. Around the fall of Wanli 20, the project was moved to Xingshengwanshou si 興聖萬壽寺 at Mount Jingshan 徑山 before being relocated again to the Jizhao an 寂照庵 and Huacheng si 化城寺, two small temples belonging to Xingshengwanshou si. Work progressed much more slowly at this pair of sites. It was not until more than one hundred years later in the Qing dynasty that the majority of the canon was finally completed. Why was Mount Wutai chosen for this endeavour in the first place? And, given that in Wanli 20 the site was abandoned, was this choice simply a mistake? Daokai, we will see here, chose the carving site very deliberately.

Daokai's decision to center the project at Mount Wutai was not a quick one. After making the vow to complete this work, in Wanli 14 Daokai wrote to Feng Mengzhen 馮夢禎 (1548–1605) asking him to collate Buddhist texts written by Chinese authors for the canon. Judging from the inclusion of the newly-carved *Chushi yulu* 楚石語錄 [Recorded sayings of Chushi] that Daokai placed in the letter as a sample, we know that the carving had started though, as Daokai admitted, the carving site had not yet been decided.<sup>19</sup> Clearly Daokai did not strongly favor a site in northern China at the time. According to Le Jin 樂晉 (d. u.), a major supporter of the project, around Wanli 11 (1583) when Daokai was in southern China looking for a place to reside he received so many invitations from major monasteries there that he felt it hard to make a decision. Even in Wanli 13 and 14 when he followed Zhenke on a visit to Mount Wutai, Daokai still showed little interest in living there. But then things suddenly changed. Master Wubian 無邊 (?–1588) was the head of Miaode an located at the heart of Mount Wutai.<sup>20</sup> Before his death, Wubian assembled the resident monks and publicly passed the chapel over to Daokai. This chapel was spacious and thus an ideal site for a project as big as carving the canon. Daokai thus finally gave up on Jiangnan and chose Miaode chapel as his hub.<sup>21</sup> This explanation of the cleric's choice, however, remains somewhat unsatisfactory. Having a

19 Daokai, *Mizang Kai chanshi yigao*, J23nB118, 2. 24b18–22.

20 Minghe 明河, *Buxu Gaoseng zhuan* 補續高僧傳, X77n1524, 12. 515c12–516a17.

21 Nakajima, *Min Banreki Kakōzō no shuppan to sono eikyō*, 29.

spacious room was surely required but that condition alone was not enough to explain why Mount Wutai won out. In reality, the fact that the chapel was given by Master Wubian to Daokai was probably more important. As we shall see, Daokai tended to have everything under his control. It was in Miaode an rather than in any other candidate temple that he had the authority to decide how to carry out the project from the very start.

It is worth noting that Daokai's expectations about the level of support that the project would receive in northern China varied greatly over the time. At first he was quite positive. In a letter to Xu Yan 徐琰 (?–1592+), he wrote:

As for the canon-carving project, the conditions in northern China are slightly better (than those in the south). There is an eighty or ninety percent chance that the scheduled event (i.e. the carving project) will be carried out in northern China. Once carved, the [Buddhist scriptures] will be transported to southern China for circulation. [My] plan is to have forty persons serving as the head of donation-collecting (*yuanshou* 緣首). Throughout the project, they will each support it with one hundred taels of silver every year. About twenty of these people will be sought from the Yan, Zhao, Qi, and Lu regions. Ten are expected to come from Jiangnan, such as the Yu family in Jintan, the He family in Danyang, and others in places like Wujiang and Songjiang. As for the remaining ten, they should be sought in the two places of Huizhou and Puzhou.

刻經因緣，大都北方緣差勝。期場十有八九定在北方，擬刻成則移就南方以流通之。計得四十人爲緣首，每人歲助百金，與刻工相終始。燕、趙、齊、魯大約有二十人。江南如金壇之於、丹陽之賀、吳江、松江諸處擬求十人，外十人則求之徽州、蒲州二處。<sup>22</sup>

This letter was written around Wanli 14. Notably, the Yan, Zhao, Qi, and Lu regions were all in northern China, so too was Puzhou, a locale in Shanxi. Put together, geographically, these areas comprised a fan-shaped region surrounding Beijing. Nonetheless, it is worth noting that Daokai was able to list a few candidates in Songjiang 松江 and Wujiang 吳江 but none from northern China. This may suggest there was a gap between the cleric's expectations for his project and the chilly reality he came to face in northern China.

Daokai once explained his reasons for finally selecting Mount Wutai in a letter to a friend. Originally, Daokai settled on Mount Wutai, Laosheng 牢盛, Lingyan 靈岩, and Shuangjing 雙徑 as the four candidates for the project,

22 Daokai, *Mizang Kai Chanshi yigao*, J23nB118, 1.17b04–05.

preferring Mount Lingyan. But later he changed his mind after meeting a monk who had lived in the Lingyan area for three years. According to the monk, people in the area had remained unruly since the Huang Chao 黃巢 (835–884) rebellion, which had toppled the Tang dynasty (618–907). Even some monks, he learned, were bandits. This situation deterred Daokai from carrying out such a large-scale project there. Hesitant, Daokai eventually turned to the supernatural realm for help. Witnessed by statues of the Buddha and such Bodhisattvas as Mañjuśrī and Samantabhadra, he cast lots in a temple three times, and Mount Wutai won out each time. “Now [we] have no choice but to observe the order of the Tathāgata” Daokai concluded.<sup>23</sup> Mount Wutai was thus chosen.

This miraculous account falls far short of answering all our questions. Given that Daokai later moved the carving site from Mount Wutai, we know the Buddha’s order was not the only factor shaping his decision. In light of this, we should ask how the monk narrowed down his choices to the abovementioned four places, three of which were in northern China.

Laosheng refers to Mount Laoshan 嶗山, Shandong. This coastal mountain was gorgeous, but historically it was Daoism rather than Buddhism that had a dominant influence in the area. Things became even more complicated starting the middle sixteenth century when forms of “folk” or “popular” religion became influential in the area, especially the Luo teachings (*Luo jiao* 羅教) which were associated with much social and political trouble.<sup>24</sup> Very likely, Daokai included this mountain because Hanshan Deqing 憨山德清 (1546–1623) of the Haiyin si 海印寺 at Laoshan had recently received a copy of the Buddhist canon from the imperial court. Deqing, like Zhenke, would emerge as one of the most important and influential Buddhist leaders in late Ming China.<sup>25</sup> But around Wanli 14 when he received the canon he was only a promising monk. After earning a national reputation for having successfully prayed for the birth of the crown prince at Mount Wutai around Wanli 10 (1582), Hanshan Deqing had retreated to the mountains for three years. Daokai and Zhenke visited Deqing at Mount Laoshan in the autumn of 1586. Both sides were clearly satisfied with the meeting, which marked the beginning of a

23 今則有不得不遵如來救命矣 Ibid. 1.18a13–22.

24 For activities of Quanzhen Daoism and the Luo Teachings in this region, see Chen, *Ming-dai fomen neiwai sengxu jiaoshe de changyu*, chaps. 4 and 5.

25 Deqing’s biography can be found in *Dictionary of Ming Biography, 1368–1644*, eds. Luther Carrington Goodrich and Chaoying Fang (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1976), 1272–75. For important studies on Deqing, see Jiang, *Wan Ming fo jiao gaige shi*, pp. 69–190; Lynn Struve, “Deqing’s Dreams: Signs in a Reinterpretation of His Autobiography,” *Journal of Chinese Religions* 40 (2012): 1–44; Sung-peng Hsu, *A Buddhist Leader in Ming China: the Life and Thought of Han-shan Te-ch’ing* (University Park: Pennsylvania State Univ. Press, 1979).



lifelong friendship. Nonetheless, Deqing did not show much enthusiasm for the project at the time. In the following few years when Daokai was occupied with the preparation for the project, we see that Deqing was still busy in Shandong and Beijing where he hoped to obtain direct patronage from Cisheng and the inner court.<sup>26</sup>

Mount Lingyan here meant Lingyan si 靈巖寺 at Mount Lingyan, Shandong. This temple was first built in the Northern Wei dynasty (386–534) and reached the height of its importance during the Tang dynasty as one of China's "Four Famous Monasteries" (*sida mingsi* 四大名寺). During the late Ming period, Zhenke once served as its abbot but his relationship to the site seems to have been superficial and thus we cannot find meaningful traces of his time there.<sup>27</sup> This area had other advantages as well, including the possibility of securing support for the carving project from a local prince who was a Buddhist adherent. But warnings about post-Huang Chao rebellion unrest discussed above overshadowed these advantages. Daokai decided that Lingyan si was not a fitting place to carry out a religious project that required the large-scale mobilization of followers.

The situation at Mount Wutai was more complicated. Starting the seventh century, Mount Wutai was regarded as the most important Buddhist sacred site in China. More importantly for Daokai's plan, this mountain was believed to be the abode of Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī, the guardian of wisdom. Since the Buddhist canon represents the Dharma treasure, it was perfectly suitable to make the canon on the mountain.<sup>28</sup> The problem was that neither Daokai nor Zhenke had a real connection with this region. Very likely, they listed Mount Wutai as a candidate because Miaofeng Fudeng 妙峰福登 (1540–1612), like Deqing, had recently received a copy of the Buddhist canon from Empress Dowager Cisheng. Though long neglected, Miaofeng Fudeng was one of the most influential Buddhist masters in late Ming China. In Wanli 14, Daokai and Zhenke visited Fudeng, who was then in Mount Luya 廬芽. This meeting seems to have been quite fruitful—a record of their happy moments together remains available to contemporary scholars. Having been trained by Prince of Shanyin

26 For Deqing's activities during this period, see my article "Challenging the Reigning Emperor for Success: Hanshan Deqing 憨山德清 (1546–1623) and Late Ming Court Politics," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 134, no. 2 (2014): 263–85.

27 Zhenke has a long poem describing the dilapidation of Lingyan si at the time. See Zhenke, *Zibo zunze quanji*, X73, no. 1452, 28.389c21–390a5.

28 In Wanli 17 when the project was about to start, Shen Zibin 沈自邠 (1554–1589; jinshi, 1577) pointed out the close relationship between carving the canon on Mount Wutai and the symbolic meaning of Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī. See Nakajima, *Min Banreki Kakōzō no shuppan to sono eikyō* 22.

山陰王 (1558–1603) in Puzhou, Fudeng had since his early years maintained a strong connection with local societies in south Shanxi.<sup>29</sup> This helps explain why Daokai planned to enlist a few major patrons from Puzhou. Nevertheless, it does not follow that the canon should have come to be made on Mount Wutai, a place far from south Shanxi and geographically distinct from it.

Significantly, project leaders Daokai (and Zhenke) lacked significant connections with local societies in each of the places they were considering for the carving of the canon. Thus, there must have been other reasons that these sites were selected as possible hubs for the project. Notably, the three sites in northern China were arrayed in a fan-shaped region around Beijing, the imperial capital. And the abovementioned people were all linked to Cisheng, arguably the most powerful and generous patron of Buddhism throughout the dynasty.<sup>30</sup> As a court woman, Cisheng was confined to the Forbidden City but she had avenues that allowed her to keep close connections with the sangha outside. More specifically, Cisheng was highly active in circulating the Buddhist canon. A memorial Daokai submitted to Cisheng indicates that he was by no means unfamiliar with this Empress Dowager. Later taken as the first piece in Daokai's collected works, the tone of this writing is closer to what we would expect in correspondence between friends rather than between a ruler and a subject.<sup>31</sup> This close relationship, though somewhat unexpected, seems to have something to do with Cisheng's willingness to patronize the carving project. In Wanli 14 and 15, Cisheng bestowed fifteen copies of the Buddhist canon to

29 Fudeng's modern biography can be found in Goodrich and Fang, eds. *Dictionary of Ming Biography, 1368–1644*, 1: 462–66. For a thorough study of Fudeng, see Dewei Zhang, "Engaged but Not Entangled: Miaofeng Fudeng 妙峰福登 (1540–1612) and the Late Ming Court," in *The Middle Kingdom and the Dharma Wheel: Aspects of the Relationship between the Buddhist Sangha and the State in Chinese History*, ed. Thomas Jülch (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 322–78. For other studies on this master, see Hibino Takeo 日比野丈夫, "Myōhō Fukutō no jiseki nitsuite" 妙峰福登の事蹟について, in *Tsukamoto Hakushi shōju kinen Bukkyō Shigaku ronshū* 塚本博士頌壽記念佛教史學論集 (Kyoto: Tsukamoto Hakushi shōju kinenkai, 1961), 583–95; Puay-Peng Ho, "Building for Glitter and Eternity: The Works of the Late Ming Master Builder Miaofeng on Wutai Shan," *Orientalism* 27, no.5 (1996): 67–73. Also, there is a brief description of his stories in James Hargett, *Stairway to Heaven* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2006), 170–75.

30 For Cisheng's biography, see *Mingshi* 明史 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1974): 114.3534–3536; Goodrich & Fang, eds., *Dictionary of Ming Biography*, 856–59. For current studies on this empress dowager, see Susan Naquin, *Peking: Temples and City Life, 1400–1900* (Berkeley: California Univ. Press, 2000) 156–161; Chen, *Mingdai de fojiao yu shehui*, 96–146; Nie Fulong 聶福榮, "Wanli chao Cisheng Li taihou chongfo kao lun" 萬曆朝慈聖李太后崇佛攷論 (M.A. thesis, Jilin University 吉林大學, 2007). I devote Chapter three of *Thriving in Crisis* to this woman.

31 For the memorial, see Daokai, *Mizang Kai Chanshi yigao*, J23nB118, 1.7b05–16.

highly favoured monks, including Deqing and Fudeng.<sup>32</sup> During this same period, the pace of preparations for the project increased noticeably. This similarity in the progress of the two events may not be coincidental.

Very likely, it was Daokai's expectation that he would receive support from both the inner court and the local society rather than the purported order from the Buddha that encouraged the monk to make Mount Wutai the project site. After making some modifications to this plan, therefore, Daokai declared with confidence that the project would be completed in around ten years.<sup>33</sup>

### 3 An Isolated Workplace in a Sacred Mountain

While on Mount Wutai, the project appears to have progressed pretty smoothly. There is no way to know exactly how many texts were carved during the period, for some of them were later re-carved and others simply disappeared over the course of time. While the existing colophons show that forty-six texts in 579 fascicles were produced in the workplace at Miaode an, Daokai himself once mentioned that up to twenty percent of the canon had been completed at this site.<sup>34</sup> If true, this means the team completed at least one thousand fascicles of texts. This is, by any standard, remarkable. In spite of the success, however, Daokai ultimately relocated the carving site to Jiangnan. In explaining the decision, he states "the adherents coming from Jiangnan have been rather active, while those in the north are rarely responsive [to the appeal for support]." <sup>35</sup> This comment suggests that things had turned out very differently than he had expected. How could things change so greatly in such a short period of time?

Daokai's comment reveals that there was an extreme unbalance in the geographical distribution of the project donors, which is substantiated by existing colophons. During the three years from Wanli 18 to 20, for example, eunuchs sponsored only twenty-nine of the fascicles carved. This small contribution is worthy of notice, given the enormous influence eunuchs had on Buddhism in

32 For studies on the bestowal of the Yongle Northern version of the Buddhist canon, see Dewei Zhang, "Where the Two Worlds Met: Spreading the Ming *Beizang* 明北藏 in Wanli (1573–1620) China," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (Third Series) 26, no. 7 (2016): 487–508; He Xiaorong, *Mingdai Beijing fojiao siyuan xiujian yanjiu* 明代北京佛教寺院修建研究 (Tianjin: Nankai daxue chubanshe, 2007), 317–22; and Nozawa Yoshimi 野沢佳美, "Mindai hokuzō kō 1: kashi jōkyō o chūshin ni" 明代北藏考 (一): 下賜狀況を中心に *Risshō daigaku bungakubu ronsō* 立正大學文學部論叢 117 (2003): 81–106.

33 Daokai, *Mizang Kai Chanshi yigao*, J23nB118, 1.18c18–19a1.

34 *Ibid.*, J23nB118, 2. 29b2–29.

35 江南善信頗發肯心，而北地則罕有應之者。 *Ibid.*, 1.17a14–18.

Northern China.<sup>36</sup> Similarly, although Daokai had expected the Prince of Shanyin and other local elites in Puzhou to participate, it turned out that their donations were negligible. The success of a project, to a large degree, hinges on the ability of its leaders to mobilize sufficient human and material resources. A question thus arises: Why did people in Northern China, those living in the inner court and those coming from local societies alike, fail to respond to Daokai's appeal?

Examining this situation, scholars have thus far tended to accuse people in north China of being parsimonious but this seems unfair when we consider things from a different angle. Daokai's collected works provide us with the first-hand and most important material out of which we can reconstruct the early history of the project. Daokai frequently wrote to his friends and supporters discussing the carving project. Closely examining those letters, we can detect some features of the social network that Daokai established. First of all, there remain very few traces of the monk's connection with either local society in Shanxi or of his interactions with Buddhist monks on Mount Wutai. Two short letters, one to a General called Ji 稽將軍 (d. u.) and the other to a Squad Leader (*bazong* 把總) called Feng 馮 (d. u.), are probably all he wrote to Shanxi people other than Fudeng. Such superficial connections with local societies greatly weakened the possibility that Daokai would obtain resources for the project in the region. Take the Prince of Shanyin as an example. Although the prince was a devout Buddhist and sponsored the carving of about twenty Buddhist texts on his own, Daokai failed to get him involved in the project. Eventually, the participation of the latter in the project was negligible.<sup>37</sup>

Perhaps more problematic still is the possibility that in the eyes of monks on Wutai Daokai (and his master Zhenke) represented competitors rather than allies. Upon hearing that the head of Cishou si 慈壽寺 was requesting a favor from the then regional inspector of Shanxi, Fu Guangzai, on behalf of the abbot of Tayuan si 塔院寺, Daokai warned Fu that "[the head of] Cishou is not brilliant, and [the abbot of] Tayuan is most stupid and vulgar."<sup>38</sup> Cishou si was Cisheng's private temple in Beijing, actually serving as a major avenue through which the woman confined to the inner court connected with the sangha out-

36 For the organization of Ming eunuchs, their active engagement in Beijing Buddhism and tremendous influence, see Chen Yunü, *Mingdai ershi si yamen huangguan yu Beijing fojiao* 明代二十四衙門宦官與北京佛教 (Taipei: Ruwen chubanshe, 2001).

37 It happened that Fudeng was then travelling around the empire, and even visited Mount Jizu 雞足 in Yunnan at Cisheng's order. It seems safe to assume that his absence from Shanxi made it more difficult for Daokai to establish a meaningful relationship with the Prince of Shanyin.

38 慈壽非高明，塔院最愚俗。Daokai, *Mizang Kai chanshi yigao*, J23, no. B118, 1.18a08–10.

side. When Zhenke and Deqing visited Beijing, they were both active in the monastery. At the time, the abbot was Benzai 本在 (d. u.). Little is known about Benzai but we can safely assume that he, following the example of his master Gufeng Juechun 古風覺淳 (1511–1581), maintained a close relationship with eunuchs.<sup>39</sup> Tayuan si also maintained a close relationship with Cisheng. Originally part of Xiantong si 顯通寺, this temple was made independent in Wanli 7 (1579) and two years later Cisheng chose it as a place to pray for the birth of the crown prince. Since the monks of both temples shared with Daokai a close connection with Cisheng, it was possible for them to become his allies. But Daokai's attitude hidden in these kinds of exchanges would clearly have caused tensions with the clerics, thereby reducing the chance that he could secure support from them for the project.

Xiantong si was the most important temple on Mount Wutai and Daokai once considered making it the carving site. Interestingly, he attempted to achieve this purpose in an indirect way, stressing that “according to the proprieties, [students] should come to learn rather than [teachers] go to teach.”<sup>40</sup> To achieve his goal, Daokai first had Fu Guangzai tell the abbot of Xiantong si that the monastery was in extreme decline, hinting that inviting eminent monks to the site would help revitalize it. Then, after some time, Fu would ask again, “Have Master Zhenke and Daokai ever been here?” With this reminder, Daokai believed, the abbot would turn to them for assistance and, naturally, they would enter the monastery to make it the carving site.<sup>41</sup> As a public monastery, in theory the running of Xiantong si was open to all capable monks. In the context of late Ming China when most public monasteries were run as hereditary temples (*zisun miao* 子孫廟), however, the monks of Xiantong si likely viewed Daokai's scheme as a threat. Whether or not Fu followed Daokai's advice is unclear, but we do know that neither Daokai nor Zhenke ever enjoyed a meaningful relationship with the monastery. This suggests Daokai failed in his attempt to obtain a stronghold on this sacred mountain.

In addition to his apparent isolation from local society and the sangha, Daokai's connection with Cisheng seems to have weakened over time due to his bitter critiques of eunuchs. During the late Ming period, eunuchs were the major patrons of Buddhism in Beijing and nearby regions including Mount Wutai. They were close to the political center, which helped them to mobilize resources. More importantly, they were well organized so that they could act as a

39 For Benzai and Juechun, see Deqing, *Hanshan laoren mengyou ji*, X73, no. 1456, 29. 668a12–c13.

40 但禮聞來學，不聞往教。

41 Daokai, *Mizang Kai chanshi yigao*, J23nB118, 1.18a27–18b03.

group. For Cisheng, eunuchs were significant for two reasons. First, they were the foremost supporting force for her religious enterprises, as evidenced by their large-scale participation in Cisheng's projects during the early Wanli period. Second, they served as the major avenue for Cisheng to link with the sangha outside the inner court, and thus essentially decided how Cisheng's resources could and would be used.

Daokai, however, was extremely critical of eunuchs. In one letter to Xu Yan, Daokai said that a layperson surnamed Zhao did a lot of harm to the canon project because he reported everything to the inner court. "You must be cautious about your acts," he warned Xu. "It is not necessary that the canon-carving project will rely on him. Therefore, there is no need to humble yourself too much."<sup>42</sup> At the end of the letter, Daokai worried that shortsighted monks would only seek immediate benefits but would not know how to cope with eunuchs. So, for eunuchs, he concluded, "You should definitely not communicate with them without my intermediation."<sup>43</sup> Judging from the letter, Layperson Zhao (as well as those eunuchs with whom he was affiliated) had a strong interest in participating in the carving project when it started. The total absence of this figure from the existing colophons is revealing, suggesting eventually that he (and his eunuch associates) left the project, whether voluntarily or involuntarily. Daokai's contempt for eunuchs can be seen in a second letter. When recommending a person to study in Beijing, Daokai warned him against living with eunuchs, claiming, "Once you get involved with them, you will no longer have the opportunity to improve your learning."<sup>44</sup> This harsh attitude would substantially weaken the willingness of eunuchs to cooperate with Daokai, which in turn seriously affected Cisheng's participation in the project.

It is worth noting that Daokai could be a highly supportive ally; he spared no time and energy assisting the monks he appreciated. After Chekong 徹空 (d. 1587) at Mount Lu 廬山 died in Wanli 15, his disciples went to Hangzhou asking Feng Mengzhen to write an epitaph for the master. Daokai urged Feng to complete the piece as quickly as possible and requested that he arrange accommodation for the disciples. At the time, it happened that two monks from Beijing were ordered to escort a copy of the Buddhist canon to Wannian si 萬年寺 on Mount Tiantai. "They are both reputed and virtuous," Daokai told Feng. He asked Feng to take care of them, which Feng did.<sup>45</sup> On another occasion, Daokai asked Fu Guangzai to do some favors for Fudeng, who was then in

42 刻藏因緣，未必就賴渠力，足下亦不必過爲委曲。

43 Ibid, 1.17b15–21.

44 一與此輩從事，即無能進修己業矣。

45 Ibid, 1.19a03–14.

Mount Luya and thus under Fu's jurisdiction. Also he did not forget to remind Fu that things should be done in a restrained fashion so as to avoid sparking criticism as Mount Luya was on the frontier.<sup>46</sup> Given the national influence Fudeng had already achieved by this time, this arrangement was probably not necessary. Nonetheless, these acts still reflected Fudeng's enthusiasm and care for others, which should have helped him to win true friends.

The individuals Daokai favored were scholar-officials, especially those with high-ranking positions, and he did win their intellectual and material support for the project. The first nine people who vowed to assist Daokai were all scholar-officials. Among these, Lu Guangzu 陸光祖 (1521–1597; jinshi, 1547) and Wang Shizhen 王士貞 (1526–1590; jinshi, 1547) were tremendously influential, even at the national level. Daokai also requested that Fu Guangzai reach out to Wang Daoxing 王道行 (*jinshi*, 1550), then the Provincial Administration Commission (*buzheng shi* 布政使) of Shanxi, and the Prince of Shanyin to involve them in the project as possible donors. What is revealing is that after making this request, Daokai continued to ask Fu to remain attentive to Buddhists among Shanxi officials who were in power as potential contributors.<sup>47</sup>

To be fair to Daokai, it may well be that personal preference led the monk to choose these types of collaborators. It is also possible that he proceeded in this fashion in an attempt to avoid political trouble. Daokai's correspondence with Feng Mengzhen is instructive here. Introducing his plan to work with forty people as the major donors, Daokai commented, "If this plan is implemented, [we] can eventually shun undesirable things and the collection of funds carried out by separate monks, thereby making the Dharma-gate free from any worries."<sup>48</sup> What things should be avoided in Daokai's eyes? Probably eunuchs. In addition to their unwelcome intervention in the affairs of the canon-carving project, eunuchs as a group were belittled or detested by most scholar-officials in the Ming. Why was Daokai reluctant to see monks go around to raise funds? The answer can be partly found in the abandonment of Lingyan si as the carving site: in late Ming China, gathering large groups of people together even for a religious cause was a potentially risky political move.

Unfortunately, in the context of late Ming China, relying so heavily on scholar-officials rendered Daokai's project unstable and had serious negative consequences. The dysfunction of the Wanli court, first triggered by the Succession Issue, was well known and led to a number of capable and reputable

46 Ibid, 1.18a10–13.

47 Ibid, 1.18b7–9.

48 此計行，而應避之緣及僧家分募之緣，可竟謝之，而法門終無他慮矣。Ibid, 1.18c18–19a1.

officials—many of whom supported Buddhism—leaving office.<sup>49</sup> This change affected Daokai's project. Fu Guangzai, for instance, had been the Chief Donor supporting the carving of *Huayan jing helun* 華嚴經合論 [A Comprehensive Exposition of the *Avatamsaka sūtra*] of 120 fascicles. When Fu memorialized the emperor requesting permission to retire from office, Daokai suggested that he cease his support of the project. Fu's two Assistant Donors had formerly participated in the project, Daokai believed, not out of Buddhist belief but mostly out of a desire to keep on good terms with Fu, a motivation that would no longer be a factor when Fu stepped down.<sup>50</sup> Clearly this was not the only case in which patronage was discontinued. In Wanli 27 (1599), Wang Kentang 王肯堂 (1549–1613; jinshi, 1589) lamented that “shortly after [the vow], the forty people [i.e. the Chief Donors] gradually went against the [current of] the time. Half of them have died and half remain alive, but none continue to serve as officials at court. ... Thirteen years have passed since [the start of the project in] the *wuzi* year (1588) but what has been completed is even less than half of the entire canon.”<sup>51</sup> The foundation on which Daokai originally built his project was collapsing.

This result, though unwanted, might not have been that surprising to Daokai. In fact, he seems to have predicted it. Even before the start of the project, Daokai announced that, “With regard to the canon-carving enterprise, if we disregard moral principles, [we] can carry it through with easiness within a single morning and night (i.e. a short time period). ... [However,] as long as we can preserve the principles for the Dharma-gate, I would accept it even if [it means that] we will lose some immediate interest.”<sup>52</sup> Daokai was probably too optimistic at the time, but what is noteworthy is his emphasis on the preservation of the principles. A few years later, before the moving of the carving site, Daokai wrote a letter to Zhenke admitting that he was too proud and impatient. This correspondence reveals that the pair continued to share a deep belief in the significance of observing the principles:

With regard to the canon-carving project, [what I can do] is only to devote myself to it until death. Whether it will be carried out smoothly or

49 For the succession issue in the Wanli period, see Gu Yingtai 谷應泰, *Mingshi jishi benmo* 明史紀事本末 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1958), 67.1061–76; Ray Huang, 1587, *A Year of No Significance: The Ming Dynasty in Decline* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981): 75–103.

50 Daokai, *Mizang Kai chanshi yigao*, J23nBu8, 2.31a1–12.

51 無何，四十人者漸與時迕，存殍半，而登朝食祿者無一焉。... 自戊子迄今，十三年矣，而於全藏不能以半。Ibid, 1. 6c16–23.

52 刻經因緣，肯苟就，無勞旦夕，即大舉就不難。... 即失一時之近利，存法門之大體，吾寧也。Ibid, 1.18c21–23.



brought to a successful end all depends on destiny. How can I predict the results? Whenever in danger and difficulties, I always recall what you told me in Tanzhi si, 'The Dharma-gate is of most importance, to which the canon-carving is only second. The canon carving should only be done according to the conditions, and the Dharma-gate must not be breached.' This is surely the rule worthy of being followed.

至於刻藏公案，亦但鞠躬盡瘁，死而後已。成敗利鈍，悉付因緣，豈能逆睹？苟當緩急危難之際，每想及老師潭柘塔院“法門爲重，刻經次之。刻經但隨緣，法門不可壞”之語，良足以爲軌持矣。<sup>53</sup>

Unambiguously, Daokai (and his master) insisted on the unquestionable priority of “the principles of the Dharma-gate” over the production of the canon. This insistence reflected their commitments as Buddhists and was consistent with their original intention of revitalizing Buddhism with the canon. The price they paid for their resoluteness proved unexpectedly high.

#### 4 Leaving Mount Wutai

Traditionally, the relocation of the carving site has been explained in two ways. Some scholars have stressed economic factors, noting that the majority of the donations came from southern China and the cost of transporting the carved woodblocks to southern China was almost prohibitive. Others have called attention to the climate of Mount Wutai, which, both cold and wet, was unfavorable for the carving and preserving of the canon. Right though they are, these reasons fall short of explaining the relocation. In the letter saying goodbye to Wang Daoxing, Daokai himself alludes to the fact that multiple factors had influenced his decision. He wrote that Mount Wutai had recently had “many pernicious obstructions” (*jinduo mozhang* 近多魔障) and urged Wang to keep protecting it.<sup>54</sup> What were the harmful obstructions? How did they affect the project and lead to its relocation in the south?

As a privately sponsored project, it seems that the legitimacy of carving the canon was shaky and it thus invited lingering suspicion at court. As early as Wanli 14, Daokai was eager to secure the official permit (*zafu* 劄付) to re-carve the canon from the Ministry of Rites. In a letter to Xu Yan, he urged Xu, through Lu Guangzu, to seek assistance from Li Changchun 李長春 (1545–1607; jinshi,

53 Ibid, 2.20b14–20.

54 Ibid, 2.29b28–29.

1568), the Minister of Rites.<sup>55</sup> Another letter shows him endeavoring to achieve the same end.<sup>56</sup> Though it is unclear whether or not the official permit was finally issued, we know that throughout its duration there was repeated trouble associated with the carving project. Around Wanli 20, Daokai told Feng Mengzhen, “The canon-carving project was impeached by censors but, thanks to the written reply submitted by the Minister of Rites, fortunately it is now safe.”<sup>57</sup> The problem lingered longer than expected. In Wanli 30 (1602) when Zhenke was arrested, the charges against him included that he had collected thirty thousand taels of silver under the name of making the new canon.<sup>58</sup>

While carrying out the project at Mount Wutai, Daokai made a conscious effort to find protectors for the carving site. He praised a military official in Yanmen 雁門 to Fu Guangzai for his achievements in reclaiming wasteland and in famine-relief and at the same time requested that Fu guide the latter toward becoming a protector of Buddhism on the mountains. On another occasion, Daokai suggested that Fu promote the magistrate of Wutai who, in Daokai’s view, was sincere, loyal, and careful and appeared to have a good relationship with the sangha there.<sup>59</sup> Despite these efforts, the carving project was still affected seriously by the so-called Wutai case. In a visit to Mount Wutai, Lü Kun 呂坤 (1536–1518; jinshi, 1574), the Grand Coordinator (*xunfu* 巡撫) in Shanxi, was infuriated to find the forests there seriously destroyed. At his order, the Magistrate of Fanzhi 繁峙 started to investigate and Sizi wo 師子窩 and Fenglin si 鳳林寺, two famous monasteries of Mount Wutai, were charged with cutting down trees to build temples or to reclaim land. Lü absolved the monasteries of blame on the grounds that those things had taken place at an earlier time. The magistrate, however, insisted on punishing the two monasteries harshly and this triggered a new round of investigations. Daokai applauded the prohibition of cutting trees but he viewed the new investigation as a scheme expressly designed by evil people to entrap Buddhists. He wrote to Zeng Fengyi 曾鳳儀 (jinshi, 1583), an official then in the Ministry of Rites, asking him to intervene on behalf of the sangha. Daokai even composed a draft petition on the basis of what he believed was most important and planned to have the Prefectural Buddhist Registry (*dugang si* 都綱司) of Mount Wutai submit it to the provincial authorities. Daokai stressed that it was unfair to

55 Ibid, 2. 25c24–30.

56 Ibid, 2. 23c13–21.

57 刻藏因緣，科臣有言，幸宗伯題覆無恙。Ibid, 1.20a02.

58 *Shengzong shilu* 神宗實錄 (Taibei: Zhongyang yanjiuyuan lishi yuyan yanjiusuo, 1967), 370. 6926: 指以五台刻經，借取重利，複令吳中極無賴之謬慕台者鼓舞人心，捐財種福，一時收受數盈三萬。

59 Daokai, *Mizang Kai chanshi yigao*, J23nB118, 1.18a2–4.

only prohibit monks from cutting trees. According to the cleric, it was merchants and ordinary people who sold timber that harmed the forests most seriously.<sup>60</sup> Daokai may have been correct in this regard, but it was no use for him to save the site.<sup>61</sup> Eventually, this prohibition affected the carving project profoundly: not only did the conflict between monks and ordinary people escalate as a result, but the restriction imposed by the authorities increased the difficulty of the large-scale gathering of wood necessary for the carving.

It was the court that dealt the last blow to Daokai's project, in the form of Lu Guangzu's resignation from government. In the Spring of Wanli 20, Lu made a sudden visit to Mount Wutai. When he heard this news, Daokai hurried to the mountain from Beijing. When they met in Longquan si 龍泉寺, Daokai first exchanged words with Lu in the Chan style and only after that did Zhenke go out to meet him. Finally, in imitation of what Su Shi 蘇軾 (1037–1101) had done several hundred years before, Lu left his jade belt to Miaode chapel as a sign of his support.<sup>62</sup> Behind this seemingly quite romantic story was the chilly reality, however. Lu had just resigned from the post as the Minister of Personnel and, as one of the project's earliest and most determined patrons, he went to Mount Wutai only to say goodbye both to the project and to the sacred mountain. Lu stayed there for more than ten days, but his experiences seem to have been pretty disappointing, at least in Daokai's eyes. In a letter written shortly after, Daokai told Wang Daoxing that he was relocating the carving site. He invited Wang to Jiangnan, promising that Wang would gain ten times what Lu had attained from Mount Wutai and that Wang would be welcomed more warmly by the people of Jiangnan than Lu had been at Mount Wutai.<sup>63</sup> Lu had been the strongest and most reliable supporter that Daokai had in the court. His leaving office left the canon project vulnerable. Unsurprisingly, the above-mentioned attack by censors happened shortly after the visit. Evidence shows that the carving ceased in the summer of the same year and the site was finally relocated in the fall, all of which can be seen as a timely response to these changes at court.

Finally, Daokai did not fulfil his vow to complete the canon. While still on Mount Wutai, he confessed in a letter to Cao Lin 曹林 (d. u.) that he was lonely

60 Ibid, 2. 29b30 – c19.

61 For the destroying of forests at Mount Wutai during the late Ming dynasty, see Chen Yunü, "Ming Wutaishan zhu fosi jianzhu cailiao zhi qude yu yunshu: yi mucai, tong, tie deng jiancai weizu" 明五臺山諸佛寺建築材料之取得與運輸 — 以木材、銅、鐵等建材爲主," *Chengda lishi xuebao* 成大歷史學報, 27(2003): 67–74.

62 Shi Yinguang 釋印光, *Qingliang shan zhi* 清涼山志 (Taipei: Zongqing tushu chuban gongsi, 1995) 6.264.

63 Daokai, *Mizang Kai chanshi yigao*, J23nB118, 2.29b16–19.

and that having devoted himself to the project in which more than one hundred people were involved he sadly found very few likeminded people. He also complained of being unable to understand “good friends” (*shan zhishi* 善知識) because their actions changed so frequently and sharply.<sup>64</sup> Even according to the original, optimistic plan, as long as ten years were needed to complete the canon. Surprisingly, it was almost always Daokai alone who drove the huge project forward. The cleric had a tendency to handle everything himself. Worse still, he never found capable assistants. In the end, he was exhausted, physically and mentally. One day, about ten years after his formal engagement in the project, Daokai suddenly disappeared. Ultimately, the canon that he spent so much time and energy preparing took more than one hundred years to complete and was presented in a form much different from what he had planned.

## 5 Concluding Remarks

Producing the Jiaying canon formed part of the self-strengthening efforts of the contemporary sangha, now termed the late Ming Buddhist revival. The selection of Mount Wutai as the site for the carving project and its subsequent relocation to Jiangnan were not as one might imagine small matters. Quite the opposite, these were both, as I have shown here, deliberate decisions shaped by diverse influences.

As its chief leader, Daokai played a critical role in every element of the project, especially the mobilization of resources. Unfortunately, his links with the local society in Shanxi were quite weak. Further the cleric failed to win support from the local sangha, including monastics on Mount Wutai. His harsh attitude towards eunuchs seems to have substantially limited the patronage he was able to secure from this group and from Empress Dowager Cisheng, the foremost donor of Buddhism in north China at the time. Rather than eunuchs, Daokai chose to partner with scholar-officials, especially those who had achieved high-ranking positions, for personal and political reasons. As a consequence of Daokai's preferences, the carving project, although located in a mountain as sacred as Wutai, became essentially isolated from its immediate surroundings. It had to rely on the input of resources from afar. In this sense, the making of the Jiaying canon is not a reliable case study in the support that Ming Buddhism could obtain from China but rather illustrates the importance of creating and sustaining extensive and diverse networks of support for large-scale projects.

64 Ibid, 2.21a22–24.

The relocation of the carving site reveals the limitations of the scholar-officials on whose support Daokai relied almost exclusively. These people served as the driving force for Buddhism in Jiangnan where they, as officials or local elites, were very active. In contrast, in north China they had power primarily as officials but unfortunately because of their volatile political surroundings these posts and their influence could easily be lost. In this sense, relocating the project provided a way of securing the protection of southern scholar-officials whose situation was comparatively more stable than that of their northern counterparts.

The production of the Jiaxing canon was unique in the history of the Buddhist canon. In the first stage, Daokai relied primarily on the support from scholar-officials to produce the canon. When this original plan failed, he retreated from Mount Wutai to Jiangnan. Although a discussion of the project's subsequent development is beyond the scope of this study, suffice it to say that it was no longer under strong control and close surveillance. Rather, it continued in a far less selective fashion and welcomed almost all contributions, many from individual ordinary people. This expansion in the number of people involved allowed the project to continue. This may also be the reason that the contents and scale of the canon differ considerably from the original plan and may explain why its completion took more than a century. From the beginning, the creation of this canon, as discussed above, was associated with the much bigger task of revitalizing Buddhism. It is hard to assess the degree to which it achieved the goal. Nonetheless, the eventful story of its creation attests to the vitality of Buddhism, especially in the Jiangnan region, at the time. Though organized only very loosely, supporters of this ambitious project persisted over a course of more than one hundred years, finally completing the main body of the Jiaxing canon in 1713.

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**PART 2**

*Pilgrims and Sacred Sites*





## A Japanese Pilgrim's Visit to Wutai in the Winter of 1072

*Robert Borgen*

In the third month of 1072, the Japanese monk Jōjin 成尋 (1011–81), accompanied by seven disciples, embarked for China aboard a Chinese merchant ship. During his travels, he kept a diary, *San Tendai Godai San Ki* 參天台五臺山記 [The Record of a Pilgrimage to the Tiantai and Wutai Mountains]. After sixteen months, he entrusted it to five of his disciples, who brought it back to Japan. Jōjin and his remaining disciples stayed behind, never to return.<sup>1</sup> As the title of his diary suggests, worship at the Wutai Mountains was one of Jōjin's goals, and he would achieve it. The diary offers a trove of data on many topics relating to both Japanese and Chinese culture and to Buddhism in general, but this paper will focus only on two. First it will illustrate the ways in which Jōjin's pilgrimage fit an established Japanese pattern that included Wutai and then, once he arrived in China, it will show how the Chinese government simultaneously controlled and encouraged him. The paper will begin with a brief—and highly selective—review of early Japanese Buddhist relations to other Asian nations to show how the pattern Jōjin followed came to be established.

Buddhism was—and still is—a world religion, a fact not lost on Japanese believers. In early Japan, in the years through to the end of the Heian period (794–1185), at least some Buddhist monks displayed a cosmopolitan attitude, viewing themselves as part of a larger, international religious community that stretched from India to Japan. Koreans had introduced Buddhism to Japan in the mid-sixth century and, between the mid-seventh and early-eighth centuries, a handful of Japanese monks did go there to study, but little is known of

1 For a general introduction to Jōjin, see my "Jōjin's Travels," in *Heian Japan, Centers and Peripheries*, eds. Mikael Adolphson, Edward Kamens, and Stacie Matsumoto (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2007), 384–413. The most accessible edition of his diary (to be cited as *STGS*) remains that in *Dai Nihon Bukkyō Zensho*. For a more modern edition, see Wang, *Xinjiao Can Tiantai Wutai Shan Ji*. The annotated translation into modern Japanese by Fujiyoshi, *San Tendai Godai San Ki* 參天台五臺山記, is particularly valuable. In places, Fujiyoshi emends the text where he believes it to be corrupt. In most, but not all, cases his emendations are almost certainly correct and I follow them in my translations. Citations of the diary will take the form of *kan* 卷 /month/day, so that the citation can be found in any edition.

their activities. Japanese Buddhist art reveals continuing Korean influence in the centuries that followed, although surviving records shed little light on religious exchanges between the two nations.<sup>2</sup> Japanese were aware of Buddhism's Indian origins and a small handful of Japanese did attempt to go there. One may have even made it to his destination, but documentation is problematic at best. *Youyang Zazu* 酉陽雜俎 [Assorted Notes from Youyang], a Chinese source compiled ca. 860, mentions a monk from Wo (Jpn. Wa 倭), an early Chinese name for Japan, who had travelled to India and returned with an anecdote about the great Chinese pilgrim Xuanzang 玄奘 (602–664).<sup>3</sup> The monk's name, Kongō Sanmai 金剛三昧, does not appear in any Japanese source, leaving the accuracy of the story open to question. Not long after it was recorded, however, the monk Shinnyo 眞如 (ca. 799–865), a member of the Japanese imperial family, did attempt the journey to India. As a boy, Shinnyo briefly had been crown prince, but he lost his position through court intrigue. When he grew into manhood, he turned to religion and eventually resolved to study in China. In 862 he departed, accompanied by ten other monks and numerous additional followers. In China, he found Buddhism in a vitiated state, the lingering effect of the persecutions by Emperor Wuzong 武宗 (814–46, r. 840–46), and so in 865 he set off on a pilgrimage to India, accompanied by three disciples. Apparently he never made it there. Reports came back to Japan that he had been killed by a tiger, somewhere in the Malay Peninsula.<sup>4</sup> One of the monks who had originally accompanied him to China, Shūei 宗叡 (807–84), instead of proceeding to India, went to a more accessible holy site, Wutai. There, he saw miraculous sights: “At Vimalakīrti's Lecture Rock on the Western Terrace, he saw a five-coloured cloud; beside Nārāyaṇa's Cave on the Eastern Terrace, he saw the saint's

2 Jonathan W. Best, “The Transmission and Transformation of Early Buddhist Culture in Korea and Japan,” eds. Washizuka Hiromitsu, Park Youngbok, and Kang Woo-bang (New York: Japan Society, 2003), 19–43.

3 The relevant passages are found in “*Nyūjūku Nihon Sō Kongō Sanmai Den Kō*”. In the annotations to his Japanese translation of *Youyang Zazu*, Imamura provides additional details (*Yūyō Zasso* [Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1980–81], vol. 1, 226–28; vol. 4, 87–88).

4 The principal source for Shinnyo's travels is *Zuda Shinnō Nittō Ryakki* 頭陀親王入唐略記. For a study of Shinnyo, including a translation of *Zuda Shinnō Nittō Ryakki*, see Isamu Shimizu, “Takaoka, Priest Imperial Prince Shinnyo,” *The Transactions of the Asiatic Society of Japan* 3, no. 5 (December 1957). Also see Saeki Arikiyo, *Takaoka Shinnō Nittō Ki: Hai Taishi to Kogai Densetsu no Shinsō*, (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 2002) and Fabio Rambelli, “The Idea of India (Tenjiku) in Pre-Modern Japan,” in *Buddhism across Asia: Networks of Material, Intellectual and Cultural Exchange*, ed. Tansen Sen (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2014), 260–61.

lantern and an auspicious bird and heard the saint's bell." After returning to Japan, he came to hold a high position in the Japanese Buddhist clergy.<sup>5</sup>

Shūei's case was typical. India was out of reach and, since Korean Buddhists looked to China as a source of orthodoxy and legitimation, it was only natural that Japanese monks followed their example. Although Japanese monks may not have explicitly stated that China was equivalent to India, it became, in effect, the holy land for Japanese Buddhists. Japanese monks went there to study with Chinese masters and to worship at holy sites, among them Wutai. In terms of Chinese periodisation, during the Sui dynasty the nascent Japanese court began sending diplomatic missions to a newly unified China, with a few monks accompanying them, notably Min (旻; sometimes read "Bin," and usually appearing as "Sōmin" 僧旻, "the monk Min" d. 653) and Shōan (請安, d.u.), both of whom would remain in China from 608 to 632. After their return to Japan, they helped disseminate elements of Chinese culture, although those elements appear to have been more Confucian than Buddhist and details are scanty. The situation changed during the Tang. At first, monks continued to travel with diplomatic missions, but, after the last of these missions returned home in 838, they went on Chinese merchant ships. Perhaps as many as 100 Japanese monks made the journey to the Tang, most of them obscure individuals whose names received only passing mention in historical records, but the activities of a few more famous monks are well documented. Instead of teaching Confucian classics after their return home, they bought back Buddhist texts and doctrines.<sup>6</sup> Among them, key individuals gradually established a pattern that Jōjin would follow.

Shūei, mentioned above, was not the first Japanese to visit Wutai. That distinction may belong to Genbō 玄昉 (d. 746), who was in China 717–735. Today he is remembered mostly for his ill-advised involvement in court politics, which led to his eventual exile, but he also may have been the first Japanese who made the pilgrimage to Wutai. According to a source dating from the mid-twelfth century:

Genbō, Head of Monastic Administration, along with Keikan 慶寬, crossed the sea to the Tang. In the fourth month of the thirteenth year in the Kaiyuan era (725), they went to the Wutai Mountains. First they met an old man who was a manifestation of the bodhisattva Mañjuśrī, and

5 In Shūei's biography, *Zenrinji Sōjō Den*, in *Nittō Goke Den* (Tokyo: Daiichi Shobō, 1979), 157–58.

6 Kimiya Yasuhiko, *Nikka Bunka Kōryūshi* (Tokyo: Fusanbō, 1972), 69–73, 137–59, 192–96. Though out of date, this source remains useful starting point for its lists of monks who traveled to China, etc.

then they saw an auspicious bird that was the bodhisattva in transformed guise. Next, upon climbing the Eastern Terrace, where they burned incense and worshipped the bodhisattva, a five-colored cloud floated above and the mountain forest glowed. Both the ground of lapis lazuli and the road bordered by golden guide ropes were clearly visible, as if in the palm of their hands. The distinction between mountain and valley disappeared as the land became level. In the east appeared a white lion with a dark blue head and tail. On its back sat the bodhisattva Mañjuśrī on a golden lotus pedestal. The light shining from the white curl between his eyebrows brightened heaven and earth, and the lion's fur gave off a golden glow. Mañjuśrī was about twenty feet tall and in front and back of him—all around—were countless hundreds of millions of other bodhisattvas. The mandorla behind Mañjuśrī was like a bright mirror. Everyone, monk and layman, man and woman, within 500 *li* 里 from the mountain in all four directions saw the Buddha's light and all were astonished as never before. This event is recorded in Genbō's *Godai San Ki* 五臺山記 (Record of the Wutai Mountains).<sup>7</sup>

The colourful details match conventionally idealised images of Wutai and so may have added a degree of verisimilitude for devout believers, although, along with the source's late date, they are more apt to arouse skepticism in modern readers. Not long after this account was written, another source made the dubious assertion that an even earlier Japanese monk, Jōe 定慧 (643–665), had visited Wutai.<sup>8</sup> Although no modern scholar accepts that claim, it suggests that stories about having made the pilgrimage to Wutai had become an appealing episode to include in hagiographic accounts.

In 804, when the penultimate Japanese mission went to the Tang court, several monks travelled with it. The most famous may have been Kūkai 空海 (774–835), but the most significant for Jōjin's story were Saichō 最澄 (767–822), who is almost as well known, and the much less familiar Ryōsen 靈仙 (ca. 759–

7 *Shichi Daiji Junrei Shiki* 七大寺巡禮私記, 54. Some standard reference works give Genbō as the first Japanese to have visited Wutai (Satō, "Godaisan" 五台山, in *Nihon Daihyakka Zensho*, (online version: Japan Knowledge); others do not (Ōno Tatsunosuke, "Godaisan" in *Kokushi Daijiten*, online version: Japan Knowledge). Scholars who have accepted Genbō's visit include the distinguished Mori Katsumi, "Chūgoku Busseki Junrei ni Tokō Shita Hitobito wa Donna Hito Datta ka," in *Kaigai Kōshōshi no Shiten*, vol. 1, eds. Mori Katsumi and Tanaka Takeo (Tokyo: Nihon Shoseki, 1975), 176. For background on Genbō, see Marcus Bingenheimer, *A Biographical Dictionary of the Japanese Student-Monks of the Seventh and Early Eighth Centuries* (Munich: Iudicium, 2001), 107–12.

8 For Jōe's visit to Wutai, see Susan Andrews' essay in this volume. David Quinter discusses another similar example from Japan and Kwak Roe introduces one from Korea.



ca. 827). Saichō is important because he went to the Tiantai Mountains, there studied the teachings of Zhiyi 智顛 (538–97), and, upon his return, founded Japan's Tendai sect based on them. Jōjin, along with most of the other Japanese monks who went to China in the next few centuries, were at least initially members of the sect, although among them were the monks who would become the patriarchs of Japan's Zen sects. Ryōsen is a less familiar figure and details of his life are murky. Unlike Kūkai and Saichō, he would remain in China, where he became the only Japanese monk to participate in the translation of Buddhist texts into Chinese. Eventually he found his way to Wutai, the first Japanese whose visit is amply documented. His example, however, was not auspicious, for he died there, reportedly poisoned in a monastery bathhouse.<sup>9</sup>

Among early Japanese pilgrims to Wutai the most familiar is Ennin 圓仁 (794–864), a disciple of Saichō, who went to China in 838 with the last of Japan's embassies that went to the Tang court. He remained in China until 847 and left a diary that has been preserved. Thanks to the English translation and study by Edwin Reischauer, it is easily accessible to Western readers.<sup>10</sup> Although Ennin's goal had been to visit the Tiantai Mountains, he was not given permission to do so. Instead, following the advice of Korean monks looking after him, he chose to undertake a pilgrimage to Wutai, where he stayed for over two months in 840. His diary offers a detailed description of Wutai's appearance and of Buddhist practice there.<sup>11</sup> At Wutai, pilgrims were hopeful of seeing traces of the resident bodhisattva Mañjuśrī, and indeed Ennin witnessed what Reischauer characterises as “modest miracles:” “five beams of light shining straight into the hall,” “a colored cloud, shining bright and luminous,” and “at night two lights...which grew from insignificant proportions to the size of a small house and then faded away.”<sup>12</sup> Later accounts would improve upon such “modest miracles.” After Ennin's return to Japan in 847, he went on to become the prelate (*zasu* 座主) of Japan's Tendai sect. It was probably his experiences that made Wutai a primary goal of Japanese monks who went to China in the following two centuries.

9 Primary sources on Ryōsen are found in Takakusu, “*Ryōsen Sanzō Gyōreki Kō*,” in *Dai Nihon Bukkyō Zensho* (Tokyo: Daiichi Shobō, 1979), 152–55. In English, see Reischauer, *Ennin's Travels in T'ang China* (New York: Ronald Press, 1955), 158. Note that Reischauer refers to him as “Reisen,” an alternate reading for the monk's name. In Japanese, see Yoritomi, “*Nittō Sō Ryōsen Sanzō*,” in *Sōden no Kenkyū*, ed. Kimura Takeo Kyōju Koki Kinen Ronbunshū Henshūgakari (Kyoto: Nagata Bunshōdō, 1981), 129–50.

10 *Ennin's Diary*. The most widely available (though not the best) edition of the original diary, *Nittō Guhō Junrei Gyōki* is that found in the bibliography. Like Jōjin's diary, it will be cited by date.

11 III/4/28–IV/7/6. Also see Reischauer, *Ennin's Travels*, 26–28, 194–211.

12 *Ennin's Travels*, 27–28.

The next monk who needs to be discussed was unable to make the journey to Wutai but did establish another element in the pattern that Jōjin would follow. That monk is Enchin 圓珍 (814–91), a disciple of a monk who had accompanied Saichō to China. In 850, just 3 years after Ennin had returned to Japan, Enchin, too, requested permission to embark on a pilgrimage to China. His goals were to visit the Tiantai and Wutai Mountains and monasteries such as Qinglong si 青龍寺 and Daxingshan si 大興善寺 in the Tang capital of Chang’an. Permission was soon granted, but by his day official missions to China had ceased. Accordingly, Enchin, who was accompanied by seven followers, had to travel on a Chinese merchant ship and could not arrange passage until 853. In China, the Japanese pilgrims were able to visit the Tiantai Mountains and the monasteries in Chang’an, but not Wutai. Although Enchin kept a record of his travels, it survives only in a highly abridged version.<sup>13</sup> Enchin returned to Japan in 858 and, like Ennin before him, would become the Tendai sect’s prelate. In the years that followed, Tendai split into two competing factions, monks whose lineage was traced back to Ennin and those who claimed Enchin as a patriarch. By the end of the tenth century, the rivalry would occasionally become violent. Jōjin belonged to the Enchin faction.

Enchin’s voyage on a Chinese merchant ship hints at changes that were taking place, both in China and Japan, that were to have a significant impact on Jōjin’s pilgrimage more than two centuries later. In China, the Tang dynasty fell in 907. A period of disunion followed during which perhaps seven Japanese monks made the pilgrimage to China. Then, in 960, China was reunited under the Song dynasty. At the time of Jōjin’s visit, the controversial reform policies of Wang Anshi 王安石 (1021–86) were in effect, although Jōjin appears to have been oblivious to them. Jōjin’s diary shows a central government that seems to be in firm control of its territory, but in 1127 the Song would lose control of the north, including Wutai. In the years between the founding of the Song and its loss of the north, perhaps twenty-five Japanese monks are thought to have visited China, including a group of three who went in 1082, specifically inspired by Jōjin’s example.<sup>14</sup> They followed the familiar pattern of visits to Tiantai and Wutai, but they were the last to do so, for Japan, too, was changing, politically and culturally. Diplomatic changes predated the fall of the Tang. The last of Japan’s official missions that actually went to the Tang, the one that brought

13 Ono Katsutoshi compiled, translated, and annotated all extant primary sources for Enchin’s pilgrimage: *Nittō Guhō Gyōreki no Kenkyū* (Kyoto: Hōzōkan, 1981), 2.

14 For lists of monks who went to China during the Five Dynasties and Northern Song and summaries of their activities, see Kimiya, *Nikka Bunka*, 247–53, 275–317. Kimiya’s list omits the three monks whose visit was inspired by Jōjin, for them, see: Mori Katsumi *Zoku Nissō Bōeki no Kenkyū* (Tokyo: Kokusho Kankōkai, 1986), 303–30.

Ennin to China, had returned home in 838. In 894, a final ambassador to the Tang was named, but his mission was promptly abandoned because of China's increasing political instability. Although formal diplomatic exchanges would all but cease for nearly 500 years, contact was becoming more common as Chinese merchants began to appear regularly (albeit not frequently) in Japan just around the time that official missions to the Tang ended. This was also a period when Japan's aristocratic, civilian court culture flourished. Starting in 1160, however, warrior families, albeit of noble background, began to dominate the government. Japanese Buddhism too changed. In 1167, not quite a century after Jōjin's departure, the monk Eisai 榮西 (1141–1215) went to China. By then, Wutai, in the north, was inaccessible. Eisai's destination was the Tiantai Mountains, but there he studied Zen as well as Tendai teachings. Zen was already known in Japan but had not yet found an appreciative audience. After Eisai, however, it would become the principal interest of monks who visited China. Reflecting both political and cultural changes, a new pattern appeared and Wutai was no longer a part of it.

Three monks, Saichō, Ennin, and Enchin, who went to China during the Tang, may have set the pattern Jōjin would follow, but two others who preceded him to the Song also deserve mention. Both wanted to visit Wutai and both, in very different ways, left memorable traces in Japanese culture. The first was Chōnen 喬然 (938?–1016). In some respects he was atypical, more like Shinnyo, the princely monk who attempted a journey to India, than other monks who went to China in his age. Like Shinnyo, he was not affiliated with the Tendai sect and had dreams of traveling all the way to India, although we have no evidence that he actually attempted to go that far. In 983 he went first to Tiantai, then to the Song capital of Kaifeng, where he had an audience with the emperor, and finally to Wutai, before returning to Japan in 986. During his travels, he kept a diary that Jōjin would bring along with him, although unfortunately it survives only in a few scattered fragments, and so details of his activities are scanty. Although today Chōnen is not widely known, some Japanese praise him for “enhancing the national polity,” because, according to the Song dynastic history, he explained to the Song emperor that Japan had an unbroken line of “kings,” (ō 王) descended from the gods, which greatly impressed the Song emperor. Chōnen is also remembered for a much less problematic contribution. From China he brought back various precious items, among them a statue of the historic Buddha said to be a copy of one brought from India. To house the image, he proposed that Mount Atago 愛宕, just northwest of the capital, be treated as if it were Wutai and a monastery be established there to be called Seiryōji 清涼寺, literally “The Clear Cool Monastery,” after Wutai's alternate name, “Qingliang shan,” or “The Clear Cool Mountains,” “*seiryō*” being the

Japanese pronunciation of the characters for “*qingliang*.” The proposal was rejected, but after Chōnen’s death in 1016, one of his disciples was given permission to enshrine the image in a monastery on the pilgrimage route to Mount Atago. The monastery came to be known as Seiryōji, as Chōnen had wished, and the image remains there to this day. In 1954, a survey of the statue revealed that it contained a variety of items associated with Chōnen, among them documents relating to his experiences in China.<sup>15</sup>

A second Japanese monk who preceded Jōjin to Song China was Jakushō 寂照 (962–1034), who went to China in 1003, accompanied by seven disciples, and never returned home. Although Jōjin mentions seeing a copy of Jakushō’s diary at the monastery in Kaifeng where he was staying, it is no longer extant and details of his time in China are scanty.<sup>16</sup> Surviving, however, is a fragment from a letter Jakushō sent to a high official in Japan reporting he had visited both the Tiantai and Wutai Mountains. Later Japanese elaborated on this, weaving colourful tales of his visit, including, predictably, an appearance of Mañjuśrī, this time disguised as a filthy woman, disfigured by a terrible skin disease. Jakushō’s adventures were later dramatised as a *noh* play, which in turn was transformed into a series of dances for the kabuki theatre.<sup>17</sup>

Jakushō had, at least indirectly, a personal connection to Jōjin. In 1069 Jōjin revealed his intention of visiting China to his mother. At the time, he was fifty-nine years old (by Asian count); his mother, eighty-two. She was distraught at the prospect of his leaving her and began to compile a sort of poetic diary

15 For Chōnen, see Wang Zhenping. “Chōnen’s Pilgrimage to China, 983–986,” *Asia Major* 3, no. 7 (1994), 63–97; Kimiya Yukihiko, *Nissō Sō Chōnen no Kenkyū* (Shizuoka, 1983); and Hao Xiangman, *Diaoran yu Songchu de ZhongRi fofa Jiaoliu* (Beijing: Shangwu Yinsluguan, 2012). Kimiya Yukihiko used the phrase “enhancing the national polity” (*kokutai senyō* 國体宣揚) as the name for a chapter, pp. 44–54. He borrowed the phrase from his father, Kimiya Yasuhiko, who also used it as a chapter name in his *Nikka Bunka*, pp. 290–93. Chōnen’s diary was among the items the Chinese court asked Jōjin to present soon after his arrival in Kaifeng (*STGS* IV/4/10/14). For a full translation of Chōnen’s report to the Song emperor and the emperor’s response, see Tsunoda Ryūsaku *Japan in the Chinese Dynastic Histories* (South Pasadena: P.D. and Ione Perkins, 1951), 49–58. Colour pictures of the statue Chōnen brought back and the items found in it are in Ugai and Setouchi, *Koji Junrei Kyōto 21 Seiryōji* (Kyoto: Tankōsha, 1978), illustrations nos. 23–39, 59–60; pp. 115–28, 137–38. The “new edition” (*Shinpan*) of the same series, has different, in some cases better, pictures but the text is less informative. Also see James Robson, “The Buddhist Image Inside-Out,” in *Buddhism across Asia: Networks of Material, Intellectual and Cultural Exchange*, ed. Tansen Sen (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2014), 296–97.

16 *STGS* V/12/29.

17 See my “Stone Bridge: A Pilgrimage Performed,” *Asiatische Studien/Études Asiatiques* 58, no. 3 (2004): 631–644. In that essay, I argue Jakushō never made it as far as Wutai, but I carelessly overlooked the letter he sent back to Japan reporting his visit there. The remainder of the essay is (I hope) reliable.

lamenting her unhappy fate. In the sixth month of 1072, she received word that he had finally departed for China and recalled an event from her youth. Years earlier, when she was but fifteen, people had gathered to admire embroidered images of the Buddha that Jakushō would take with him to China. When someone asked, "What sort of person is Jakushō?" another replied "A man who would abandon his parents in order to cross the sea. How sad!" Jōjin's mother remarked that now she understood that feeling.<sup>18</sup> In other words, although sixty-nine years had passed since Jakushō had left for China, there was still living memory of the event in the person of Jōjin's mother.

These two Japanese monks, Chōnen and Jakushō together, are tied to Jōjin in one additional way. After he had returned from Wutai to Kaifeng, he came upon a Chinese text, *Yang Wen Gong Tanyuan* 揚文公談苑 [A Garden of Talks by Lord Yang Wen], compiled by the Song literatus Yang Yi 楊億 (974–1020). It includes an account of Chōnen's and Jakushō's visits to China. The information about the latter is particularly valuable, as it is otherwise poorly documented and Yang Yi appears to have been personally acquainted with Jakushō. Jōjin copied this passage into his diary, a decision that reflects his keen interest in precedents set by previous Japanese pilgrims.<sup>19</sup>

So it was that by the time Jōjin began his pilgrimage, a pattern had emerged in Japan's Buddhist relations with the outside world. First, Japanese were aware of Buddhism's Indian origins but only the rarest of individuals showed any interest in attempting to go there. Koreans had played an active and well documented role in the earliest days of Buddhism in Japan, but, despite evidence of continuing influence from Korea and help Ennin received from Korean monks in China, by the ninth century Japanese Buddhists appear to have lost interest in visiting Korea. China became the principal goal of those who rose to the challenge of overseas pilgrimage. In China, Japanese monks sought to visit two holy sites, the Tiantai and Wutai mountains, along with monasteries in the Tang capital, anachronistically even after the Song had moved the capital. Most of the monks who ventured to China were from Japan's Tendai sect, and even Chōnen, who was not, went to Tiantai. Jōjin followed the pattern so closely that, when he first arrived at Tiantai, instead of recording his own impressions of the holy mountain, he simply copied into his diary Enchin's description,

18 Sōhei Miyazaki, *Jōjin Ajari Haha no Shū Zen Yakuchū* (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1979), 168–72. For an English translation, see Robert A. Mintzer, "Jōjin Azari no haha shū: Maternal Love in the Eleventh Century: An Enduring Testament" (Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 1978), 204–5.

19 *STGS* v/12/29. For a translation, see my "Through Several Glasses Brightly: a Japanese Copy of a Chinese Account of Japan," *Sino-Japanese Studies* 2, no. 2 (1990): 5–19.

written more than two centuries earlier.<sup>20</sup> This was particularly appropriate, as Jōjin belonged to Enchin's lineage within the Tendai sect and he may have used this as a chance to demonstrate how closely he was following the example of a revered patriarch. Note too that Jōjin traveled in a party of eight, as had Enchin and Jakushō before him. Perhaps even this was part of an effort to fit an established pattern.

Jōjin explained his goals first in a petition presented to the Japanese court in 1070. It is preserved in a compendium of Japanese writings in classical Chinese, *Chōya Gunsai* 朝野群載 [Collected Official and Unofficial Writings], initially compiled in 1116 but modified afterwards. Jōjin's petition appears in a section devoted to "foreign countries" (*ikoku* 異國) under the heading "A Holy Man Asks to Visit the Tang" 聖人申渡唐:

Ācārya Great Master of the Transmission of the Lamp Jōjin humbly begs an Imperial Decree be granted to the Kyushu Office, Dazaifu, giving special Permission to accompany a returning Merchant from the Great Song Nation so that he may make a Pilgrimage to the Wutai Mountains and other Holy Sites

The above Jōjin humbly wishes to visit the traces of prior worthies who entered the Tang. Their objectives differed. Some sought to understand the deeper meaning of the dharma, others aspired to worship at holy sites. Each requested permission from our imperial court before embarking for a foreign land. Thus, they were able to investigate the enigmas and probe the depths, studying esoteric and exoteric texts, or climb the mountains and cross the rivers, making pilgrimages to famous places of dark mystery. Regarding the Wutai Mountains, I have opened a few essential Buddhist texts and glanced at the biographies of several individuals. It is the place where Mañjuśrī manifests himself. Accordingly, *Avatamsaka sūtra* [*Kegonkyō* 華嚴經; The Flower Ornament sūtra] states, "In the northeast is a place called Clear Cool Mountains where the bodhisattvas dwell. All the bodhisattvas, past and present, live there. Among them is a bodhisattva named Mañjuśrī, who has ten-thousand bodhisattva followers and perpetually preaches the dharma." Furthermore, the *Mañjuśrī sūtra* states, "If one hears the name 'Wutai Mountains,' enters the Wutai Mountains, grasps a stone from the Wutai Mountains, and

20 See my "The Case of the Plagiaristic Journal: a Curious Passage from Jōjin's Diary," in *New Leaves: Studies and Translations of Japanese Literature in honor of Edward Seidensticker*, eds. Aileen Gatten and Anthony Hood Chambers (Ann Arbor: Center for Japanese Studies, University of Michigan, 1993), 63–88.

treads the ground of the Wutai Mountains, that person will surpass sages who have attained the four realisations<sup>21</sup> and come close to supreme enlightenment. The Tiantai Mountains are where Great Master Zhizhe 智者大師 attained enlightenment. The Five Hundred Arhats always dwell in these mountains. Truly it is apparent from the scriptures that these are the preeminent mountains under heaven. Therefore, Bai Daoyou 白道猷 from India climbed Huading 華頂 Peak at Tiantai to worship the arhats and Ryōsen from Japan entered the Wutai's Clear Cool Mountains, where he saw the ten thousand bodhisattvas.

Although I am foolish by nature, when I see those who are worthy, I seek to emulate them. For many years I have wished to make a pilgrimage. Previous pilgrims—Kanken 寬建<sup>22</sup> in the Tengyō 天慶 era (938–47), Nichien 日延 in the Tenryaku 天曆 era (947–57), Chōnen in the Tengen 天元 era (978–83), and Jakushō in the Chōhō 長保 era (999–1004)—all received imperial beneficence that enabled them to worship at holy sites in China. My life has already reached its sixth decade; my remaining years cannot be many. If I do not carry out my long-standing desire, what benefit will endure afterwards? Pressed by my karma, this feeling grows ever stronger. At the six hours I perform the six rites. All my life I have maintained a vegetarian diet. For three years, I have sat, not reclined, to sleep in order to strengthen my purity and stiffen my resolve. Although I do not lack a fear of crossing the sea, I will entrust my remaining life to the wind upon the waves. I may not fail to shed tears for my native land, but I will place my hopes in the moon above Wutai's Five Peaks. How can I abandon my thoughts of propagating the faith by visiting the chamber where dwelled the Great Master? How can I forget the rites, morning and night, for my aged mother in her lodgings? Even if I wished to escape my karma, it would be impossible. What indeed are my hopes in this world?

I hopefully beg that an imperial decree be given to Dazaifu allowing me to accompany a merchant on his return voyage so I can fulfil my wish to worship at the holy sites.

Presented with humble trepidation,  
The Second Year of Enkyū 延久 (1070), the First Month, Eleventh Day  
Ācārya Great Master of the Transmission of the Lamp Jōjin<sup>23</sup>

21 The original text has “四果聖人”, presumably a copyist's error for “四果聖人”.

22 The original text has “Ken'en 寬延,” who is otherwise unknown, presumably a copyist's error for Kanken, who does appear in other sources.

23 *Chōya Gunsai, Shintei Zōho Kokushi Taikai* vol. 29A (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1964), 461–62. In making this translation, I consulted Mintzer's translation (“Jōjin Azari,” 45–48)

Before discussing the significance of this document, a few details in it deserve explication. First, the heading given the document by the compiler of *Chōya Gunsai* may appear to suggest that he did not realise the Tang dynasty had long since collapsed, but in fact “Tang” had come to mean simply “China.” More noteworthy is the title “holy man” the compiler gave Jōjin, indicating the esteem in which he was held just over four decades after he had left for China. Jōjin’s petition takes the form of a request that Dazaifu be instructed to allow him to travel to China. Today, Dazaifu is a town in Kyushu, about fifteen kilometres inland from Fukuoka. It takes its name from the ancient government office responsible for relations with the outside world that was once located there. In his petition, Jōjin mentions three men who may not be familiar. Bai Daoyou (died ca. 396) was a Central Asian monk who is said to have visited the Tiantai Mountains. Kanken and Nichien were monks who made pilgrimages to China during the during the Five Dynasties period. Details concerning their travels are few.

Jōjin’s petition is interesting for several reasons. Although he does state his intention of visiting Tiantai, where his sect had been founded, he certainly seems to be more interested in Wutai. He mentions it alone in his heading and first in his text, where he devotes more space to describing it. Also, he carefully places himself in the context of previous Japanese pilgrims, focusing on the more recent ones. He begins by stating his desire to visit sites associated with monks who had gone to China during the Tang, presumably Saichō, Ennin, and Enchin, but he does not name them. The monks he does name went after the fall of the Tang, thus hinting at an awareness of political change in China. Note too the mention of his aged mother. Although she complained bitterly in her poetic diary that he was abandoning her, both his actions as she recorded them and his statement here suggest that he was very much concerned for her welfare.

Finally, no evidence survives to demonstrate that he received permission to travel, and so Japanese scholars generally agree that his trip was illegal: he went secretly. To support this view, they note that after he and his followers boarded a Chinese merchant ship, they hid in their cabin while waiting in the harbour for a favourable wind. Other evidence suggests a more complicated picture. When the Japanese monks arrived at Wutai, Jōjin reveals he had brought items entrusted to him by influential figures at court. If his plans were a secret, it was an open secret. Apparently, the court government neither gave official approval for his pilgrimage nor did it make any effort to stop him. His diary does not explain why his party hid in a cabin. It could have been fear of

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and the Japanese translation by Ii in his, *Jōjin no Nissō*, 16–18.



thieves rather than officials, and, since Dazaifu officialdom had a bad reputation, the distinction between the two may have been less than absolute.

In 1072, on the nineteenth day of the third month, Jōjin's ship set sail from Kyushu. Two days later, when weather conditions deteriorated, he noted:

The sailors, with great commotion, prayed to the gods and performed divination. Then wind shifted to the northeast. Unperturbed, I invoked Mañjuśrī and the 10,000 Bodhisattvas of the Wutai Mountains and also the 500 Arhats at Stone Bridge in the Tiantai Mountains. I repeated their names tens of thousands of times.<sup>24</sup>

Again, Wutai comes before Tiantai. On the twenty-fifth, the first islands off the Chinese coast were sighted, but then progress slowed as the ship went from obscure island to obscure island, perhaps because the Chinese merchants sought to avoid customs officials in the usual entrepôt of Mingzhou 明州, the modern Ningbo. Whatever the reason for the delay, it was not until the fourteenth day of the fourth month, after transferring to a riverboat, that the Japanese monks finally disembarked at Hangzhou. There, Jōjin encountered a Chinese merchant, Chen Yong 陳詠, who had been to Japan five times and had mastered the language. Chen announced, "If you employ me as your interpreter, you will be able to make your pilgrimage to the Tiantai Mountains."<sup>25</sup> Jōjin took him up on his offer, and he proved to be as good as word, performing a variety of tasks for the Japanese pilgrims. Seven days later, Chen accompanied him to the local government office to present a petition for permission to visit Tiantai. Later, Jōjin noted that both the master of the ship that brought him to China and the owner of the inn where he was staying in Hangzhou also had been asked to add their names to the petition. Permission to travel arrived on the third day of the fifth month. When Jōjin finally copied into his diary the document authorising his visit to Tiantai, we discover it was issued, not to him, but to his interpreter Chen Yong, who would accompany him throughout his travels in China. Furthermore, it made no mention of a pilgrimage to Wutai. Instead, it said that, after visiting Tiantai, Jōjin was to return to Japan.<sup>26</sup> Possibly local officials had the authority to allow travel only as far as the relatively nearby Tiantai, about 200 kilometers away, not the more distant Wutai. Jōjin's dealings with officialdom illustrate how closely the government monitored his activities in China. Jōjin himself did not complain, but at least one Chinese

<sup>24</sup> STGS 1/3/21.

<sup>25</sup> STGS 1/4/19.

<sup>26</sup> STGS 1/4/26; 5/22; 11/6/5.

monk, whom he met as he made his way to the Song capital, chafed under government restrictions on travel. That monk, apparently of high clerical status, gave him a petition to present to the court. Among other concerns, it noted that monks who traveled from their home prefectures without official permission were punished by being laicized. Although the document's conclusion is missing, the context suggests that the monk hoped restrictions on travel by Chinese monks might be eased.<sup>27</sup> Jōjin never mentioned the petition again. Possibly Chinese friends warned him it would be folly to bring up the matter at court.

Jōjin would spend over four months at Tiantai, devoting himself to religious practice and sightseeing. He also began the process of requesting permission to proceed to Wutai. On the second day of the sixth month, he drafted a document that he presented to the officials in Taizhou 台州, the capital of the prefecture in which Tiantai is located:

Petition:

The Ācārya of the Great Japanese Nation's Enryakuji 延曆寺, Head Monk (*jushu* 寺主) of Daiunji 大雲寺, and Great Master of the Transmission of the Lamp, your humble servant Jōjin begs to request Imperial Permission to make a Pilgrimage to the Holy Places of Wutai, Daxingshan si and Qinglong si:

I, the above-mentioned monk, from my youth, aspired to pilgrimage. I had heard of Tiantai, south of the Yangzi River, where Dingguang 定光 had left his traces at Jindi 金地 and of Wutai, east of the Yellow River, where Mañjuśrī manifested himself in the rock grotto. Although I desired to visit the original places and make a pilgrimage to worship at the holy sites, for thirty-one years I was head monk of Daiunji and for twenty years also guardian monk to the Minister of the Left. During that time I was unable to carry out my true wish, but now my age fills six decades and my remaining years are not many. If I do not fulfil my humble desire, how my regrets will increase! Accordingly, I undertook to board a merchant vessel and come here. Among previous pilgrims, Daoyou from India climbed to Stone Bridge and worshiped the 500 Arhats. Ryōsen from Japan entered Wutai and saw the myriad bodhisattvas. Although my nature is stubborn and foolish, I wish to see the worthies in order that I may be saved. First I will make a pilgrimage to worship at the holy sites; then I will return to Tiantai and perform the Esoteric Lotus Rite for the rest of my days. I will devote myself to seeking enlightenment and await paradise. With me, I

27 STGS III/8/28.

have brought more than 600 scrolls of Tiantai and esoteric sūtras and texts, and thirty-eight ritual objects for the lustration ceremony (*kanjō* 灌頂). I will take the esoteric sūtras and ritual commentaries to the Sūtra Repository at Qinglong si to correct any errors.

Humbly requesting that imperial beneficence will promptly grant a decree allowing me to fulfil my long-standing wish,  
Your servant presents this petition.

The \_\_ Day of the Sixth month of the fifth year of the Xining Era (1072)  
Petition presented by the Ācārya of the Great Japanese Nation's Enryaku-ji, Head Monk of Daiunji, and Great Master of the Transmission of the Lamp, your humble servant, Jōjin.<sup>28</sup>

Like his earlier request for permission to travel to China, this petition again shows how Jōjin was placing himself in an established tradition. Whereas in Japan, he mentioned only the holy mountains at Tiantai and Wutai, once he had arrived in China, he added two destinations: Daxingshan si and Qinglong si. These were monasteries in the Tang capital of Chang'an that Enchin had previously requested permission to visit.<sup>29</sup> Since Jōjin had already quoted passages from a text written by Enchin, one can assume that here too he was consciously following the lead set by the patriarch of his lineage within the Tendai sect. Although less relevant to the issues being addressed here, another interesting detail is the term he uses for his native land, "The Great Japanese Nation" (Dai Nippon Koku 大日本國). It is a usage that must surely provoke strong, distinctly ambivalent, reactions among modern readers because of its redolence of prewar Japan's official name, "Great Japanese Imperial Nation" (Dai Nippon Teikoku 大日本帝國). Jōjin, however, was not motivated by imperialistic ambitions. Rather, he was imitating Chinese usage. If Japan is "The Great Japanese Nation," China is "The Great Song Nation" (Da Song Guo 大宋國) a term Jōjin also adopts. Jōjin seems to be attempting to put Japan on an equal footing with China. In other historical periods, the Chinese might have taken offence at such assertions of equality, but the Song was a weak dynasty that faced military threats and was anxious to make friendly alliances. Rather than object, the Song chose to treat Jōjin as an official representative of Japan and later would use his visit as an excuse to seek a revival of diplomatic ties, an attempt that ultimately failed as the Japanese court was not interested.<sup>30</sup>

28 STGS 1/6/2

29 Ono, *Nittō Guhō Gyōreki*, 86.

30 For diplomacy in Song times, see the essays found in Morris Rossabi ed., *China among Equals: The Middle Kingdom and its Neighbors, 10th-14th Centuries* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983). Diplomatic consequences of Jōjin's visit to China are treated in my

Unofficial Chinese tolerance of this usage was demonstrated when the monks at Wutai presented Jōjin a document using both the terms “Great Song Nation” and “Great Japanese Nation.” Jōjin’s terminology may not be a portent of modern Japanese militarism, but it does hint at Japan’s rising cultural confidence.

Two months after Jōjin had submitted his petition to the Chinese court for authorisation to complete his pilgrimage, a reply came from the central government. He was told that, not only had he been given permission to worship at Wutai, but, in addition, he was ordered to appear at court for an imperial audience. The following day, he copied into his diary the new document he had received from the local prefectural office. This one, unlike the previous travel permit, was addressed to him, not his interpreter. Furthermore, quoting instructions received from the central government, it no longer referred to him as simply “the Japanese monk Jōjin.” Instead, he was now “the Japanese monk of great virtue (*Nippon Koku daitokusō* 日本國大德僧), Jōjin.” He was to have an official escort and his travels were to be at government expense, but Wutai was not mentioned. Instead, he was instructed to proceed to the capital.<sup>31</sup> The treatment he was receiving suddenly improved. Jōjin was no longer merely a visiting monk, but rather he was a guest of state, generously funded by the Chinese government and well received wherever he went. Having successfully completed their visit to Tiantai, Jōjin and his party, now under official escort, headed for Kaifeng, a journey of sixty-five days, with only a few days of rest along the way. That was just one day more than the time between the submission of his request and the reply that it had been approved. The central government’s response had been impressively quick.

Traveling most of the way on China’s remarkably well-developed canal system, the Japanese arrived in the outskirts of the capital on the eleventh day of the tenth month. Two days later, they were instructed to take up residence in Chuanfa yuan 傳法院, literally something like, “Transmit the Dharma Cloister,” or, to describe its function, “The Translation Cloister,” a government-sponsored institution devoted to translating sūtras into Chinese and located within an important monastery, Taiping Xingguo si 太平興國寺. It also seems to have served as an official residence for visiting foreign monks. The head of the cloister was Richeng 日稱. In Jōjin’s words:

He is said to be a man from Central India, fifty-six years of age. Three years after leaving the western land, he had arrived at this court. Since

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“Monkish Diplomacy: A Case Study in Eleventh-Century Sino-Japanese Relations,” *Contacts between Cultures: Selected Papers from the Thirty-third the International Congress of Asian and North African Studies, vol. 4: East Asian History and Social Sciences*, ed. Bernard Hung-Kay Luk (Lewiston NY: E. Mellen Press, 1992).

then already twenty-five years have passed. His name is Richeng *sanzang* 三藏. His colour is black like ink. It is said that because of his virtuous behaviour, the court made him a National Teacher (*guoshi* 國師) and an official of this monastery.<sup>32</sup>

“*Sanzang*,” or “*Tripitaka*,” was a title given to sūtra translators, several of whom resided in the Translation Cloister. Jōjin frequently used the term in place of an actual name, probably referring to third-ranking monk at the cloister, Great Master Fancai 梵才, with whom he seems to have developed a close personal relationship.<sup>33</sup>

Preparations for the imperial audience commenced almost immediately. Asked by a Chinese official when he would like to have it, Jōjin requested it be scheduled as soon as possible so he could proceed expeditiously with his plan to visit Wutai. The official responded that he should present yet another petition. The audience took place on the twenty-second day of the month and immediately afterwards an imperial messenger told the Japanese monks that they were to visit and burn incense at the major monasteries in the capital. Another one then informed them that they had been given permission to continue with their pilgrimage to Wutai.<sup>34</sup>

In the days that followed, Jōjin recorded his visits to the capital monasteries and his preparations for the journey to Wutai. Selected excerpts from the diary will give a sense of how arrangements proceeded. Jōjin's imperial audience had been in the morning. That afternoon, back at the Translation Cloister, the Japanese received various gifts, were treated to some rare fruits served on silver dishes, and:

All the monks in the cloister came to express their joy at our audience. *Sanzang* said, “Last year two translators came from India, but they neither had an audience nor did they make a pilgrimage to Wutai. You must have an affinity with the king!”<sup>35</sup>

On the following two days, the Japanese monks visited the Kaifeng's principal monasteries, which Jōjin described in some detail. In the evening on the second day, after they had returned to the Cloister:

32 *STGS* IV/10/13.

33 Although the identity of Jōjin's “*sanzang*” is not certain, I am following Fujiyoshi; see, for example, his translation of the entry for 10/15 (*STGS* p. 437). For information on Fancai, see Fujiyoshi *STGS* 431.

34 *STGS* IV/10/17, 22.

35 *STGS* IV/10/22. Note that, in Jōjin's account, *sanzang* uses the term “king” (*wang* 王), apparently referring to the Chinese emperor. One wonders if that was the term actually used.

Around 6:00 PM, Fancai *sanzang* informed me in writing, “The court will send a special escort to accompany you when you go to burn incense at Wutai. This shows very deep respect for you and is quite unprecedented!” The Cloister’s *sijia* 司家 (Jōjin’s note: the Cloister’s scribes are called “*si-jia*.” They are also known as “*zhizhang*” 職掌) came and presented the document from the Visitors Bureau (*Kesheng* 客省) regarding my pilgrimage to Wutai:

Visitors Bureau Document to the Translation Cloister (in small script: twenty-fourth day, in the name of the Imperial Dispenser [*yuyao* 御藥])

Twenty-second day of the tenth month in the fifth year of Xining [1072], Palace Eunuch Service, Court Service Official of the East, in charge of the Imperial Dispensary, Li Shunju 李舜舉 reports:

According to the Visitors Bureau, the Japanese monks, Jōjin et al., shall be permitted to proceed to the Wutai Mountains to burn incense. Afterwards, they are to make a report at Yanhe 延和 Palace Hall [where their audience had taken place]. The document, as above, is conveyed to the Translation Cloister, which is to act in accordance with these imperial instructions.

Humbly presented, twenty-second day of the tenth month in the fifth year of Xining [1072]

Acting Vice Commissioner in Charge of Receiving Edicts in the Bureau of Military Affairs, Vice Commissioner of the Western Palace Audience Gate, Acting Concurrent Administrator of the Hostel for Tributary Envoys of the Visitors Bureau, and Superintendent of the Liquan Daoist Temple 醴泉觀, Zhang 張 (his signature)

Attendant at the Eastern Palace Audience Gate, Concurrently Serving as Administrator of the Hostel for Tributary Envoys of the Visitors Bureau, and Manager of the Imperial Guards Commanders and the Office of Admittance, Qiu 秋 (his signature)

The three *sijia* asked for two strings of cash each, saying that all who have previously made pilgrimages to Wutai had paid the *sijia*. I replied that I would ask *sanzang* and follow his instructions.<sup>36</sup>

36 *STGS* IV/10/24. The official titles incorporate corrections suggested by Fujiyoshi and my colleague, Beverly Bossler.

The next day, the twenty-fifth of the month:

In writing, I asked *sanzang*, “The scribes came to ask for money: two strings of cash for each of the three of them. Previously, I gave them six bolts of silk, two each for the three of them, along with five strings of cash, three for the senior scribe and one each for the other two. Now, because the Visitors Bureau sent the document for my visit Wutai, they again ask for money. It is unreasonable.” *Sanzang* replied, “The silk and cash from before are quite a lot. There is no need to give them any more.” I conveyed this information to the scribes. The scribes are very avaricious.<sup>37</sup>

On the afternoon twenty-sixth, the official escort, Palace Eunuch of the Right Duty Group Liu Duo 劉鐸, presented a note expressing his pleasure at being appointed to accompany Jōjin and stating that they would leave on the first of the next month. The following day:

The Imperial Dispenser came and took a seat. He indicated to me that the extreme cold will be unbearable and so I ought to go to Wutai in the spring, but I replied, “Because I and my interpreter wish to return to Japan soon, we would like to go as soon as possible.” I gave the official a document requesting that the interpreter be allowed to travel with me:

The Japanese, full rank, name, etc.:

On the twenty-sixth day of this month, I, Jōjin received the imperial beneficence of having an escort specially dispatched to guide him and his party on a pilgrimage to the Wutai Mountains to worship in the holy precincts. Since having arrived in this great nation we find ourselves unable to communicate in the spoken language and so it would be a great expedience if our interpreter Chen Yong were allowed to accompany us. We humbly beg that you, Chief Escort Imperial Dispenser, present this petition. Respectfully recorded and presented,

Reported as above,

date, full rank and name

Our escort for the journey to Wutai came and requested a string of cash for copying the petition and so forth. I gave it to him. *Sanzang* prepared tea. I gave the interpreter five strings of cash, the cost of wool clothing: a wool hat, wool gloves, and wool socks. The Imperial Dispenser informed the interpreter that we could proceed to Wutai soon. The interpreter purchased three items, a wool hat, wool shoes, and leather gloves for this old monk and brought them to me. I gave him the one string fifty cash that they cost.<sup>38</sup>

“Imperial Dispenser” is not an actual title but a contraction Jōjin used, referring to Li Shunju (d. 1082), an official whom he met several times and whose name appeared—complete with some of his official titles—in the document Jōjin received granting him permission to visit Wutai. Elsewhere, we see that this official was also responsible for the Translation Cloister. He, and other officials Jōjin encountered in Kaifeng, including his escort, were eunuchs. Eunuchs were unknown in Japan and must have been, at the very least, a novelty to the Japanese visitors. Jōjin could not resist mentioning (twice) that they spoke with women’s voices.<sup>39</sup> Note too that Jōjin lied about wishing to return promptly to Japan. Previously, when he had requested permission to travel to Wutai, he had stated that his intention was to return to Tiantai afterwards and then remain there, which in fact is what he did. On the other hand, although he probably did not yet know this, his interpreter would indeed go to Japan when his disciples returned home.

Two days later, around noon, Jōjin continued with his preparations:

The interpreter brought nine saddles, which *sanzang* estimated were worth fourteen strings of cash. I bought them. They were made of new leather and pleased me greatly. Around 2:00, our Wutai Escort came with an edict for travel expenses (one page), an edict for prefecture and district relay station horses (one page), and an edict for prefecture and district military guards (one page). These are most generous decrees. I could barely restrain my tears at this amazing imperial beneficence. Saying I could copy them later, the escort took them back with him. I gave him 300 cash, which seemed arbitrary but was what *sanzang* recommended.

38 STGS IV/10/27.

39 STGS IV/10/12, 13, 18, etc. For further information on Li, see Fujiyoshi, *San Tendai Godai San Ki no Kenkyū*, 34.



Great Master Ciji 慈濟 sent a note, as follows:

Presenting one pair of candles to the Ācārya as offerings to the bodhisattva at the Wutai Mountains, I would be pleased if you were to accept them.

When I look at my *Dream Record* (*Muki* 夢記) now, I see in it, “On the night of the seventh day of the intercalary tenth month in the first year of Enkyū 延久 (1069), I dreamed that, while I was on a journey, the emperor summoned an imperial dispenser and bestowed provisions, and so forth.” Thinking about it, I realise it was a portent of my successfully engaging in religious practice at Wutai. The edict for travel provisions perfectly matches my old dream!<sup>40</sup>

Note that Jōjin kept a written record of his dreams and apparently had taken it with him to China. Elsewhere in his diary he mentioned dreams he had along the way.

The next day, the last of the tenth month, Jōjin purchased two packhorses, one for ten strings of cash, the other for nine strings (plus a tax of 815 cash), performed religious rites, and exchanged gifts with his hosts at the Translation Cloister. Whereas previous translated selections have excerpted key passages, the following is the complete entry for the first day of the eleventh month:

Clear sky. Around 10:00 AM, the escort and an official from the State Finance Commission (*Sansi* 三司) came with the document regarding travel expenses along the way to the Wutai Mountains. The official gave this aged monk the document, which said:

Regarding the Japanese monks, Jōjin et al.,

The Palace Eunuch Liu Duo shall accompany Jōjin et al. to Wutai to burn incense and then accompany them back to the palace. Each of the eight Japanese monks, per person, shall receive rice, three *sheng* 勝; flour, one *jin* 斤 three *liang* 兩 two *fen* 分; oil, one *liang* 兩 nine *qian* 錢 two *fen*; salt, one *liang* 兩 two *fen*; vinegar, three *he* 合; charcoal, one *jin* 斤 twelve *liang*; firewood, seven *jin*. For the traveling merchant and interpreter, one individual, each day a ration token shall be provided for rice, one *sheng*.

40 STGS IV/10/29.

Nearby relay stations shall be ordered to provide the above items in the prefectures, superior prefectures, districts, garrisons and official relay stations along the route, both going and returning. Within four days of their return, the tokens, together with the confirmation documents received along the route, shall be submitted to the bureau.

Fifth year of Xining, Tenth Month, Twenty-eighth Day

Administrative Assistant (*Panguan* 判官)

Assistant Commissioner (*Fushi* 副使)

Commissioner (*Shi* 使)

An official of the Visitor's Bureau came bringing an imperial edict calling for the bestowal of ten strings of cash on Jōjin and five strings of cash on the interpreter. I sent the interpreter to the government storehouse to request the cash and around noon, he brought it. I gave two strings to the official of the Visitors Bureau and stored eight strings in *sanzang's* cell. Thereupon, we departed. The cloister's assistant head, *sanzang*, and all the great masters saw us off as we left through the Great Gate. At the Middle Gate, we mounted our horses. The government provided us ten horses and twenty soldiers. For each of us, there was a horse and two guards. Two private packhorses and their drivers that *sanzang* personally arranged for us carried our belongings. A throng of spectators, monks and laymen, were lined up outside the Great Gate. For a while we passed through the city and after proceeding five *li*, we arrived outside Shuntian Gate (Shuntian men 順天門), where we could see the Jinming River (Jinming jiang 金明江). There was a great bridge and a tower. Around 6:00 PM, having traveled twelve *li* from the stable at Shuntian Gate, we arrived at Yongfu yuan 永福院, one *chō* 町 to the west of Xindian Stable (Xindian Mapu 新店馬鋪) in Xiangfu 祥符 District. The head monk came out and made tea. The monks all greeted us. At the seven hours we performed the rites and recited scroll six of the *sūtra*.<sup>41</sup>

A few details in this entry require comment. Those familiar with the Song capital will recognise that Jinming was a lake, not a river. Also, Jōjin gives one

<sup>41</sup> *STGS* v/11/1. Jōjin began each diary entry by giving the day's position in the sexagenary cycle, which I have omitted from all my translations.

distance using a Japanese unit of measure, *chō*, which is equal to approximately 109 meters. Daily, Jōjin, presumably together with his Japanese followers, performed a series of rites and readings from the *Lotus sūtra*. Normally, as in this case, the rites were performed at seven times, although, while they were on the road, they were not always able to follow the routine strictly. Almost every diary entry ends with a statement similar to the one that concludes this one.

The party proceeded expeditiously to Wutai making use of the official postal relay system. Other than an occasional stable that did not have enough horses, problems were rare. After only five days travel, Jōjin sold at a loss the packhorses he had purchased because feeding them on the road was a nuisance. Once, the Japanese found the millet they were provided not to their liking and so purchased some rice to mix with it. A few times the travellers would stop early, for instance when they were near the escort's hometown. Occasionally they rested for a day, as in Taiyuan, where the local prefect, Liu Xiang 劉庠 (1023–86), a particularly distinguished official, organised a special welcome for them. As they neared Wutai, the escort requested that their guard be increased from twenty to thirty-five men "because of the danger of tigers, the threat of bandits."<sup>42</sup> Most days, however, they simply traveled, averaging approximately 60 *li* per day. Often, the entries in Jōjin's diary consist of nothing more than the distances between relay stations. On other days, however, he added descriptions of interesting things he had observed along the way.

On the seventeenth day of the eleventh month, for instance, Jōjin began his entry with a typical record of regular exchanges of mounts and concludes with some zoological observations, to which Jōjin adds a novel Buddhist analysis:

Clear sky. Around the first quarter of 6:00 AM, we mounted ten horses and headed north. Proceeding fifteen *li*, we reached Xin Stable (Xin mapu 新馬鋪) in Wuxiang 武鄉 District and mounted ten fresh horses. Proceeding twelve *li*, we reached Nankai Relay Station (Nankai yi 南開驛), where I collected 460 cash. We mounted ten fresh horses and crossed Doudi Peak (Doudi ling 斗底嶺). Proceeding twenty *li*, we reached Laiyuan 來遠 Stable in Qi 祁 District, Taiyuan Superior Prefecture, and mounted ten fresh horses. After crossing Mount Shifu 石覆, we proceeded fifteen *li*, arrived at Pantuo 盤駝 Stable, Mount Pantuo, and mounted ten fresh horses. After crossing Mount Pantuo, we proceeded fifteen *li* until we arrived at Tuanbai 團栢 Relay Station and stopped for the night.

42 STGS V/11/3, 20, 25.

Everyday for the past six or seven days, I have seen camels, altogether thirty or forty of them, and have observed the form of their bodies carefully. Their heads are like those of horses, and, like oxen, they have ropes attached to their noses. They lack upper teeth, and their eyes resemble those of oxen. Their long narrow necks are always curved and hold up their heads in the manner of a crane's neck. Both above and below their necks they have hair. Their hooves, like those of oxen, are divided in two. Their tails are like pigs' tails. On their backs are two humps, each one-foot high. Their hair is long and they always lay down as oxen do. They are ten feet tall and twelve or thirteen feet long. Their sins in former lives must have been great indeed!

Today we went seventy-seven *li*. The relay station sent 512 cash. At the three hours we performed the rites and recited scrolls seven and eight of the *sūtra*.<sup>43</sup>

On the twenty-seventh day of the month, Jōjin caught a glimpse of Wutai: "For the first time, I saw the peak of the Eastern Terrace and was moved to tears."<sup>44</sup> Later, when the Japanese party stopped for the evening, Jōjin discovered some graffiti that previous pilgrims had left on a wall:

Uncle Wen 文叔 of Taiyuan, accompanied by his younger brothers and family members, went to Wutai seeking Mañjuśrī. On the thirtieth day of the sixth month in the fifth year of Xining [1072] we spent the night here and so I write this:

On the twenty-second day, seeking to glimpse Mañjuśrī, we climbed the Eastern Terrace and saw his sacred precinct, which was most wonderful. Sometime after 2:00, a five-coloured auspicious cloud and its aureole appeared. At 4:00, we saw the radiance of his whole body appear in the mountains and valleys. We worshipped it until dusk and returned.

Written by: Taiyuan Superior Prefecture Director of the Salt Monopoly and Arresting Agent for Salt, Alum, and Iron Smugglers, Officer Wang Yicheng<sup>45</sup>

43 *STGS* v/11/17. The precise time Jōjin indicates with "the first quarter of 6:00 AM" is uncertain. Fujiyoshi discusses the problem of marking time in his *STGS* vol. 1, pp. 4–6.

44 *STGS* v/11/27.

45 太原府永利兩監巡捉私塩鑿鉄司吏人王倚誠.

On the twenty-sixth day, he also wrote a poem:

Leaving our village, several days, we arrive at Ye 冶 Ford;  
 Along the road, the mountain and forest scene is ever fresh.  
 From here, Wutai is one hundred *li* away.  
 Certainly we will see the holy place and meet holy monks.<sup>46</sup>

This is followed by four additional poems, each of eight lines, “The Mountain Farmer,” (*Shanzhong Gengzhe* 山中耕者) “Composed upon Reaching the Stockade,” (*Daozhai Youzuo* 到寨有作) “Composed when Staying at the Baoxing Relay Station,” (*Su Baoxing Yishe Youzuo* 宿寶興驛舍有作) and “Song of the Stone Rooster,” (*Shiji Yong* 石雞詠), all describing rustic scenes without directly mentioning Wutai. After copying the graffiti, Jōjin notes that a new group of thirty-five guards appeared and the head monk of Wutai had sent ten horses and seven acolytes to receive his party. Then:

By lamplight, I wrote a list of items to be presented as offerings:  
 Three *liang* of gold dust and ten *liang* of silver, Jōjin's offerings to Mañjuśrī;  
 three bolts of Chinese silk, one each from the three monks Raien 賴縁,  
 Kaishū 快宗, and Shōshū 聖秀; from Ikan 惟觀 and Shinken 心賢, one  
 string of cash each; and from Zenkyū 善久 and Chōmyō 長明, 500 cash  
 each. I also wrote a list of the imperial sūtra offerings from the empress  
 dowager (*kōtai kōgū* 皇太后宮) and a document for the mirror and hair  
 entrusted to me by the assistant chief of the empress's office (*taikō taigō  
 no suke* 太皇太后亮).<sup>47</sup>

The seven men named were Jōjin's disciples who had accompanied him to China. The last of them, Chōmyō, was an acolyte who would later be ordained in Kaifeng. The significance of the other offerings, the sūtras, hair, and mirror, would become clear three days later. Whereas when Jōjin first saw Tiantai, he was able to borrow Enchin's language to describe the scene elegantly, albeit conventionally, Wutai aroused tears, but not eloquence. Although the prose style of his diary did not change as it had when he approached Tiantai, the content did. Starting from this day, his entries become longer and offer a fascinating picture of Wutai in the winter of 1072. Unfortunately, the picture is not as comprehensive as one might wish, for Jōjin's stay was brief. He arrived,

46 *STGS* v/11/27. I have followed Fujiyoshi's emendations for several problematic details in this passage.

47 *STGS* v/11/27.

apparently in the afternoon, the day after he wrote the above entry, spent the following two full days there, and then departed the next day, the second of the twelfth month. Much of his description will be summarised rather than translated, both for the sake of concision and, occasionally, to gloss over problematic details.

Early in the morning of the next day, the twenty-eighth, Jōjin's party mounted horses provided by the Wutai monasteries and was on its way, descending into valleys and climbing precipitous hills. Because snow that had fallen a month earlier had frozen and the horses' footing was bad, occasionally they had to walk. Their route took them along the side of the North Terrace. When they reached its peak, they could see the West, Central, and South Terraces, and they offered prayers to all of these. Only the East Terrace was out of sight, behind other mountains. They then descended again into the valley at the base of the five terraces, where (in a relatively literal translation that attempts to convey some of the minor ambiguities and stylistic infelicities of the original):

All the monks, led by the monastery controller (*douwei na* 都維那) came to greet us. The assistant chief monk (*fu sengzheng* 副僧正) came on horseback to a small hall at the bottom of the hill and then all the monks formed a line. They had eight five-coloured pennants and two jewelled pennants. Eight monks beat cymbals. All together, about several hundred people came. First they prepared tea in the hall. First the head monk had us place our offerings to Mañjuśrī in a cart. We lined the inside of the cart with brocade. The gold, silver, and silk were as noted in the previous day's list. I presented the mirror and hair, and also two *liang* of silver, one box of Borneo camphor fragrance (*longnao xiang* 龍腦香) and three *liang* of Indian frankincense (*xunlu xiang* 薰陸香). These famous fragrances were added to the fragrance cart. All the monks formed a line and walked for five *li*, while the Japanese went slowly on horseback. We brought the offerings to Zhenrong yuan 眞容院, halfway up the side of the Central Terrace, and placed them before Mañjuśrī.<sup>48</sup>

After 4:00, the Japanese were taken to the room where they were to stay in Zhenrong yuan, or "The True Visage Cloister," famed for its image of Mañjuśrī.<sup>49</sup> Of it, Jōjin wrote "The adornment was extremely marvellous" (莊嚴甚妙), a phrase he used repeatedly in his descriptions of monasteries. Then they went

48 *STGS* v/11/28.

49 For a discussion of the Zhenrong yuan, see Choi Sun-ah's essay in this volume.

to the bathhouse and washed. Afterwards, they made the rounds of the cloister's various halls to worship, and:

Along the way, a five-coloured cloud appeared above the Western Hall. The escort saw it first and told me. Then I saw it too.<sup>50</sup>

That evening, a second miraculous event occurred:

All night, I slept in the meditation seat and had no urge to urinate at night, which was very unusual.<sup>51</sup>

A five-coloured cloud is a common manifestation of Mañjuśrī's presence; Jōjin's second "miracle" is less conventional.

In the morning of the following day, the assistant head monk escorted Jōjin around various halls of Zhenrong yuan. The Japanese monks burned incense and prayed at each: Ruixiang 瑞相 Hall, a four-story building dedicated to Mañjuśrī; Huaxiang 化相 Hall, another four-story building, this one with a sixteen-foot image of Śākyamuni, flanked by images of Amitābha and Maitreya; and a three-story building that he does not name with four life-size silver Buddhas. Then, another miracle:

Before noon, it began to snow. In the twenty-eight days since we left Kaifeng it had not snowed, but today it began to fall. This is a rare thing. Doubtlessly it was Mañjuśrī's greeting! All the monks in the cloister were impressed.<sup>52</sup>

When they went to the assistant head's cell for their midday meal, they were joined by the seventy-four-year-old Great Master Miaoji, Yanyi 妙濟大師延一, famed as the author of the *Guang Qingliang zhuan* 廣清涼傳 [Extended Chronicle of Mount Clear and Cool], a classic account of Wutai. Jōjin must have recognised the importance of the text, for he requested a copy, and that evening he was given a printed version. He received other gifts. The assistant chief monk gave the Japanese monks what Jōjin termed "bodhisattva stones" (*pusa shi* 菩薩石), which gave off a five-coloured glow. Bodhisattva stones are thought to be white quartz.<sup>53</sup> In addition, his escort brought him two types of

<sup>50</sup> STGS v/11/28.

<sup>51</sup> STGS v/11/28.

<sup>52</sup> STGS v/11/29.

<sup>53</sup> See Fujiyoshi's note to STGS v/11/29.

medicine and a catty of tea. He also met a local official from a nearby prefecture who had been “exiled” (*liu* 流), apparently to Wutai. And finally, again, he recorded some graffiti he found, this time on a door to his cell, for example:

The Eastern Head for Court Service (*Dong Tou Hongfeng Guan* 東頭供奉官), Governor of Bozhou 博州, stayed here on the twenty-eighth day of the seventh month in the fourth year of Zhiping 治平 (1067). While proceeding to my official post, I saw the bodhisattva. When I encountered the bodhisattva, I saw the five-coloured light that emanates from his forehead (*haoguang* 毫光). Around 8:00 AM, I saw this right before my eyes and, as noon approached, it disappeared. My whole family was overjoyed. [signed] Cui He 崔何

Zhaozhou Longxingsi 趙州龍興寺, Sūtra and Śāstra Lecturer, the śramaṇa Zhenxuan 真宣 and this cloister’s head monk, Shigong 師公, saw the sage visage. I record this in the hope that I may come here again. The... day of the sixth month in the fourth year of Zhiping (1067) [signed] Zhenxuan

Eighteen urban residents, among them He Feng 何諷 and his mother, Madam Zhou 周, from Pingshan District (Pingshan xian 平山縣) Zhending Superior Prefecture (Zhending fu 真定府) all came to Zhenrong yuan. We saw the five-coloured light that emanates from the Buddha’s forehead. We were all overjoyed and hope to come again. The twenty-fifth day of the third month in the fifth year of Xining (1072).

Note that one of these was written by an official, one by a monk, and one by a townsman. The remaining two examples are both by common people, presumably prosperous ones, who travelled in groups, one of which again included some of the women in the family: one man’s mother, another’s wife. Although hardly conclusive evidence, these fragments hint that a range of China’s people believed they might experience Mañjuśrī’s presence at Wutai.

The next day, the first of the twelfth month, Jōjin’s second and last full day at Wutai, began with visits to additional halls within Zhenrong yuan:

At the first quarter of 8:00 AM, we went to the Baozhang Hall (Baozhang ge 寶章閣) to burn incense. On the ground level were images of Bhaiṣajyaguru (Yaoshi fo 藥師佛) and the sixteen arhats. On the upper level was a sixteen-foot seated image of Vairocana (Lushenafu 盧舍那佛). Surrounding it are 1,000 images of Śākyamuni on leaves, which in turn are surrounded by 4,000 silver bodhisattvas. Next, to the left is a sixteen-foot image of the Extend Life King Bodhisattva (Yanshouwang pusa 延壽



王菩薩) surrounded by 3,000 silver bodhisattvas. Next, to the right, is a sixteen-foot image of Long-life King Bodhisattva (Changshouwang pusa 長壽王菩薩), surrounded by 3,000 silver bodhisattvas. Altogether, there are 10,000 bodhisattvas. Next we went to worship at the Jisheng Hall 集聖閣. On the ground level was a thirty-foot image of the Thousand-armed Avalokiteśvara (Qianshou Guanyin 千手觀音). On the upper level was a sixteen-foot image of Mañjuśrī Bodhisattva with the Five Locks of Hair (Wuji Wenshu pusa 五髻文殊菩薩), the sixteen arhats, and Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva. Next we went to worship the Mañjuśrī Bodhisattva at the monks' hall. I offered 100 cash at each of the three halls. Next we went to observe the cell of a monk, his name uncertain, who was seated in perpetual silence, we were told, already for twenty years.<sup>54</sup>

At the end of his entry for this day, Jōjin remembered an additional detail:

This morning at Baozhang Hall, I saw its name plaque (*e* 額) written by Emperor Renzong 仁宗 (1010-63, r. 1022-63) in the flying white (*feibai* 飛白) style. It was exquisitely beautiful, impossible to fully describe.<sup>55</sup>

“Exquisitely beautiful” is a different translation of Jōjin’s familiar descriptive phrase, previously rendered as “The adornment was extremely marvellous,” a more literal translation that does not work in this context.

After their mid-day meal, the eight Japanese pilgrims and their interpreter, with a local monk as a guide, mounted horses to see more of Wutai:

We went to worship at Taiping Xingguo si 太平興國寺 (originally named Bailu si 白鹿寺). It is halfway up the Central Terrace, five *li* from Zhenrong yuan. First we worshiped the sixteen-foot image at the Mañjuśrī Pavilion. Next we worshiped at the Hunjin 渾金 Sūtra Repository. Next we climbed to the upper hall and worshiped the 10,000 bodhisattvas. Next we worshiped at the Wansheng Pavilion (Wansheng ge 萬聖閣). On the ground floor were the Buddhas of the five directions, each with four Bodhisattvas. Next, at the upper floor, was a tenth-stage bodhisattva (shidi pusa 十地菩薩). Next, we worshiped at the Sanqian Jinfo Pavilion (Sanqian Jinfo ge 三千金佛閣). Everything was made of the seven treasures. It is an immense monastic compound, consisting of halls and

54 *STGS* v/12/1. A cryptic phrase in the sentence about offering cash has been omitted and “his name uncertain” is a very tentative translation of another cryptic phrase.

55 *STGS* v/12/1.

many-storied buildings. The head monk, recipient of the purple robe, the Reverend Chonghui 崇暉, provided rare fruits and medicinal tea. He was eighty-two years old. He told us he had made circuit of the five terraces fifty-eight times and had burned the third finger of his left hand as an offering to Mañjuśrī. On the Eastern Terrace, he had seen Mañjuśrī's halo glow, head glow, and full-body glow, and he had seen the 10,000 bodhisattvas. Atop the Southern Terrace, he had seen the golden-hued heaven of Mañjuśrī, and so forth. His body was light; his voice high. He is indeed a sage.

Next we left the monastery, went down the hill for one *li*, and worshiped at the Diamond Grotto (Jin'gang ku 金剛窟, the home of Mañjuśrī Bodhisattva. People who worship at the grotto light torches, enter the cave, take some dirt, burn incense and pray. Before the cave is a well named Mañjuśrī Well. Above the grotto is a life-size image of Mañjuśrī surrounded by his retainers. I presented 800 cash to Xingguo si and the grotto. Next we worshiped at Da Huayan si 大華嚴寺, an immense monastic compound. Next we went to the monks' cells, where we saw a translator from Eastern India who showed us several tens of palm leaf sūtras, which he said were Sanskrit texts of the *Amitābha sūtra* and the *Aluli sūtra* (*Aluli jing* 阿嚕力經) etc. He also showed us a pure-gold five-inch image of Śākyamuni. He showed us Indian monks' robes: a *kāṣāya*, *uttarāsaṅga*, and *antarvāsa*. I asked, "Do you have a *saṃghāti*?" He answered, "No, I do not have a *saṃghāti*." He came from India in the autumn of this year. He said that he came from the Translation Cloister, with a palace servitor (*gongfeng guan* 供奉官) as escort, to the Wutai Mountains, and arrived in the tenth month. His body is black in colour and his hair has not been shaved for some time. It is about one inch long. He plans either to return to India or to go to the capital.<sup>56</sup>

The translator was showing Jōjin sūtras from India written on palm leaves, as was the practice there. The *kāṣāya*, *uttarāsaṅga*, *antarvāsa* and *saṃghāti* are all parts of a Buddhist monk's formal robes. After touring Wutai, Jōjin returned to his cell.

That evening, officers, some monastic, others from the local government, came to visit him. They brought various gifts: more bodhisattva stones, two "medicinal pillows," (i.e., pillows stuffed with herbs believed to have medicinal properties such as chrysanthemum flowers, sweet flag, or magnolia), and two stone censors. At first he refused the latter because he had nothing to burn, but the donor was persistent, and so he accepted one and left it with a Wutai monk,

56 STGS V/12/1.

explaining that he planned to use it when he returned the following year to perform austerities for 100 days. In the months that followed, occasionally he would mention his intention of returning to Wutai, once stating he would go after two years.<sup>57</sup> Whether or not he did so is unknown. In addition to the gifts, he received two documents:

From: the Mañjuśrī Sage Image Hall, Bodhisattva True Image Cloister, of the Huayan si, Wutai Mountains, Daizhou, Hedong Circuit of the Great Song Nation:

On the twenty-eighth day of this month, the Ācārya of the Great Japanese Nation's Enryakuji, Head Monk of Daiunji, Great Master of the Transmission of the Lamp, and Recipient of the Purple Robe from the Great Song Nation, Jōjin, brought sūtras in the late emperor's own hand presented by the Great Japanese Nation's empress dowager:

*The Lotus Sūtra*, one copy in eight scrolls

*The Sūtra of Infinite Meaning* in one scroll

*The Sūtra of Meditation on Samantabhadra* in one scroll

*The Amitâbha Sūtra* in one scroll

*The Wisdom Sūtra* in one scroll

The above named sūtras have been received in the numbers specified. In accordance with the Dharma, they have been placed before the true image of Mañjuśrī Bodhisattva as eternal offerings. The merit that is accumulated will return to benefit the former emperor of the Great Japanese Nation. We humbly pray that his mind be supremely enlightened, he recognise the source of the Buddha nature, he peacefully dwell in the Treasure World, and he soon receive the rank of Dharma-king.

Empress Dowager: we humbly pray that your steadfast virtue will long be known, you will celebrate an imperial age of 1,000 years, you will long remain on this earth, and your glorious endeavours will flourish for a hundred-thousand generations. Furthermore, we pray that, forever after, your nation will be pure, its ruler long-lived, its people prosperous, and the masses healthy; its chief ministers will revere the way of Yao and Shun, its frontier lords will shine in the teachings of Tang and Yu, the Buddha's Law will long flourish, and its phoenix calendar, emblematic of

57 STGS V/12/3; VI/1/20; VII/3/12, 23, 28; VIII/4/13, 17.

the dynasty, will long endure. We sincerely pray that Mañjuśrī enlighten all with his mirror of wisdom.

A humble prayer,

Great Song Nation, the...day of the eleventh month, in the fifth year of Xi'ning (1072)

[Signed by fifteen Wutai monks in ascending order of rank, concluding with:]

Chief Monk of the Ten Monasteries at the Wutai Mountains, concurrent Master of Zhenrong yuan, Chief Monk Responsible for Public Affairs, Lecturer on the Sūtras, Vinaya, and Śāstras, Transmitter of the Mahāyāna Precepts, Great Master Jiaozheng 覺證, Recipient of the Purple Robe Śramaṇa Shunxing 順行

And then:

From: Mañjuśrī Sage Image Hall, Bodhisattva True Image Cloister, of the Huayan si, Wutai Mountains, Daizhou, Hedong Circuit of the Great Song Nation:

On the twenty-eighth day of this month, the Ācārya of the Great Japanese Nation's Enryakuji, Head Monk of Daiunji, Great Master of the Transmission of the Lamp, and Recipient of the Purple Robe from the Great Song Nation, Jōjin, brought one mirror and three bundles of hair, the personal effects of the sixth daughter of Lord Fujiwara, the late Minister of the Right of the Great Japanese Nation, junior first rank, the wife of Fujiwara no Moronobu Ason 藤原師信朝臣, assistant chief of the Empress Dowager's Office. She died in childbirth. The above items shall be placed in the Mañjuśrī True Image Hall in accordance with the Dharma as eternal offerings so the good karma accumulated may benefit that lord's wife. We humbly pray her splendid angelic ox-cart be escorted by immortals from the three islands, and the mirror of the Buddha's wisdom shine clearly to enlighten her to the universal way. We further pray that devout laymen will praise the nation and all receive auspicious karma, and in administering affairs, both public and private, tranquility will be their reward. Mañjuśrī is holy strength and bright power.

A humble prayer.

Great Song Nation, the...day of the eleventh month, in the fifth year of Xi'ning (1072)

[This time Jōjin transcribes only the first signature and then notes that the others are as above.]<sup>58</sup>

These documents explain the sūtras, hair, and mirror that Jōjin had mentioned earlier: they were mementos of the recently deceased Japanese emperor, Go-Reizei 後冷泉天皇 (1025-68, r. 1045-68) and of a court lady, entrusted to him by family members to be presented at Wutai in order to ensure rebirth in a better world. After his return to Kaifeng, Jōjin reveals that, in addition to the items mentioned here, on his journey to and from Wutai, he wore a garment given him by another consort of the same deceased emperor and a cap given by high court official who happened to be his own maternal uncle.<sup>59</sup> Not mentioned anywhere are the political implications of Go-Reizei's death. He was the last in a line of emperors to had close family ties to the long-powerful Fujiwara lineage, and so his passing marked the end of that family's domination of the court. The others who entrusted items to Jōjin were all associated with the Fujiwara, as was Jōjin himself. Later in the diary, however, we discover hints that Jōjin had ties with the rival court faction too.<sup>60</sup> Whatever the significance of these associations in terms of Japanese court politics, they suggest that, even if Jōjin never received official permission to make his pilgrimage, it was hardly secret. Moreover, they point to Wutai's hold on the religious imaginations of Japanese courtiers in the eleventh century.

The documents also suggest something about the position of Buddhism in Song China. On the one hand, their format and bureaucratic language are reminiscent of the documents Jōjin received from Song officialdom. The strings of titles attached to each of the names of the monks who signed the documents, most of them omitted from the translations here, add to the bureaucratise flavour. On the other hand, unlike the official documents, the monks adopt a significant detail from Jōjin's own petitions, referring to his native land as "The Great Japanese Nation," usage that does not appear in documents issued by the government. Chinese Buddhists appear to have been more willing than their government compatriots to place Japan on an equal footing with China, at least linguistically. Note too the references to Yao and Shun, Tang and Yu, legendary rulers from Chinese antiquity who seem out of place in these Buddhist

58 *STGS* v/12/1.

59 *STGS* v/12/28.

60 For details, see my "Jōjin's Travels," 397-400.

documents. Their inclusion again demonstrates the degree to which Buddhism had been assimilated into Chinese culture.

Although Jōjin never states this directly, his haste to visit Wutai may have been in part influenced by a desire to fulfil his duty to those who had entrusted him with offerings. Having kept his promise to members of the Japanese court and received official-looking documents to prove it, he began his journey back to Kaifeng the following morning. In other words, after traveling all the way from Japan and impatiently rushing to Wutai in the dead of winter, he spent only two full days there. In contrast, he had stayed at Tiantai for over four months, exchanging texts with his Chinese counterparts, visiting holy sites, and participating in various rituals. One can only speculate as to why he did not linger at Wutai. In part, he had no choice but to linger at Tiantai because he lacked permission to travel further. At Wutai, the opposite may have been the case. Possibly Jōjin had hoped to stay longer but did not have permission to do so or was being pressured by his official escort, who had not wanted to go until the weather was more clement. Alternatively, he may have gone to China assuming Tiantai to be a place for study and Wutai a place to worship and encounter Mañjuśrī. Study required time, but, at Wutai, he had assumed he needed only to present his offerings, say his prayers, and hope to feel the presence of the bodhisattva. These would not require so long a stay and in fact he accomplished all. His visit to Wutai, however, seems to have inspired him to change his plan. Only after he had arrived at Wutai did Jōjin mention the possibility of a second visit. Again, one can only speculate, but perhaps he had not realised that Wutai deserved a longer stay until he had gone there, and so upon completing his first visit he began to contemplate a second one.

Whatever Jōjin's reasons, he did not linger at Wutai. As he departed, again, both government and monastic officials came to convey their greetings and give him more gifts. In return, Jōjin presented two strings of cash. Forty acolytes came and indulged themselves in some wine. Chinese monks appear to have been more willing to treat themselves to wine than was Jōjin. Not long after he had arrived at Tiantai, the head of a monastery there offered him some. Jōjin firmly refused; his Chinese host had four cups. Later, however, Jōjin appears to have allowed himself a bit of "medicinal wine."<sup>61</sup> After the acolytes had their wine, they accompanied the Japanese monks the rest of the day. Since snow covered the five summits, Jōjin and his party did not stop to worship but headed off directly for Kaifeng. After having gone only two *li*, however, they were greeted by two monastic officials, one of whom had already seen them earlier in the morning. The two had rushed on ahead to prepare some medici-

61 *STGS* 1/5/20, 6/10.

nal tea for the Japanese party. "It was most considerate," Jōjin commented. As they ascended Huayan Peak (Huayan ling 華嚴嶺), between the Eastern and Northern Terraces, it began to snow heavily. Accordingly, when they came to a small pavilion, they removed some of their lower garments to free their legs and they walked down from the peak because the horses could not get good footing on the frozen snow. After they had traveled thirty *li*, they arrived at the stable near the bottom of Huayan Peak. There, a monk had come to prepare a great maigre feast for them. In the afternoon, as snow continued to fall, they resumed their descent. After ten *li*, the snow let up and they continued another thirty *li* before they arrived at the relay station where they would spend the night. Jōjin also noted, somewhat cryptically, that he was asked to provide a document showing his name and status (*mingbu* 名簿) in order to request a purple robe.<sup>62</sup> In both China and Japan, the purple robe was a symbol of honour that an emperor might bestow on a distinguished monk. The Chinese court had flattered Jōjin by assuming he had already received one when he arrived in China. He had not, but he had been awarded one at his imperial audience in Kaifeng.<sup>63</sup> Why he needed to produce a document on his way back from Wutai is unclear.

The return journey to Kaifeng was mostly uneventful, despite an untoward incident that occurred soon after party's auspicious start. What exactly happened, however, is unclear because ambiguities in Jōjin's prose allow for alternate interpretations of the problem. As noted, the Japanese party was to receive provisions along the way to Wutai. On the third day after it had left Wutai, a question arose regarding receipt of those provisions. A request was made for payment, apparently in cash, not in kind, to cover provisions for the twenty-seventh, eighth, and ninth days of the eleventh month and the first, second, and third days of the twelfth month. Jōjin noted that they had been hosted by the Wutai monasteries on most of those days and so only one day's provisions were needed. Nonetheless, provisions for six days had been requested. It was, Jōjin noted, inappropriate. Although Jōjin clearly disapproved of what was taking place and says he tried to stop it, he does not clearly specify who made the inappropriate request. Most scholars have interpreted the passage to mean that Jōjin's escort wanted to collect unneeded provisions, presumably for personal gain, but an alternative reading is that the request came from the district officials and Jōjin did not want to pay.<sup>64</sup> A few days later, Jōjin

62 *STGS* V/12/2.

63 *STGS* III/8/1, IV/10/18, 22.

64 *STGS* V/12/4. Fujiyoshi's translation shifts the blame from the escort; other annotators do not.

offers another ambiguous hint of profiteering on the part of the escort. This incident occurred in Taiyuan, where the local prefect Liu Xiang had received them grandly on their way to Wutai. Now, on their return, they arrived there on the ninth day of the month and again were welcomed with a lavish reception and gifts of fruit and wine. Jōjin returned most of the wine. They spent the following day there, enjoying the prefect's hospitality. The escort repeatedly asked that they remain because of "commerce" (*maimai* 賣買). The next day again the escort asked that they stay, so the Japanese monks treated themselves to a hot bath, but then they were on their way again in the afternoon.<sup>65</sup> What exactly the escort was doing cannot be known, but his behaviour does arouse suspicions.

After taking a slightly different route on their return journey, Jōjin's party arrived back in Kaifeng on the afternoon of the twenty-sixth day of the twelfth month and returned to its quarters at the Translation Cloister, where all were warmly greeted. That evening Jōjin's friend *sanzang* sent him a large jug of wine, which he accepted this time, and three varieties of fruit: kumquats, pomegranates, and large pears.<sup>66</sup> Note that Jōjin had previously mentioned receiving fruit, often "rare fruit" (*chinka* 珍菓), without specifying what exactly he had been given. In Japanese usage, the meaning of character for "fruit" had broadened to include a range of other delicacies; in modern Japanese, it can mean simply candy or a snack. When Jōjin wrote that he had received "fruit" at Wutai—in the middle of the winter—possibly he was receiving some other food, perhaps nuts, another possible meaning for the term, but here he specified the fruits, suggesting that, indeed, even at Wutai he may have received fruits that somehow had been brought there in the winter.

The day after they arrived back in Kaifeng, it snowed. Jōjin noted that the weather had been clear, with neither rain nor snow, during their twenty-eight days of travel to Wutai. At Wutai, it snowed, but then on the twenty-six days of their return journey again it was clear. To Jōjin, this was clear proof Mañjuśrī had been protecting the Japanese. All the monks in the cloister were very impressed and added that because there had been no snow, the government had asked them to pray for it. Later in the day he met with several foreign monks, among them the Indian known in Chinese as Tianjixiang 天吉祥, who was famed as a sūtra translator. Then:

Around 2:00 PM, the three scribes came and showed me the cloister's report of my return. They requested money, but on a previous day I had

65 *STGS* v/12/9,10,11. Here again Fujiyoshi sees the escort as innocent, glossing 賣買 as "shopping" かいもの. This too seems a forgiving interpretation.

66 *STGS* v/12/26.



given them six strings of cash and six bolts of silk. Therefore, even though I had more than twenty-strings of cash, I told them there was no reason to pay them and did not give them anything. They are very avaricious officials. They said that in previous cases, when monks who had made the pilgrimage to Wutai returned, they had always given a reward. After I had asked *sanzang* and was told that I ought to give them something, I gave the interpreter three strings of cash. This morning I gave fifteen cash to each of the twenty soldiers from Zhengzhou. I gave their leader 30 cash.<sup>67</sup>

Once again, Jōjin is not altogether clear, but presumably he gave the strings of cash to the interpreter, who was to pass it on to the scribes, one string of cash for each. Also, one begins to wonder if the scribes were truly avaricious or perhaps Jōjin was stingy.

On the last day of the month—and of the year—Jōjin wrote:

Around 6:00 AM, I had the interpreter present to the Imperial Dispenser my memorial (*biao* 表) expressing the joy of my pilgrimage to the Wutai Mountains. Around noon, the interpreter returned and explained he was late because the dispenser had been away and so he had to wait but he had presented the memorial. I had Great Master Wenhui 文惠 compose it and Dingzhao 定照 transcribe it:

The Ācārya of the Great Japanese Nation's Enryakuji, Head Monk of Daiunji, and Great Master of the Transmission of the Lamp, Śrimana Jōjin

Your above-named servant and his party previously received your sage beneficence. An imperial escort and tokens for the use horses from the relay stations were specially provided so that we could visit Wutai to worship its holy visage. Already on the twenty-sixth day, we returned to the Translation Cloister. Your servant from a foreign land has fully attained his wish of forty-three years and so rejoices in his heart over the imperial generosity.

Your servant reveres the imperial prestige and sage beneficence and is deeply moved. Respectfully presenting this memorial as an expression of thanks,

Respectfully presented,

Petitioned on... day,... month... year by... full title.

At 2:00 PM, the Palace Eunuch who was our escort came and asked for the tokens, but I told him I had entrusted it to the Visitors Bureau yesterday.<sup>68</sup>

That memorial and visit by their escort marked the end of the official procedures relating to Jōjin's pilgrimage to Wutai, but not the end of official interest. In the new year, on the twentieth day of the first month:

Around noon, there was a special edict, and so a servitor from the Palace Eunuch Service 入内内侍省供奉官 came and, in accordance with the edict, asked, "At the Wutai Mountains, what miraculous forms (*lingxiang* 靈相) did you see?" Through the interpreter, I replied, "Atop the Central Terrace, a five-coloured radiance appeared." Again, he asked, "Did you see any other forms?" I replied, "I did not see any other forms." Again, he asked, "What was the length of the radiance?" I replied, "About ten feet." Again, he asked, "On your way there and back, how were you treated by the prefectural officials?" I replied, "All treated me very kindly. Among them, Liu Xiang of Taiyuan was most generous. Twice he sponsored maigre feasts, both exceedingly grand. He donated to me ten strings of cash and two pieces of wool clothing. There were two maigre feasts each in Luzhou 潞州, Zhezhou 折州, and Daizhou 代州, and along the way fruits and other things were often donated. Although other prefectures offered maigre feasts, because I had no time, I passed them by." Again, he asked, "How long will you reside in this cloister?" I replied, "I will wait for the spring flowers and then proceed to Tiantai Mountains in Tai Prefecture, where I will perform the secret rites for several tens of days at each of the twelve places of religious practice, one by one, seeking a divine response. Then, the year after next, I will send a petition to come to the capital, and again make a pilgrimage to the Wutai Mountains, where I will perform Buddhist rites for ninety days atop each terrace. Then I will return to the capital. Such is my intention."<sup>69</sup>

After Jōjin had answered the official's questions, his interpreter added the story about snow not having fallen while they were traveling. The Palace Servitor was very impressed, Jōjin concludes. After this entry, Jōjin provides no

68 *STGS* v/12/30.

69 *STGS* vi/1/20. "Spring water" is a very free translation of "flower water" 花水, which Fujiyoshi speculates is Jōjin's way of writing "peach blossom water" 桃花水, referring to the time in the third month when peach trees blossom and rivers begin to flow freely.

additional information about his visit to Wutai, beyond repeating that he intended to visit again. Whether or not he went is unknown.

Jōjin's diary provides insights into many issues. This paper has attempted to look at his interest in Wutai from a historical perspective, but it has addressed only a few of the issues that might interest historians. For example, the logistics of Jōjin's journey from Kaifeng to Wutai are recorded in detail, but here discussed only superficially. Buddhologists and art historians might have given more attention to his practices and the images he worshipped. Instead, this paper has focused only on two issues. The first is the degree to which the Chinese government was able to monitor and control the movements of a group of foreign visitors who had arrived unexpectedly on its shores in the year 1072. In China, Jōjin never went anywhere without first getting official permission to travel. Initially, local officials had hesitated to deal with him directly, but once the court had formally welcomed him, he was treated grandly wherever he went. His diary reveals the efficient operation of Song transportation systems, first the canals; later, on his way to Wutai, the postal relay system. The second issue is Japanese interest in Wutai during the centuries before Zen would become a major element in Japanese Buddhism. Japanese Buddhist pilgrims had come to regard Wutai as a particularly important destination when they journeyed to China. Because diplomatic exchanges with China virtually ceased after Japan's last mission to the Tang had returned home in 838 and few Japanese traveled abroad, some regard the centuries that followed as an age of isolation. The isolation, however, was far from complete. The urge to visit Wutai and see manifestations of the bodhisattva Mañjuśrī meant that at least a few Japanese ventured overseas to visit China. Buddhism, a world religion, helped keep alive Japan's contact with the outside world even during an age when few Japanese ventured overseas.

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## The Pilgrimage Account of Duke Miγvačir of Alaša to Mount Wutai in 1938

*Isabelle Charleux*

Pilgrimages to the sacred Chinese mountain of Mount Wutai (‘Five-peaked mountain,’ Mo. Utai [šan] Uula)—a main place of Sino-Tibeto-Mongol encounter in China in the modern period—were very popular among Mongols who went there in droves in the 19th and early 20th century. Many Mongols made the vow of going on pilgrimage to Mount Wutai once in their life, and after death, cremation ashes of the most pious devotees were buried on the mountain. While few Mongol pilgrims could afford journeying to Lhasa—the core of their Buddhist tradition—the Wutai Mountain was easy to reach from the Sino-Mongol “border.”<sup>1</sup>

Mongols’ pilgrimages are documented by a variety of sources—about 350 Mongolian stone inscriptions *in situ*, hundreds of “certificates of donation,” pilgrimage guides written by clerics, oral and written literature (prophecies, prayers, praises, folk songs, tales, wise sayings), autobiographies and memoirs of high clerics, map-paintings, and archival documents (passports for groups of pilgrims that give them authorization to cross their banner’s frontiers, fundraising petitions, and ‘petitions of grievances’ which give us some interesting cases of the incidence of nobles’ pilgrimages on the populations).

The biographies, poems and guidebooks written by Mongol lamas that recall their visits to Mount Wutai generally dealt with their initiations and visions; like Tibetan-style guidebooks, they give a symbolic, ‘mandalic’ overview of the topography of Mount Wutai, viewed as the otherworldly abode of bodhi-sattva Mañjuśrī.<sup>2</sup> As in Tibetan pilgrimages, there was a gap between the popular piety and the Buddhist spirituality of the literate, and we still know little

1 On Mongol pilgrimages to Wutaishan: Isabelle Charleux, *Nomads on Pilgrimage. Mongols on Wutaishan (China), 1800–1940* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2015), with Appendices online.

2 A few guidebooks to Mount Wutai are modelled on Tibetan guides to holy places, which fit with Katia Buffetrille’s definition of Tibetan guidebooks as “literary stereotyped projections of an internal vision of spiritual reality destined to convey the pilgrim towards a supernatural level.” (Katia Buffetrille, “Reflections on Pilgrimages to Sacred Mountains, Lakes and Caves,” in *Pilgrimage in Tibet*, ed. Alex McKay (Richmond (Surrey) and Leiden: Curzon Press, International Institute for Asian Studies 1998), 19.



about what ordinary Mongols (and, especially, the non- or poorly literate masses) actually thought about Mount Wutai during the Qing and Republican periods. As for pilgrims' diaries, they are a personal kind of record that give an insider's viewpoint of their travels and contrast with the formal and codified literary style of guidebooks.

In the early 20th century, the practice of writing diaries and travel accounts developed among Mongols (including Buryats and Kalmyks). Diaries of Buryat<sup>3</sup> and Kalmyk<sup>4</sup> lay and monk pilgrims to Urga (Mo. Yeke Kūriye), Lhasa, India and Nepal written between 1882 and 1905 were preserved in archives and occasionally published, the most famous one being Gombojab Tsybikov's (1873–1930) detailed diary of his journey to Lhasa.<sup>5</sup> Though in the 20th century the Communist regimes of the USSR and Mongolia encouraged everybody to write his/her 'notebook' (Cyr. Mo. *temdegleliin devter*),<sup>6</sup> during this time people no longer went on pilgrimage (at least overtly).

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- 3 Several travel records by Buryat lamas are preserved in the Russian Academy of Sciences, Saint Petersburg. Aleksei G. Sazykin, *Katalog mongol'skikh rukopisei i ksilografov Instituta Vostokovedeniia Akademii Nauk sssr* [Catalogue of Mongolian manuscripts and xylographs of the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR] (Moscow: Nauka 1998), I, 295–296, n°1635, 1636, 1638, 1639, 1640; Nikolai Tsyrempilov and Tsymzhit Vanchikova (comp.), *Annotated Catalogue of the Collection of Mongolian Manuscripts and Xylographs MI of the Institute of Mongolian, Tibetan and Buddhist Studies of Siberian Branch of Russian Academy of Sciences* (Sendai-shi: Tōhoku Daigaku Tōhoku Ajia Kenkyū Sentā, 2004), 263–65, n°549, 551, and 553; Tsyrempilov and Vanchikova (comp.), *Annotated Catalogue of the Collection of Mongolian Manuscripts and Xylographs M11 of the Institute of Mongolian, Tibetan and Buddhist Studies of Siberian Branch of Russian Academy of Sciences* (Sendai-shi: Tōhoku Daigaku Tōhoku Ajia Kenkyū Sentā, 2006), 287–289, n°825, 826 and 827.
  - 4 Five manuscript diaries are listed in Gonbochjab T. Tsybikov, *Lhasa and Central Tibet* (Annual report of the Board of Regents of the Smithsonian Institution) [Washington: Government Printing Office 1904]; Arash Bormanshinov, "Kalmyk Pilgrims to Tibet and Mongolia," *Central Asiatic Journal* 42 (1998): 1–23: 10, n. 43 and 44, 13, 16–17 and n. 71, 19. Some are preserved in the Archive of the Russian Geographical Society. See also Alexander Andreyev, "Russian Buddhists in Tibet, from the End of the Nineteenth Century–1930," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, Series 3, 11(3), 2001: 349, n. 1.
  - 5 This famous Russian Buryat explorer, Buddhologist and anthropologist left a travel account that is a unique source for the history of Tibet and Tibetan politics (Tsybikov, *Un Pèlerin bouddhiste au Tibet*, transl. from Russian by Bernard Kreise [Paris: Peuples du Monde, 1992, 1st ed. Petrograd, 1919]). He also served as an interpreter for the Dalai Lama who had taken refuge in Urga in 1904. For examples of Tibetan pilgrims' accounts in the 1940s: Charles Ramble, "The complexity of Tibetan pilgrimages," in *Searching for the Dharma – Buddhist Pilgrimage in Time and Space*, eds. Christoph Cueppers and Max Deeg (Lumbini: Lumbini International Research Institute, 2014).
  - 6 On the practice of writing notebooks: Laurent Legrain, *Chanter, s'attacher et transmettre chez les Darhad de Mongolie* (Paris: Centre d'Études Mongoles et Sibériennes & École Pratique des Hautes Études, 2014), 162–169.

A few lay Mongols wrote diaries and travel accounts of their pilgrimage to Mount Wutai, but to my knowledge only the travel account that is the object of the present study has been preserved. A Mongolian stone inscription standing in Mount Wutai's Pusa ding 菩薩頂 monastery<sup>7</sup> mentions that Prince Ardsedi of Abaya Banner and deputy-chief of the Sili-yin 7ool League (Inner Mongolia) wrote an account (*oron-u dangsa*) of the pilgrimage he made to Mount Wutai in 1848.<sup>8</sup> In the early 1930s, two Westerners visiting Mount Wutai met "a group of Mongol pilgrims, the leader of whom was busily engaged writing down in Mongol script in a very modern notebook descriptions of the places of interest visited for the edification of those at home."<sup>9</sup> The famous Buryat diplomat-monk Agvan Dorjiev (1853–1938) wrote down factual details about his journey to Mount Wutai in his autobiography.<sup>10</sup> Over the past decade, a few Inner Mongol pilgrims' memoirs of their pilgrimages in ancient days have been recorded.<sup>11</sup> But since the pilgrimage stopped in the 1940s, there is little hope of finding other aged pilgrims who still have a clear recollection of the pilgrimage they performed more than seventy years ago.

The present study deals with the recently published account of the life of Duke Miγvačir (1893–1958), a writer, traveller, artist, poet, and pious Buddhist from Inner Mongolia. In the account of his travels, he describes his visit to the sacred Chinese mountain in 1938 with his younger brother, after a long journey to Tibet, India, and Beijing. The account of his life and travels forms the third part of his work entitled *Alaša qosiyun-u barayun güng-ün iledkel šastir* (Genealogical treatise of the Western Duke of Alaša [Alashan 阿拉善] Banner) written in 1942.<sup>12</sup>

I will first give an overview of Mount Wutai around 1938: Miγvačir travelled in the last years of the pilgrimage (the last Mongolian stone inscription preserved *in situ* is dated 1940). In part two I introduce Miγvačir and his work

7 Pusa ding, Bodhisattva Peak or Bodhisattva's *Uṣṇīṣa* [Monastery], was built during the Yongle reign (1403–1425) on the ruins of old Da Wenshu si 大文殊寺 or Zhenrong yuan 真容院 that housed the 'true image' of Mañjuśrī. In the Qing period, it was the Gélukpas (dGe lugs pa) principal monastery, sponsored by the Manchu emperors.

8 Charleux, *Nomads on Pilgrimage*, Online Appendix A2, stele PSD1, 1936.

9 Rewi Alley and Ralph Lapwood, "The Sacred Mountains of China: A Trip to Wu T'ai Shan," *The China Journal* 22, no.3 (March 1935): 118.

10 Dan Martin and Thupten J. Norbu ("Dorjiev: Memoirs of a Tibetan Diplomat," *Hokke bunka kenkyū* 法華文化研究 17 (1991): 1–105) translated an autobiography written in 1923, of which several manuscripts and lithograph copies in Tibetan and Mongolian exist (I thank Gray Tuttle for having sent me a copy of this article).

11 For instance, Tian Chang'an 田昌安 and Liang Heng 梁衡, eds., *Nanwang Wutaishan 難忘五臺山* (Memorable Wutaishan, Taiyuan: Zuojiia chubanshe 2003): 41–48 and 62–71.

12 I especially thank Hurelbaatar Ujeed for having sent me a copy of this book.

in the context of the early 20th century Alaša nobility. Part three examines the account of his journey to Mount Wutai, pursuing answers to questions including: What do the descriptions of the places he visited, the rituals he performed, the donations he made, and his mode of travel tell us about Mongols' and more specifically Alaša Mongols' pilgrimages to Mount Wutai and about the monasteries and their clergy in 1938? Does it highlight specific Mongol practices and representations of Mount Wutai compared to Chinese and Tibetan pilgrimages? Is MiḠvačir's account representative of Mongols' pilgrimages of the early 20th century? What does the account say and not say, about Mongol identity, pan-Buddhist views of Mount Wutai, and forms of *communitas* between 'ethnicities' on Mount Wutai?<sup>13</sup>

### 1 Mount Wutai in the 1930–1940s

The late 1930s was a period of conflict, religious persecution and warfare between Nationalist, Communist and warlord forces. Before 1937, Chinese warlord Yan Xishan 閻錫山 (1883–1960), born in the Mount Wutai region, was able to protect the province, but from 1937 to 1946, Mount Wutai became a conflict zone between the Japanese and Communist forces. At the beginning of the Sino-Japanese conflict in 1937, groups of Mongols sought refuge on Mount Wutai. French explorer and orientalist Alexandra David-Neel (1868–1969), who left Mount Wutai during the Japanese attack, encountered groups of terrified Mongols on the road who were fleeing Čaqar and seeking refuge with women and children on Mount Wutai.<sup>14</sup> In 1938 the Japanese occupation of North Shanxi, including Mount Wutai, almost put an end to the pilgrimage. That same year, "Japanese and Communist forces [the Eighth Route Army], along with the armies of a few warlords, took up residence in the mountains, taking over temple buildings for use as forts and causing many monks and nuns to leave to seek safety elsewhere."<sup>15</sup> The monasteries were occupied by these parties and pillaged and many inhabitants fled the area.

13 See Elverskog's theory on the role of Mount Wutai in the creation of a 'Mongol identity,' of a 'Qing identity,' a 'Qing culture,' and of Qing 'cosmopolitanism' uniting Mongols, Chinese and Tibetans (Johan Elverskog, "Wutai Shan, Qing Cosmopolitanism and the Mongols," *Journal of the International Association of Tibetan Studies* 6 (December 2011): 243–274).

14 Alexandra David-Neel, *Sous les nuées d'orage* (Paris: Plon, 1940), 155.

15 Beth M. Szczepanski, *The Instrumental Music of Wutaishan's Buddhist Monasteries: Social and Ritual Contexts* (Surrey, England, Burlington (VT): Ashgate, 2012). On that period: Ono Katsutoshi 小野勝年 and Hibino Takao 日比野丈夫, *Godaisan 五臺山* (Wutaishan, Tōkyō: Zayuhō Kankōkai, 1942), 153–156.

Yet in 1940, date of the last (Inner) Mongol stone inscription, Ono Katsutoshi and Hibino Takao still encountered pilgrims from Inner Mongolia, evidence that in spite of the conflict, Mount Wutai continued to attract travellers and pilgrims, including Westerners and Japanese, in the late 1930s. Famous British scholar of Asian religions John E.C. Blofeld (1913–1987) resided on Mount Wutai in 1935 and 1936; Alexandra David-Neel was there in 1937, and Dr. Norman Bethune (d. 1939), a Canadian surgeon in China, travelled there in 1938. During that period leading up to the first years of the People's Republic of China, Mount Wutai appears as an isolated bastion, a refuge from the conflicts and ensuing economic disasters, attracting refugees, runaways and bandits. Many pilgrims died from hunger and exhaustion on the road before reaching their destination and the survivors desperately flooded the monasteries in search of food and shelter. In addition, monks from monasteries that were closed or turned into administrative hubs and schools all over China reached Mount Wutai to continue their training or to survive. While the rest of the country experienced instability and economic ruin, the number of monks increased on Mount Wutai, and monastic life and Buddhist practice continued there.<sup>16</sup> In 1936 a provincial census still counted 130 monasteries and 2,200 registered monks and clerics, of which 800 were Tibeto-Mongol Buddhists, as well as 10,000 practicing lay Buddhists on Mount Wutai.<sup>17</sup> To accommodate the growing numbers of monks and nuns as well as lay pilgrims, the monasteries had to adapt and most of them were turned into 'monasteries of the Ten Directions' (*shifangtang* 十方堂).<sup>18</sup> It seems that calamities and troubles entailed a rise in faith, with individuals looking for divine help and miracles, a situation that pushed Mongol refugees to journey to Mount Wutai.

16 Ono Katsutoshi and Hibino Takao, *Godaisan*, 152. Similarly, in this period of religious persecution, other great pilgrimage sites that relied mostly on individual donations and less on land property and were less linked to local power fared relatively well (Vincent Goossaert and David A. Palmer, *The Religious Question in Modern China* [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011], 127).

17 Cui Zhengsen 崔正森, "Zhenhaisi fojiao jianshi" 鎮海寺佛教簡史 [Short history of Buddhism at Zhenhaisi], *Wutaishan yanjiu* 五臺山研究 2003.4: 13. In 1911, Zhang Dunggu 張沌谷 (*Wutaishan can fo riji* 五臺山參佛日記 [Pilgrimage diary to Mount Wutai], *Di-xue zazhi* 地學雜誌 3, no. 1: 26) counted 3,000 to 4,000 monks and novices. In their chapter on the Mount Wutai clergy and monastic economy, Ono Katsutoshi and Hibino Takao (*Godaisan*, 144-145) quote a survey listing 46 'blue' (Chinese Buddhist) monasteries with 797 monks, and 20 'yellow' (Tibetan Buddhists) monasteries with 394 lamas in 1940.

18 Speaking about Chinese Buddhist music, Beth Szczepanski points out that this transformation entailed a simplification of rituals to allow "participation by a large number of inexperienced novices from all over China" (*The Instrumental Music*, 55).

## 2 The Alaša Mongols

Before introducing Miyvačir's work, it may be useful to say something about the specific identity of the Alaša Mongols. Their story starts when Qoroli, a grandson of Gūšri khan (1582–1655) of the Qošuud, fled the Zunghars and settled in this arid region<sup>19</sup> located west of the Ordos loop in 1677. In 1686 the Qing emperor officially granted the Alaša Mongols this territory and made it an independent banner (it was not included in the leagues of Inner Mongolia but was directly subordinate to the Qing dynasty's Court of Colonial Affairs and kept a distinct identity).<sup>20</sup> From then on, the nobles of Alaša had close links (including marital relations) with the Manchu imperial family and lived a Sino-Manchu lifestyle in the early 20th century.<sup>21</sup> Based in the fortress of Dingyuaning 定遠營 (modern Bayanqota, Alaša Left Banner) south of the desert, the 'ruling princes' (*jasay*) of Alaša dwelled in a Chinese-style palace and patronized Tibeto-Mongol Buddhism.<sup>22</sup> Dingyuaning was a main stopover for the trade and pilgrims' caravans from northern and eastern Mongolia to Xinjiang, Amdo (Eastern Tibet) and China. Alaša Mongols guided other Mongols in their pilgrimage to Lhasa. In the Republican period, Alaša remained somehow apart from the great political and economic changes of the era (notably, Chinese colonization and banditry), and the aristocratic society and 'semi-feudal system' of the Qing period was maintained for a while.<sup>23</sup>

As Miyvačir explains in his book,<sup>24</sup> the coming of the Sixth Dalai Lama Tshangs dbyangs rgya mtsho (1683–1706?) is the main event in the history of

19 Alaša includes the southwestern part of the Gobi desert. A third of the camels of the Qing empire were raised in Alaša.

20 In 1914, Alaša was included within Gansu Province, although it still maintained its autonomy, and in 1928 was attached to the Ningxia Province. In 1956 the territory became part of Inner Mongolia.

21 P.K. Kozloff, "The Mongolia-Sze-Chuan Expedition of the Imperial Russian Geographical Society," *The Geographical Journal* 36, no.3 (Sept. 1910): 299.

22 On Dingyuaning: Charleux, *Temples et monastères de Mongolie-Intérieure* (Paris: Comité des Travaux Historiques et Scientifiques and Institut National d'Histoire de l'Art, 2006) CD-rom, "Bannières Alashan et Ejin;" on the Alaša Mongols: see the references in Christopher P. Atwood, *Young Mongols and Vigilantes in Inner Mongolia's Interregnum Decades, 1911–1937* (Leiden, Boston, Köln: Brill, 2002), 649 n. 22. For a description of Dingyuaning in 1948: A. Doak Barnett, *China's Far West. Four Decades of Change* (Boulder; San Francisco; Oxford: Westview press, 1993), 149–175.

23 On the political situation in Alaša in the late 1920s: Atwood, *Young Mongols and Vigilantes*, 648–658, 791–800, 797.

24 Miyvačir, *Mergen-i bayasqayčı čayan teüke: Alaša qosiyun-u barayun güng-ün iledkel šastir* [White history that rejoices the sages: Report of the Western Duke of Alaša Banner, Höh-hot: Öbör Mongyol-un arad-un keblel-ün qoriya, 2008 [1942]], 76–78.

Buddhism in Alaša. Many Mongols (and some Tibetans) believe that he did not die near Kukunor *en route* to Beijing after he was forcibly deposed by the Qing in November 1706 as described in official histories. Instead he is said to have escaped and started a new life, traveling as a beggar monk throughout East and South Asia, and finally settling in Alaša in 1716, where he built several monasteries and died in 1746.<sup>25</sup> His disciples founded the great monastery of Barayun keyid (Helanshan nansi 賀蘭山南寺) in Alaša to enshrine his mummified corpse.

### 2.1 *Duke Miγvačir, a Noble, Buddhist and Writer*

Miγvačir, an aristocrat from the Alaša Qošuud noble family, was a writer, historian, traveller, artist, poet, and a pious Buddhist. His Chinese name is Luo Shanqing 羅善卿.<sup>26</sup> In 1923, he inherited the title of Barayun güng (duke of the West) of the 10th generation of the Alaša Ögeled<sup>27</sup> Banner and of the rank of *ulus-un tüsiye güng* (Imperial Duke of the first degree, *Zhenguo gong* 鎮國公).<sup>28</sup> During the 1927–1928 rebellion against warlord Feng Yuxiang 馮玉祥 (1882–1948), he remained neutral and was appointed as adviser. In 1937–1938, as he recounts in his book, he and his younger brother, monk Sirabjamsö *umzad*,<sup>29</sup> travelled to Tibet and India; then they took a boat from Calcutta to Tianjin (via Singapore, Saigon and Hong Kong) and a train from Tianjin to Beijing. They resided in Beijing from 1938 to 1940, visited the Forbidden City and

25 His “Secret Biography” was written in 1757 by a Mongol monk named Ngag dbang lhun grub dar rgyas (religious name: Lha btsun dar rgyas no mon han), himself a reincarnation of the Tibetan regent (*sde srid*) Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho (see Ngawang Lhundrup Dargyé, *The Hidden Life of the Sixth Dalai Lama*, transl. Simon Wickham-Smith [Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2011]). Piotr Klafkowski (ed., *The Secret Deliverance of the Sixth Dalai-Lama as narrated by Dharmatāla* [Wien: Wiener Studien zur Tibetologie und Buddhismuskunde, Universität Wien, 1979]), Michael Aris (*Hidden Treasures and Secret Lives: A Study of Pemalingpa (1450–1521) and the Sixth Dalai Lama (1683–1706)* [London and New York: Kegan Paul International, 1989]), Jalsan (“The Reincarnations of Desi Sangye Gyatso in Alasha and the *Secret History* of the Sixth Dalai Lama,” *Inner Asia* 4, no. 2 (2002): 347–359—Jalsan is the sixth reincarnation of Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho), and Borjigidai Oyunbilig (“Eine mandschurische Throne angabe zur Tod des sechsten Dalai Lama,” *Zentralasiatische Studien* 40, 2011: 245–258) have different hypotheses concerning the identity of the Mongol Sixth Dalai Lama.

26 The Qošuud nobles of Alaša took the Chinese surname Luo, from Lubsangdorji (r. 1739–1783) who was the ruler of Alaša first enfeoffed by the Qing emperor (even if Miγvačir is not a descendant of Lubsangdorji but of his uncle).

27 Ögeled (pr. Ööld) is after the 18th century a euphemism for the hated word ‘Zünghar.’

28 Miγvačir, *Mergen-i bayasqayči čayan teüke*, 40. The first *ulus-un tüsiye güng* (and Miγvačir’s ancestor) was Yümčüm (r. 1698–1713), the second son of Qoroli.

29 He is called *toyin* (monk of a noble origin) and *umzad* (cantor in a monastery).

famous historical places, monasteries, gardens and markets. From Beijing, in 1938, they visited Mount Wutai.<sup>30</sup>

The pair returned to Alaša in 1940, but in Irḡai qota (Ningxia, modern Yin-chuan 銀川) Miḡvačir was suspected of being a spy with connections to foreign countries. He was arrested and questioned. During his time in jail he acted as a monk and recited religious books all day long while beating a *damaru* (small portative drum), remaining otherwise silent. He was eventually exonerated and released. At Irḡai he bought a bicycle to bring back to his country and show to his people.<sup>31</sup> To avoid being involved in Alaša politics, he took the monastic vows (*toyin-u sakil*) with Abaḡa Lama Deserid qutuḡyṭu.<sup>32</sup> At the end of his life, he founded and restored several monasteries in Alaša with personal funds. He died at the age of 65, in 1958.

### 3 Duke Miḡvačir's Work

In 1942, Duke Miḡvačir, then a (noble) monk (*toyin*), composed his major work entitled *Alaša qosiyun-u barayun giing-ün iledkel šastir* and had it printed. The book was rediscovered in 1957,<sup>33</sup> and edited and published in 2008. The original is preserved in the Library of Inner Mongolia in Höhhot (Kökeqota).

The work is composed of three sections. The first one is a historical and genealogical record of the Alaša Mongols. It concerns the genealogy of the Alaša Ögeed nobility, its relation to Tibetan Buddhism and the establishment of the Alaša Banner, ending with the biographies of the dukes of the West, the tenth and last one being Miḡvačir himself. The second section deals with the biographies of the reincarnated lamas of Alaša, starting with the Sixth Dalai Lama, who is believed to have lived, died and been reincarnated in Alaša, and with the foundation of the Alaša monasteries. Miḡvačir shows his great knowledge of Buddhism and Mongol history here.

The third section, “Möngke juu-yin oron-du ḡiyulčilaḡsan ni” (Travels to the land of the eternal Jo bo, i.e. Lhasa) records the travels of Miḡvačir along with his younger brother, the monk Sirabḡamso. In 1937, they journeyed to Tibet on

30 S. Sečenbilig, “Emüneki üge” [Introduction], in Miḡvačir, *Mergen-i bayasqayči čayan teüke*, 1–13.

31 Sečenbilig, “Emüneki üge,” 2–3.

32 *Deserid* < Tib. *sde srid*: reincarnation of the Tibetan regent Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho (1653–1705).

33 A librarian named Vangč'in who collected old books in Alaša bought it from a certain Dorḡisengge at Čoytu küriye. Miḡvačir was still alive but it seems that the book was no longer in his possession.

horseback to purchase a copy of the *Kanjur* in the Potala of Lhasa. The journey through difficult and dangerous mountains, deserts and rivers took about five months. In Lhasa, they visited and worshiped the Potala and many monasteries, enquiring about their construction, icons and rituals. On the 4th day of the first lunar month, 1938, they left Lhasa in a group of ten Mongol pilgrims and crossed the Himalayas, leading yaks and oxen that carried the 108 volumes of the *Kanjur*. They eventually arrived in Galinbu (Kalimpong, in Sikkhim), and continued to India to visit the main Buddhist pilgrimage sites of the region.<sup>34</sup> Then, as mentioned before, they travelled to Tianjin by boat where they arrived on the 20th day of the third month.

Miyvačir describes the different customs and habits, hats and clothing, fauna and flora, and food of the countries he visited. He recounts the history and legends of the palaces, monasteries, caves he encountered, as well as their icons of worship, architecture, rituals. As Sečenbilig explains, “he writes to record without reserve what he saw and heard by himself on the roads he travelled on.”<sup>35</sup> The original book was illustrated with many drawings of official hats, fauna and flora, cities, plans of palaces, Indian *stūpas*, etc. Unfortunately, the illustrations were too indiscernible to be printed.

#### 4 Miyvačir’s Account of His Journey to Mount Wutai

Miyvačir’s visit to Mount Wutai does not appear in local sources; no surviving stone inscription bears his name, and local monastic history does not record donations he made.<sup>36</sup> He was one among many anonymous Mongols who made the pilgrimage. His travelogue recounts his visit to Mount Wutai in chronological order.

#### 5 From Beijing to Mount Wutai

In 1938, Miyvačir and his brother, “filled with religious inspiration,” departed from Beijing on their pilgrimage to Mount Wutai (‘Utai’). They bought a train ticket in the station west of Čiyan men (Qianmen 前門, Beijing) and descended at Ding ĵeu (Dingzhou 定州 in Hebei Province), 200 kilometres (300 *γajār*

34 Miyvačir, *Mergen-i bayasqayči čayan teüke*, 126–289.

35 Sečenbilig, “Emüneki üge,” 2.

36 See Charleux, *Nomads on Pilgrimage*, Online Appendix A.



according to Miṭvačir, i.e. ca. 150 kilometres<sup>37</sup>) south-west of Beijing. There, innkeepers dragged them away to a hotel named Tüng šang lüi ḡuvan (Tongshang lüguan 同商旅館). At Dingzhou, they rented (one or several) black donkey(s). The account lists eight stages from Dingzhou to Changchengling 長城嶺 (a pass of the Great Wall, the ‘gate’ to Mount Wutai) and then two to Taihuai 臺懷, the central village of Mount Wutai, and gives the distance between them (p. 403–404):

30 *yaĵar* to reach Guu men ĵen (Gaomenzhen 高門鎮); 35 *yaĵar* to reach Čüi yang siyan (Quyngxian 曲洋縣)—there we camped at noon for lunch; at Keü nei (Kounei 口內) we stopped for the night—30 *yaĵar*. From there, Zang quvai ĵen (Zhanghuaizhen 張懷鎮)—40 *yaĵar*: we stop for lunch. Fu ping siyan (Fupingxian 福平縣): we stopped for the night—50 *yaĵar*. From there, Ma an šan (Maan shan 馬鞍山)—20. Li yuvan buu (Liyuanbao 李遠堡)—20: we stopped for lunch. Löng čiyuvan ḡuvan (Longquan guan 龍泉關): we stopped for the night—30 *yaĵar*. From there we climbed the great mountain pass of Utai called Čang čeng ling (Changchengling, 1,350 metres above sea level). Above: Tiye buu (Tiebao 鐵堡), 30: we stopped for lunch. We settled down in San yi diyan (Sanyi dian 三義殿, Sanyi Inn) at the entrance of Tai quva ĵiye (Taihuajie 太花街 / Taihuaijie 臺懷街)<sup>38</sup> Street, the centre of Mount Wutai. We travelled 60 *yaĵar*.

This passage indicates that it took them four days to reach Mount Wutai by the western ‘imperial’ road (345 *yaĵar/li*, between 70 and 95 *yaĵar/li* a day<sup>39</sup> from Daizhou), which was easily accessed and often used by pilgrims from inner China and eastern Inner Mongolia. As in other parts of the world, these pilgrims were generally in a hurry to reach their final destination.<sup>40</sup>

37 In the plain, 1 *yaĵar* = 1 Chinese *li* 里 = 0.5 kilometres in 1930, but in mountainous areas, Chinese usually count in ‘mountain *li*’ (*shanli* 山里) which is less than a *li*.

38 The term *ĵiye* (Ch. *jie*) here certainly means ‘street.’ Sečenbilig restores ‘Taihuajie 太花街,’ which is probably a mistake for ‘Taihuaijie 臺懷街.’ The village had a population of about two thousand in 1940 (Ono Katsutoshi and Hibino Takao, *Godaisan*, 142).

39 Which equals between 35 and 48 kilometres a day, or less if the unit in question is ‘mountain *li*.’ Other sources inform us that on average Mongol pilgrims to Mount Wutai walked or rode up to 70 to 90 *li* a day.

40 Historians of medieval pilgrims to Santiago de Compostela have estimated the average kilometres travelled a day to be 50.

## 6 Fulir Terigütü Manzusiri (Mañjuśrī With a Flour Head)

Just after having arranged their stay at the Sanyidian Inn, the brothers immediately visited the “very precious two *zhang* 丈 <sup>41</sup>-high Mañjuśrī with a Flour Head,” “inside a temple of five *zhang* (in height), with the face in the direction of the hare [the east].” The Fulir terigütü Manzusiri Monastery is the Mongolian name of Shuxiang si 殊像寺 (Mañjuśrī Image Monastery). Although Miγvačir later acknowledged that the Great White Stūpa of the Tayuan si 塔院寺 (Stūpa Cloister Monastery) was the central place of worship, the statue of the Shuxiang si was in his eyes the most important site of Mount Wutai.

The Shuxiang si statue was the most worshiped statue of Mount Wutai; it was believed to be a ‘true portrait’ of the Bodhisattva, comparable to the Sandalwood statue of Beijing. The pilgrims to Mount Wutai, be they Chinese, Tibetans or Mongols, went directly to worship this statue (or the Great White Stūpa) when they arrived at the mountain. The presence of a stone inscription in Mongolian script and the fact that a whole Mongolian guidebook was dedicated to this Chinese Buddhist monastery confirm its importance for Mongol pilgrims.<sup>42</sup> Alaša Mongols may have known this guidebook since it was compiled with the help of Alaša Buddhist grammarian Aγvandandar (Ngag dbang bstan’dar, b. 1759 – d. 1831 or 1840).

Miγvačir notices that:

While pilgrims prostrated and made offerings, Chinese Buddhist monks (*quušang*; *heshang* 和尚) were joyfully playing music. It is a monastery with assemblies of about 50 monks and lamas.<sup>43</sup>

Already in 1889, Dmitri Pokotilov, then attaché of the Russian diplomatic mission in Beijing, recorded that due to the crowds of Mongol pilgrims who worshiped its main icon, the Shuxiang si had had to invite Mongol lamas to reside in the monastery.<sup>44</sup> The principal Chinese Buddhist monasteries of Mount

<sup>41</sup> 1 *zhang*=3.33 metres. The statue of Mañjuśrī riding his lion, however, is 9.87 metres high. Made out of clay, it is the largest Mañjuśrī statue on Mount Wutai; it still stands in the Main Hall.

<sup>42</sup> *Ūjesküleng sečig-ün erike kemeqdekü orošiba* (The beautiful flower chaplet, 19 fol.) written by *dge slong* Ye shes don grub (1782–1855) of the Tümed ca. 1813 and printed in Beijing. It also exists in a contemporary Tibetan version (Robert G. Service, “Notes on *The Beautiful Flower Chaplet*: A Nineteenth Century Mongolian Guide to the Shu-hsiang Szu of Wu-t’ai shan,” *Mongolian Studies* 29 (2007): 180–201).

<sup>43</sup> Miγvačir, *Mergen-i bayasqayči čayan teüke*, 403–404.

<sup>44</sup> D. Pokotilov (“Der Wu T’ai Schan und seine Klöster,” *Sinica-Sonderausgabe* 1935: 38–89 [transl. by W.A. Unkrig of two chapters (p. 47–116) of *U-taj. Ego prošloe i nastojaščee*, Saint

Wutai such as the Tayuan si and the Xiantong si 顯通寺 (Clear Understanding Monastery) also had a few Mongol lamas in residence in order to perform rituals in Mongolian, welcome Mongol pilgrims and attract their donations. After the decline of Manchu imperial patronage in the second part of the 19th century, the Mount Wutai monasteries were dependent on Mongol donors for their maintenance and survival. As I have shown elsewhere, Mongols were often the main donors of the Chinese Buddhist monasteries and had stone inscriptions carved to record their contributions.<sup>45</sup>

## 7 The Legend of the Statue of Mañjuśrī With a Flour/Buckwheat Head

Miyvačir then tells us the origin of the Shuxiang si statue:

When Amuyulang qayan (Emperor Kangxi, r. 1662–1722) was searching for his father [on Mount Wutai], he arrived at this place quite late in the evening and asked for some food. There was an old *heshang* in a grass hut with a small dog. There was no one else. He spoke with him and spent the night there. Beginning from the next day he continued searching for his father, the [former] emperor, over the course of several days but could not find him. When back [in Beijing] the great empress dowager revealed to him: “This *heshang* [you met] there is your father.” Then he went again [to Mount Wutai] and hoped to see him but there was no longer a settlement [where he had originally found the grass hut]. [Instead] there was an old [statue of] Mañjuśrī in a ruined shrine (*bungqang*). “This is the real body of my emperor-father,” he said, and he [decided to] build a temple and restore the Mañjuśrī [statue]. When the emperor came again [to Mount Wutai], the statue-maker was kneading flour to eat noodles. When [the artisan] realized that “the emperor had arrived,” to complete the statue, he had the idea of making the head with kneaded flour and painting it. Having seen it the emperor said “It is fine” and recovered. This is why [the statue] became famous as [Mañjuśrī] with a flour head.<sup>46</sup>

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Petersburg, 1893)) counted less than twenty Chinese monks plus a few novices from Wutai County.

45 Charleux, *Nomads on Pilgrimage*, 133–135.

46 Miyvačir, *Mergen-i bayasqayči čayan teüke*, 405.

Duke Miγvačir here merges one of the many stories of Emperor Kangxi searching for his father on Mount Wutai with the legend of the buckwheat portrait of Mañjuśrī.<sup>47</sup> The Manchu Qing dynasty's second emperor was very popular among the Mongols. Many stories circulated in Mongolia portraying him as a magnanimous and just emperor, close to the people and concerned about their well-being. These materials show him rewarding merit, loyalty and honesty, but sometimes also finding himself in delicate situations because of his clumsiness or his naivety.<sup>48</sup> Other Mongol stories about Kangxi on Mount Wutai highlight the way the Mongol *imaginaire* appropriated, developed and distorted Chinese narratives on Mount Wutai.<sup>49</sup>

## 8 Qara Luus-un Qayan-u Süme and Čayan Suburγa

After having worshiped the Shuxiang si image, Miγvačir and his brother then offered tea to the monks at the Qara luus-un qayan-u süme, the Monastery of the Black Dragon Emperor (Wanfo ge 萬佛閣, Ten Thousand Buddha Pavilion, popularly known as Wuye miao 五爺廟, Fifth/Five Lord Temple, renovated in 1917), which he tells us held 30 assemblies (*qural*) (a year?). Initially a local cult aimed at securing propitious weather, the cult of Wanfo ge's Dragon King developed in the early 20th century: the Black Dragon, viewed as a manifestation of Mañjuśrī, fulfilled all kinds of pilgrims' prayers.

Then Miγvačir admired the Čayan suburγa (White Stūpa of the Tayuan si). Given the centrality of this place of worship at the sacred mountain, it is surprising that he only devotes three sentences to the site. These concern its size (it “measures 30 *zhang* high and its base measures 10 *zhang*”), its orientation,<sup>50</sup> its circumambulations and the fact that it is “unparalleled in the world.”

47 The story of this ‘true portrait’ is a developed version of the legend of the 8th-century statue of the Zhenrong yuan 真容院 (the old temple of Pusading)—which did not exist anymore at that period or was believed to have been moved to the Shuxiang si—, itself modelled on the story of King Udayana's Sandalwood Buddha: the sculptor being incapable of carving the bodhisattva's likeness, Mañjuśrī manifested himself in front of him. In the Shuxiang si version, Mañjuśrī appeared in the kitchen; the sculptor had no time to find his tools and quickly made the head with buckwheat according to the apparition.

48 Charleux, “Kangxi/Engke Amuγulang, un empereur mongol? Sur quelques légendes mongoles et chinoises,” *Études mongoles et sibériennes, centrasiatiques et tibétaines* 42 (2011).

49 Charleux, *Nomads on Pilgrimage*, 189, 197–200.

50 He writes that the Čayan suburγa and the Qara luus-un qayan-u süme open toward the direction of the horse, i.e. south.

## 9 Kürel Süme

After having worshiped the Wanfo ge and the White Stūpa, Miḡvačir and Sirabĵamso climbed the Lingjiu Peak (Lingjiu fengding 靈鷲峰頂). They were filled with wonder before the Bronze temple and Miḡvačir shows off his knowledge of Chinese architecture:

The door and the wall of the Kürel süme [Bronze temple<sup>51</sup>] are entirely made of brass and its summit is golden. Formerly Duke Baldanbazarayča of Alaša gilded it.<sup>52</sup> There are constantly sixty lamas called *diyančiči*<sup>53</sup> who read *sūtras*. A similar Bronze temple stands in Bei qai [Beihai 北海].<sup>54</sup> There is also one in Wan šeu šan [Wanshou shan 萬壽山, Longevity Hill]<sup>55</sup> in Beijing.

In the great Xiantong si, which has many other famous pavilions such as the great Beamless Hall, bronze pagodas and remarkable statues, Mongols focused on the small five-metre-high Bronze Pavilion built in 1605. The whole monastery was known in Mongolian as Altan kürel süme (Golden Bronze Monastery/Temple), certainly because this small bronze pavilion was run by lamas invited to take up residence in this Chinese Buddhist monastery so that they could welcome Mongol pilgrims.<sup>56</sup> The Bronze Temple is decorated with ten thousand Buddhas and enshrines a Tibetan-style bronze statue of Mañjuśrī: this is the Tibeto-Mongol shrine of the great Xiantong si.

## 10 Pusading, Dalai-lama-yin Sira Labrang, Gebsi-yin Süme and Čorĵi-yin Süme

Then Miḡvačir briefly described:

51 *Süme* designates both a temple or shrine and a whole monastery. Here Miḡvačir obviously describes the small Bronze Temple inside the great Xiantong si.

52 According to the book's editor (Sečenbilig, "Emüneki üge," 468 n. 321) there is no duke with this name in Alaša, but a *tusalayčiči tayĵi* Baldanbazarayča was the fourth son of Göngsangčürmed, *jasay wang* from 1844 to 1875.

53 'One who does meditation,' recluse, hermit lama.

54 It is the bronze pavilion in front of the White Pagoda of Beihai Lake in Beijing.

55 Baoyun ge 寶雲閣 Bronze Pavilion, on Wanshou shan, in the Yiheyuan 頤和園 Summer Palace of the Qing, west of Beijing.

56 Pokotilov ("Der Wu T'ai Schan und seine Klöster," 71–72) also mentions lamas in this Chinese Buddhist monastery.

In a higher place to the north of the hill there is a monastery [here called *küriye*, while Miḡvačir calls the other monasteries *süme*<sup>57</sup>] with several courtyards. The southern terrace [is reachable by] 108 steps; it is an extraordinary monastery. It has about 30 *heshangs*.

Here we can recognize the Pusa ding, accessible by a 108 step-stairway that represents the 108 passions the pilgrims crush with their feet, so that by the time they reach the gate they are cleansed from defilement and freed from sufferings. However, the Pusa ding clergy was entirely Tibeto-Mongol Buddhist, staffed by lamas of various ethnicities including Han and Manchu, but not by *heshangs*. From 1659 to 1937, the Pusa ding was the residence monastery of the *jasay lama* ('head lama'), who presided over the whole clergy of Mount Wutai; when Miḡvačir visited it, the site had already lost some of its glory (the last *jasay lama* was dismissed in 1937).

Three monasteries stand 'behind' (i.e., north of) Pusa ding according to Miḡvačir: the Yellow residence (*labrang*) of the Dalai Lama, with one/several great banner/s (*yeke tuy*), the Gebsi-yin *süme*, and the Čorji-yin *süme* (Monastery of the *čorji*<sup>58</sup>). He wrote that "all of them are extremely beautiful." What is the Yellow residence of the Dalai Lama? High dignitaries such as the Dalai Lama took up residence in the front courtyard of the Pusa ding, rather than 'behind' the structure. North of the Pusa ding is the Cifu si 慈福寺 (Merciful Blessings Monastery); on the map xylographed by a Mongol lama of the Cifu si in 1846, the Cifu si is surrounded by four banners topped by tridents (fig. 6.1). The 'Yellow residence of the Dalai Lama' may designate this monastery rebuilt in 1822 as the main lodging centre for Mongol pilgrim-lamas, but to my knowledge the Cifu si, which was under the authority of the lCang skya (Zhangjia) qutuḡtu, did not have any connection with the Dalai Lama. Or, it may also be the Pushou si 普壽寺 (Universal Longevity Monastery), known as 'the Dalai Monastery' because the Thirteenth Dalai Lama Thub bstan rgya mtsho (1876–1933) resided there in 1908.

57 In the 19th century, the monasteries of Inner Mongolia and Mount Wutai are usually called *süme* ('temple, monastery'), which is also the official name of monasteries that received a title from the Qing. *Küriye*, lit. 'enclosure' or 'encircling camp,' designates large monasteries of Alaša, Qalqa and Eastern Inner Mongolia. Miḡvačir perhaps calls the Pusa ding *küriye* because it was the largest monastery of Mount Wutai.

58 Tib. *chos rje*, 'lord of religion,' title given to meritorious lamas; also designates the curate of a monastery, or the abbot of a small monastery.



FIGURE 6.1 Cifu si Monastery. Detail of the 1846 Cifu si map. Rubin Museum of Art. (Photography provided by the Rubin Museum of Art, <[http://wutaishan.rmaz.org/rma\\_viewer.php?image\\_id=1&mode=info](http://wutaishan.rmaz.org/rma_viewer.php?image_id=1&mode=info)>) © KARL DEBRECZENY

The Gebsi-yin süme (Monastery of the *dge bshes*)<sup>59</sup> could be the school of Buddhist doctrine (*mtshan nyid, čanid*) mentioned by Pokotilov. It was located behind the Pusa ding and had 26 students.<sup>60</sup>

### 10.1 *Manibarada-yin Süme*

Miγvačir then describes the Manibarada-yin süme composed of an inner and an outer monastery (*küriye*). It has many assemblies (*qural*), and displays a *Kanjur* written with ‘gold of five colours.’

It is the monastery offered to the Seventh Daybo qutuγtu<sup>61</sup> of Barayun keyid [recognized as a Mongol reincarnation of the Sixth Dalai Lama] in Alaša. The present-day reincarnation lives there. Formerly Öndör gegen [Zanabazar, First Jebčündamba qutuγtu, 1635–1723] resided there. So too did the Second reincarnation of the Daybo qutuγtu.

This monastery is the Shancai dong 善財洞 (Sudhana Cave),<sup>62</sup> composed of an upper monastery (restored in the Qianlong period by lCang skya qutuγtu Rol pa'i rdo rje (1717–1786) who lived and meditated there) and a lower one (built or restored in the Jiaqing period, r. 1795–1820) located on the slope and at the foot of Dailuo Peak (Dailuo ding 黛螺頂). I found no other source linking this monastery with the Daybo reincarnation lineage.

Then Miγvačir gives a geographical overview of the central part of Mount Wutai, “located west of the river and facing ‘in the direction of the snake’ (south south-east)” (Fig 6.2):

The White Stūpa is the central place. South of it, is the Mañjusiri-yin süme [this corresponds to the Shuxiang si rather than the Wenshu si 文殊寺]; north of it, [there is] an elevation (*degedü oron*). On the other side of the main part, [to the] east, the Yellow *labrang*, the Gebsi[-yin süme], the Čorji-yin süme. Southeast, the [Mani] Badara-yin süme. South

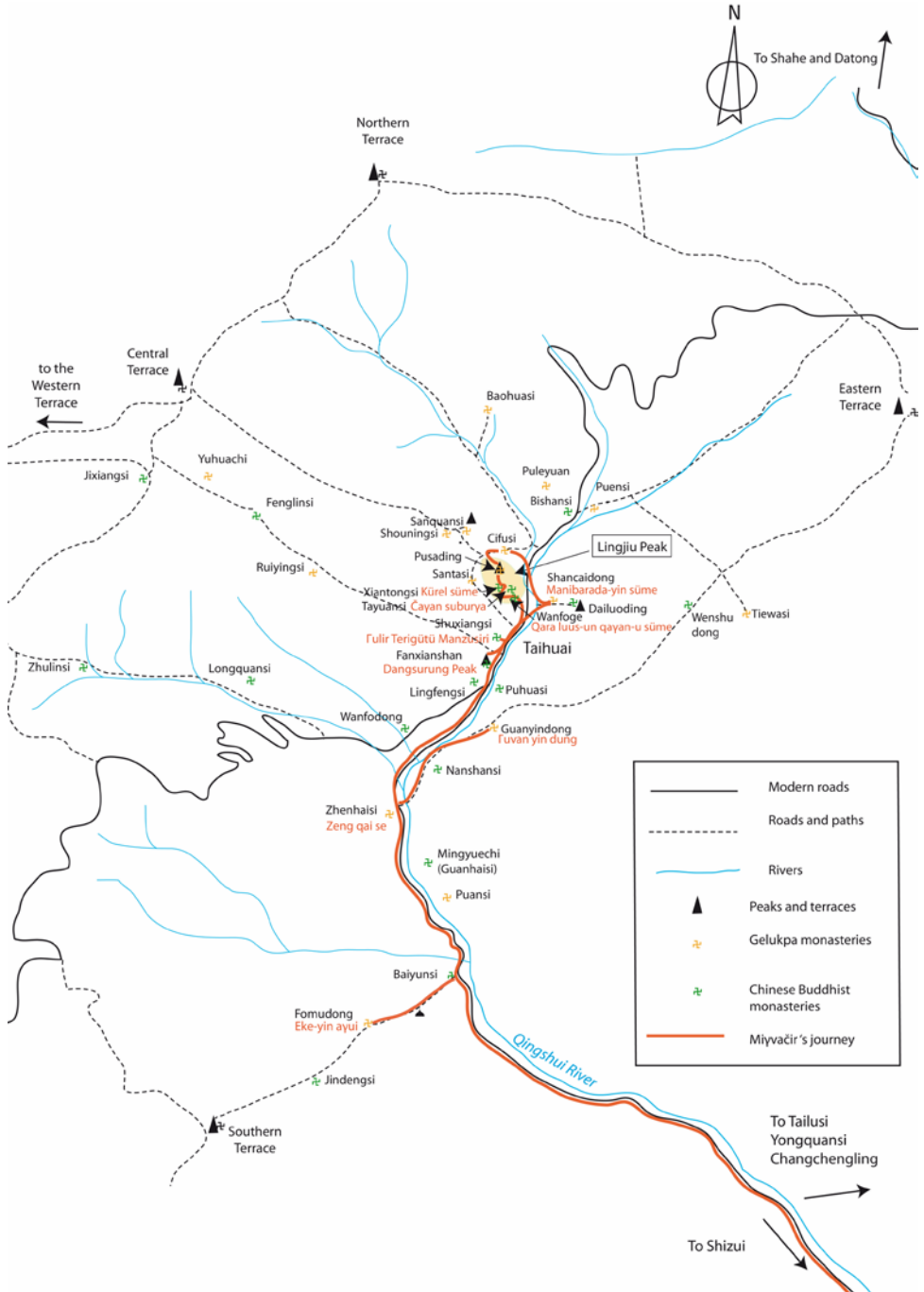
59 Doctor in theology, first degree in academic studies.

60 Pokotilov, “Der Wu T'ai Schan und seine Klöster,” 76–77.

61 According to his biography, the Mongol Sixth Dalai lama was known as Dvags po bla ma (> Mo. Daybo lama), from the name of a monastic school south-east of Lhasa (Ngawang Lhundrup Dargyé, *The Hidden Life of the Sixth Dalai Lama*, 42).

62 The Shancai dong is called Manibadara-yin süme in a stone inscription located *in situ*, dated 1907 (stele SC D1, 1907, see Charleux, *Nomads on Pilgrimage*, Appendix B). It is dedicated to Sudhana, portrayed as a main attendant of Mañjuśrī. It is unclear why Mongols call the monastery ‘Manibhadra,’ which is the name of one of the main *yakšas* (water-deity), as well as of the ‘happy housewife’ Manibhadrā who practiced meditation while performing her duty as a model mother and wife according to a Buddhist tale.





MAP 6.1 General map of Mount Wutai, distinguishing between the “Yellow” (Tibetan/Mongol Buddhist) and “Blue” (Chinese Buddhist) monasteries of the early 20th century, and identifying monasteries visited by Miyačir. © Isabelle Charleux

of it, a low place. Besides these, there are other small monasteries without names. There is no space between the temples (*qural*) and the buildings (*bayising*). There are many forests and mountains. At the river below, there is a village (juvangzi, *zhuangzi* 莊子) with Chinese roofs, with a great market, called Tai quva jiye (Taihuai Street). South of it is the monastery of the Dragon King.

## 10.2 *Dangsurung Peak*

To the west of it, the Dangsurung Peak is a lonely mountain. On its top, there is a monastery. This is an excellent place to burn incense and throw *kei mori* [wind-horse papers] to the wind. It is very high and steep.

Miḡvačir and his brother climbed the peak by a snaking path, made prostrations and offerings, and at the edge of the terrace, burned incense and juniper, threw wind-horse (papers) and fired guns.

Dangsurung corresponds to Fanxian shan 梵仙山 Peak and its temple, the Lingying si 靈應寺 (Numinous Response Monastery), is dedicated to a Nainai 奶奶 deity (who was an ancient Fox spirit) and stands south of the Shuxiang si. Modern pilgrims continue to throw five-colour Tibetan ‘wind-horse’ papers from the flat area outside the temple: if the wind-horses are blown away it is taken to be an auspicious sign.

## 11 *Fuvan Yin Dung*

After that, according to the account, the pair made their devotions for three days, paid the innkeeper and left. They walked a long distance and crossed the great bridge of the river. From the river, they went up and reached the monastery called Fuvan yin dung (Guanyin dong 觀音洞, Avalokiteśvara Cave). Miḡvačir described it as a tiered monastery comparable to the Potala of Lhasa (Möngke juu, the eternal Jo bo) and located halfway of the mountain face.

The cave: it is very beautiful and hollow, like the superior cave of Mount Tebke of Liu šu šu (Liu Shushu 六叔叔) šabrunq lama.<sup>63</sup> Inside there is water. If I, Lüve šan čing (Luo Shanqing), stayed [settled] in Mount Wutai,

63 Appellation of Gendüntübden, Sixth Abaya lama, who founded the monastery of Tebke in Alaša according to the book's editor, Sečenbilig, “Emüneki üge,” 468 n. 322. He is called

I would stay at Guvan yin dung. Nearby there is abundant water and fuel. From the window, in the middle of the clouds one has a distant view of the mountain; I think it is a really a pleasant place.

Miyvačir does not mention that according to Mount Wutai tradition the Sixth Dalai Lama, who is so important in the Alaša lore and in his work, is believed to have come to Mount Wutai and have meditated for six years in a cave after his presumed death.<sup>64</sup> There are actually two renowned caves at Guanyin dong Monastery: the cave where the Sixth Dalai Lama was said to have meditated and the cave with a sacred spring. Tibetans, like Mongols, venerate these caves, and the Thirteenth Dalai Lama specially visited the site in 1908.

## 12 Eke-yin Aγui

From there, *only then* I rode my black donkey, followed by men who walked behind me; we walked a great distance along/descending the Keterkü River [Qingshui he 清水河 River?], and penetrated in a pass of a western mountain; we continued further and arrived at a very high terrace on the southern slope of the cliff: here inside a beautiful monastery is the Mother's Cave (Eke-yin aγui).

Miyvačir thus insists that he went walking in the central part of Mount Wutai but rode his donkey to the Mother's Cave (Fomu dong 佛母洞, Mother of Buddha Cave, or Qianfo dong 千佛洞, Thousand Buddha Cave), located at about 14 kilometres south of Taihuai, on the southern slope of the Southern Terrace.

There is a hole measuring 8 *cun* [25.6 centimetres] which is only just enough for a naked man to pass through. I, the Duke, took my clothes off except for my trousers. I crawled inside with my head and a hand first while a *heshang* pushed with strength my feet with his shoulders, and finally I just barely got into it. People say that the head alone is larger than the body; if the head enters, whatever the size of the body, thanks to the joints, why would not the body pass? If one says it is not true, he/she just has to pierce a 7 or 8 *cun* hole in his/her own yurt, go through it and then

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*šabrunḡ lama* (reincarnation of the lower rank or non-officially recognized reincarnation) because he was the reincarnation of *doramba* Baldanyesi.

64 In the famous biography of the Mongolian Sixth Dalai Lama by Ngawang Lhundrup Dargyé (*The Hidden Life of the Sixth Dalai Lama*), there is no detail of his visit to Mount Wutai.

he/she will know. (But) this is a real hole. If one looks inside with a lamp, he/she [sees that] it is as big as a yurt. There are several clay Buddhas. Soon it was cold and I said I wanted to get out, but the monk closed the entrance and, frightened by all kind of things, I had to make promises. Then the monk pulled and, since I had no choice, I promised to pay and make offerings again. I crawled, one hand in the back, the other one on the ear. When the head with one hand went out, then the monk pulled me out with his two arms. If nobody pulls one cannot go out by him/herself. Besides the hole there are several kinds of swords and knives.

Miyvačir precisely describes his frightening experience of crawling inside the womb-cave. He confirms several unusual details told by other travellers,<sup>65</sup> including that one has to enter in the cave (almost) naked and a Chinese monk blackmails people who are extremely frightened of not being able to get out. His advice about crawling inside can still be useful for modern pilgrims. This womb-cave ritual is still extremely popular among both devotees and tourists, and is a must-see place for present-day Mongols who spend only one or two days on the mountain. In Mongolia, Mount Wutai was primarily known for its womb cave, and several other womb caves of Mongolia refer to that of Mount Wutai.<sup>66</sup>

### 13 Zeng Qai Se and Return to Beijing

“From there we settled down in a *ger* (yurt or house); we were invited to eat a free meal and spend the night.” Then they visited Zeng qai se (Zhenghai si 鎮海寺, Subduing the Ocean Monastery) in the middle of woods and prostrated to the (Seventh) ʃang ʃiya (lCang skya) qutuγtu—bLo bzang dpal ldan bstan pa'i sgron me (1891 or 1892–1958).<sup>67</sup> Finally, the brothers went back to Dingzhou and took the train to Beijing.

65 Such as Lessing and others (cf. Charleux, *Nomads on Pilgrimage*, chapter 6). Curiously Chinese accounts of the Wutaishan pilgrimage do not mention the womb-cave ritual.

66 Charleux, *Nomads on Pilgrimage*, 352; on the womb-cave: 350–367.

67 Because he was one of the most senior lamas in the Mongol hierarchy, the Guomindang used the authority of the Seventh lCang skya qutuγtu to rally the Inner Mongols. He spent a part of his life on Mount Wutai, where he met President Yuan Shikai 袁世凯 (1859–1916) in 1912. In 1937, he was nominated member of the Commission for Mongol and Tibetan Affairs of the Republic of China and established his office in the Pule yuan 普樂院 courtyard of the Zhenhai si, where stands the 7 metre-high *stūpa* enshrining the salts used to dry and preserve the remains of Rol pa'i rdo rje, erected in 1786. He encouraged Wutaishan monks to enrol in the army and fight against the Japanese.

TABLE 6.1 Monasteries visited by MiŦvačir

Names according to MiŦvačir	Chinese name	Remarkable thing for MiŦvačir	Affiliation in the 1930s-40s
Ŧulir terigütü Manzusiri	Shuxiang si 殊像寺	Mañjuśrī statue	Chinese Buddhist (with a few lamas)
Qara luus-un qaŦan-u süme	Wanfo ge 萬佛閣 or Wuye miao 五爺廟	30 <i>qural</i>	Chinese Buddhist
ČaŦan suburya	Great White Stūpa of Tayuan si 塔院寺	Great <i>stūpa</i>	Chinese Buddhist (with a few lamas)
Kürel süme	Bronze pavilion of Xiantong si 顯通寺	Bronze pavilion	Chinese Buddhist (with a few lamas)
“A monastery with several court- yards...”	Pusa ding 菩薩頂	108 steps	Gélugpa
Dalai-lama-yin sira labrang	Cifu si 慈福寺 (or Pushou si 普壽寺 ?)		Gélugpa
Gebsi-yin süme Čorji-yin süme			
Manibarada-yin süme	Shancai dong 善財洞	Upper and Lower monaster- ies	Gélugpa
Dangsurung Peak	Fanxian shan 梵仙山 Hill	burn incense, throw wind- horse papers and shoot with guns	Chinese
Ŧuvan yin düng	Guanyin dong 觀音洞	Comparable to the Potala; spring	Gélugpa
Eke-yin aŦui	Fomu dong 佛母洞	Womb-cave	Chinese Buddhist
Zeng qai se	Zhenhai si 鎮海寺	lCang skya qutrytu; many <i>qurals</i>	Gélugpa

## 14 Conclusion

Duke MiŦvačir’s travel account is useful for both what it does and does not tell us. In clear language and often in detail, the author records day-to-day visits to important sites, including a must-see statue. MiŦvačir was a pious Buddhist

who journeyed to Lhasa and took monastic vows two years after his pilgrimage (and two years before the redaction of his book). Before starting the pilgrimage to Mount Wutai, he and his brother—a monk—were “filled with religious inspiration.” His account stresses religious behaviour and actions such as walking, circumambulation, prostration, the burning of incense and the offering of tea to the monks. Yet, the account of Miγvačir and his brother’s visit to Mount Wutai is rather matter-of-fact, and does not show an active spiritual approach. Miγvačir does not mention interactions and discussions with local monks, lamas’ teachings and empowerments, encounters with or visions/apparitions or dreams of deities or miraculous signs. This does not of course mean that Miγvačir and his brother did not experience them. The text gives the impression that the author acted more as tourist-observer, curious to visit the main sites within five days.

In these respects, the travel account is very different from Chinese lay pilgrims’ accounts such as Gao Henian’s 高鶴年 in 1903 and 1912.<sup>68</sup> It is, instead, more in the tradition of Chinese matter-of-fact diaries.<sup>69</sup> It was not a private journal. The work was written with an audience in mind and printed, probably for his descendants and family, to inform them about the history of their people, their genealogy and the deeds of the last duke.

Miγvačir and his brother’s pilgrimage to Mount Wutai typifies what would have been viewed as the minimum tour for an early 20th century Mongol pilgrim. They spent only five days on the mountain and did not take the time to visit the five terraces. They focused on the main monasteries, labelling the others “small monasteries without name.” Surprisingly, Miγvačir does not mention some must-see places such as the giant wooden lotus of the Luohou si 羅喉寺 (Rāhu[la] Monastery), the Jin’gang ku 金剛窟 (Vajra Cave), the Dailuo ding 黛螺頂 (Black Conch Peak Monastery), the *stūpa* of Rol pa’i rdo rje in the Zhenhai si, and the terraces.

68 Gao Henian was a Chinese lay Buddhist, famous for having popularized meditation practices, and author of books on Buddhism and Buddhist studies. His diary of Mount Wutai, *Mingshan youfangji* 名山游訪記 [Record of visits to famous mountains] (Beijing: Zongjiao wenhua chubanshe, 2000, 1st ed. 1949), describes the day-by-day pilgrimage of a pious and learned lay Buddhist. His first trip in 1903 lasted fifty days; he attended the great festival and spent nine days walking on the terraces. During his second trip in 1912, which lasted one month, he went several times to the terraces with Chinese masters and lamas. Besides giving practical details on monasteries and caves, he gives the names of the masters he met and transcribes conversations he had with them about the Dharma and enlightenment. He recounts that Mañjuśrī appeared to him as a young boy riding an ox who guided him when he was lost, and tells miracles and historical anecdotes.

69 For diaries about Wutaishan: Charleux, *Nomads on Pilgrimage*, Online Appendix C.

While the brothers' short itinerary may have been shaped by convenience—they started with the central places around Taihuai and ended with sites on the way back to Beijing—it might also have been born of other concerns. The pair first visited the most 'orthodox' sites praised in the guidebooks and enshrining the most ancient relics (the Shuxiang si, the White Stūpa, the Xiantong si, the Pusa ding). They ended with more recent, more Tibeto-Mongol (Cifu si, Guanyin dong, Zhenhai si) and less 'orthodox' (the Womb-Cave) sites. Six (almost half) of the sites they visited were affiliated with Chinese Buddhism, which shows that on Mount Wutai, fame, sanctity and efficacy (of relics, of sacred icons, of great Buddhist masters) were more important than sectarian and ethnic differences. The apparent harmony and blurred visual frontier between *heshangs* and lamas and between Chinese and Tibetan Buddhist monasteries also suggest this was the case. So too do the 'multiethnic' rituals that may have helped convince the Mongol pilgrims even more firmly that Chinese Buddhism and Tibetan Buddhism belonged to the same tradition.<sup>70</sup> Moreover, the importance of residing Mongol communities within Chinese Buddhist monasteries helped attract pilgrims by convincing them that Mount Wutai was also a Mongol place. The fact that Miyvačir mentions *heshangs* in the Pusa ding perhaps means that he did not make such a difference between *heshangs* and lamas: since the early 20th century it was not only on Mount Wutai that Tibeto-Mongol Buddhism and Chinese Buddhism were not seen as different religions anymore.<sup>71</sup> Finally, Miyvačir's attention to Chinese Buddhist sites may reflect, in part, the fact that he was certainly literate in Chinese and may have thus showed some interest in the Chinese tradition of Buddhism too.

Another element of the text relevant to discussions of Mount Wutai's status as a place where individuals from around the world met and meet is Miyvačir's description of making the circumambulation (*ergiče*) of the Wanfo ge and of the Great White Stūpa. This basic (Indo-)Tibetan-Mongol practice is not practiced by Chinese and can be viewed here as an ethnic marker for Tibetans and Mongols.<sup>72</sup> Nowadays, Tibetans and Mongols circumambulate *stūpas* and the

70 Several centuries of cohabitation of the Chinese and Tibeto-Mongol traditions of Buddhism on Mount Wutai led to forms of syncretisms and mutual borrowings: see Charleux, *Nomads on Pilgrimage*, chapter 3.

71 Gray Tuttle (*Tibetan Buddhists in the Making of Modern China* [New York: Columbia University Press, 2005]) argues that before the 1930s, when Buddhism was constructed as a world religion, Tibetans and Chinese even perceived the two traditions as different religions. The period of the 1930s and 1940s sees a major shift, with the creation of nation-states, the redefinition of the place of religion in the public space and the role of Buddhist culture as cement linking Chinese, Tibetans and Mongols.

72 However, present-day Chinese often follow this Tibeto-Mongol practice around the Great White Stūpa; pilgrims tend to borrow others' gestures.

whole Lingjiu Peak, following the path taken by the Sixth Month procession, but do not walk around monastic walls. Monasteries are often erected on cliffs near ravines, and circumambulation is rarely possible on Mount Wutai.

Although Miřvačir and his brother travelled in a period of political and religious rupture, a time of troubles, of economic stagnation and political weakness, of rising nationalisms, anticlericalism, spiritual revivals, and Buddhist reforms, the author does not dwell on the turmoil and conflicts of the age. Their pilgrimage, along with the on-going erection of steles and the records of donations after the fall of the Qing allow us to challenge the previously temporally bounded units of the Qing and the Republic. These indicate continuity across the period that has not often been recognized.

Duke Miřvačir's travel account is therefore a unique source on early 20th century Mongols' pilgrimages. It highlights specific Mongol practices and representations of Mount Wutai which recycle and mix local lore such as the story of the Shuxiang si statue. It tells us about the Tibeto-Mongol landscape and history of Mount Wutai, mentioning names of persons and temples that do not appear in Chinese sources (Даγбо qutuγtu, Manibarada-yin süme, Dangsung Peak and so on). It also introduces specific Alaša perspective, when speaking of places linked to Alaša Buddhist history such as the Shancai dong and the Guanyin dong. Finally, even if he does not tell about a spiritual Buddhist experience on Mount Wutai, he gives us an insight on his personal feelings when he was moved by the beauty of the places he visited and especially the Guanyin dong, comparable to the Potala that he had seen with his own eyes.

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# Visions in Translation: A Qing-Gelukpa Guidebook to Mount Wutai

*Wen-shing Chou*

## 1 Introduction

Mount Wutai's popularity among the literate sector of pilgrims during the eighteenth- and nineteenth- century is best reflected in an efflorescence of multilingual literature about the mountain range. As the only sacred mountain in China proper to receive a textual representation in Inner Asian languages before the twentieth century, Mount Wutai was the subject of a remarkable collection of Mongolian- Tibetan-, and, under imperial patronage, Manchu-language texts during the late eighteenth- and early nineteenth- century.<sup>1</sup> The most authoritative yet anomalous among them is a text entitled the *Guide to the Clear and Cool Mountains: A Vision of Marvelous Sun Rays That Causes Lotus of Devotion to Blossom* (*Zhing mchog ri bo dwangs bsil gyi gnas bshad dad pa'i padmo rgyas byed ngo mtshar nyi ma'i snang ba*; hereafter, *Guide*).<sup>2</sup> Unlike other Tibetan and Mongolian guidebooks that drew from legends and records

1 For a list of known works in Mongolian, see Isabelle Charleux, *Nomads on Pilgrimage: Mongols on Wutaishan (China), 1800–1940* (Leiden: Brill, 2015), online appendix D; for a list of multilingual text, see Gray Tuttle, “Tibetan Buddhism at Wutai Shan in the Qing: The Chinese-language Register,” *Journal of the International Association of Tibetan Studies* 6 (2011): 163–214.

2 This study relies on the edition printed at Songzhu si 嵩祝寺, Beijing, in 90 ff. in the original Tibetan book format (*pecha*) at the library of the Minorities Cultural Palace, Beijing (Text no. 001798). I thank Xianba, librarian at Minorities Cultural Palace Library, for providing me with scans of the valuable text. Multiple reprints were made in modern typeset. See Lcang skya, *Zhing mchog* Lcang skya Rol pa'i rdo rje et al. *Zhing mchog ri bo dwangs bsil gyi gnas bshad dad pa'i padmo rgyas byed ngo mtshar nyi ma'i snang ba* (Xining: Mtsho sngon mi rigs dpe sgrun khang, 1993 [1831]); Dge 'dun chos 'phel ed., *Gnas yig phyogs bsgrigs*, (Chengdu: Si khron mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 1998), 384–565. Further citations refer to the 1993 typeset edition. For a forthcoming English translation of the text designed for an English-reading audience in the Tibetan tradition, Changkya et al., *Guide to Mount Wutai: The Classic Tibetan Handbook to China's Sacred Pilgrimage Site* (Boston: Wisdom Publications. Forthcoming); for an approximate Chinese translation, see Wang Lu, “Shengdi Qingliang Shan zhi,” *Wutai Shan yanjiu*, no. 2 (1990): 8–48. Lcang skya's incomplete work was published as a separate text in his collected works. See Lcang skya, *Ri bo dwangs bsil*. For an early translation of Lcang skya's incomplete work by Albert Grünwedel, see Ernst Boerschmann and Hartmut Walravens, *Lagepläne des*

in their respective languages and historiographies, the *Guide* contained, and almost exclusively so, well-crafted translations of biographies and miracle tales collected in Chinese gazetteers. The *Guide* became an authoritative Tibetan-language reference to Mount Wutai at the time of its publication,<sup>3</sup> and has continued to be the most frequently consulted Tibetan-language text by pilgrims, devotees, scholars, and the like. This essay examines the *Guide* in relation to its Chinese source text in an attempt to explicate why the translation and synthesis was undertaken, and how it acquired its status as the definitive guide since its publication. My comparative analysis illuminates the interpretative process of translation, and uncovers the shifting concepts of visions and miracles, of time and space, as they are redefined and made accessible to a new audience.

This essay is drawn from chapter 2 of my book, *Mount Wutai: Visions of a Sacred Buddhist Mountain*,<sup>4</sup> where I explore the practice of translation as a key component of the multimedia Qing-Gelukpa reinvention of Mount Wutai. Through an intertextual study of the *Guide* and other related works, my book chapter argues that miracle stories collected in the Chinese mountain gazetteers (*shanzhi* 山志) of Mount Wutai served as important sites of transcultural knowledge through which its authors—a circle of Gelukpa writers from Amdo and Mongolia—accessed and animated Mount Wutai's past, and by extension, the history of Buddhism in China. In other words, it is the belief that tales of Mañjuśrī's myriad manifestations at Mount Wutai offer pilgrims access to the bodhisattva's earthly residence that led authors of the *Guide* to translation. Through its production and widespread dissemination, the *Guide* reinserted the most important transcultural sacred site of the Qing empire into the large network of Tibetan sacred sites, and introduced the substance of Chinese Buddhist teachings and history into a new Qing-centered Gelukpa Buddhist worldview. By underscoring the centrality of China within a Buddhist cosmography, the authors of the *Guide* also asserted their own unique intermediary status in the Tibetan Buddhist cultural world as guides to its Chinese counterpart.

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*Wutai shan, und Verzeichnisse seiner Bauanlagen in der Provinz Shanxi* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2012), 64–94.

- 3 The Tibetan and Mongolian translations were issued together (i.e. both carved from wood-blocks and printed at the same time) but have since been dispersed and included in different collected works.
- 4 Wen-shing Chou, *Mount Wutai: Visions of a Sacred Buddhist Mountain* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2018).

## 2 Authorship

The *Guide* has often been attributed to the Monguor polymath and reincarnate lama Chankya Rölpe Dorjé (Lcang skya Rol pa'i rdo rje, 1717–1786; hereafter, Rölpe Dorjé),<sup>5</sup> when in fact he completed only two of its five chapters. In the six decades after Rölpe Dorjé initiated the project in 1767, the unfinished manuscript passed through the hands of several scholars and translators, and was eventually completed and edited by the prominent Mongol Lama Changlung Ngakwang Lozang Tenpé Gyeltsen (Lcang lung Ngag dbang blo bzang bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan, 1770–1845; hereafter, Changlung),<sup>6</sup> who issued the text in both Tibetan and Mongolian languages in 1831 (fig. 7.1).<sup>7</sup>

Despite the fact that the work is known by an independent title, rather than as a translation, my comparison of the *Guide* with extant Chinese-language gazetteers reveals that it was in fact a close translation and abridgement of a single Chinese text—the imperially sponsored *New Gazetteer of the Clear and Cool Mountains* (*Qingliang shan xinzhì* 清涼山新志; hereafter, *New Gazetteer*)—compiled under the reign of the Kangxi emperor (1654–1722).<sup>8</sup> Nowhere in the *Guide* itself do the authors explain the work's relation to the *New Gazetteer*, but the connection was disclosed in a full biography of Lcang lung by Gyelwang Chöjé Lozang Trinlé Namgyel (Rgyal dbang Chos rje Blo bzang'phrin las mnam rgyal, ca. nineteenth century), which described Rölpe Dorjé's emendation of an earlier, faulty Tibetan translation of a text made by the Kangxi

5 Ch. Zhangjia hutuketu ruobi duojie 章嘉胡土克圖若必多吉, Skt. Lalitavajra.

6 Lcang lung was a descendant of Genghis Khan (born in the Sunid Left Banner of Inner Mongolia). Lcang lung also authored a praise poem of the preincarnations of Rölpe Dorjé and a guide to painting the incarnation lineage. See Lcang lung Ngag dbang blo bzang bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan, *Skyabs mgon lcang skya rin po che'i 'khrungs rabs gsol 'debs*, TBRC W1KG1338 (Abaga, Inner Mongolia: Bsod nams kun sdud gling gi par khang), vol. 3: 379–386; and *khyab bdag lcang skya rdo rje 'chang gi 'khrungs rabs 'dri tshul*, TBRC W1KG1338 (Abaga, Inner Mongolia: Bsod nams kun sdud gling gi par khang), vol. 3: 337.

7 A colophon appended to the 1831 edition written by Lcang lung indicates that Rölpe Dorjé completed the first two chapters, Lo chen Ngag dbang bskal bzang and Gro tshang Mkhan sprul bla slob completed the latter chapters by translating from the Chinese, and Changlung himself subsequently made stylistic revisions, corrected faulty translations, and paid for the printing of the blocks at the monastery called the Lama Residence of Kündüling (Kun sdud gling gi bla brang) at Wutai Shan, referring probably to Jifu si 集福寺. For more on its printing and dissemination, see Chou, *Mount Wutai*, 57–58.

8 The text was first printed in 1694, 1701, and 1707. See Gray Tuttle, “Tibetan Buddhism at Wutai Shan in the Qing,” 185.

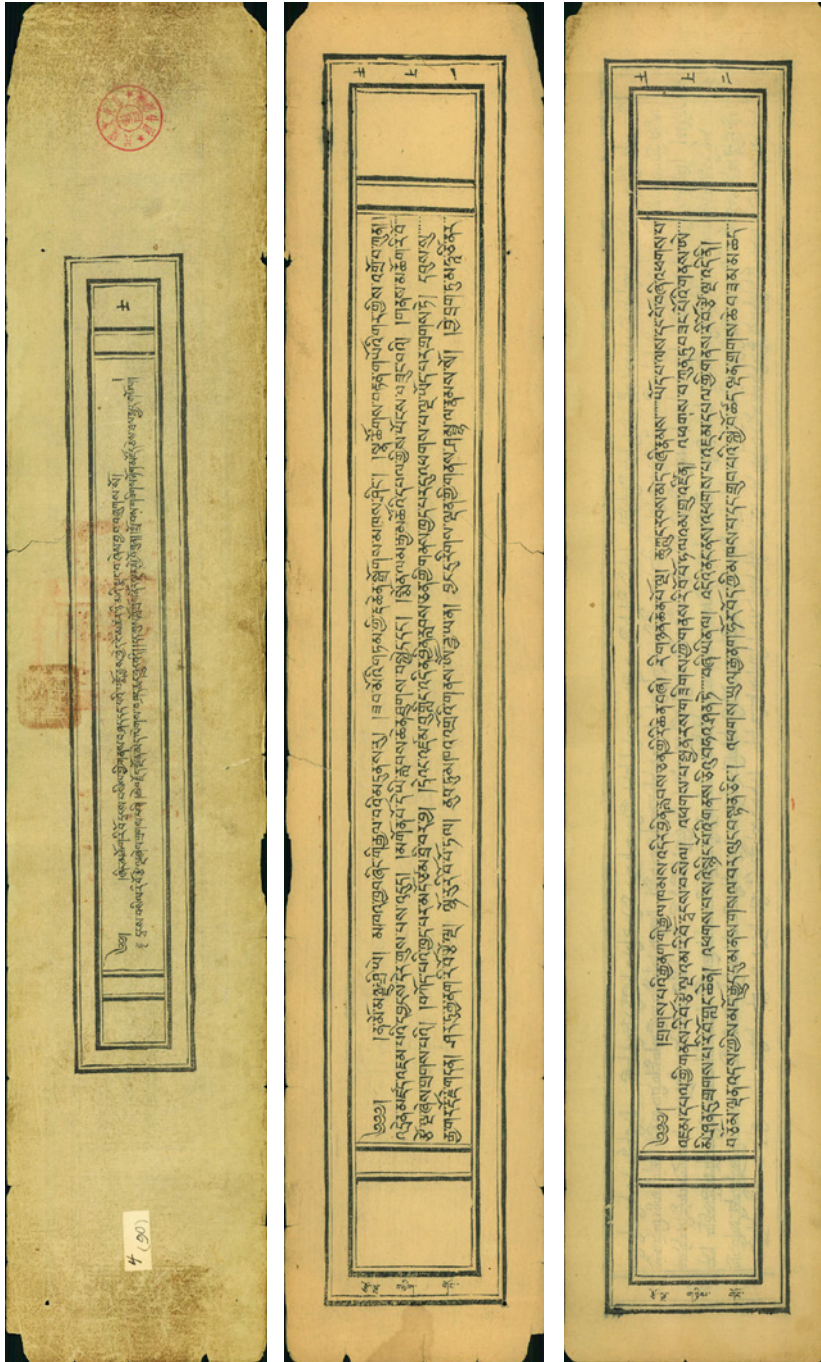


FIGURE 7.1 Guide to the Clear and Cool Mountains, 90 folios. Library of the Minorities Cultural Palace, Beijing.

emperor.<sup>9</sup> The *Guide's* close adherence to the *New Gazetteer* thus corroborated this description.

All of the aforementioned authors, and especially Rölpe Dorjé, had spent significant time at Mount Wutai. At the age of seven, Rölpe Dorjé was brought to the Qing court after his home monastery of Gönlung (Dgon lung, Youning si 佑寧寺) in Amdo was destroyed during the Qing suppression of the Lobsang Danjin Rebellion (1723–34). Raised and educated in the Qing court alongside the prince who was to become the Qianlong emperor (1711–1799), Rölpe Dorjé became the most prominent religious dignitary in the Qing court, serving as the preceptor of the Qianlong emperor. In between overseeing imperially appointed works on all fronts and as the main diplomatic liaison between the Qing court and Inner Asia, Rölpe Dorjé found in Mount Wutai a place for solitude and teaching. Between 1750 and his death in 1786, Rölpe Dorjé spent nearly all his summers at Mount Wutai, where he held retreats, gave teachings, initiations, and commentaries, conducted translations of scriptures, and experienced many visions of Mañjuśrī, of whom he was also considered an emanation.<sup>10</sup> The subsequent portrayal of his life (and previous lives) on Mount Wutai,<sup>11</sup> which I examine in a separate chapter in *Mount Wutai*, reveals the paradigmatic importance of Mount Wutai for the transcultural identity of both Rölpe Dorjé and the network of teachers and students who congregated

9 Rgyal dbang Chos rje Blo bzang 'phrin las rnam rgyal, *Rje btsun dpal ldan bla ma dam pa lcang lung aya pandi ta rin po che ngag dbang blo bzang bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan dpal bzang po'i rnam par thar pa mkhas pa'i yid 'phrog nor bu'i do shal*, TBRC W6799 (Delhi: Mongolian Lama Gurudeva, 1975–1985), vol. 2: 89 rect.. 89 recto-verso, detailed the extended and slow-coming production of the text as it passed from one author's hand to another.

10 Thu'u bkwan blo bzang chos kyi nyi ma, *Lcang skya rol pa'i rdo rje'i rnam thar* [Biography of Rölpe Dorjé]. (Lanzhou: Kan su'u mi rig s dpe skrun khang, 1989. [1792–1794]), 510–511; Chinese translation by Chen, 169. Many secondary sources indicate that Rölpe Dorjé entered retreat consecutively at Mount Wutai beginning in 1750, but from his biography it is obvious that he did not go there during a two-year trip to Tibet in search of the Seventh Dalai Lama's reincarnation between 1757 and 1758. For secondary scholarship on Rölpe Dorjé and his activities at Mount Wutai, see Wang Xiangyun, "Tibetan Buddhism at the Court of Qing: The life and work of lCang-skya Rol-pa'i-rdo-rje, 1717–86," (Ph.D. Diss., Harvard University, 1995); Gene Smith, *Among Tibetan Texts* (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2001), 122–146; Patricia Berger, *Empire of Emptiness: Buddhist Art and Political Authority in Qing China* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2003); Maria Illich, "Selections from the life of a Tibetan Buddhist polymath: Chankya Rolpai Dorje (lcang skya rol pa'i rdo rje), 1717–1786," Ph.D. Dissertation, Columbia University, 2006. For Rölpe Dorjé's translation activities at Mount Wutai, see Lin Shih-Hsuan, "Siyi er wei manzhou—Wutai Shan yu Qing Qianlong nianjian de manwen fojing fanyi," in *Yishan er Wuding*, ed., Miaojiang (Taipei: Xinwenfeng, 2017), 213–247.

11 Chou, *Mount Wutai*, chapter 3.

around him at Mount Wutai during the summer months. The completion and popular reception of the *Guide* by his disciples therefore represented not only an homage to the legacy of their teacher but the collective commitment and skills of a group of Gelukpa polyglots from Amdo and Mongolia who converged on Mount Wutai.

### 3 Textual Comparison

What portions of the *New Gazetteer* were kept intact in the *Guide* and why? How did the authors select, collect, arrange, and frame the *New Gazetteer* in their new work? On the whole, while some of the lengthier stories from the *New Gazetteer* were slightly abbreviated in the *Guide*, every entry related to the monastic and miraculous history of Mount Wutai, and their original sequence of appearance were preserved in the *Guide*. Tales of Mañjuśrī's apparitions and his teachings, hagiographical accounts of Buddhist masters in diverse traditions in China (Chan, Tiantai, Huayan, Vinaya, Pure Land, and Esoteric Buddhism), along with pre-Buddhist legends of immortals, were all meticulously translated and introduced through an Indo-Tibetan tantric framework. A side-by-side comparison of the *Guide* and the *New Gazetteer* in terms of their organization and content illuminates a faithful preservation of the content of the Chinese language text on the one hand, and an introduction and reorganization of that content for its Tibetan and Mongolian-language readers on the other. Through 1) the selection and reordering of chapters, 2) the judicious additions to and emendations of the Chinese source, 3) the brief pre-framing and reframing of the content through the lens of an Indo-Tibetan cosmology, and 4) an appended personal eulogy penned by Rölpe Dorjé, the authors of the *Guide* rendered intelligible the tales of visions and miracles from its Chinese source to their Tibetan-reading audience, thereby providing unprecedented insight and access into a Chinese textual and religious world.

### 4 The Chinese Source Text

The *New Gazetteer* was composed by Laozang Danba (active early 18th century), the Tibetan Buddhist lama of Han-Chinese origin who served as the third Jasagh lama of Mount Wutai, the court-appointed official who oversaw religious affairs of the entire mountain range.<sup>12</sup> It was the second of four

<sup>12</sup> Originally used to describe a series of laws laid down by Chinggis Khan (d. 1227), the Mongol term *jasagh* was subsequently used in the Manchus to denote a status of military and



imperialy sponsored rewritings of Mount Wutai gazetteers within the span of one hundred and fifty years. As its name suggests, the *New Gazetteer* was an emended version of the *Gazetteer of Mount Clear and Cool* (*Qingliang shanzhi* 清凉山志; hereafter, *Gazetteer*) by the Ming-dynasty monk Zhencheng 鎮澄 (1546–1617), first published in 1596. After its initial publication in 1694, the Kangxi emperor commissioned the text to be translated into Tibetan, Mongolian, and Manchu (omitting the frontispiece illustration and map), which, together with the original Chinese, was issued in a single publication in 1701 by the imperial palace printing house at Wuying dian 武英殿 in 1701, making it the first ever multilingual gazetteer in the four languages of the empire (fig. 7.2).

The 1701 Tibetan translation of *New Gazetteer* might have been the very text that instigated Rölpe Dorjé's new compilation. The colophon of the *Guide* and the biographies of both Rölpe Dorjé and Changlung all referenced a faulty and inaccessible translation from a Chinese-language text as a chief reason to compile a new text.<sup>13</sup> Upon examination, one can see that the 1701 translation,

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administrative rule, and “*jasagh* lamas” was used to describe high-ranking imperialy appointed lama officials. See Dorothea Heuschert, “Legal Pluralism in the Qing Empire: Manchu Legislation for the Mongols,” *The International History Review* 20, no. 2 (June 1998): 310–24. For more on Qing administrative documents concerning imperial sponsorship of *jasagh* lamas, see Vladimir Uspensky, “The Legislation Relation to the Tibetan Buddhist Establishments,” (Paper given at the “Wutai Shan and Qing Culture” Conference at the Rubin Museum of Art, 2007). See also Sechin Jagchid, “Manzhou tongzhi xia menggu shenquanfengjian zhidu de jianli,” *Gugong wenxian* 2, no.1 (1970): 1–18. Although the position of *jasagh* lamas was also created at the capital in Beijing, Mukden (Shengjing), Hohhot, Jehol, and Dolonor, the successive *jasagh* lamas at Mount Wutai became especially tied to Tibet, as later regulations specified that they should be drawn from a pool of lamas in Tibet. See Tuttle, *Tibetan Buddhists*, 22; and see also *Qinding Lifan yuan zeli*, in *Gugong Zhenben Congkan* 300 (Haikou shi: Hainan chubanshe, 2000) 58, 9. The three earliest *jasagh* lamas, Awang Laozang (Ngag dbang blo bzang, 1601–1687), Laozang Danbei Jiancan (Blo bzang bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan, 1632–1684), and Laozang danba (Blo bzang bstan pa, act. late 17th and early 18th century) wrote prefaces to the imperialy sponsored editions of Mount Wutai gazetteers in Chinese and Manchu and included their own biographies among the eminent monks of Mount Wutai. These prefaces are preserved in Gugong bowuyuan ed., *Qingliang shan zhi. Qingliang shan xin zhi. Qin ding Qingliang shan zhi*. See also Tuttle, “Tibetan Buddhism at Wutai shan in the Qing: The Chinese Language Register,” 192–194; Natalie Köhle, “Why Did the Kangxi Emperor Go to Wutai Shan?: Patronage, Pilgrimage, and the Place of Tibetan Buddhism at the Early Qing Court,” *Late Imperial China* 29, vol. 1 (2008): 78–79; the biographies are included in *Qinding Qingliang shan zhi*, *juan* 16, 21a–22b; and *Qingliang shan xin zhi*, *juan* 7, 21b–24b. For a partial English translation of these biographies, see Hoong Teik Toh, “Tibetan Buddhism in Ming China” (Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 2004), 228–37.

13 Thu'u bkwan, *Lcang skya*, 504; Chinese trans., 240; Rgyal dbang Chos rje, *Rje btsun dpal ldan bla ma dam pa*, 89 recto; Lcang skya, *Zhing mchog*, 207. According to Thu'u bkwan, Rölpe Dorjé took up the task of compiling a guide to Mount Wutai at the request of his

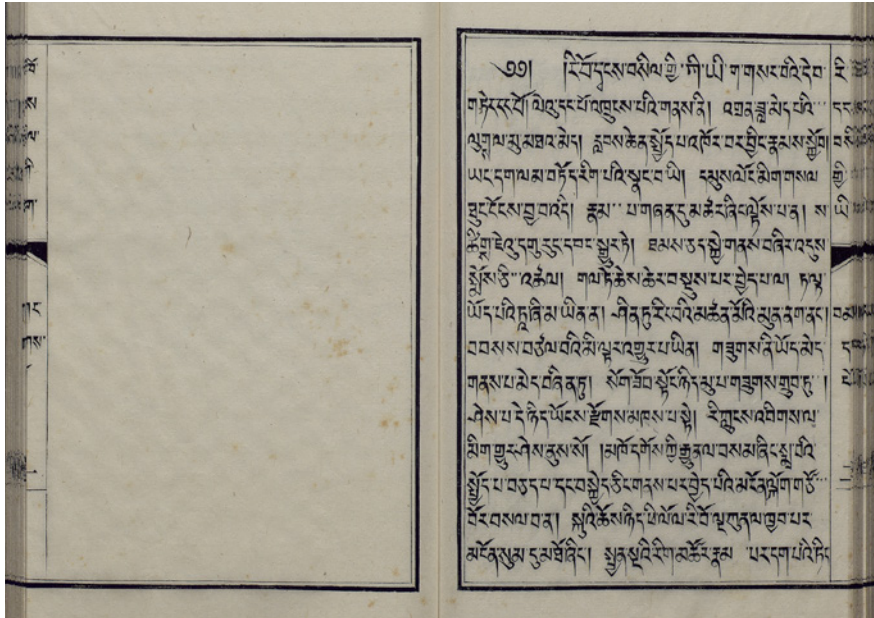


FIGURE 7.2 Laozang Danba, Tibetan version of the quadrilingual *New Gazetteer of Clear and Cool Mountains*, 1701. Wuying Dian Palace imprint. Rare Book Library of the National Palace Museum, Taipei.

which featured a word-for-word translation and transliterations of the Chinese text, the eighteenth-century equivalent of Google translation, was indeed impossible to understand and filled with syntactical errors.<sup>14</sup> Furthermore,

disciples, who were dissatisfied with the existing Tibetan version by Ri tse Inga pa Dpal ldan grags pa, which was thought to be too brief and flawed by omissions. They also found it difficult to comprehend since it contained only inaccurate, literal translations from the Chinese sources. According to Rgyal dbang Chos rje Blo bzang 'phrin las nam rgyal, Rölpe Dorjé corrected and made accessible an extant translation of the *New Gazetteer* in five sections that was error-ridden. It is unclear whether this text in five sections refers to the 1701 translation, which has ten chapters. According to Lcang lung's own colophon, he corrected a previous translation from the Chinese that was faulty in style, syntax and content.

14 Equally awkward was its format, which, together with the Manchu and Mongolian versions, was carved on wooden blocks and presented in the stitched booklets typical of Chinese books since the Ming dynasty, rather than in the loose-leaf *pecha* format of Tibetan and later Mongolian and Manchu Buddhist books that trace their origin to palm leaf manuscript in India. But unlike Chinese language books, which are stitch-bound on the right margins in accordance with the direction Chinese language texts are read, from right to left and top to bottom, the Tibetan language edition of the *New Gazetteer* is bound on the left margins of the pages to cater to the direction of Tibetan readers, who read from left to right. In contrast to the Chinese version, and to a lesser degree the Mongolian

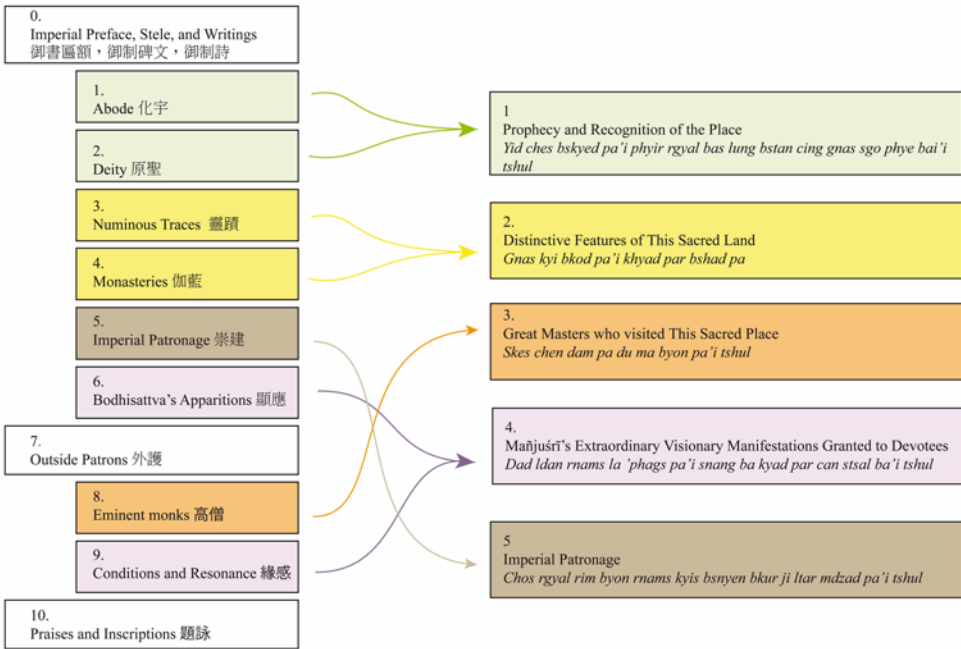


FIGURE 7.3 Diagram showing the selection and reordering of chapters from the *New Gazetteer* to the *Guide*

comparing the two texts themselves, one can discern virtually no similarities between the 1701 Tibetan translation of the *New Gazetteer* and the *Guide*. Everything from the terms used and the transliterations of Chinese names to the format of the books differ from one Tibetan-language guide to the other.<sup>15</sup> In

version, which became widely circulated beyond the court (as is evident from extant copies of both in major libraries around the world), the Tibetan-language edition (and almost certainly the Manchu-language edition) did not seem to have gone outside of the imperial holdings, and the only known copy is now in the rare book library of the National Palace Museum, Taipei. For the circulation of the Mongolian version, see Charleux, *On-line Appendices to the book Nomads on Pilgrimage*, Appendix D, 144.

15 For example, the legend surrounding the numinous site of Longgong Shengdui 龍宮聖堆 [Sacred pile of the naga palace] was described in the Chinese version of the *New Gazetteer* as “longmu wenfa huaqu, longzhi jiyong weidui 龍母聞法化去，龍池即湧為堆 [the female naga disappeared upon hearing the Buddhist teachings; the naga pool welled up and turned into a heap].” The Tibetan version of the *New Gazetteer* rendered the Chinese text verbatim, as “klu'i yum lugs srol thos te sprul nas song phyin klu mtsho brtas te bye mar gyur to” whereas the *Guide* supplies a full story: “It is said that in the past, a female naga received teachings here. When she returned to her land, she achieved spiritual attainment. As a result the lake dried up with only a remnant of the lake remaining (sngon klu mo zhig chos nyan du'ongs nas phyir log te rang gnas su sleb pa na grub pa brnyes te mtsho skam pa'i shul du grags).” See Lcang skya, *Zhing mchog*, 12.

contrast to what appeared to have been a mere gesture of imperial multilingualism in the translation of *New Gazetteer* from 1701, the *Guide* represents a well-thought-out attempt at translating the vocabularies, phonetics, and syntax of a longstanding and continuously evolving genre of sacred mountain gazetteers.

## 5 Reordering Vision

The most significant departures from the Chinese sources were structural: chapters from the Chinese original were combined, rearranged, and omitted to reflect the functions, priorities, understandings, and outlooks of a Tibetan guidebook, even though the content of the chapters that were combined and reordered remain largely intact (fig. 3). The ten chapters of the *New Gazetteer* and their rough equivalent in various versions and editions of *Gazetteer* from the Ming and Qing periods (all of which shared a similar organization) were rearranged and reduced to five chapters in the *Guide*. This reordering did not seem to follow any particular convention in Tibetan guidebooks to holy places, although a later Tibetan-language guidebook to Mount Wutai by Dznyana Shriman (Dznyā na shrī man, active mid-nineteenth century)<sup>16</sup> followed the same order as the *Guide*, showing that perhaps the *Guide* established a convention to be followed by later Tibetan texts on Mount Wutai.

While Dznyana Shriman's guidebook did not include nearly as much detail in individual entries, it incorporated more accounts of contemporaneous Tibetan and Mongol visitors. Overall, the contents of eight out of ten chapters from the *New Gazetteer* are present in the *Guide*. They are reorganized such that "Eminent Monks" comes before "Imperial Sponsorship"; "Abode" and "Deity" are combined and summarized into one chapter called "Prophecy and Recognition of the Place"; "Numinous Traces" and "Monasteries" are combined into one chapter called "Distinctive Features of This Sacred Land"; and "Bodhisattva's Apparitions" and "Conditions and Resonances" are combined into another chapter called "Mañjuśrī's Extraordinary Visionary Manifestations Granted to Devotees."<sup>17</sup> A preface by the Kangxi emperor and transcriptions

<sup>16</sup> Dznyā na shrī man, *Ri bo rtse lnga'i dkar chag*.

<sup>17</sup> This reorganization does reflect important revisions. As Martha Nussbaum puts it, "Form and style are not incidental features... The telling itself—the selection of genre, formal structures, sentences, vocabulary, of the whole manner of addressing the reader's sense of life—all of this expresses a sense of life and of value, a sense of what matters and what does not..." See Martha Nussbaum, *Love's Knowledge: Essays on Philosophy and Literature*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990, 5.

of imperially authored steles, placards, and writings appended to the beginning of the *New Gazetteer*, as well as two chapters on “Outside Patrons” and “Praises and Inscriptions,” were completely omitted from the *Guide*. Unlike the eight chapters from the *New Gazetteer* mentioned earlier that directly addressed scriptural prophecies, miracles, and saintly figures associated with Mount Wutai, imperial and literary writings and stories of Confucian and other non-Buddhist supporters of Mount Wutai appeared to lay too far outside the purview of a Tibetan-language guidebook to be included in the *Guide*.

The distinctions perceived by the Chinese compilers and readers between the categories of abode and deity, sites and monasteries, tales of apparitions (focused on Mañjuśrī’s miraculous manifestation in earthly forms to teach worthy individuals) and karmic conditioning (focused on the law of cause and effect as well as on events that resulted from past karmic actions), were merged or dissolved in the *Guide*. A key difference here hinges on the way “extraordinary vision” was understood and represented. Whereas the corresponding Tibetan term *snang ba*—which is part of the Tibetan title of the *Guide*—emphasized the sensory experience of what one perceives, an appearance contingent upon one’s karmic aptitude, the corresponding Chinese categories of *xianying* 顯應 (the Bodhisattva’s apparitions) or *yuangan* 緣感 (conditions and resonances) revolved around the concept of *ganying* 感應 (stimulus and response). Deriving from an indigenous Chinese episteme in which things are related according to affinities and patterns of change (*yinyang wuxing* 陰陽五行), *ganying* was understood as the mechanism by which the devotees were able to elicit a response from Mañjuśrī based on the sincerity of their prayers and past deeds, which then set into motion Mañjuśrī’s miraculous apparition.<sup>18</sup> In other words, it is karmic affinity with Mañjuśrī that affords a devotee a vision. Within this paradigm, whereas *xianying* focused on the manifestation of certain phenomena, *yuangan* designated a relationship between Mañjuśrī and his faithful supplicant. While this distinction might have been obvious to the Chinese compilers, both categories would have been understood under the rubric of *snang ba* in the Tibetan. By combining the concepts of revelatory

18 For more on *ganying* and its pre-Buddhist origins, see Marcus Bingenheimer, *Island of Guanyin: Mount Putuo and its Gazetteers*, London & New York: Oxford University Press, 2016; Robert Sharf, *Coming to Terms with Chinese Buddhism* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2002), 77–133; Raoul Birnbaum, “The Manifestation of a Monastery: Shen-Ying’s Experiences on Mount Wu-t’ai in T’ang Context,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 106, no.1 (1986): 134–137; Chün-fang Yü, *Kuan-yin: The Chinese Transformation of Avalokitesvara* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001); and Robert Campney, *Signs from the Unseen Realm: Buddhist Miracle Tales from Early Medieval China* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2012), 49.

visions with karmic conditionings, writers of the *Guide* collapsed the differences between present and past and between present and future.

## 6 New Matrices

The reorganization and merging of chapters highlighted earlier reflected a Tibetan Buddhist priority for and understanding of extraordinary visions. Save for several additions and corrections of factual errors made about eminent monks from Tibet, the text represents a redaction of the Chinese texts.<sup>19</sup> By contrast to this subtle, and perhaps unintentional, manipulation of the content of the Chinese gazetteer, one significant and deliberate addition in the *Guide* was the way in which an Indo-Tibetan Buddhist cosmology preframed and reframed the translated content from chapters of the Chinese gazetteers. Distinct from indigenous Chinese and Chinese Buddhist cosmology, they introduced Mount Wutai to the Indo-Tibetan world. This began with the concept of what constitutes a holy site. The preface to the *Guide*, which followed a prayer and homage to Mañjuśrī, began with this statement: “In general, it is popularly known that there are five exceptional places in Jambudvīpa that are sacred and filled with empowerments (*byin rlabs*). In the center is Vajrāsana of India; in the east is the Five-Peaked Mountain of China; in the south is the Potala Mountain; in the west is Oddiyan, the land of the dakinis; and in the north is Shambhala, the realm of the Kalki kings.”<sup>20</sup>

19 The most notable and lengthy addition is the story of Shuxiang si's miraculous sculpture of Mañjuśrī in Lcang skya, *Zhing mchog*, 43. For more on Tibetan and Mongolian recensions of the legend behind this miraculous image, see Wen-shing Chou, “Imperial Apparitions: Manchu Buddhism and the Cult of Mañjuśrī,” *Archives of Asian Art* 65, nos. 1 and 2 (2015): 152. Another important correction is the biography of the Gelukpa master Shakya Yeshe (1354–1435), who visited Beijing on the invitation of the Ming Yongle emperor, and who was erroneously described as an Indian monk. To amend this error, the *Guide* doubled the amount of text about Shakya Yeshe, corrected the mistake, supplied more information about his travels to China, and included a praise poem extolling Shakya Yeshe from the 1744 text *Garland of White Lotus* by Purchok Ngakwang Jampa (1682–1762). See Lcang skya, *Zhing mchog*, 126–127. It also included the addition of two sites (out of a total of 118): the Cave of Sudhana (Nor bzang phug, Shancai dong 善財洞), and the retreat temple of Rölpe Dorjé (Grove of Eternal Happiness, Kun tu bde ba'i tshal), the continued significance of which has been demonstrated by nearly all subsequent Tibetan Buddhist pilgrimages to Mount Wutai. See Lcang skya, *Zhing mchog*, 18 and 24. Descriptions to these two sites were revised and added, respectively, after Rölpe Dorjé completed and published the first two chapters alone. See Lcang skya, *Ri bo dwangs*, 11 recto and 14 recto.

20 Lcang skya, *Zhing mchog*, 1.

Only after introducing these five directional holy places (*byin rlabs can gyi gnas*, lit., “sites of empowerment”) did Rölöpé Dorjé (who authored chapters 1 and 2) also mention the existence of the Four Holy Mountains (*byin rlabs can kyi ri*) and the Five Fierce Mountains (*ri gnyan chen po lnga*)<sup>21</sup> within the Kingdom of Mahacina (Indian scriptural term for China)—referring to the four Buddhist mountains of Mount Wutai, Mount Putuo (Putuo shan 普陀山), Mount Emei (Emei shan 峨眉山), and Mount Jiuhua (Jiuhua shan 九華山) and the Five Marchmounts (Wuyue 五嶽), respectively.<sup>22</sup> In contrast, whenever Mount Wutai’s location was mentioned in various Chinese gazetteers from the Ming and Qing dynasties, it was identified as the most important sacred mountain outside the pre-Buddhist Five Marchmounts system.<sup>23</sup> Thus, instead of following the Chinese texts, which situated Mount Wutai within the territory of China, Rölöpé Dorjé found it necessary to map out an entire system of sacred sites (Bodhimaṇḍas) centered on Bodh Gaya, a cosmography of sacred laces that arose out of the early Indian Buddhist world system described in Vasubandhu’s *Abhidharmakośabhāṣyam*, an extremely influential treatise that became one of the core texts in the Gelukpa monastic curriculum.<sup>24</sup> This spatial

21 For usage of the term fierce mountain, or “ri gnyan po,” see Xie, “The Mythology of Tibetan Mountain Gods: An Overview,” *Oral Tradition* 16, no. 2 (2001): 343–363.

22 By this point, the Five Marchmounts (Hengshan 恒山 in the north, Huashan 華山 in the west, Songshan 嵩山, in the center, Taishan 泰山 in the east, Hengshan 衡山 in the south) had been commonly associated with Daoists. See Robson, *Power of Place*, 46–52. Here the Tibetan word for the Five Marchmounts, “ri gnyan chen po lnga (Five Fierce Mountains),” reflects this understanding by authors of the *Guide*. Thu’u bkwan uses the same word in his 1801 *Grub mtha’ shel gyi me long*, 414. Mgon po Skyabs translated the Five Marchmounts as “ri bo’am lhun po chen po lnga” in his 1736 *Rgya nag chos ’byung*, 4. In addition to describing their Daoist affiliations, Chinese language gazetteers from the Ming and Qing also expound on the Five Marchmounts as the sacred mountains where the emperors conducted sacrifices. See *Qingliang shanzhi*, *juan 1*, 2.

23 See *Qingliang shanzhi*, preface, 1 (reprinted in *Qingliang shan xinzhì*, preface 18) and *juan 1*, 1.

24 The universe described therein centers around the towering Mount Meru, which rises from a “great ocean” (*mahāsamudra*). This cosmological structure with Mount Meru at its center is always painted opposite the image of the Wheel of Rebirth (*bhavacakra*, *srid pa’i khor lo*) at the entrance of Tibetan Buddhist temples and prayer halls, attesting to the prevalence and universality of this cosmology up until the twentieth century. All textual and visual representations show Mount Meru concentrically ringed by seven golden mountain ranges and a “wall of iron” (*cakravāla*) at its perimeter. The region between the mountain ranges is filled with the waters of the seas. Between the wall of iron and the outermost mountain ranges lies the “great ocean.” On the “great ocean,” in the four directions from Mount Meru are four continents (*dvīpa*), of which only the southern one is accessible to humans. This southern continent, known as Jambudvīpa (lit., Rose-apple continent), therefore corresponds to the physical earth that humans inhabit. See Kloetzli,

geographic mapping contrasted sharply with a temporal mapping of Mount Wutai in Chinese-language texts, which, by situating Mount Wutai outside the pre-Buddhist Five-Marchmount system, reiterated the history of Mañjuśrī's arrival in (and Buddhist transmission to) China. While the preeminence of Mount Wutai in China and therefore within Chinese-language literature was indisputable, its place within the competitive networks of Tibetan sacred geography had yet to be asserted and reinforced within an Indo-Tibetan world system.

Vasubandhu's descriptions of the universe have been established since at least the sixth century and in China,<sup>25</sup> and the association of Mount Wutai, Oddiyan, and the Potala with the directions already existed by the Mongol Yuan dynasty.<sup>26</sup> But only in the eighteenth century did this aggregate of five directional sacred sites on the Jambudvīpa seem to have become firmly established in Tibetan sacred geography, and the *Guide* remains one of the earlier datable references to it.<sup>27</sup> This particular mapping of the sacred sites onto Jambudvīpa coincided with the advent of empirical world geography in the Qing court.<sup>28</sup> It has remained so authoritative that many texts from that

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"Buddhist Cosmology," in *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, ed. M. Eliade (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1987), 114.

- 25 For a discussion of Tibet's belated Mount Meru controversy in the twentieth century, see Lopez, *Buddhism and Science: A Guide for the Perplexed* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), 57–63.
- 26 They were described in an 1278 text written by 'Phags pa Blo gros rgyal mtshan (1235–1280) for Kublai's second son, Prince Zhenjin. See Constance Hoog, *Prince Jii-Gim's Textbook*, (Leiden: Brill, 1983), 16. For an English translation of an original Mongolian translation from the Yuan dynasty, see Vladimir Uspensky, "*Explanation of the Knowable*" by 'Phags-pa bla-ma Blo-gros rgyal-mtshan (1235–1280) (Tokyo: Research Institute for Languages and Cultures of Asia and Africa, 2006).
- 27 The same directional schema of exalted places is also mentioned in a praise poem of Mount Wutai by Bka' 'gyur ba blo bzang tshul khriims (b. seventeenth century, active in early eighteenth century) entitled *Ri bo rtse lnga'i gnas bstod* probably dated to the early part of the eighteenth century, collected in his "*Gsung 'bum*" in 6 volumes (179 chos tshan) in the *Mi rigs rig gnas pho brang=minzu wenhua gong 民族文化宫 [Minorities Cultural Palace]*, Beijing. See *Shes bya'i gter mdzod*, Vol.1, 125, # 003895 (15); published *Gangs ljongs mkhas dbang*, 1579–1584.
- 28 See Matthew Kapstein, "Just where on Jambudvīpa are we? New Geographical Knowledge and Old Cosmological Schemes in Eighteenth-century Tibet," in *Forms of Knowledge in Early Modern Asia: Explorations in the Intellectual History of India and Tibet, 1500–1800*, ed. Sheldon Pollock (Durham N.C.: Duke University Press, 2011), 336–64; and Lobsang Yongdan, "Tibet Charts the World: The Bstan po No mon han's *Detailed Description of the World*, An Early Major Scientific Work in Tibet," in *Mapping the Modern in Tibet*, ed. Gray Tuttle (Andiastr, Switzerland: International Institute for Tibetan and Buddhist Studies, 2011), 73–134. Sumba Khembo however, maps a different scheme in his "*Zam gling*" *spyi bshed* (General Description of Jambudvīpa).



century onward mention it as though it had been instantiated in Tibet long before Rölpe Dorjé restated it in his introduction to the *Guide*, despite the fact that scholars have not been able to trace the formation of this sacred cosmography to a textual source prior to the eighteenth century.

Existing on Jambudvīpa—the only island in the cosmological system known to humans—the five directional holy places were recognized as both supreme and within worldly reach. However, for many Tibetans and Mongols in the eighteenth century, Mount Wutai was in fact the only one of the five that clearly corresponds to an empirical, geographic location that was both accessible to and culturally Buddhist. The location of Vajrāsana was not contested, and wherever it was believed to be in northern India, Buddhism had long declined in the region.<sup>29</sup> The rest of them—Potala, Oddiyan, and Shambhala—as much as they were believed to be reachable for those with the karmic conditionings, had no singular set of empirical geographic coordinates. Rölpe Dorjé’s insertion of Mount Wutai into this particular India-centered cosmography, on which many of the holiest sites in Tibetan sacred geography were also mapped, placed Mount Wutai on a par with other sacred Pure Lands in Tibetan sacred geography; identified as the most exalted place east of Jambudvīpa, Mount Wutai became a synecdoche for China/East Asia, and in turn, the Qing empire, within world geography. This preframing of Mount Wutai within an Indo-Tibetan cosmography effectively placed the mountain and its associated territories on the map, and thereby attracted its Tibetan and Mongolian readers to the mountain.

After establishing Mount Wutai’s place within an Indo-Tibetan cosmology, it was equally important for Rölpe Dorjé to begin his Chapter 1, “Prophecy and Recognition of the Place,” by evoking one of the most important tantric scriptural authority of prophecies (*lung bstan pa*), the *Ārya Mañjuśrīmūlatantra*.<sup>30</sup> The teachings and practices of Tantra (*rgyud*) were developed in India and separately transmitted to Tibet and China from the seventh century onward.<sup>31</sup> In Tibet, it had been classified as a vehicle (*yana*) of the Buddha’s teachings that is to be distinguished from, and often considered superior to, that of the sūtras (*mdo*). Transmitted from teacher to disciple, the late appearance of tantric teachings in places with an already vast Buddhist corpus of scriptures and praxis was justified by an alternate temporality—tantric teachings always

29 Toni Huber, *The Holy Land Reborn: Pilgrimage and the Tibetan Reinvention of Buddhist India* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), 193–220.

30 See E. Obermiller, “Bu-ston’s History of Buddhism and the Mañjuśrī-mūla-tantra,” *The Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland* 2 (1935), 299–306.

31 For an introduction to Tantra within the Tibetan tradition, see Lama Yeshe, *Introduction to Tantra: The Transformation of Desire* (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 1987).

traced back to the historical Buddha, even if they were not accessible to the majority of the people at the time. Even more so than the earlier sūtras, tantric scriptures therefore had existed outside of linear, historical genealogy. While all the Chinese texts, from the earliest extant *Ancient Chronicle of Mount Clear and Cool* to the later Ming and Qing gazetteers, including the *New Gazetteer*, cited the *Avataṃsaka sūtra* and the likely apocryphal *Mañjuśrī Parinirvāṇa sūtra* as scriptural justifications for the authenticity of Mount Wutai as Mañjuśrī's earthly abode, the *Guide* opened instead by authenticating its sacred nature through an abbreviated quotation from the *Ārya Mañjuśrī-mūlatantra*:

In China and Greater China,  
Mañjuśrī will be thoroughly accomplished ...  
The great heroic bodhisattva  
Mañjuśrī, the dazzlingly radiant one,  
Will personally appear in a youthful form  
In the regions of that land.<sup>32</sup>

This particular passage, drawn from a chapter on the prophecies concerning the kings in the Tibetan translation by Sakya Lodrö (Sa skya blo gros) and Kumārakalaśa from the eleventh century,<sup>33</sup> was probably the most frequently cited textual authority in various Tibetan works on China.<sup>34</sup> This chapter on prophecies was missing in the Song-dynasty Chinese translation attributed to Kashmiri monk Tianxizai 天息災 (Skt., Devaśanti; ob. 1000),<sup>35</sup> since direct assertions of Buddhist kingship such as mentioned in the passage would likely not have gone over well in Song-dynasty China. Because this prophecy was not included Tian Xizai's translation of *Ārya Mañjuśrīmūlatantra*, Chinese language sources on Mount Wutai did not reference the text. Here, Rölpe Dorjé expediently edited and abridged the prophecy, leaving out the most significant section of the text on the Buddhist dharma king in order to focus on affirming the sacred identity of Mount Wutai; he went on to explain that the first part of

32 Lcang skya, *Zhing mchog*, chapter 1, 1. The English translation of passages from *Zhing mchog* are modified from the initial translation from Changkya, *Guide to Mount Wutai*.

33 Tibetan Tripitaka Peking edition, vol. 6, no. 162, 260- 4.1-7.

34 It is also cited in Tuken's biography of Rölpe Dorjé as one of the chief scriptural justifications for Rölpe Dorjé's decision to retreat at Wutai Shan every summer. See Thu'u bkwan, *Lcang skya*, 501; Chinese trans. 238.

35 Guiliane Mala, "A Mahayanist Rewriting of the History of China by Mgon Po Skyabs in the Rgya Nag Chos 'Byung," in *Power, Politics, and the Reinvention of Tradition: Tibet in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries*, eds. Brian Cuevas and Kurtis Schaeffer (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 158-59.

the prophecy reveals a special connection between China and Mañjuśrī, while the second part, about Mañjuśrī living in China in the form of a youth, corroborates the ancient Chinese sources, which also mentioned a youth with five topknots frequenting the Five-Peaked Mountain.<sup>36</sup> Only after Mount Wutai had been sanctioned by the fulfillment of a tantric scriptural prophecy did Rölpe Dorjé go on to cite the *Avataṃsaka sūtra* and the *Mañjuśrī Parinirvāṇa sūtra*, as well as other sūtras that were extant in Chinese and Tibetan languages and that had already been included in the *New Gazetteer*.

Through a tantric prophecy, Chapter 1 of the *Guide* thus situated the emergence of Mount Wutai first and foremost within an Indo-Tibetan tantric temporality. Likewise, in Chapter 2 on “Distinctive Features of this Sacred Land,” the familiar tantric scheme of the five-directional Buddhas (with Vairocana in the center) was inserted into the beginning and end of the section on numinous sites.<sup>37</sup> Given Mount Wutai’s ready topographical association with the five directions, and the importance of esoteric teachings at Mount Wutai during the Tang Dynasty, when the tantric deity Vairocana was already mentioned in relation to Mañjuśrī’s five syllable mantra during the time of Amoghavajra (Bukong Jin’gang 不空金剛, 705–774), it is surprising that this tantric scheme of the five directional Buddhas and their connection to the five terraces were not elaborated upon in either the *Gazetteer* or the *New Gazetteer*.<sup>38</sup> The earliest Tibetan understandings of Mount Wutai, since the thirteenth century, has been to view the five terraces in line with the symbolisms of the five directional Buddhas. Such conceptual and abstract understandings were in place long before the more substantial, on-the-ground knowledge of Mount Wutai became available. Rölpe Dorjé, who authored this chapter, saw a need to emphasize this cosmology that was absent in *New Gazetteer*, mentioning the assembly twice in the chapter. He wrote,

According to the noble masters of the past, the five peaks symbolize the great Vairocana Buddha—the Sambhogakāya form of Mañjuśrī—whose perfectly purified five aggregates emanate as self-radiance of the five wisdoms in the aspect of the five-tathagata families. If we make an inference from this statement, it appears that the Central Mountain is Mañjuśrī’s body, the Eastern Mountain is his mind, the Southern Mountain is his quality, the Western Mountain is his speech, and the Northern

36 Lcang skya, *Zhing mchog*, chapter 1, 2.

37 Lcang skya, *Zhing mchog*, chapter 1, 9–10, 35.

38 The Five Directional Buddhas were only once mentioned in a quotation from Chengguan in *Qingliang shan zhi*, *juan 2*, 1, and reprinted in *Qingliang shan xinzhì*, *juan 2*, 1.

Mountain is his activity. In other words, these mountains are respectively the holy places of the emanations of the five Buddha families: Vairocana, Akṣobhya, Ratnasambhava, Amitābha, Amoghasiddhi.<sup>39</sup>

The second mentioning of the five Buddhas included a reference to the earlier guidebook by Penden Drakpa, where the shape of each peak is compared to an auspicious animal and a corresponding stūpa design.<sup>40</sup> Positioned spatially onto an existing Tibetan sacred geography, temporally by the fulfillment of a Tibetan tantric prophecy, and symbolically by the directional scheme of the five Buddhas, Mañjuśrī's field of activity was now fully mapped onto the matrices of Indo-Tibetan tantric cosmology.<sup>41</sup>

## 7 Reimagining Buddhism in China

Through translation of the miracle stories and teachings as recorded in the *New Gazetteer*, their reframing within an Indo-Tibetan worldview, and careful emendation of the existing Chinese source, authors of the *Guide* made the dense textual history of Mount Wutai accessible for and intelligible to their Tibetan and Mongolian language readers for the very first time. Much of the content of the *Guide's* careful rendering from the *New Gazetteer* consisted of seemingly illogical dialogues between masters and disciples in the form of Chan encounter dialogues and lengthy discussions on the nature of phenomena by Huayan masters.<sup>42</sup> The wit and humor of Chan rhetoric and philosophical outlooks of Huayan Buddhism, as well as many other traditions and practices of Buddhism, were thus encased in Indo-Tibetan-tantric cosmography, prophecy, and, directional schema. This imposition of an Indo-Tibetan Buddhist structure onto originally Chinese Buddhist material in fact reflects a religious milieu (beyond Rölpe Dorjé and his immediate disciples) that was invested in the Chinese Buddhist history of Mount Wutai. As the abode of

39 Lcang skya, *Zhing mchog*, Chapter 1,10.

40 Ibid., 34–35.

41 The same practice is continued in the guidebook by Dznyana Shriman and in Khenpo Sodargye's 2007 compilation of the Mount Wutai guidebook, which was specifically intended for pilgrims from Larung Gar in Eastern Tibet. The latter includes both the Buddhas and Mañjuśrīs of the Five Families as well as a list of tantric prophecies from all known texts, Tibetan and Chinese, made much longer by the inclusion of Nyingma sources. See Bsod nams dar rgyas, *Ri bo rtse lnga'i gnas bshad mthong ba don ldan*.

42 For more on Chan encounter dialogues, see John McRae, *Seeing Through Zen: Encounter, Transformation, and Genealogy in Chinese Chan Buddhism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 74–83.

Mañjuśrī, it is one, if not the only, place within China that carried an affinity with the Tibetan Buddhist cultural and religious world through the long-standing tradition of Tibetan Buddhism on the mountain. For those pilgrims and other faithful unfamiliar with Chinese history and geography, it was as though the rest of China's vast territory could be mapped out using Mount Wutai as a recognizable coordinate. It is a place in-between—familiar to Indo-Tibetan sacred geography as the indisputable residence of one of its most highly revered deities and its many manifestations, yet authentically Chinese in history, memory, and location. Mount Wutai's singular importance as a gateway to China was clearly evident in the study and evaluation of Chinese Buddhist history and philosophy alongside other world systems (Indian, Tibetan, Mongolian, and other Inner Asian traditions) by Gelukpa scholars working in and around the Qing court in the eighteenth century.<sup>43</sup> Just as the Qing emperors sought to create a “China's Tibet” (*Zhonghua weizang* 中華衛藏, literally Chinese *Ü-tsang*) at Mount Wutai for the Qing-centered Chinese-language world, here “China (rgya nag)” is opened up for the Tibetan-language world through Mount Wutai.<sup>44</sup>

## 8 Eulogy

Rölpé Dorjé's most personal and original contribution to the *Guide* was not in the text itself, but a lengthy eulogy of Mount Wutai that he was asked to compose for the conclusion of the guidebook.<sup>45</sup> The structure of this closing prayer roughly paralleled that of the main text: after several initial verses that pay homage to and proclaim Mañjuśrī as the resident deity of Mount Wutai according to scriptural prophecies, the poem described the wondrous sight and sound of the landscape, and then invokes the long line of Indian, Chinese, and Tibetan teachers who have graced the mountain range, either physically or as

43 This was undertaken by three major eighteenth-century figures: Gombojab (Mgon po Skyabs [b. late seventeenth century – d. after 1766]), Sumba Khembo (Sum pa Mkhan po Yes shes dpal byor [1704–1776]), and Tuken (Thu'u Bkwan Blo bzang Chos kyi Nyi ma [1737–1802]), who were the authors, respectively, of *The History of Buddhism in China*, *The Auspicious Wish-Fulfilling Tree*, and *The Crystal Mirror*. See Chou, *Mount Wutai*, 72–73.

44 For more on Wutai Shan as China's Tibet, see Shih-Hsuan Lin, “Zhonghua Weizang: Qing Renzong Xixun Wutai Shan Yanjiu,” *Gugong Xueshu Jikan* 28, no. 2 (2010), 148–212.

45 This is quite the opposite of the Manchu emperors' practice of prefacing works. The eulogy is cited in full in Thuken's biography of Rölpé Dorjé, and also completes the final version of the guidebook that was finished by his disciples in 1831. See Thu'u bkwan, *Lcang skya*, 504–510.

apparitions.<sup>46</sup> Here, Rölpe Dorjé invoked not only Kāśyapamātāṅga, Vimalakīrti, Dharmaratna,<sup>47</sup> Buddhapāli, Chengguan 澄觀 (738–839) and Dushun 杜順 (557–640),<sup>48</sup> all of whom were prominently featured in Chinese sources and in the *Guide*, but also such Indian and Tibetan philosophers as Nāgārjuna (ca. 150 – ca. 250), Atiśa (982–1055?), Sakya Paṇḍita (1182–1251), and Tsongkhapa (1357–1419). These Indo-Tibetan luminaries were not directly mentioned in the Chinese gazetteers, and were also subsequently absent in the *Guide*, but they were the most revered figures in the Tibetan and especially Gelukpa tradition, variously considered to have been emanations and/or students of Mañjuśrī. The authors did not insert into the guidebook itself important figures from the Indo-Tibetan pantheon associated with Mañjuśrī, likely because disciples of Rölpe Dorjé who completed the work did not wish to take the liberty to add anything to the text besides materials already related by or about their teacher, just as they sought to keep the Chinese text intact. However, in his closing poetic prayer, Rölpe Dorjé found the space to pay homage to a more complete panorama of sagely beings at Mount Wutai, explaining,

The attributes of a great place like this  
are difficult for someone like myself to relate.  
Thus, I have relied, in the little I relate,  
on the genuine accounts of Chinese and Tibetan holy beings of the past.

By “the little I relate,” Rölpe Dorjé presumably referred to what he had related in both the main body of the text and in his praise poem, alluding to the purpose of this undertaking: to relate as authentically as possible the numinous history of Mount Wutai. Toward the end of the eulogy, he reflected on his own lineage, learning, experience, and aspirations:

Although I, Rölpe Dorjé, am [but] an elderly beggar-monk,  
who is caught up in the distracting appearances of this [world],  
and who has little prospect to realize completely pure *dharma*,  
having come to this hermitage now several times  
to practice the two stages of the Victor’s Oral Transmission  
[passed on from] the Master, Lozang [Tsongkhapa],

46 For the structure and poetic metaphors of Rölpe Dorjé’s eulogy, see Kurtis Schaeffer, “Tibetan Poetry on Wutai Shan,” *Journal of the International Association of Tibetan Studies*, no. 6 (2011): 215–242.

47 Kāśyapamātāṅga and Dharmaratna are believed to have been the first Indian masters to come from India to China in the year 67 CE.

48 Chengguan and Dushun are the patriarchs of the Huayan school of Buddhism.

I have made a few imprints [on my mind] through the contemplation of texts.

Although direct experiential realization is hard to awaken  
 I have gained some idea of how to integrate into my mind  
 the meaning of the words of *dharmā* I have studied in the past  
 through the eloquent words of the Master Tsongkhapa, Mañjuśrī in essence,  
 and the compassion of [my] father lamas,  
 the immeasurably kind Ngakwang Chokden and the rest.  
 Bless me, [my] yidams and lamas, with your great compassion  
 as I make prayers and aspirations over and over again,  
 that my life may be spent here [in Mount Wutai] until the very end  
 and that from this moment right now until [I am] enlightened,  
 I will never be separated from this profound path  
 and will realize its meaning without obstruction.

Those of you yearning from the bottom of your hearts  
 to realize the holy *dharmā*  
 cast off your obsession with the eight mundane concerns  
 and, practicing with intensity in a place such as this,  
 strive to attain permanent happiness in every way you can.<sup>49</sup>

Thus, Rölpe Dorjé stressed the spiritual intensity of Mount Wutai, attributed his achievements to his good fortune in coming there, and expressed his heartfelt wish to remain there for the rest of his life. As Kurtis Schaeffer has observed, the language of this poem and other poetry about Mount Wutai is primarily about envisioning the mountain.<sup>50</sup> In invoking Mount Wutai's past luminaries, and in acknowledging his lineage of teachers, from Tsongkhapa, the founder of the Gelukpa tradition, on down to his own teacher Ngakwang Chokden (Ngag dbang mchog ldan, 1677–1751), Rölpe Dorjé encapsulated his knowledge of Mount Wutai's eminent past and teachings passed down by previous masters, as well as his own religious learning and lineage, into a single dedicatory prayer. By articulating the "profound path" that he followed, he was able to integrate the Chinese past with the Tibetan/Mongol present in a timeless map of Mount Wutai's visionary topography.

49 Translation modified from Illich, "Selections from the life of a Tibetan Buddhist polymath," 538–539. See Thu'u bkwan, *Lcang skyā*, 509–510.

50 Schaeffer, "Tibetan Poetry on Wutai Shan," 229.

## 9 Conclusion

In the careful translation, reframing, and reorganization of the content of a Chinese gazetteer, the *Guide* reflected the depth of cultural and religious engagement by Tibetan Buddhist writers and pilgrims in late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth-century Mount Wutai. Through its production and widespread dissemination, writers of the *Guide* not only reinserted the most important transcultural sacred site of the Qing empire into the larger topography of Tibetan sacred sites, but also introduced the substance of Buddhist teachings and history in China into a Gelukpa Buddhist worldview, underscoring the centrality of China within the sacred geography of Buddhism that was being revised and refined to reflect a new Qing-centered cosmology. As a text produced during the height of the Gelukpa presence on the mountain by Rölpe Dorjé and his disciples, it exemplified the Qing Gelukpa writers' genuine and critical engagement with the layered Chinese textual and religious history of Mount Wutai.<sup>51</sup> This engagement filled a gap in Qing-Gelukpa scholarship by supplying knowledge of the history of China proper during a period when many parts of Mongolia and Tibet were recently incorporated into the Qing empire for the first time. By iterating Mount Wutai's sacred history in Tibetan and Mongolian languages at this juncture of geopolitical transformation, the writers of the *Guide* thereby positioned themselves as liaisons between the Chinese and Indo-Tibetan Buddhist cultural worlds.

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<sup>51</sup> At the peak of the Gelukpa monastic presence during the Jiaqing reign (1796–1820), some 3,000 lamas were in residence at Mount Wutai. See Charleux, *Nomads on Pilgrimage*, 110, citing Zhao and Hou, "Jianlun Qingdai qianqi de Wutaishan zangchuan fojiao," 29, citing Tian, *Wutai xinshi*.



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## Mount Wutai and Mañjuśrī in Old Uigur Buddhism

*Peter Zieme*

E. Lamotte writes in his famous paper on Mañjuśrī:

Bodhisattva de l'Inde et de la Sérinde, Mañjuśrī est encore le grand Bodhisattva de Haute Asie. Du ive siècle jusqu'à nos jours, il a sa résidence en Chine au Wou-t'ai chan 五臺山 'Mont des cinq terrasses', où sa présence attira durant des siècles des foules de pèlerins.<sup>1</sup>

He concludes: "Le Wou-t'ai chan commença à être fréquenté par des bouddhistes de toute la Chine et par des pèlerins étrangers, indiens, japonais et tibétains. Le pèlerinage s'organisa: des plans et des notices furent mis à la disposition des visiteurs."<sup>2</sup> R. Birnbaum, who devoted several studies to this topic, showed an important reason for Mount Wutai's fame among Buddhists was visitors having visions of Mañjuśrī Bodhisattva here.<sup>3</sup> Among the Old Uigur texts from Dunhuang and Turfan there are a small number of interesting pieces that show that the cult of Mañjuśrī at least for some groups became an integral part of their Buddhist belief. So far no systematic study of Mañjuśrī in the Old Uigur tradition has been written. Even today it is difficult to give such a comprehensive survey, as the material is scattered and fragmentary. What I want to present here is a first attempt at collecting testimonia that we have already while also providing a glimpse of some new materials.

### 1 Mañjuśrī (Wenshushili 文殊師利)

L. Russell-Smith discusses a famous painting of Mañjuśrī from Dunhuang preserved in Musée Guimet (EO 3588) in which she found some obvious

1 Étienne Lamotte, "Mañjuśrī," *T'oung Pao* 48 (1960), 54.

2 Ibid., 61.

3 Raoul Birnbaum, "The Manifestation of a Monastery: Shen-ying's Experiences On Mount Wu-t'ai in T'ang Context," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 106 (1986): 8.

influences from painting styles of Uigurs and Tanguts.<sup>4</sup> Many Chinese texts in which Mañjuśrī is interlocutor are well known from Old Uigur translations, too. There are also praises on Mañjuśrī like the *Mañjuśrīnāmasaṃgīti* of which several copies are preserved. Some Uigur monks had a great interest in the latter one as they even prepared the text for a printed edition in Brāhmī script accompanied by Old Uigur transcriptions of the Sanskrit text in Uigur script.<sup>5</sup>

## 2 Some Epithets

I would like to start with some epithets of Mañjuśrī that were common in Old Uighur Buddhist literature, but partly not known from Chinese sources.

1. In stanza XVII of the *Wutai shan zan* 五臺山讚 —the “Eulogy of Mount Wutai” that appears in multiple manuscripts at Dunhuang—M. Cartelli translates *dasheng* 大聖 as “Great Sage”. In the Uigur version this epithet *dasheng* is precisely and extensively circumscribed as the *ulug bügüliug mančuširi bodis(a)t(a)v* “Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī of great wisdom.” It has to be remarked that the Uigur did not choose the normal word for “wise” (*bilgä*), but the synonymous expression *bügü* that has also the connotation of magical wisdom. In Modern Turkish, the latter term is a name of magicians or witch doctors.

2. The Old Uigur name *nom ögüki* means something like “Beloved of the dharma.” I could not find such an epithet used for Mañjuśrī in Chinese. A possible Chinese equivalent could be Chinese *faxi* 法喜 translated in Charles Muller’s Buddhist Digital Dictionary: “The joy one experiences on receiving the Dharma (Skt. *prīṭijanana*). Joy in the Dharma, the joy of hearing or tasting dharma,” but this is the name of Dharmanandi.<sup>6</sup> On the other hand, three Chinese texts record a bodhisattva’s name Faxi pusa 法喜菩薩 “Bodhisattva dharma-joy.”<sup>7</sup> But from these occurrences it is unlikely that the name refers to Mañjuśrī, wherefore the true equivalent of *nom ögüki* in Chinese still remains an open question.

The compound *nom ögüki* is known from the following contexts. In a prayer accompanied by a colophon the donor – after mentioning his efforts for the protection and spread of the teaching – writes: 05 *ayag-ka* [*tägimlig burhan-tur*] 06 [*a*] *din ymä nom ögüki mančuširi-ta ulatı bodist* [*v-lar otgurak maña*] 07

4 L. Russell-Smith, *Patronage in Dunhuang: Regional Art Centres on the Northern Silk Road in the Tenth and Eleventh Centuries* (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 215–227, pl. 54.

5 K. Wille, *Sanskrihandschriften aus den Turfanfunden*. Teil 12. Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag. (Verzeichnis der Orientalischen Handschriften in Deutschland 10.12 = SHT XII), 2016. SHT XII, No. 6733a, b.

6 Tanmonanti 曇摩難提 Charles Muller, “Dharmanandi” *Digital Dictionary of Buddhism*, <<http://www.buddhism-dict.net/cgi-bin/xpr-ddb.pl?q=曇摩難提>>.

7 T. 441, 14: 278c10; T. 2871, 85: 1344b11.

ötügçi *bolti-lar* “Beside the venerable [Buddha] the Bodhisattvas headed by Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī, the Beloved of the dharma, became [definitely] intercessors [to me].”<sup>8</sup> A second clear example comes from an unidentified, possibly original Old Uigur Healing Book. It details an encounter between the Buddha and a Bodhisattva who bears the name *nom ögüki*. One quotation may suffice here: “The divine Buddha graciously praised the Bodhisattva Nom ögüki: Sādhu sādhu! You all the Bodhisattvas headed by the Bodhisattva Nom ögüki will attain the *anuttarasamyak-saṃbodhi*!”<sup>9</sup> After a discussion with Kōichi Kitsudō<sup>10</sup> it has become clear that *nom ögüki* can be regarded as the usual equivalent of *fawangzi* 法王子 “the son of the *dharmarāja*,” the stock epithet of Mañjuśrī, in Sanskrit *kumārabhūta*.

3. *tözün iduk mančuširi* “Gentle, holy Mañjuśrī.” This epithet is known from an unpublished Old Uigur text in the Bibliothèque Nationale<sup>11</sup> in Paris originating from cave 181 which corresponds to cave 464 according to the modern numbering system at Dunhuang.

### 3 *Wutai shan zan*

Poetical praises of the sacred mountains and especially of Mount Wutai were written on many occasions, and quite a number are known from the Dunhuang finds, too. They are written in the genre of *zan* 讚. Already Rao Zongyi 饒宗頤 presented some examples in a study.<sup>12</sup> Du Doucheng’s 杜斗城 book<sup>13</sup> is the most comprehensive study of the related Chinese original texts.

Here I would like to give some comments on the famous poem or praise on Mount Wutai known from these Dunhuang materials, i.e. the *Wutai shan zan*. The Chinese text was carefully studied by Mary Anne Cartelli, and I owe a lot to her erudition in the edition of the Chinese text. As far as I know, no other Chinese versions than those known from Dunhuang are attested nor translations into other languages of the Middle Ages except into Old Uigur. Although all evidence from the Turfan oasis in the Tarim basin is fragmentary, one can already conclude that the *Wutai shan zan* was translated at the earliest

8 Collection of Turfan texts, Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences and Humanities: Ch/U 6005 verso 5–7.

9 Rahmeti Arat, “Bruchstücke eines Gebetsbuches.” *Studia Orientalia* 28, no. 9 (1964): 7.

10 In the meantime, Kōichi Kitsudō identified the “Healing Book” as a translation from Chinese. He will publish his study in the near future.

11 Bibliothèque Nationale: Pelliot ouïgour grotte 181, no. 219.

12 Tsong-Yi Jao and P. Demiéville, *Airs de Touen-Houang (Touen-houang k’iu). Textes à chanter des VII<sup>e</sup>–X<sup>e</sup> siècles* (Paris: Editions du Centre National de la recherche scientifique, 1971), 63–64.

13 Du Doucheng 杜斗城, *Dunhuang Wutaishan wenxian jiaolu yanjiu* 敦煌五台山文獻校錄研究, Taiyuan: Shanxi renmin chubanshe, 1991.

in the 10th century, but more probably later. Among some circles of monks and laypeople, Mount Wutai was highly regarded as a sacred mountain and as a specific goal for pilgrimages.

The *Wutai shan zan* in Old Uigur tradition is attested not only in translation but also in transcription. Transcription means that the Chinese text was written not in characters but in the alphabetical script that we are used to calling Uigur script. The whole passage that is embedded in a voluminous miscellany of different Chinese Buddhist texts consists only of the first five stanzas, introduced and concluded by *vyr swy'* transcribing *fozi* 佛子.<sup>14</sup>


Some of the beginning stanzas are preserved in a fragment that contains an Old Uigur translation of the *Wutai shan zan*: Ch/U 6956 of the Berlin Collection.<sup>15</sup> As only the upper halves of the lines are preserved, it is impossible to reconstruct complete verses, not even according to the Chinese version, because often Uigur translators treat the Chinese originals in a rather free manner. The manuscript begins with the title written in Uigur script, here as *'wd'yš'ns'n*. It is true that in other contexts in Old Uigur the same spelling *'wd'y* (*uday*) is the name of an Indian general term for a mountain in the East, namely Sanskrit *udaya*. As mentioned already, different texts follow different transcription practices of Chinese. The regular transcription of Chinese *wu* 五 "five" is according to M. Shōgaito<sup>16</sup> *yu*, *γuu*, or *uyu* [qw, qww, 'wqw].<sup>17</sup> The *Wutai shan zan* has in Ch/U 6956 clearly *uday* [*'wd'y*] against *qwd'y* in SI 4033 (4bKr 16a). This shows that it is difficult to draw a general rule, and one has to examine each singular case as such. In other instances, the first syllable *wu* 五 "five" is transcribed as *qw* representing a pronunciation like *γu*<sup>18</sup>.

In the following, I introduce a fragment preserved in the St. Petersburg Collection (Institute of Oriental Manuscripts of the Russian Academy of Sciences). The fragment SI 4033 (4bKr 16a) is another version or copy of the Old Uigur *Wutai shan zan*. The Uigur text is written on the verso side of a Chinese scroll,<sup>19</sup> but for the first time in a different order of the columns. As a rule, the vertically written lines or columns run from left to right, in this very first case

14 Peter Zieme, "Three Old Turkic *Wutaishanzan* fragments," *Nairiku-ajia gengo-no-kenkyū. Studies on the Inner Asian Languages* 17 (2002), 236–237. For a study of the booklet U 5335 see Masahiro Shōgaito et al., *The Berlin Chinese text U 5335 written in Uighur script. A reconstruction of the Inherited Uighur Pronunciation of Chinese* (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols Publishers, 2015).

15 Zieme, "Wutaishanzan," 224–227.

16 Masahiro Shōgaito, *Uighur Manuscripts in St. Petersburg. Chinese texts in Uighur script and Buddhist Uighur texts* (Kyoto: Graduate School of Letters Kyoto University, 2003), 127.

17 Collection of Turfan texts, Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences and Humanities: So 148300:  after Yoshida, "Sogdian", 336.

18 Peter Zieme, *Magische Texte des uigurischen Buddhismus* (Turnhout: Brepols Publishers, 2005), D129 *qwd'y š'n* (= Wutai shan).

19 T. 1509, 25: 161c15–162b07, cp. Matsui, "Abita Cave," 700.



they run from right to left.<sup>20</sup> The first two stanzas will be presented here in transcription and translation, the variant readings of the aforementioned text Ch/U 6956 verso are given in *italic*.

[I]

Buddha son!

*Oh Buddha son!*

a I invite the holy Bodhisattva called vyk'n<sup>21</sup> Mañjuśrī to the Bodhimaṇḍala,<sup>22</sup> for a while.

a *For a while [I invite the Bodhisattva to the Bodhimaṇḍala ...]*

b With fixed mind listen to the eulogy of Wutaishan with the five terraces!

b *[... listen to] the eulogy of Mount [Wutai].*

c Five [hundred] poisonous nāgas make rain and let flow the water of a large ocean.

c *Five hundred [poisonous nāgas let rain] water to a large ocean.*

d Because the gentle being Bodhisattva called Mañjuśrī presses (?) and graciously sits, one cannot move the mountain called Mount Wutai with five terraces.

d *[If one] tries to shake and rock [ ], [what the] Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī [has protected], never [one can] move that mountain.*<sup>23</sup>

o1 burhan ogl1.

*burhan ogl1*

a ulug iduk vyk'n mančuširi o2 atl(1)g böditsv tavčo-ka ötünürm(ä)n. bir o3 üdün.

20 Peter Zieme, "Neues zu den 'nach rechts fortschreitenden Kolumnen'" (academia.edu, July 2015). Other entries on this leaf are written in the regular order, probably in 1240, cp. Matsui Dai 松井太, "Shivushidō Yakushidō kankei bunsho to toyoku sekkutsu no bukkyō kyōdan—Peteruburuku shozō Uiguru-go sezoku bunsho setsuki— シヴシドゥ・ヤクシドゥ関係文書とトヨク石窟の仏教教団——ペテルブルク所蔵ウイグル語世俗文書箭記—— In Moriyasu Takao 森安孝夫 ed., *Chūō Ajia shutsudo bunbutsu ronsō* 中央アジア出土文物論叢, 61. Kyoto: Hōyū Shoten, 2004, 61.

21 Perhaps to read vyk'n = *yegän* "son," "nephew" (ED 912b-913a).

22 Moun Wutai is Mañjuśrī's "field of activity" or "place of practice" (*daochang* 道場).

23 For comparison cp. Mary Anne Cartelli, *The Five-Colored Clouds of Mount Wutai: Poems from Dunhuang* (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 90: 佛字 / 道場屈情暫時間 / 至心聽讚五臺山 / 毒龍羽降爲大海 / 文殊鎮壓不能翻 Disciple, / Bow down in the bodhimaṇḍala, and pray a moment. / To perfect your mind listen as Mount Wutai is eulogized. / Poisonous dragons send down rain, making a great sea, / What Mañjuśrī has protected cannot be overturned.

- a *bir üdün pwwd'p*<sup>24</sup> [ ]
- b titirü köñül-lüg-in tıñlañ-lar beš 04 basguk-lug guday-šan tag-nıñ öğdisin.
- b [ ] *tag-nıñ öğdisi-n*<sup>25</sup>
- c beš yüz 05 agulug luu-lar. yagmur yagi-ıp. ulug taluy ögüz 06 suvın akıtur-lar.
- c *beš yüz [agulug luular yagmur yağıtur] ulug taluy ögüz suvın.* [ ]
- d manču-širi atl(1)g tözün bolda[čı] 07 bödi-tsv<sup>26</sup> basıp oluru yarlıkayur üçün. baş basguk 08 -lug +<sup>27</sup> <guday> guday<sup>28</sup> šan atl(1)g tagıg <-nıñ> täprätgäli umazlar::
- d [ ] *agtargalı toñdargalı kul[ınsar] mančušuri bodıstıv. basu[ ] näñ ol tag-ıg täprätgäli [umazlar::]*

[11]

- a South-north of the city Daizhou there is the mountain called Mount Wutai with five terraces.
- a *Buddha son! [Northeast of the] city named Tayčiu*<sup>29</sup> *there is a mountain [called Mount Wutai].*
- b (missing: Its high, broad mountains are joined to Heaven.)
- b *The height of that mountain is [as if it stretches and holds up to the sky].*
- c If one – standing on the Eastern Terrace – looks, there appears *vaiđürya* jewel brightening city of the divine Buddha “King of physicians.”
- c *Looking [from the east], there turns up the city and conurbation of [the Lapslazuli King] who is [like] the king of the physicians.*
- d If one – standing on its Western Terrace – looks, Prince Jeta’ s garden, the Jetavana monastery clearly appears.
- d *Looking [from the west, there turns up] Prince Jeta’s [Grove] with [...] clearly and manifestly brilliant [...].*<sup>30</sup>

24 *pwwd'p* may be a word for *bodhimandala*. Cp. Zieme, “Wutai shan zan,” 226 (spelled *twud'p*). The word itself is *futu* 浮圖 (< Buddha) in Old Uigur transcription, one of the Chinese terms for “stüpa” (J.J.M. De Groot, “Der Thüpa. Das heiligste Heiligtum des Buddhismus in China,” *Abhandlungen der Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften* [Berlin: Verlag der Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1919], 2).

25 The final stroke is separately written from the preceding word *wykdysy*, but it does not seem to be the punctuation mark that follows the stroke.

26 A special spelling of *bodhisattva*.

27 The deletion mark is written at the wrong place.

28 Before this *qwd'y* another *qwd'y* was marked as deleted.

29 Transcription of Chinese. Daizhou 代州.

30 For comparison cp. Cartelli, *Five-colored Clouds*, 91: 佛字 / 代州東北有五臺山 / 其山高廣與天連 / 東臺望見琉璃國 / 西臺還見給狐園 Disciple, / In northeast Dai prefecture

*burhan oğlu*

a tačiyu atl(1)g o9 balık-nıñ küntin tag-tın buluñ-gınta.<sup>31</sup> beš basguk 10  
-lug guday šan atl(1)g tag bar <...><sup>32</sup> ärür.

a *tačiu atl(1)g balı[k ] yuñak-ınta bar ärür bir be[š basguklug] tag.*

b (missing)

b *ol tagrıñ edizi [ ] tiräyü tutar täg tetir [ ]*

c öñdünki basgu[k] 11 üzä turup körsär. otači eligi täñri burxan-[nıñ<sup>33</sup>] 12  
ärdini yaldırık-lıg. uluşı balıki közünür.

c *[öñtünki ... ] körsär otači eligi-lig [ ]-lig balıki uluşı közünür*

d kedinki bas[guk]<sup>34</sup> 13 -kı üzä turup körsär. čet tegin-nıñ yemiš-li-ki  
četavan 14 säñräñ bäkiz bälgülüg közünür::

d *[kedinki ... ] körsär čet tegin-nıñ [ ] birlä bäkiz b(ä)lgülüğ adruk  
a[ ]*

There is still another small fragment in the St. Petersburg Collection SI 5497 (Kr IV 742) which contains in four fragmentary lines some essential keywords like “I invite” (l. 2), “with clear mind” (l. 3), “with terraces” (l. 4) and “east direction” (l. 5), but the spaces between these phrases do not well fit to the Old Uigur text according to the other two versions. Moreover, the first line contains only *burhan* (the Buddha) while the last line (l. 7) is the date “seventh month, on the [four]th day.” As a whole, one cannot understand how and why the keywords corresponding to the *Wutai shan zan* are embedded into this letter-like document.

#### 4 Some Notes

Without going into the philological details only a few interesting items should be mentioned here. The Chinese text describes the place as a “*vaiḍūrya* land.” M. Cartelli connects this *vaiḍūrya* land with the name Ryūkyū used for a chain

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is Mount Wutai, / Its high, broad mountains are joined to Heaven. / From the Eastern Terrace one gazes on the land of Vaiḍūrya, / From the Western Terrace one turns to see Jetavana.

31 A strange spelling: *pwbwnk kynt'* (usually: *pwbwnk ynt'*).

32 One word is deleted.

33 The spelling of *nıñ* is not sure.

34 Judging from the end of line 7 *öñdünki basgu[k]* the emendation of *kedinki bas[guk]* at the end of line 5 is justified, because the word *basguk* begins at the same position of both lines.

of islands lying northeast of China attested since the Sui (581–618).<sup>35</sup> And she writes:

This verse thus exaggerates the view from the top of the Eastern and Western Terraces to encompass both Japan and India. (...) The stanza emphasizes the universality of the Buddhist teachings, which transcend national borders and geographical barriers. The sermons of the Buddha were sent forth from Jetavana in the west, but by the Tang had reached the land of Vaiḍūrya far to the east of China. In the mind of the writer Mount Wutai stood at the center of this Buddhist world.<sup>36</sup>

One has to mention here that Ryūkyū is the Japanese form of Chinese *liuqiu* 琉球 and thus does not fully correspond to the Chinese equivalent of *vaiḍūrya*, which is *liuli* 琉璃 as seen in the *Wutai shan zan*, too. This may also be the reason why Du Doucheng connected the *liuli* with the land of the Healing Buddha Bhaiṣajyagururāja. As if the anonymous Old Uigur translator was aware of Du Doucheng's idea, he translated the phrase as “the vaiḍūrya land of the King of physicians Bhaiṣajyagururāja.” But his ground may be different from modern scholarship. I think that he interpreted the Chinese text, and this is again in the line as M. Cartelli puts it, in a more general Buddhist way, not simply thinking of geographical places.

Another point I would like to mention here is the number of dragons. The Chinese verse speaks first of “poisonous dragons,”<sup>37</sup> later in stanza III of “five hundred poisonous dragons.” Additionally, Zhang Huiming quotes from the diary of ninth-century Japanese monk Ennin 圓仁 (794–864), who mentions 500 dragons. She also refers to Mogao cave 61 where two times 250 dragons are depicted.<sup>38</sup> Thus, it is self-understanding and not surprising at all that the Uigur translator used the number already in the first stanza, too.

Summing up, we have beside the transcriptional text two different manuscripts on verso sides of Chinese scrolls with the beginning stanzas of the *Wutai shan zan* as well as one regular Old Uigur manuscript that contains the stanzas XV–XVIII. Since there is no trace of stanzas V to XIV, only less than the half of the Old Uigur translation is known so far.

35 Cartelli, *Five-colored Clouds*, 91.

36 *Ibid.*, 91.

37 *Ibid.*, 91.

38 Huiming Zhang, *Iconographie de Mañjuśrī et du mont Wutai en Chine médiévale. Une étude d'après des matériaux picturaux de Dunhuang du VIIe au Xe siècle* (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2018), 382–383.

## 5 Mount Wutai as a Pilgrimage Goal

Pilgrimage to Mount Wutai was occasionally regarded as less important than striving for rebirth in Pure Land. In Wang Rixiu's 王日休 (d. 1173) scripture the *Longshu zengguang jingtu wen* 龍舒增廣淨土文 [The Pure Land Tracts of Longshu] we read:

Fang Zhu of Tang. Zhu died by violence. When he reached the Shadow Office, he encountered Yamarāja. Rāja said: 'It is written in the accounts that in the past you exhorted an old person to recall Buddha and thus to get the merit of rebirth in Pure Land. You too will arise to Pure Land. Therefore I ordered you to see you.' Zhu said: 'Before reciting 10,000 *juan* of the *Vajracchedikā* and making a pilgrimage to Wutai I do not want to be reborn.' Rāja said: "To recite a sūtra and to make a pilgrimage are good works, but better is a fast rebirth in Pure Land." The Rāja knew that he could no decide alone, and he released him to return. One learns that by exhorting somebody for rebirth oneself will not only reach rebirth but also impress the Darkness.

唐房翥. 翥暴死, 至陰府, 見閻羅王. 王曰: "據案簿, 君曾勸一老人念佛, 已生淨土. 君承此福, 亦合生淨土, 故召來相見. 翥曰: "先許《金剛》萬卷, 巡禮五臺, 未欲往生." 王曰: "誦經巡禮, 固為好事, 不如早生淨土." 王知志不可奪, 乃放還. 以此知勸人修者, 非徒往生, 又感動幽冥也.<sup>39</sup>

Nevertheless, pilgrimage to Mount Wutai stood in high esteem for a long time. Many scholars have extensively studied pilgrimage travels to Mount Wutai and other sacred mountains, either within China or from Korea for example. Here I quote from R. Buswell's paper:

The Chinese Wutaishan became a major pilgrimage center of East Asian Buddhism starting in least the Northern Wei dynasty (424–532), and it eventually became so renowned that it drew monks from across the continent, including South Asia and Tibet. Wutaishan soon came to be recognized as the abode of Mañjuśrī, the Bodhisattva of Wisdom, an identification that prompted Chajang's journey to the mountain.<sup>40</sup>

39 T 1970, 47: 268a5–11. For the translation I used Heinrich Hackmann, *Laien-Buddhismus in China. Das Lung shu Ching t'u wên des Wang Jih hsiu aus dem Chinesischen übersetzt, erläutert und beurteilt* (Gotha, 1924), 156. This vita is also attested in the Old Uigur version of the so-called *Abitaki*, book IV.

40 R. Buswell, "Korean Buddhist Journeys to Lands Worldly and Otherworldly," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 68, no. 4 (2009), 1068.

Some wall inscriptions are known from grottoes of Dunhuang and Yulin 榆林 recently studied by D. Matsui in which Uigur pilgrims shortly express their worship of Mañjuśrī, sometimes giving place and date.<sup>41</sup>

Other inscriptions document travels to Mount Wutai. In cave 3 of Yulin, a certain Śakyapal announced his pilgrimage to Uday = Wutai(shan) for future generations. In a similar way, in another inscription Tāvāči Tutuŋ concluded his entry by the phrase *sadu bolzun* “Sādhu!”<sup>42</sup>

## 6 Gansu Inscriptions

Some Chinese-Uigur bilingual inscriptions are known from Gansu 甘肅. One is from 1326 and refers to the restauration of a Mañjuśrī temple near Jiuquan 酒泉 in Suzhou 肅州, and it expresses the authorities’ gratitude to the Čagatay Prince Nomdaš who was in charge of the works. The inscription dedicates to each of his predecessors one stanza, but three to Nomdaš himself.

“After such Charismatic One (i.e. Nomkulı, Nomdaš’s predecessor) (the One having) the gold of *puṇya* and wisdom,<sup>43</sup> (the One) believing in the way of the Bodhisattvas and in the Buddha Law; (the One who is) the pride of all and everybody, who is complete at mercy, who has compensating wisdom, who has a non-returning belief; (the One) who has a body decorated with *maṅgala* (marks of happiness), who is very beautiful like the emerald jewel, who is mighty and powerful like the Mahābala (an epithet of the Buddha), the Mahāsattva (i.e. the great Being), the prince Nomtaš was born.”

*bo muni tąg kutlugtıŋ*  
*buyan bilgä bilignıŋ altunı*  
*bodistvlar yorigın[ta]*  
*burhan nomınta kertgünčlüg.*

*yapa alkunıy kīvānči*  
*y(a)rukančuči köñülkä tükällig*  
*yaruk bilgä biliglig*

41 Matsui, “Tonkō sho sekkutsu no Uiguru-go daiki meibun ni kansuru setsuki (ni) 敦煌諸石窟のウイクル語題記銘文に関する筈記(二),” (11), 34–35. Cp. now Matsui, “Tonkō sekkutsu Uiguru-go: Mongoru-go daiki meibun shūsei 敦煌石窟ウイクル語: モンゴル語題記銘文集成,” 2017.

42 Ibid., 37.

43 To achieve merit and wisdom are two Buddhist virtues (*puṇya* and *prajña*).

*yanıqsız kertgünč köñüllüg.*

*maṅgal ornaşmıř ätözlüg  
markat ärdini täg uz körklüg  
mahabala küçlüg küsünlüg  
mahasatua nom tař taise törüdi.*

After the final and definite Islamisation of the whole of Xinjiang in the early years of the 15th century some Uigur Buddhists remained active in Gansu, and they were still Buddhists at least until the end of the 18th century. The Mañjuśrī temple was still intact, its inside was decorated with paintings to which pilgrims and visitors have attached inscriptions in Uigur that resemble those of Yuan period (1271–1368). The dates of some texts witness to the Kangxi 康熙 period (1662–1722). Here, I quote one example:<sup>44</sup>

“In the 30th year of *ka sing*, in the second month, on the first day. When we—longing for the place of Ārya Mañjuśrī—came, we venerated by saying (this) is an *adhiṣṭhita*...<sup>45</sup>. On the happy day, monk Do-rje, monk Dharma and monk Saṃghaśrī. On the sheep-day.”

- 01 Ka sing otuzunč yıl üzä ikinti ay üzä yaṅı kün üzä
- 02 ary-a mančuşiri-nıṅ ornagı-mı küsä[yü] kälmiş-imiz üzä
- 03 adiştit... tep kälip yükündümüz
- 04 kutlug kün-kä toyın torči toyın darm toyın saṅgaşı[ri] t...
- 05 koy kün üzä:.

According to the given date that corresponds to the year of 1551, the three monks came to the temple for veneration.

## 7 New Texts from the Northern Grottoes of Mogao

Among the newly found materials in the Northern Caves of Mogao, there are also some Old Uigur texts concerning Mañjuśrī. The blockprint B 140:5 is a colophon to an Old Uigur translation of the *Acintyabuddhavişayanirdeśa*

44 Yusup & Zhang, “Wenshushan,” 103–104.

45 The word is not clear, but the reading *vpaşyi* for *Vipaşyin* adopted by Yusup and Zhang seems to be out of the question.

(T. 340), as confirmed by A. Yakup.<sup>46</sup> This colophon composed in alliterative verses states that the Chinese version of the sūtra was translated by the famous Uigur scholar Čisön Tutuŋ from Üč Lükčüŋ from Chinese (*tavgač tili*) into Turkish (*türk tili*). Čisön Tutuŋ is known as the author of some other Old Uigur texts, but he is also known from a portrait in Turfan.

The title of the sūtra is given in Sanskrit and Old Uigur: *ary-a mañčuširi bodistv üzä nomlatulmuş ačintaya buda višaya tegmä sakingalı bögünğäli bol-guluksuz burhanlarnuŋ adkangu uguši* “‘The object groups of the Buddhas that are impossible to understand and to assemble’ called \**Acintyabuddhaviṣaya*, preached by the Bodhisattva Ārya-Mañjuśrī.”

Also, another *Mañjuśrī sūtra* was introduced into Old Uigur Buddhism, as one learns from the long poem on sūtra preaching and its Uigur tradition as it is known from the Northern Caves (B128:18). The fourth of ten Mahāyāna sūtras is the text *synpʹnky* that is a transcription of Chinese *Qianbo jing* 千鉢經 (Thousand Bowls sūtra).<sup>47</sup>

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46 A. Yakup, “Uighurica from the Northern Grottoes of Dunhuang,” *A Festschrift in Honour of Professor Masahiro Shōgaito’s Retirement. Studies on Eurasian Languages* (Kyoto: “Studies on Eurasian Languages” Publication Committee, 2006), 24; A. Yakup, “Dunhuang beiqu shiku chutu Huihuwen wenxian de zonghe yanjiu,” in *Research on the Northern Grottoes of Mogaoku Dunhuang*, ed. Peng Jinzhang (Lanzhou, 2012), 459–462.

47 *Mahāyāna Yoga of the Adamantine Ocean, Mañjuśrī with a Thousand Arms and Thousand Bowls: Great King of Tantras (Dasheng yuqie jin’gang xinghai manshushili qianbi qianbo dajiaowangjing* 大乘瑜伽金剛性海曼殊室利千臂千鉢大教王經) T. 1177, 20. In contrast, Aydar Mirkamal reads *sirparke* as a transcription of *Qianbo jing* 千鉢經, cp. Mirkamal 2015, p. 192.



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## How Important is Mount Wutai? Sacred Space in a Zen Mirror

*T.H. Barrett*

In earlier work I have pointed to imitations of Mount Wutai in China and beyond as one of the consequences of the reordering of sacred space so as to place Mañjuśrī within the Chinese world. Further reading has only confirmed my view that these tributes to the centrality of Mount Wutai should be taken seriously. But in passing I have also pointed to rejection of the significance of Mount Wutai in some circles, following in this regard the work of Steven Heine in particular. Subsequently I have noticed that this rejection was in fact more significant than can be conveyed by a predominant focus on a single well known case; it is clearly articulated in other sources too, such as the poetry attributed to the Layman Pang (d. 808). Surely vehement denial was as much of a marker of importance as the copious literary and artistic production in praise of Mount Wutai. Or should that be “vehement denial is a marker of importance”?

It demands something of an effort for anyone used to writing in the historical mode to employ the present tense in asking a question. That Mount Wutai deserves such an effort is clear, but given that research in contemporary China demands a very different set of skills from those normally commanded by historians, most fortunately there does exist a study in English that addresses contemporary issues within the context of heritage and tourism studies.<sup>1</sup> Rather than venture into this unfamiliar territory, then, these remarks must simply note this publication and move promptly back in time. In the recent past the case of Mount Wutai has commended my own attention as illustrative in particular of the imbrications of different forms of sanctity.<sup>2</sup> As a sacred space it tended to multiply its presences, as different locations competed to attract pilgrims, and this tendency has continued to impress me. Best known, of course,

<sup>1</sup> Robert J. Shepherd, *Faith in Heritage: Displacement, Development and Religious Tourism in Contemporary China* (Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press, 2013).

<sup>2</sup> T.H. Barrett, “On the Road to China: The Continental Relocation of Sacred Space and its Consequences for Mountains, Minds, and Texts,” in *Images, Relics, and Legends: The Formation and Transformation of Buddhist Sacred Sites*, eds. James Benn, Jinhua Chen, and James Robson, (Oakville, Ontario: Mosaic Press, 2012), 46–67.

are the cases where regimes outside China were moved to emulate the success of Mount Wutai: accounts of such imitations may be found in Khotan (perhaps) and Nepal, and also on the territory of the Tanguts and Khitan, and further afield in Japan and Korea.<sup>3</sup>

But this process also took place quite rapidly within China itself. One notes that already by 844 a more convenient Wutai had been called into existence on Zhongnan shan 終南山 for those who did not wish to stray too far from a metropolitan area, and that this was still recognised in the late eleventh century.<sup>4</sup> After the break-up of China at the start of the tenth century finding a home like Mount Wutai for the bodhisattva Mañjuśrī seems to have appealed also even to – or especially to – one quite peripheral regime, far away in the Empire of Min, in present-day Fujian 福建.<sup>5</sup> That the institution of pilgrimage should have survived efforts to curtail long distance travel in such desperate times, and that Mount Wutai should have continued to play such an important role during that period cannot fail but to impress us.<sup>6</sup>

It would indeed be a mistake to underestimate the strength and resilience of Buddhist pilgrimage traditions in general over the very long term. One notes that Charles Allen, a British writer who has devoted a book to the role that archaeologists of the Victorian era played in uncovering the holy places of Buddhism in South Asia is obliged to point out that the significance and exact location of Bodhgaya were never forgotten in Burma, whence visitors continued to arrive long after it had passed out of Buddhist hands and shortly before British interest in the place developed at the beginning of the nineteenth century.<sup>7</sup> Yet the two millennia and more of pilgrimage that such reports attest is all the more remarkable in view of the complete lack of importance accorded holy places within the core teaching of Buddhism. The traditional Buddhist

3 Besides the brief mentions provided in the study in the previous note, see for example now Eun-su Cho, “Manifestation of the Buddha’s Land in the Here and Now: Relic Installation and Territorial Transformation in Medieval Korea”, in Benn, Chen and Robson, 138–163.

4 For Zhongnan shan see James A. Benn, “On the Road to China: The Continental Relocation of Sacred Space and its Consequences for Mountains, Minds, and Texts,” in *Images, Relics, and Legends: The Formation and Transformation of Buddhist Sacred Sites*, eds. James Benn, Jinhua Chen, and James Robson (Oakville, Ontario: Mosaic Press, 2012), 68–89; for the ‘Southern Wutai’ see E.O. Reischauer, *Ennin’s Diary* (New York: The Ronald Press Co., 1955), 340, and Ono Katsutoshi 小野勝年, ed., *Nittō guhō junrei kōki no kenkyū* 入唐求法巡禮行記の研究 vol. iv (Tokyo: Suzuki Gakujutsu zaidan, 1969), 59–60, n. 3.

5 Edward Schafer, *The Empire of Min* (Rutland, Vermont, and Tokyo: Tuttle, 1954), 12.

6 I have in mind here the conspicuous place of Mount Wutai in a manuscript on the holy sites of China in the Stein Collection of the British Library, S.529; for the approximate date of this cf. T.H. Barrett, *From Religious Ideology to Political Expediency in Early Printing* (London: Minnow Press, 2012), 82–83.

7 Charles Allen, *The Buddha and the Sahibs: The men who discovered India’s lost religion* (London: John Murray, 2002), 92.

canon in East Asia, for example, excludes topographies of holy places entirely, and where they are found in modern editions they mark an innovation of the twentieth century.<sup>8</sup> For that matter, explicit criticism of the role of Mount Wutai, as is well known, can be found in Chan or Zen literature, notably in famous *kōan* collections citing the sayings of great masters such as Rinzai (i.e. Linji Yixuan 臨濟義玄, d. 866).<sup>9</sup> That particular instance of Chan rejection or at least radical qualification of the importance of Mount Wutai has already been well described in English, so in what follows I leave it aside in order to explore similar sources a little further.

Approaching this topic as I did earlier from the perspective of Mount Wutai in Song (960–1279) times, however, encourages the use of the Recorded Sayings of the masters as they existed during that era, rather than in the forms in which they may have existed in a somewhat earlier epoch. We should however recall that with the fall of the Northern Song (960–1127) in the early twelfth century Mount Wutai, always difficult of access for inhabitants of Song China, slipped entirely beyond their ken. For this and for other reasons connected with the internal development of their strand in Chinese religion the content of the sayings during two separate stages of the development of the Chan movement could have been significantly different, as Albert Welter has argued at monographic length in the case of Linji's sayings. So the form in which they have been generally cited and translated cannot be taken straightforwardly as preserving the *ipsissima verba* of the master, or even the earliest layers of a developing tradition.<sup>10</sup> This is hardly an unusual problem in the history of religion, but for many sources we simply do not have detailed studies like that provided by Welter for Rinzai, leaving us in the uncomfortable position of having to cite materials from standard collections that have utilised textual materials that may or may not reflect the usage of pre-Song times, but that certainly reached publication considerably later. A good example would be a dialogue concerning Mount Wutai and a certain Master Fu 孚 of Taiyuan 太原 (d.u.) that is preserved in the *Xuefeng Yulu* 雪峰語錄 (Recorded Sayings of Xuefeng), as a consequence of the dialogue having been commented on by the subject of

8 On this issue see T.H. Barrett, "Finding a Place for Mountains in Chinese Religion: Bibliographic and Ethnographic Perspectives," *Journal of Chinese Studies* / 中國文化研究所學報 51 (June, 2010), 357–374, especially 359–362.

9 In earlier publications I have drawn extensively on Steven Heine, "Visions, Divisions, Revisions: The Encounter between Iconoclasm and Supernaturalism in *Kōan* cases about Mount Wu-t'ai," in *The Kōan: Texts and Contexts in Zen Buddhism*, eds. Steven Heine and Dale Wright (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 137–167.

10 Albert Welter, *The Linji lu and the Creation of Chan Orthodoxy: The Development of Chan's Record of Sayings Literature* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008).

these sayings, Xuefeng Yicun 義存 (822–908). Master Fu happens to be staying at the famous monastic centre of Jingshan 徑山, northwest of Hangzhou, and meets a monk in front of the Buddha Hall who, on learning where Master Fu is from, asks him if he has been to Mount Wutai? Yes, says Fu. Have you seen Mañjuśrī? Yes, says Fu. Where? In front of the Jingshan Buddha Hall, says Fu – an answer that does not directly belittle the significance of Mount Wutai, but does make a point about the omnipresence of the Wisdom personified by the great Bodhisattva. Now the standard twentieth century edition of the *Recorded Sayings* that reproduce this dialogue derives from a Japanese edition of 1702. This was at least published in a facsimile edition in 1974, but no better version of this source would seem to be in general circulation.<sup>11</sup>

It is admittedly true, as Albert Welter has again pointed out, that we know that Xuefeng's *Recorded Sayings* had already been compiled in 1032, but in his words, "Given its compilation history, and the fact that over one hundred and twenty years lie between Xuefeng and any record of publication of his teachings, it would be wise to regard the *Record* the way the material in other Chan *yulu* deserves to be regarded, as historical fiction."<sup>12</sup> As it happens, this remark is made in the context of a careful study of the background to Xuefeng's activities, which took place precisely under the Fujianese regime rather far from Mount Wutai that we have noted as trying to promote an alternative home for the bodhisattva. In the case of this particular recorded dialogue, moreover, we are able to place it about a generation before the publication of the text that now contains it, because it was already included in a famous general account of the development of Chan up to the Song published in 1004.<sup>13</sup> But this hardly affects Welter's point. To concede the cogency of his doubts is not, on the other hand, to affirm that the sentiments expressed somewhat obliquely by Master Fu would have been implausible in the ninth century. Thanks to the retrieval of the Dunhuang archive we possess one source, attested in a number of manuscripts, which gives good evidence that in some circles the importance of Mount Wutai was already being challenged in the eighth century. This is the *Lidai fabao ji* 歷代法寶記 [Record of the Dharma Jewel Through the Generations], a work composed between 774 and 780, which has been extensively studied by Wendi Adamek.

11 For the passage in question see *Xuefeng yulu* 2, 9a – b, which is p. 267 as reproduced in Yanagida Seizan 柳田聖山, ed., *Zengaku sōsho* 禪學叢書, vol. 111, Kyoto: Chūbun shuppansha, 1974.

12 Albert Welter, *Monks, Rulers and Literati: The Political Ascendancy of Chan Buddhism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 98.

13 Namely Daoyuan 道原, *The Records of the Transmission of the Lamp* (*Jingde chuandeng lu* 景德傳燈錄), T. 2076, 51: 19. 359c27–360a1.

For as it happens, the master to whom much of the text is dedicated, Wuzhu 無住 (714-774), turns out to have spent the summer of 749 at Mount Wutai himself in his early monastic career.<sup>14</sup> None the less he is said to have discouraged others who wished to depart from his own eventual base in West China for a visit to the north to pay respects to Mañjuśrī: “the Buddha is in body and mind, Mañjuśrī is not far.”<sup>15</sup> So, such thoughts concerning Mount Wutai were evidently not unthinkable in the eighth century, which makes much later sources representing masters of about this period and later as having spoken in this way at least not incredible, even when early documentation is lacking. Among the Dunhuang manuscripts Wuzhu’s words must be termed somewhat unusual, given the praise lavished on Mount Wutai in a wealth of different documents from this site, but if we look at the earliest collection of “encounter dialogue” materials that we possess as a result of forms of transmission other than preservation in the Dunhuang archive, we certainly already find the Chan movement depicted as maintaining something of the same less enthusiastic attitude over one thousand years ago. The source that demonstrates this is the remarkable collection preserved in Korea that is generally known as the *Zutang ji* 祖堂集 (Record of the Ancestral hall). This work, by two monks in the lineage of Xuefeng Yicun known to us only as Jing 靜 and Yun 筠, is usually given the date of compilation of 952, though it seems to have been revised somewhat thereafter, perhaps at the end of the tenth century, with some further additions in Korea.<sup>16</sup>

This Korean element explains the presence in the text of a record of a Korean master visiting Mount Wutai in 784, prior to heading south to see the memorial hall of the Sixth Patriarch.<sup>17</sup> Though nothing much is made of the visit, there is certainly no indication in this particular instance of any overt or implied criticism, and nothing to show that such a pilgrimage was considered to be anything less than a commendable act.<sup>18</sup> But there is much more we can learn from this source about attitudes to Mount Wutai apart from this passing reference. The *Zutang ji* also forms our earliest, partial source for one very

14 Wendi Adamek, *The Mystique of Transmission: On an Early Chan History and its Contents* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 346.

15 Ibid., 386; on p. 274 she puts forward this passage as directly prefiguring Linji’s remarks.

16 On the problems surrounding the history of this collection, see Welter, *Monks, Rulers and Literati*, 63–65, and also John Jørgensen, *Inventing Hui-neng, the Sixth Patriarch: Hagiography and Biography in Early Chan* (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 729–752, for the Korean elements in the text.

17 For a reference to this entry, see Jørgensen, *Inventing Hui-neng*, 340–341, concerning Toñi 道義 (d. 825), though he omits the mention of Mount Wutai and mentions only this visitor’s excursion to the South.

18 *Zutang ji* 祖堂集, compiled by Jing 靜 and Yun 筠 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2007), 750.



famous, classic *kōan* based around a dialogue with Mañjuśrī himself, set in his magical Mount Wutai abode, that we find alluded to twice in the compiler's commentary in the famous early twelfth century Zen collection known as the *Bīyan lu* or *Hekiganroku* 碧巖錄 [Blue Cliff Record].<sup>19</sup> I make, incidentally, no apology for mentioning Japanese readings of the title of this and other texts, since the export of many of the works mentioned to Japan brought the problem of evaluating Mount Wutai to a wider Japanese readership.<sup>20</sup> Indeed, the negative image of Mount Wutai propagated by the texts examined here was within the wider confines of East and Inner Asia no more confined to the area where the Chinese language was spoken than were attempts at creating alternative homes for the bodhisattva.<sup>21</sup>

Returning, however, to the anecdote in question, there is no implication in the *Zutang ji* that a seeker after truth should not have been looking for the bodhisattva there; the date assigned to the encounter in the magic palace is not clear, but of the two masters who comment on the story, one died in 928.<sup>22</sup> In the report of their comments the full text of the dialogue as used later in Case 35 of the *Blue Cliff Record* is not given, but only the portion in which Mañjuśrī and his visitor, Wuzhuo 無著, take tea, though the part not cited by Jing and Yun does occur in print in 1060, well before the time that the section containing the prose commentary of the *Blue Cliff Record* was written.<sup>23</sup> I shall not, however, discuss the totality of the text of either the relevant prose or verse of the *Blue Cliff Record*, since the full dialogue with the bodhisattva, whatever its implications for the student of Zen Buddhism, does not reflect directly on the

19 The references are in the commentary by Yuanwu Keqin 圓悟克勤 (1063-1135) to Cases 35 and 91: cf. Thomas Cleary, trans., *The Blue Cliff Record* (Berkeley: Numata Center for Buddhist Translation and Research, 1998), 183, 404.

20 On this text in Japan, see for example Isshū Miura and Ruth Fuller Sasaki, *Zen Dust: The History of the Koan and Koan Study in Rinzai (Lin-chi) Zen* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1966), 358, and cf. Heine, "Visions, Divisions, Revisions", 145, for an early Japanese reference to Mount Wutai based on it.

21 Though I have not attempted to document this phenomenon other than by mentioning occasional Japanese materials in passing, we should note for example that the *Jingde chuandeng lu*, which as pointed out in n. 13 above contains material relating to Mount Wutai, was influential in both Vietnamese and Tangut Buddhism: cf. Cuong Tu Nguyen, *Zen in Medieval Vietnam* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1997), 32; Kirill J. Solonin, "Sinitic Buddhism in the Tangut State," *Central Asiatic Journal* 57 (2014), 178.

22 *Zutang ji* 11, 504, which suggests that Baofu Congzhan 保福從展, who died in that year, commented on the case.

23 This source, the gazetteer *The Extended Chronicle of Mount Clear and Cool* (*Guang Qingliang zhuang* 廣清涼傳), is summarized by Heine, "Visions, Divisions, Revisions", 138-139.

status of Mount Wutai as such within the early Chan community.<sup>24</sup> Similar considerations apply to the other classic Zen materials adduced here.

Even so, that a reference to tea as the preferred drink of a bodhisattva should have been discussed already at this date makes the frequent references to tea in Chan literature published in the Song period all the more intelligible.<sup>25</sup> And as for the basic idea in itself of using a conversation with Mañjuśrī as a vehicle for the teaching of Chan Buddhism, this may well go back further, since the two masters whose remarks we have just noted in the *Zutang ji* also use as a vehicle for comment the case of the famous reported conversation of the seventh century between the Indian guest on Mount Wutai, Buddhapālita, and Mañjuśrī.<sup>26</sup> Nevertheless the idea that one might be entertained by the bodhisattva in his home seems to have been particularly appealing, since the *Zutang ji* also contains poetry on this topic.<sup>27</sup>

This is not, however, the only envisioning of an encounter dialogue with Mañjuśrī that is reported by Jing and Yun, though when a master claims to have met the bodhisattva and reports what conversation took place we cannot surely suppose that the report was designed to serve anything other than its immediate function in Chan teaching, and there would seem to be no reason to believe at any rate that such dialogues were thought of as promoting pilgrimage to Mount Wutai, even if they do not give it an explicitly negative evaluation. Some of these encounters recorded in the *Zutang ji* were taken up in later texts; some were not.<sup>28</sup> In at least one episode that appears for the first time in a collection of 1026, incidentally, the question about a possible encounter on Mount Wutai is asked not with reference to the bodhisattva but with regard to

24 The meaning of the dialogue even at the most banal and obvious level would in any case seem to require a certain amount of exploration. One notes for example that a specific historical situation on Wutaishan has been put forward as a background for the dialogue in R.D.M. Shaw, *The Blue Cliff Records, The Hekigan Roku* (London: Michael Joseph, 1961), 127-128.

25 On tea and Chan, and the Buddhist background to the emergence of this drink, see now James A. Benn, *Tea in China: A Religious and Cultural History* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2015), especially 128-130.

26 *Zutang ji* 11, 503, and for a translation of the apparently seventh century original see Paul Copp, *The Body Incantatory: Spells and the Ritual Imagination in Medieval Chinese Buddhism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014), 159-162.

27 *Zutang ji* 11, 524: the first poet, Litian 麗天, is unknown, but the second, Qiyun Lingzhao 齊雲靈照, lived from 870 till at least 937, as shown by the editorial note on p. 519. The poems do not mention tea drinking, but perhaps already imply the existence of the dialogue used in Case 35 of the *Blue Cliff Record*.

28 For a reported encounter transmitted also in later texts, see *Zutang ji* 5, 271-272, taken up for example in the *Jingde chuandeng lu* 14: 316b16-18; for another that does not seem to be transmitted elsewhere, see *Zutang ji* 19, 284.

a Dragon King, suggesting that the participants, the *dramatis personae* in these scenarios, were in any case not entirely fixed.<sup>29</sup> But in some ways the most intriguing glimpses of the developing Chan tradition and its attitudes to Mount Wutai is afforded by the *Zutang ji* in its depiction of a master particularly famous for his remarks on the dwelling place of the bodhisattva in his *Recorded Sayings* of later times who is in this source reported as having pronounced a verdict on a visit to the mountains that would appear to have dropped from the tradition at a later date.

This master, Zhaozhou Congshen 趙州從誥 (778–897), is hardly an inconspicuous figure, and indeed is well represented in the *Zutang ji*, where his sayings are amongst the portion of that source, selected some time ago for a translation into Japanese, that was subsequently rendered into Modern Chinese, though I am not aware of an English translation, despite the work now available on the *Zutang ji* in English.<sup>30</sup> But the version of his *Recorded Sayings* in general circulation at present, the basis for a complete translation into English, would seem to date back no further than the late Ming dynasty.<sup>31</sup> In some respects one can consider the ‘lost’ dialogue preserved only in the *Zutang ji* that we may now add to the existing stock of this master’s sayings to be an oblique critique that already presupposes the popularity of the stories about dialogues on Mount Wutai with the bodhisattva. In effect this lost dialogue, though it opens with the master predictably asking a visiting monk “Where have you been? To Mount Wutai? Did you meet Mañjuśrī?” veers off to continue (paraphrasing slightly) ‘No, I saw a water buffalo. What did it say? It said the weather is still quite chilly; be sure to stay well, venerable sir’ – in other words, expectations are subverted, in a slightly surreal fashion.<sup>32</sup> Here there is still no overt rejection of the importance of Mount Wutai, though again the dialogue cannot be construed as promoting pilgrimage either.

29 See Li Zunxu 李遵勗, vol. v, ed., Yanagida, *Zengaku sōsho* vol. v (Kyoto: Chūbun shuppansha, 1975), 16, 489. Reprint of Fuzhou Kaiyuansi Canon edition; Puji 普濟, ed., *Wudeng huiyuan* 五燈會元 11 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1984), 696–697.

30 The translation of Zhaozhou’s sayings is in a volume of extracts from the *Zutang ji* published under the auspices of the Puti xueshe 菩提學社, *Chanzong junyu lu; Zutang ji baihua jujie* 禪宗雋語錄: 祖堂集白話句解 (Hong Kong: Puti xueshe, 1988, second edition), 307–332, based as far as I can deduce on a translation published by Yanagida Seizan in 1974.

31 James Green, *The Recorded Sayings of Zen Master Joshu* (Boston: Shambhala, 1998), xxiii.

32 *Zutang ji* 18, p. 792; cf. *Chanzong jun yulu*, pp. 312, 326. A couple of dozen or so water buffalo references may be found in the *Zutang ji*; cf. Green, *Zen Master Joshu*, 155, 158–159, for some more water buffalo stories in translation.

The same might also be said of the appearance of this master in another famous case mentioning Mount Wutai, the thirty-first included in the *Wumen guan*, *Mumonkan* 無門關 [Gateless Gate], which was compiled in 1228.<sup>33</sup> This concerns an old woman offering directions to monks on the road approaching the mountains. The mention thus seems almost incidental, though in fact it has been read in the light of the overall understanding of the search for Mañjuśrī within the Chan tradition.<sup>34</sup> As Steven Heine notes in connection with this case, the master is as early as the beginning of the eleventh century represented as having in his younger days wished to visit Mount Wutai himself but to have encountered criticism on that account from another practitioner, leaving it unclear whether he made the pilgrimage or not.<sup>35</sup> But in that the master is depicted as having gone to verify reports of the old woman himself, the anecdote elegantly implies that he came all the way to the foot of the mountain and then went home again without bothering to venture further.

This case is included in his *Recorded Sayings* along with two others mentioning Mount Wutai, none of which is attested in the early *Zutang ji* materials.<sup>36</sup> One is in other sources attributed to another, unconnected but less famous master, suggesting the possibility that the famous Zhaozhou Congshen has absorbed in some cases material originally associated with others, in the same way that it is sometimes said that all witticisms made by twentieth century American women ended up being attributed to Dorothy Parker (1893–1967).<sup>37</sup> A third case is more firmly associated with him in Song sources, but does not appear to be one that may be unambiguously dated back to his own life time. This is because it comments on a story about Fenggan 豐干 meeting and old man on Mount Wutai and asking him if he is Mañjuśrī, which evokes the response “Can there be two Mañjuśrīs?”.<sup>38</sup> The incident is first attested at the start of the eleventh century, in connection with stories about the famous

33 For the compilation of this work, see Ishii Shūdō, trans. Albert Welter, “The *Wu-men kuan* (J. *Mumonkan*): The Formation, Propagation, and Characteristics of a Classic Zen Kōan Text,” in *The Zen Canon: Understanding the Classic Texts*, eds. Steven Heine and Dale S. Wright (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 207–244.

34 See for example Kōun Yamada, *Gateless Gate*, second edition (Tempe, Arizona: University of Arizona Press, 1979), 153–156.

35 Heine, “Visions, Divisions, Revisions,” 141–142, 146–147 (which also notes another allusion to Wutaishan in the *Blue Cliff Record*, case 24); as he points out in notes 24 and 25, p. 165, both the story about Zhaozhou Congshen that entered the *Gateless Gate* and the one concerning his pilgrimage ambitions may be traced back to 1004.

36 Green, *Zen Master Joshu*, 148, translates the case just discussed.

37 Compare the remarks of Tongan Changcha 同安常察, Puji, *Wudeng huiyuan*, 6, 335, and the dialogue translated by Green, *Zen Master Joshu*, 164, no. 504.

38 Green, *Zen Master Joshu*, 145–146.

Buddhist poet Hanshan 寒山, who is depicted in the *Recorded Sayings* as a contemporary of the master.<sup>39</sup> It was believed in the late tenth century that Fenggan – or at least someone with a similar name, written fenggan 封干 – had lived in the early eighth century, though whether this was really so or not is now rather hard to tell.<sup>40</sup> That dating would in any case be hard to reconcile with the implicit dates in the *Recorded Sayings*. Stories about Hanshan and his associates seem to have grown over time, however, and the chances are that this material too has become attached to Zhaozhou Congshen in the course of its transmission.

But in one sense the later sources for this master's attitude to Mount Wutai are after all quite consistent with the glimpse that is afforded earlier by the *Zutangji*. His relegation of the famous abode of the bodhisattva to a secondary status is unmistakable, even if his mode of stating this tends towards the indirect. Nowhere in his sayings can one find anything like the blunt statement of Linji that "Mañjuśrī is not on Mount Wutai."<sup>41</sup> But the tradition itself likes to talk about the different styles that the great masters set for their followers, their individual approaches (*jiafeng* 家風). Rather than try to trace a shift of attitudes over the course of time – something that as we have discovered is not entirely easy to do, given the nature of the materials available – might it not be possible to put down this indirection to a personal trait, and to point instead to another master whose remarks on the matter tend more towards the trenchancy of Linji? Certainly there is one other master who has been described in the following terms: "His tongue is inconceivably venomous, and, what makes the case worse, he is the most eloquent of the Chan masters."<sup>42</sup>

This man was (to use the Japanese form of his name widely known to students of Zen) the formidable Ummon, or in Chinese Yunmen Wenyan 雲門文偃 (864-949), the most famous one-time student of Xuefeng. His *Recorded Sayings* in the form in which they are known today are no more ancient in bibliographical terms than those of any of the other masters whose dicta were circulated during the Song, but they do portray extremely vividly an unusual

39 For this version, see Wu Chi-yu, "A Study of Han-shan," *T'oung pao* XL vol. 4-5 (1957), 419-420. Green, *Zen Master Joshu*, 158-159, translates a story of interaction between Hanshan and the master.

40 Wu, "Study of Han-shan," 396.

41 For the context of this dictum within his sayings as now transmitted, see for example Burton Watson, *The Zen Teachings of Master Lin-chi: A Translation of the Lin-chi lu* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), 38.

42 John C.H. Wu, *The Golden Age of Zen* (Taipei: United Publishing Center, 1975), 212-213, as cited in Urs App, *Master Yunmen: From the Record of the Chan Teacher 'Gate of the Clouds'* (New York, Tokyo: Kodansha International, 1994), 77.

and forceful personality.<sup>43</sup> Where Linji seems to have been content with telling his students that there was no bodhisattva to be found on Mount Wutai, Yunmen is positively scathing, denouncing any of his students thinking of going on pilgrimage there or indeed anywhere, on the grounds that they will “just squander the alms of the faithful.”<sup>44</sup> His tone of abuse verges on taunting his students for harbouring the very idea of travelling to see Mañjuśrī or even Zhaozhou.<sup>45</sup> Of course he makes it more than clear what he dislikes on a number of topics, and at least the notion of pilgrimage to Mount Wutai does not provoke him to physical violence, for which he was not unknown.

But to me the clearest indication that the mountain exercised a spiritual allure that Chan masters had to struggle against with all their might is to be found in the poetry of the Layman Pang Yun 龐蘊居士 (c. 740-808). The Layman, whose image is that of a family man as fully enlightened as any monk, but generally far less forbidding than some later figures like Yunmen, has appealed to generations of Chan students in China and beyond, so it is no surprise to find that his *Sayings* were rendered into English already over forty years ago.<sup>46</sup> What no one has so far succeeded in doing to my knowledge is to translate more than a fraction of the corpus of verse under his name into any language, even Japanese. The *Zutang ji* makes it clear that “something close to three hundred plus” 可近三百餘首 verses attributed to him were already widely known and appreciated at the time of its compilation in the mid-tenth century, and it even quotes eight of them; by contrast, indeed, it scarcely records any sayings of his at all.<sup>47</sup> Finding an early printing of all of these pieces is, as ever, far from easy, though recent research has managed to locate a manuscript version of the text of the *Sayings* and the verses from 1486 in Japan, a century and a half earlier than the Chinese woodblock edition of 1637 used by translators in the past.<sup>48</sup>

Whether all the two hundred and four verses we now have – plus three couplets known only through early quotations – all date back to before 808 is slightly problematic. Their most recent editor, Tan Wei, finds their language

43 App, *Master Yunmen*, xvii, dates the text that he uses to 1267.

44 App, *Master Yunmen*, 117.

45 App, *Master Yunmen*, 122.

46 Ruth Fuller Sasaki, Yoshitaka Iriya and Dana R. Fraser, *The Recorded Sayings of Layman Pang: A Ninth-Century Zen Classic* (New York and Tokyo: Weatherhill, 1971).

47 Sasaki, Iriya and Fraser, *Layman Pang*, 26–27: as the latter page indicates, all the verses quoted are rendered into English. Cf. *Zutang ji* 15, 699–702.

48 Sasaki, Iriya and Fraser, *Layman Pang*, 28, gives details of early editions known at the time; Tan Wei 譚偉, *Pang jushi yanjiu* 龐居士研究 (Chengdu: Sichuan renmin chubanshe, 2002), 425–489, prints a collated and annotated edition of the poems using the 1486 manuscript.

very similar to that of Hanshan and other Buddhist versifiers of the Tang.<sup>49</sup> But the way in which the *Zutang ji* introduces them is slightly problematic: ‘something close to three hundred plus’ is mathematically a bit odd, though possibly ‘three’ is a textual slip for ‘two’ here. But as it stands ‘three hundred plus’ invites comparison with the some three hundred and seven verses (depending on what is counted) that constitute the very famous Buddhist corpus under the name of Hanshan, and in that case a close phonological study of the rhyme patterns suggests that a smaller original corpus was expanded at a later date.<sup>50</sup> Amongst possible motivations for the expansion of any corpus of poetry up to three hundred plus pieces was emulation of the model provided by the *Shi jing* 詩經 [Classic of Poetry] said to have been edited by Confucius, which contains three hundred and five pieces. Possibly research into the rhyme schemes of Layman Pang’s verse might discover something similar to the example afforded by Hanshan, though this can be no more than mere speculation at present.

In any case the verses under his name seem likely to date from the ninth or early tenth centuries, even if not from the late eighth, so the presence within them of a couple of lines concerning Mount Wutai as direct as anything attributed to Linji is not without interest. One of these, “Do not consider the monasteries of the Clear and Cool Mountains; the emptiness of the skandhas is the true Mount Wutai,” as Tan Wei shows, opens a verse, number 45, enthusiastically endorsed by the great Song period master Dahui Zonggao 大慧宗杲 (1089–1163) as “true, real and not misguided.”<sup>51</sup> But the line that struck me most forcibly when exploring this entire topic occurs earlier, in poem 24, in which the Layman extols his own practice: “It is better than worshipping at Wutai; it is better than seeking the Western Paradise.”<sup>52</sup> To my mind, the bracketing together of Mount Wutai with the most popular form of Buddhist practice throughout East Asia speaks eloquently of the importance of the former, even in a context in which its significance is ostensibly being negated.

It also serves to remind us of something else, too. Here, quite overtly, and by implication throughout the entire early literature of Chan, the tradition claims

49 Tan, *Pang jushi yanjiu*, 425.

50 E.G. Pulleyblank, “Linguistic Evidence for the Date of Han-shan,” in *Studies in Chinese Poetry and Poetics*, ed. Ronald Miao, San Francisco: Chinese Materials Center, 1978, 163–195.

51 These lines read: 無念清涼寺，蘊空真五臺 and, then, 是真語，實語，不誑不妄。Tan, *Pang jushi yanjiu*, 446.

52 亦勝五臺供，亦勝求西方。Tan, *Pang jushi yanjiu*, 440.

superiority over all other forms of practice.<sup>53</sup> But we should not fall into the trap of supposing that its opponents were by contrast mired in folk religion or shallow supernaturalism.<sup>54</sup> Pure Land Buddhism, at any rate, eventually came to be a regular component of their practice for many Chinese masters, and indeed one master of the tenth century was already sympathetic enough to be later claimed as a patron of the trend.<sup>55</sup> These remarks have been devoted to an account of Mount Wutai in the sayings of the great masters of the past, precisely because their rhetoric – which on investigation seems to have extended beyond the personal outlook of any particular master at any particular time – tacitly underscores just how important Mount Wutai was in their eyes. The Chan way of life remains, indeed, powerfully attractive to many persons of all nations today. But it has not superseded Mount Wutai in importance for many others. After a purely historical examination of the sources, the last word on this question should perhaps go to a contemporary, an artist interviewed in the course of the tourism study alluded to at the start of this investigation. “Even when I was studying we were supposed to paint only people like Mao. It was like he was a Buddha! But he’s gone now, right? He is in Tiananmen, Wenshu is still here.”<sup>56</sup>

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53 We might recall that the Dunhuang versions of the *Platform Sūtra* do not identify themselves as belonging to a Chan tradition but to the Southern school of the Sudden Teaching of the ‘Highest Great Vehicle’ *zuishang dasheng* 最上大乘.

54 Steven Heine, “Visions, Divisions, Revisions,” handles this topic well, but some of the epithets applied in his piece to the cult of Mount Wutai might mislead a casual reader into giving it less credit than the Chan masters themselves allowed it.

55 Albert Welter, *Yongming Yanshou’s Conception of Chan in the Zongjing lu: A special transmission within the scriptures* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 27–43.

56 Shepherd, *Faith in Heritage*, 152.



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**PART 3**

*Changing Practices at Mount Wutai*





## Lama Nenghai's Imprint on Mount Wutai: Sino-Tibetan Buddhism among the Five Plateaus since the 1930s

*Ester Bianchi*

At the beginning of the 21st century, Mount Wutai 五臺山 includes more than one hundred fifty sacred sites of different natures, sizes and traditions. Among the approximately eighty active monasteries and temples, a dozen belong to the Sino-Tibetan tradition.<sup>1</sup> These sites are home to at least ten per cent of Mount Wutai's monastic population<sup>2</sup> and identify themselves with monk Nenghai 能海 (1886–1967), the “Chinese lama” to whom I have already devoted a number of studies<sup>3</sup> and who stands out as one of the most significant personalities of the modern Sino-Tibetan Buddhism [Fig. 10.1]. In spreading Tibetan Buddhism inside China proper, Nenghai visited Mount Wutai several times, and finally moved there at the beginning of the 1950s, spending the last years of his life in Jixiang si 吉祥寺, near Qingliang Bridge.

In the present study, I shall evaluate Nenghai's role in the developments of Buddhism on Mount Wutai during the 20th century, as well as the legacy he

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- 1 There are currently ten active Sino-Tibetan monasteries on Mount Wutai and four more monasteries are under construction. In 2006 the monasteries belonging to Nenghai's tradition numbered eight. As for the total number of monasteries, in August 2015 official data referred to seventy-three active sites inside Mount Wutai National Park and stated that nine more sites were under construction (Zhang Chunyu 張春雨, personal communication, August 2015).
  - 2 See Gray Tuttle, “Tibetan Buddhism at Ri bo rtse Inga/Wutai shan in Modern Times,” *Journal of the International Association of Tibetan Studies* 2 (2006): 24. This percentage has probably increased during the last decade. According to Rukong 如空, today on Mount Wutai there are more than three hundred resident monastics belonging to Nenghai's tradition (Rukong, personal communication, 25 July 2015).
  - 3 In particular see Ester Bianchi, “The ‘Chinese Lama’ Nenghai, (1886–1967): Doctrinal Tradition and Teaching Strategies of a Gelukpa Master in Republican China,” in *Buddhism Between Tibet and China*, ed. Matthew Kapstein (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2009), 294–346, and Ester Bianchi, “Sino-Tibetan Buddhism: Continuities and Discontinuities. The Case of Nenghai 能海's Legacy in the Contemporary Era,” in *Chinese and Tibetan Esoteric Buddhism*, eds. Yael Bentor and Meir Shahar (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 300–18. On Nenghai, see also Dingzhi, ed., *Nenghai shangshi zhuan* (Chengdu: Fangguang wenhua, 1995) and Wu Wei, “Indigenization of Tibetan Buddhism in Twentieth-Century China” (PhD diss., Princeton University, 2017).



FIGURE 10.1 Worship of Nenghai on Wutaishan (Shangshita si). Photo by author.

created through his first and second-generation disciples involved with the “Five Plateau Mountains”.<sup>4</sup>

## 1 Nenghai’s relationship with Mount Wutai

The coexistence of Chinese and Tibetan Buddhist worship and practice on Mount Wutai has been one of its most distinctive features for more than a millennium.<sup>5</sup> In the last phase of the imperial period, religious sites were

4 I collected the fieldwork data for the paper in July-August 2006 and in July 2015.

5 In the 8th century, at a time when the identification of Mount Wutai with Mañjuśrī had consolidated in China, there is also evidence of a Tibetan interest in Mount Wutai: the first Tibetan pilgrims reached the mountain as early as the beginning of the 8th century (Anne Chayet, *Les Temples de Jehol et leurs modèles tibétains* [Paris: Editions Recherche sur les Civilisations, 1985], 147). Furthermore, a Tibetan mission of the 9th century requested a map of the site from the imperial court (Tuttle, “Tibetan Buddhism at Ri bo rtse Inga,” 2). However, it was under the Yuan dynasty, when Tibetan Buddhism was selected as the state religion, that the mountain became an important centre for Tibetan Buddhism. With the Qing period, the Tibetan sites on the mountain acquired an extremely large institutional role. On Tibetan and Mongolian Buddhism on Mount Wutai in late imperial China, see Isabelle Charleux, *Nomads on Pilgrimage: Mongols on Wutaishan (China), 1800-1940* (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 109–12 and pas-

classified as “yellow temples” (*huangmiao* 黃廟 or *lamamiao* 喇嘛廟), i.e. monasteries in the Tibetan tradition, and “black temples” (*qingmiao* 青廟, also known as *heshangmiao* 和尚廟), i.e. Chinese monasteries.<sup>6</sup> In spite of this clear-cut distinction, encounters and interactions between the two categories of monasteries were not unusual.<sup>7</sup> The situation remained basically the same throughout the first half of the 20th century, when Nenghai arrived on the mountain.<sup>8</sup>

Nenghai [Fig. 10.2],<sup>9</sup> a Chinese monk with a *chan* 禪 background, became devoted to the transmission of the Gelukpa teachings to Chinese disciples after

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*sim*; Karl Debreczeny, “Wutai shan: Pilgrimage to Five-Peak Mountain,” *Journal of the International Association of Tibetan Studies* 6 (2011): 1–133; David M. Farquhar, “Emperor as Bodhisattva in the Governance of the Ch’ing Empire,” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 38, no. 1 (1978): 5–34 (on the identification of Emperors with Mañjuśrī); Natalie Köhle, “Why did the Kangxi Emperor go to Wutai Shan? Patronage, pilgrimage, and the Place of Tibetan Buddhism at the Early Qing Court,” *Late Imperial China* 29, no. 2 (2008): 73–119; and Gray Tuttle, *Tibetan Buddhists in the Making of Modern China* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 15–33.

- 6 *Huangmiao* refers to *huangjiao* 黃教, a Chinese term for the Gelukpa tradition of Tibetan Buddhism; *qingmiao*, on the other hand, refers to the habit of wearing dark clothes (brown, grey, or black) among Chinese monks.
- 7 Consider for example that, as the Russian ambassador Pokotilov who visited Mount Wutai in 1889 explained, Chinese monasteries used to host Mongolian lamas because it was to their economic advantage. This situation promoted cross-fertilization of cultural and ritual elements from the different traditions. See D. Pokotilov, “Der Wu Tai Schan und seine Klöster. Eine historisch-geographische Skizze und Schilderung der örtlichen Verhältnisse im Jahre 1889,” *Sinica Sonderausgabe*, 1935: 38–89. For earlier times, see Charleux, *Nomads on Pilgrimage*, 99 ss.
- 8 A census from 1936 reports that out of 2,200 monks who resided in the 130 monasteries on the mountain, approximately 800 belonged to the lama category. After the establishment of the PRC, many monks and nuns left monastic life and the number of residents decreased to 359 individuals by 1952. In 1956, out of the 124 sites that were still active, 99 belonged to the Chinese tradition and 25 to the Tibetan one. According to a new census of the monastic population, 582 monks lived on the mountain in 1958. See Hou Wenzheng, *Wutaishan zhi* (Taiyuan: Shanxi renmin chubanshe, 2003), 130–32.
- 9 On Nenghai’s life at Wutaishan, see Tuttle, “Tibetan Buddhism at Ri bo rtse lnga,” 8–14; Wen Jinyu, “Wutaishan zangchuan fojiao yu minzu tuanjie,” *Fayin* 2 (2003): 22–27; Zhao Gaiping, “Nenghai fashi dui Wutaishan zangchuanfojiao fazhan de gongxian,” *Xizang yanjiu* 1 (2009): 59–70; and Zheng Jihuai, “Wutaishan shang de mifa chuanren: Nenghai fashi,” *Wutaishan yanjiu* 2 (1996): 24–27. Also see the accounts by some of his disciples in a collective work of memories published in 1997: Qingding, “Wushang dabao enshi Nenghai lao fashi de xingshi ji,” in *Nenghai shangshi yonghuai lu*, eds. Qingding, Longlian, Zhaotong et al. (Shanghai: Shanghai foxue shuju, 1997), 12; Ren Jie, “Haigong shangshi de chen qin wen lu,” in *Nenghai shangshi yonghuai lu*, 68–69; Zhaotong, “Suishi Haigong shangshi huiyilu,” in *Nenghai shangshi yonghuai lu*, 29–40; and Zhimin, “Haigong shangshi qinian si xingshi lu,” in *Nenghai shangshi yonghuai lu*, 42.



FIGURE 10.2 Common portrait of Nenghai. Photo by author.

studying in Tibet.<sup>10</sup> He first came to Mount Wutai in 1934, two years after returning from a four-year period of study in Lhasa. At the mountain, Nenghai stayed at the Chinese monastery Guangji Maopeng 廣濟茅蓬 (also known as Bishan si 碧山寺), where he was appointed abbot in the summer of 1936. In the few years following his initial visit, he became acquainted with the *jasagh* lama (Ch. Zhasa lama 札薩喇嘛) Lozang Pasang (1882–1955), a Mongolian monk from Pusa ding 菩薩頂. Nenghai created a secluded space for his disciples to practice Tantrism, and also devoted himself to the translation of Tibetan works into Chinese.<sup>11</sup> In the early days of 1937, because of tensions that arose between his followers and the traditional Chinese monks in the Guangji Maopeng,

10 Nenghai first went to Kham in 1926–1927; he later went to Central Tibet and stayed in Drepung monastery between 1928–1932; he went back to Lhasa for the last time in 1940–1941.

11 Nenghai translated the *Lam rim Nyamgur* (*Putidao cidī kesong* 菩提道次第課誦), the “Vajrabhairava sādhanā of the Thirteen Deities” (*Daweide shisanzun yigui* 大威德十三尊儀軌), and also began to study and translate with the *jasagh* lama the *Abhisamayālamkāra* (*Xianzheng zhuangyan lun* 現證莊嚴論), one of the fundamental texts in the Gelukpa monastic curricula for *geshēs*.



Nenghai established his own tantric community of more than a hundred monks at Shancai dong 善財洞 (Sudhana's Cave) with the support of the *jasagh* lama.<sup>12</sup> Soon afterward, however, due to the Sino-Japanese war, he was forced to leave North China and was only able to come back to Mount Wutai sixteen years later.

During this period of time, Nenghai stayed in Jinci si 近慈寺, his first *misheng jin'gang daochang* 密乘金剛道場 ("tantric vajra *bodhimanda*")—the name he gave to his monasteries. Nenghai founded the place of practice south of Chengdu in 1938 and planned to move back to Mount Wutai as soon as historical circumstances allowed.<sup>13</sup>

In 1952 Nenghai went back to live in Guangji Maopeng for a while and decided to take up permanent residence on Mount Wutai. The following year he returned to the mountain and founded the Jixiang si, the seventh and last *jin'gang daochang* where he retired during his last thirteen years of life [Fig. 10.3]. He declared that he had always desired to live on the mountain devoted to Mañjuśrī, his principal meditation deity (*vidam*). Governmental politics of the time, which required that Buddhist monasteries be economically independent, favoured this decision. Jixiang si was located near Qingliang Bridge, 2,440 m. high above sea level, on the south-western side of the Central Terrace.<sup>14</sup> Nenghai changed its name into Qingliangqiao Jixianglü yuan 清涼橋吉祥律院 (Vinaya Temple Jixiang of Qingliang Bridge) and moved in together with the monks from the Jinci si and other followers. The place was surrounded by fields to grow vegetables and to feed livestock, and could thus assure the survival of the monastic community. In 1957 Nenghai, as abbot of Jixiang si, was elected President of the newly-founded Buddhist Association of Mount Wutai, and in 1958 the Buddhist review *Xiandai foxue* 現代佛學 (Modern Buddhism)

12 On these early years at Mount Wutai, see Chenkong, "Wutaishan guangji maopeng zhi guoqu yu xianzai." *Haichaoyin* 17, no.7 (1936 July): 79–82, Dingzhi, ed., *Nenghai shangshi zhuan* (Chengdu: Fanguang wenhua, 1995), 15, and Zhaotong, "Suishi Haigong shangshi huiyilu."

13 On Jincisi, see Bianchi, "The 'Chinese Lama' Nenghai," 316–22.

14 Founded during the Northern Wei dynasty, Jixiang si became an important Buddhist site under the Tang. According to one tradition, this was the place where Mañjuśrī appeared as an elder man carrying a lamp to the Emperor Kangxi, who was said to be lost while he was wandering on the Central Terrace in search of his father, the former Emperor Shunzhi. It is for this reason, tradition holds, that Denglong Wenshu 燈籠文殊, a particular form of the bodhisattva wearing a beard and monastic robes and carrying a red lantern, is worshipped in the monastery. Apparently, the place was selected by Nenghai also because, at the end of the Ming dynasty, the *vinaya* master Sanmei 三昧 had established an ordination platform at this spot. See Hou, *Wutaishan zhi*, 92–93, and Wen Jinyu, "Nenghai fashi jielü sixiang yanjiu," *Foxue yanjiu* (2003): 30.



FIGURE 10.3 Jixiangsi, near Qingliang Bridge. Photo by author.

reported positively on the activities of his community. The following years constituted a relatively relaxed period in his life and career. Nenghai and his disciples, like other monastic communities in China, engaged both in productive activities and in religious studies and spiritual practice.

In 1966, at the outbreak of the Cultural Revolution, the Jixiang si was subject to repeated attacks, Nenghai himself was tortured, and his young disciple Zhimin 智敏 (1927–2017) was harassed and beaten until he lost the mobility of his legs.<sup>15</sup> Finally, Nenghai passed away on January 1, 1967, one of the three monks who died on Mount Wutai during those years of turmoil.<sup>16</sup> He was found dead in the Meditation Hall, with his body still sitting in the lotus

15 Zhimin, abbot of Duobao jiangsi 多寶講寺 in Zhejiang, encountered Nenghai in 1953 at the Shanghai Jin'gang daochang 上海金剛道場 and resolved to enter the monastic order. The following year he moved to Mount Wutai, took novice vows under Qingding 清定 and full ordination with Nenghai. He spent the next thirteen years on the mountain. See Bianchi, "Sino-Tibetan Buddhism."

16 Five other individuals were reported to have committed suicide. During the Cultural Revolution, the majority of monks disrobed and went back to their place of origin. Only about sixty elderly people were allowed to continue to live on Mount Wutai. See Hou, *Wutaishan zhi*, 130–132.

position, a phenomenon interpreted as a sign of spiritual realization in the Buddhist tradition.<sup>17</sup>

John Blofeld, who resided on Mount Wutai in 1935–36 and became intimate with Nenghai, observed that he was “attempting a compromise between Lamaism and Chinese Buddhism, incorporating the salient features of both.”<sup>18</sup> In fact, as I have already discussed elsewhere,<sup>19</sup> the teachings and practices Nenghai advocated reveal a combination of Chinese and Tibetan elements. This synthesis is the most distinctive character of his tradition. It is apparent in the architecture, furniture, iconography and religious objects displayed inside his monasteries, as well as the religious activities carried out by his monastic communities and the doctrines and practices he transmitted to them. Nenghai belonged to the doctrinal lineage of Khangsar Rinpoche, who had bestowed on him his dharma heritage at Drepung monastery in Lhasa before passing away in 1941 [Fig. 10.4].<sup>20</sup> At the same time, however, Nenghai integrated this transmitted tradition with elements taken from Chinese Buddhism, “purely joining in one doctrine Tibetan and Chinese teachings.”<sup>21</sup> Since the Chinese Buddhist elements belong almost entirely to open/exoteric (*xian* 顯) teachings, while the Tibetan ones are mainly of tantric/esoteric (*mi* 密) nature, Nenghai's tradition can be characterized both as a form of Sino-Tibetan Buddhism<sup>22</sup> and as an example of the “perfect penetration of exoteric and esoteric teachings”

17 On the night of December 31, 1966, Nenghai reached the Meditation Hall and, after dismissing a disciple with a premonitory sentence, he began meditating. The next morning, January 1, 1967, the religious community found him dead, his body still sitting in the lotus position. Interesting enough, in 2004 Jikmé Püntsook also passed away while sitting in meditation. See Suodaji kanbu, *Fawang Jinmei Pengcuo zhuan* (Sertar: Larong Wuming foxueyuan, 2001), 229.

18 John Blofeld, *The Wheel of Life: The Autobiography of a Western Buddhist* (Boston: Shambala Dragon Editions, 1988), 136.

19 The present discussion on the combination of Sino-Tibetan or exoteric-esoteric elements in Nenghai's teachings follows closely my former study: Bianchi, “Sino-Tibetan Buddhism.”

20 On Khangsar (1890–1941) see Bianchi, “The ‘Chinese Lama’ Nenghai,” 297–302. Nenghai took back Khangsar's relics from Lhasa; they are presently enshrined in a stūpa at Jixiang si.

21 These are the words of nun Longlian 隆蓮, quoted in Bianchi, “The ‘Chinese Lama’ Nenghai,” 296. While Nenghai's teachings related to the Highest *Yogatantras* refer almost exclusively to Tibetan Vajrayāna, in his exoteric doctrines and lower tantras Chinese and Tibetan aspects are often intertwined.

22 The category of “Sino-Tibetan Buddhism” for the modern time was established by Monica Esposito, “rDzogs Chen in China. From Chan to ‘Tibetan Tantrism’ in Fahai Lama's (1920–1991) Footsteps,” in *Images of Tibet in the 19th and 20th Centuries*, ed. M. Esposito (Paris: École française d'Extrême-Orient, 2 vols., 2008), 472.



FIGURE 10.4 Relic *stūpa* of Nenghai's Tibetan master Khangsar. Photo by author.

(*xianmi yuantong* 顯密圓通), a well-established category of late imperial Chinese Buddhism.<sup>23</sup>

23 Nenghai justified the union of exoteric and esoteric teachings on the basis of Tsongkha-pa's *lamrim* perspective of a gradual path to bodhi. It should be noticed, however, that this kind of combination can be dated back at least to 11th century China, as testified by the "Collection of Essentials for Realization of Buddhahood in perfect penetration of the Exoteric and the Esoteric teachings" (*Xianmi yuantong chengfo xinyao ji* 顯密圓通成佛心要集, T.1955, 46) by Liao dynasty monk Daochen 道殿 (11th-12th century). "This work, according to its preface composed probably sometime in the 1080s, is a concerted effort

After the Cultural Revolution, Nenghai's tradition—characterized by this twofold combination of Chinese and Tibetan, *xian* and *mi*—soon re-emerged in Sichuan, Zhejiang and on Mount Wutai. Nenghai's relics are preserved in a stūpa which was built between 1979 and 1981 along the path leading to Dailuo ding 黛螺頂.<sup>24</sup> The construction was sponsored by the Buddhist Association of China and the Chinese characters on the nearby stele were written by the Association's President Zhao Puchu 趙樸初 (1907–2000) [Fig. 10.5].<sup>25</sup> It reads:

He held to the teachings of Mañjuśrī and took his monk staff to the Clear and Cold mountains. He spread sūtras and tantras and far and wide revered the dharma king. His discipline was painstakingly pristine, his knowledge sharp as the vajra. A messenger of peace, he was a light for the Buddha school. Among the lofty Five Peaks, and within the flourishing

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to synthesize the doctrines of Huayan Buddhism, which its author characterizes as the acme of the Buddha's exoteric or manifest teachings (*xianjiao* 顯教), and the practices and assumptions of the occult Buddhist traditions (*mijiao* 密教, i.e., Tantrism, esoterism, etc.)" (Robert M. Gimello, "Icon & Incantation: The Goddess Zhunti and the Role of Images in the Occult Buddhism of China," in *Images in Asian Religions: Text and Contexts*, eds. Phyllis Granoff and Koichi Shinohara, Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2004, 234–5). Also see Robert Gimello, "Wu-t'ai Shan during the Early Chin Dynasty: The Testimony of Chu Pien," *Chung-Hwa Buddhist Journal* 7 (1994), 507–8 and 558–9, n. 16; Charles D. Orzech "Looking for Bhairava: Exploring the Circulation of Esoteric Texts Produced by the Song Institute for Canonical Translation," *Pacific World: Journal of the Institute of Buddhist Studies (Third Series)* 8 (2006): 148 and 162–3, n. 38; and Henrik H Sørensen, "Esoteric Buddhism under the Liao," in *Esoteric Buddhism and the Tantras in East Asia*, eds. Charles D. Orzech, Henrik H. Sørensen, and Richard K. Payne (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 457. For the debates about *xian* and *mi* during the Republican period, see Mei Jingxuan, "Minguo zaoqi xian mi fojiao chongtu de tantao," *Chung-Hwa Buddhist Studies* 3 (1999): 251–70, and Luo Tongbing, "The Reformist Monk Taixu and the Controversy About Exoteric and Esoteric Buddhism in Republican China," in *Images of Tibet in the 19th and 20th Centuries*, 433–71.

24 After the Cultural Revolution, Nenghai was immediately regarded as one of the most prominent masters of the Republican period. He was appreciated for his contribution to the revival of Tantrism, for bridging Tibetan and Chinese Buddhism, and for his patriotism. See for instance Wen, "Wutaishan zangchuan fojiao," Yu Guanghui, "Lun Nenghai fashi dui Chengdu zangchuan fojiao fazhan de gongxian," *Zhongguo zangxue* 2 (2013): 156–61; Zhao, "Nenghai fashi dui Wutaishan," and Zheng, "Wutaishan shang de mifa." Nenghai's life was also narrated in a documentary film entitled: *Dangdai Xuanzang Nenghai shangshi* 當代玄奘能海上師 ("Lama Nenghai, a Modern Xuanzang 玄奘").

25 "承文殊教，振錫清涼，顯密雙弘，遙遵法王。律履冰潔，智刃金剛，作和平使，為釋宗光。五頂巍巍，三峨蒼蒼，闕塔崇岳，德音無疆" (quoted in Longlian, "Nenghai fashi nianpu," in *Sichuan wenshi ziliao xuanji* 39 [Chengdu: Sichuan renmin chubanshe, 1985], 85).



FIGURE 10.5  
Relic stūpa of  
Nenghai, and Zhao  
Puchu stele  
inscription.  
Photo by author.

Three Emei, in hidden stūpas on lofty mountains, may his virtue resound boundless.

Nenghai's heirs, most of whom chose to live on the sacred mountain devoted to Mañjuśrī, do not consider themselves representatives either of the Tibetan Gelukpa school or of Chinese Buddhism. Instead, they derive their identity from the “doctrinal lineage of lama Nenghai” (*Nenghai shangshi chuancheng* 能海上師傳承), and thus position themselves at an equal distance between Chinese Buddhists and Tibetan Buddhists [Fig. 10.6].

## 2 Nenghai's legacy on Mount Wutai

Nenghai's passage on Mount Wutai has left an indelible mark. He is still revered in a number of stūpas and monasteries, which are headed by different



FIGURE 10.6 Nenghai's lineage on Mount Wutai: Nenghai, Khangsar and Qinghai. Photo by author.

abbots and are independent from one another both in administration and, to some extent, also in practice. Nevertheless, a substantial traditional identity unifies these sites and communities. In each of them, Han Chinese monks dressed in yellow robes follow the particular liturgy created by Nenghai: they chant Tibetan texts translated into Chinese, engage in Tibetan meditation practices and rituals, and at the same time abide by typical Chinese Buddhist habits and rules.

Among these places, the two main sites are located at the very core of Taihuai 台懷. Tayuan si 塔院寺 [Fig. 10.7], with more than seventy monks, hosts the biggest of Nenghai's monastic communities on the mountain. It was previously one of the "ten major black/Chinese monasteries" (*shi da qingmiao* 十大青廟) and nowadays, though the resident community practices a form of Sino-Tibetan Buddhism, it continues to attract pilgrims of all Buddhist traditions. Yuanzhao si 圓照寺 [Fig. 10.8], on the other hand, is home to more than forty monks and has been associated with the Gelukpa tradition for over five hundred years.<sup>26</sup> The nearby Guangzong si 廣宗寺 houses the relics of Fazun 法尊

26 Tuttle, "Tibetan Buddhism at Ri bo rtse lnga," 16–8.



FIGURE 10.7  
Sino-Tibetan, Tibetan  
and Chinese pilgrims  
at Tayuan si.  
Photo by author.



FIGURE 10.8  
Nenghai's memorial  
hall (Yuanzhao si).  
Photo by author.





FIGURE 10.9 Stūpa of Fazun (Guangzong si). Photo by author.

(1902–1980), another fundamental figure in the dissemination of Tibetan teachings in China [Fig. 10.9]. The residing community of a dozen of monks nevertheless follows Nenghai's liturgy.<sup>27</sup>

The other monasteries in Nenghai's lineage located in the neighbourhood of Taihuai include Santa si 三塔寺, which is home to ten Chinese monks and two Tibetan *lamas*,<sup>28</sup> Jifu si 集福寺 (also known as Wulang miao 五郎廟), where approximately twenty-five nuns practice Sino-Tibetan Buddhism,<sup>29</sup> and

27 The stūpa was erected in 1980, soon after Fazun's death. On Fazun, see Brenton Sullivan, "Blood and Teardrops: the Life and Travels of Venerable Fazun (1901–1980)," in *Buddhists: Understanding Buddhism Through the Lives of Practitioners*, ed. Todd Lewis (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2014), 296–304, and "Venerable Fazun at the Sino-Tibetan Buddhist Studies Institute (1932–1950) and Tibetan Geluk Buddhism in China," *Indian International Journal of Buddhist Studies* 9 (2008): 199–241, and Françoise Wang-Toutain, "Quand les maîtres chinois s'éveillent au bouddhisme tibétain. Fazun: le Xuanzang des temps modernes," *Bulletin de l'École française d'Extrême-Orient* 87, no. 2 (2000): 707–27, and, with reference to Wutaishan, Tuttle, "Tibetan Buddhism at Ri bo rtse lnga," 6–8.

28 In July 2015, abbot Puxin 普信 was collecting funds in order to restore and enlarge the monastic buildings (Yuandao 願道, personal communication, 25 July 2015).

29 The remaining thirty-five nuns in residence are affiliated with Pure Land Buddhism. Abbess Xianrui 顯瑞 was a disciple of Qinghai 青海.



FIGURE 10.10 Sino-Tibetan-Indian architecture at Dabao si. Photo by author.

the newly-built Wenshu dong 文殊洞, currently inhabited by ten monks.<sup>30</sup> Finally, (Nenghai) Shangshi ta si (能海) 上師塔寺 (commonly known as Jinjie si 金界寺) is at present under restoration and does not have an organized monastic community yet. Given that its buildings enshrine one of Nenghai's stūpas, it seems destined to grow into a major site.<sup>31</sup>

As for the monasteries spread throughout the surrounding areas, the Dabao si 大寶寺 deserves special mention here. Located to the south of Mount Wutai National Park's boundaries, its Sino-Tibetan-Indian architecture immediately reveals the monastery's uniqueness [Fig. 10.10].<sup>32</sup> The Daobao si hosts

30 Abbot Puxing 普興 was a disciple of Jidu 寂度.

31 Abbot Zhiming 智明, a disciple of Qingding, is the sole residing monk and is taking charge of the work to enlarge and restore the site (Zhiming, personal communication, 26 July 2015).

32 The place was established by Zhaojian 照見, previously guest prefect (*zhike* 知客) of Tayuan si and disciple of Jidu. In 2006 he built the retreat huts on the upper slope of the nearby mountain; in 2009 he added the main Dharma hall; finally, in 2010, the construction of the big stūpa began. It is modelled on Bodhgaya's stūpa, as it was the wish of Nenghai, who, after his pilgrimage to India, had himself a 10 m. high stūpa built in Mianzhu, Sichuan (Pujing 普淨, personal communication, 26 July 2015). On similar copies in Beijing and Inner Mongolia, see Isabelle Charleux, "Copies de Bodhgayā en Asie orientale:

sixty-three monastics, including fourteen nuns and ten Tibetan Gelukpa lamas; the latter take part in everyday common activities but practice separately according to their own Tibetan liturgies.

Jixiang si was Nenghai's last residence and remains a place where his relics are worshipped; as such it is a favourite pilgrimage spot despite its remote location near Qingliang Bridge. For at least a decade, the monastery has been in the process of being restored. It is presently home to thirteen monks and a nun who practice a rather simple form of Tibetan Buddhism compared to that of the other Sino-Tibetan monasteries.<sup>33</sup>

Finally, located on Mount Wutai Central Terrace is Yanjiao si 演教寺, a subsidiary monastery of Yuanzhao si. At this monastery, daily religious practice is conducted autonomously by the five residing monks, who need only go to the main monastery in Taihuai for the bimonthly recitation of the precepts and for other important religious events.<sup>34</sup>

Further evidence of the strength of Nenghai's legacy comes in two forms. First, in Summer 2015 at least four other Sino-Tibetan monasteries were under construction: Jingshui si 淨水寺 (a nunnery already inhabited by a dozen of nuns), Yuhua si 玉華寺, Hanshan si 寒山寺, and Lianhua si 蓮花寺. Second, Nenghai's tradition on the mountain is also evident in the growing number of stūpas, built in Tibetan style and destined to enshrine relics and bones of outstanding Han Chinese monastics.

Besides the already mentioned relic stūpa of Nenghai located along the path of the "short pilgrimage route" leading to Dailuo ding, another stūpa at Jixiang si enshrines the cleric's ashes and bones [Fig. 10.11].<sup>35</sup> Following its

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Les stupas de type Wuta à Pékin et Kökeqota (Mongolie-Intérieure)," *Arts Asiatiques (L'autre en regard, Volume en hommage à Madame Michèle Pirazzoli-t'Serstevens)* 61 (2006): 120–142; on small-scale models in Tibet, see Charles E.A.W. Oldham, "Some Remarks on the Models of the Bodh Gaya Temple Found at Nar-thang," *Journal of the Bihar and Orissa Research Society* 23 (1937): 418–28. My thanks to Wen-shing Chou for sharing this information with me.

33 The Jixiang si abbot is Fangseng 方僧, who inherited this position from Rengang 仁剛 (see below, note 35). Practice at Jixiang si does not include Highest Yogatantras (Cunjin 存晉, personal communication, 27 July 2015) and is thus very similar to that of the Tiexiang si (see Ester Bianchi, *The Iron Statue Monastery. "Tiexiangsi", a Buddhist Nunnery of Tibetan Tradition in Contemporary China* (Firenze: Leo S. Olschki, 2001), 121–165).

34 Jimin 寂泯 (personal communication, 27 July 2015). In July 2015, the monastic establishment was being consistently enlarged.

35 Nenghai was cremated by his disciple Rengang. A member of the CCP, Rengang was granted permission by the local government, in spite of the fact that this occurred during the Cultural Revolution. Rengang kept relics (*sheli* 舍利), ashes and bones, at his place throughout the ten-year turmoil. In 1979 the Buddhist Association of China made the decision to enshrine Nenghai's relics together with some other precious personal



FIGURE 10.11 Stūpa of Nenghai's bones and ashes at Jixiang si. Photo by author.

establishment, the former stūpa was later enlarged and became the monastic establishment called Shangshi tayuan (“Stūpa complex of lama Nenghai”). The monastery also includes stūpas for Qingding 清定 (1903–1999)<sup>36</sup> and Qinghai 青海 (1923–1991). The principal stūpa of Qinghai, however, was built in 1992 at Qingliang qiao; in the same area, inside and around Jixiang si, there are the stūpas of Qingding, Chengfo 成佛 (1908–1991), Rengang 仁剛 (?–1998) and Jidu 寂度 (1910–2004), as well as Khangsar lama's relic stūpa.<sup>37</sup>

Other stūpas of Nenghai direct disciples are located next to Santa si. There are the two stūpas of Qingfo 請佛 (1915–2003) and Jidu, and those of Ren Jie 任傑 (Changhao 常浩, 1920–2011), Longhui 隆慧 (1932–2013), Chengfo and Guohu

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belongings (e.g. the silver buttons of his military jacket) in a stūpa leading to Dailuo ding. Many of Nenghai's disciples, such as Qingfo 請佛, Longlian, Jidu, Qinghai and the same Rengang, participated at the construction project. Nenghai's bones and ashes were later enshrined in Jixiang si's stūpa (Zhiming, personal communication, 26 July 2015).

36 Qingding (1902–1999), who became his disciple in 1942, was appointed by Nenghai abbot of the Shanghai Jin'gang daochang in order to spread tantric teachings in South-East China. He was arrested in 1955 as a former member of the nationalist army. After his rehabilitation, he took up abbotsip at Chengdu Zhaojuesi 昭覺寺, which he reorganized as a place of “tantric and pure land joint practice” (*mijing shuangxiu* 密淨雙修), thus introducing Nenghai's tradition in a prominent Chinese monastery of the area. See Qingding, *Qingding shangshi kaishi lu. Qingding shangshi jianjie. Nenghai shangshi jianjie. Kangsaba renboqing xingji chugao* (Chengdu: Zhaojuesi, 1999).

37 On the stūpas built in the 1990s, see Tuttle, “Tibetan Buddhism at Ri bo rtse lnga,” 20–1.

果護 (1928–2011) [Fig. 10.12]. A more recent and noteworthy case is the stūpa of Longlian (1909–2006), the only nun among Nenghai's principle disciples [Fig. 10.13]; when she passed away her relics were divided into four equal parts and one portion was sent to Mount Wutai.<sup>38</sup> Finally, Renxiang 仁祥, who was a disciple both of Nenghai and Qingding, found his place next to his two masters' stūpas.

These stūpas testify of the close ties of many of Nenghai's direct disciples with Mount Wutai.<sup>39</sup> Among them, Qinghai and Jidu are the most revered figures, since they inherited the master's influence and position on the mountain.<sup>40</sup> As abbots of Yuanzhao si and Tayuan si respectively, they were responsible for reviving Sino-Tibetan Buddhism on the mountain and possibly, even if indirectly, also Tibetan Buddhism.<sup>41</sup> Consequently, with the sole exception of the Jixiang si and Shangshita yuan, which tend to be autonomous and “bipartisan” due to their relevance as places for the worship of Nenghai's relics, all other Sino-Tibetan communities identify themselves either with the lineage of Qinghai or with that of Jidu, which differ from one another in certain doctrinal aspects and for some tantric practices.<sup>42</sup>

38 Longlian, former abbess of Tiexiang si 鐵像寺 (Sichuan) and commonly addressed as “the most outstanding nun of the modern era,” resided on Mount Wutai in 1957–58 and again in 1959, studying and practicing with Nenghai for several months. On Longlian's stays on Mount Wutai, see Qiu Shanshan “Longlian fashi yu Wutaishan,” *Wutaishan* 7 (2006): 19–23; On Longlian, see Ester Bianchi, “Subtle Erudition and Compassionate Devotion: Longlian (1909–2006), the ‘Most Outstanding *Bhikṣuṇī*’ in Modern China,” in *Making Saints in Modern China*, eds. David Ownby, Vincent Goossaert and Ji Zhe, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), 272–311, and Qiu Shanshan, *Dangdai di yi biqiuni: Longlian fashi zhuan* (Fuzhou: Fujian meishu chubanshe, 1997).

39 Among Nenghai's direct disciples I shall also mention Dinghui 定慧, Jingtian 靜天, Wanfa 萬法, Yongci 永慈, Xingfa 興法, Zhaotong 照通, Liu Mingyuan 劉明淵 (Tongyi 通一), and Zhenyi 貞意. On Nenghai's principle disciples, see Liu Mingyuan, *Nenghai shangshi ji qi di zi shengping shiji huiji* (Taiyuan: Shanxi Taiyuan sanbao di zi yin, 2012); significantly, this book, focused on the Qingfo and Jidu lineage branch, does not include Qinghai's biography.

40 On Qinghai, see Tuttle, “Tibetan Buddhism at Ri bo rtse lnga,” 14–8, and Zhao, “Nenghai fashi dui Wutaishan,” 68–9. On Jidu, see especially Liu, *Nenghai shangshi ji qi di zi*, 34–45.

41 This is, for instance, Gray Tuttle's opinion of Qinghai's deeds and endeavours (see Tuttle, “Tibetan Buddhism at Ri bo rtse lnga”).

42 Among the main differences, it should be noticed that the “Vairocana *sādhana*” (*Pilu yigui* 毗盧儀軌), which was transmitted to Nenghai in 1946 by a Mongolian lama, was inherited only by Qinghai, and is thus practiced exclusively in those monasteries that connect themselves with his lineage branch (Haixin 海信, personal communication, 28 July 2015).



FIGURE 10.12 Stūpas of Ren Jie, Longhui, Chengfo and Guohu (near Santa si). Photo by author.

Qinghai [Fig. 10.14] lived with Nenghai for twenty-seven years, first at the Jinci si and later on Mount Wutai. In 1978, as soon as it was permitted,<sup>43</sup> he went back to the mountain, settled in Guangzong si and decided to convert it into a Sino-Tibetan Buddhist monastery. In 1984 he moved to the neighbouring Yuanzhao si, which soon became a major hub of Nenghai's tradition.

Jidu [Fig. 10.15] was also among those disciples that followed Nenghai from Jinci si to Mount Wutai. He came back to the mountain in 1978 as well, resided in Bishan si for a couple of years and, in 1981, was appointed abbot of Tayuan si, thus introducing Sino-Tibetan Buddhism to this Chinese site.

43 In the early 1980s, after the promulgation of the new policy on freedom of religious belief and the official reopening of the Mount Wutai Buddhist Association, those monks who had been previously turned out were invited to come back to live on the mountain. New young monks were also recruited. By 1984, 94 monks positively responded to the call to return to Mount Wutai and 75 young monks were ordained between 1981 and 1988. Over the last decades the monastic population has been on the rise (to my knowledge, no official census of the Mount Wutai monastic population is available). At least a quarter of the monks practice Tibetan or Sino-Tibetan Buddhism and most of them are Mongolian or Han Chinese, though over the last years there has been an exponential growth of Tibetans. See Hou, *Wutaishan zhi*, 132–3, and Tuttle, “Tibetan Buddhism at Ri bo rtse Inga,” 4–5.



FIGURE 10.13 Stūpa of Longlian (near Bishan si). Photo by author.

Presently, among the Sino-Tibetan Buddhist communities on Mount Wutai one finds monks belonging to the second and third generation of Nenghai's disciples. The most prominent masters include abbot Haixin 海信 from Yuanzhao si, who was disciple of Qinghai, and Fangseng 方僧, the abbot of Jixiang si who resides in Yuanzhao si. Fangseng was a disciple of both Qinghai and



FIGURE 10.14  
Worship of Qinghai (Yanjiao si).  
Photo by author.

Rengang,<sup>44</sup> Abbot Rukong 如空 and *tulku* Zhaohui 照慧<sup>45</sup> from Tayuan si were two principle disciples of Jidu and abbot Zhaojian 照見 of Dabao si was also a disciple of Jidu. Abbot Zhiming 智明 of Shangshita si, who presides over Nenghai's relics, on the other hand, connected himself with Qingding and Renxiang.

While some of these masters still preserve Nenghai's tradition unchanged, others have established direct connections with contemporary Tibetan *tulkus* and *lamas* and are reviving Nenghai's tradition through new relationships.<sup>46</sup> A prominent case is Zhaojian. Before Jidu's complete transmission was bestowed upon him in 2004, in 2001 he received the "title of lama" (*shangshiwei*

44 Fangseng inherited Jixiangsi's abbotship from Rengang but continues to live at Yuanzhaosi where he has the title of guest prefect (*zhike*).

45 Zhaohui, who met Nenghai in Jinci si when he was a child, usually stays in a private residence (*jingshe* 精舍) in Shenzhen, but he often comes back to Tayuan si, where he has formal residence. As the senior master, he is responsible for transmitting teachings and bestowing initiations in the monastery (Rukong, personal communication, 25 July 2015).

46 In most cases these second generation masters have received formal permission to give initiation into Highest *Yogatantras* by first generation disciples of Nenghai, such as Jidu or Qinghai, who conferred to them all the tantric transmissions they had received themselves from Nenghai. But in other cases, second and third generation masters have been bestowed the lama position by Tibetan masters; this implies that they are revitalizing Nenghai's tantric tradition through new lineages and transmissions. Initiations in Nenghai's communities are individual (master to disciple), no mass initiation is reported, whereas dharma transmission is usually conducted on a communal basis (Pujing, personal communication, 26 July 2015).





FIGURE 10.15  
Worship of Jidu  
(Dabao si).  
Photo by author.

上師位) from *tulku* Daji 大吉 (1923 –), abbot of the Namu 南無 monastery in Kangding. Daji's previous incarnation was a co-disciple of Nenghai.<sup>47</sup> In addition, Zhaojian often sends his own disciples to Kangding for periods of study and practice. Yuanzhao si monks Haixin, Fangseng, Xinli 心利 and Haiqin 海勤 also received the “title of lama” from Daji. Accordingly, Daji went several times to Yuanzhao si and in 2011 also to Dabao si in order to bestow initiations upon the residing community members and to transmit teachings to them. The first lineage master to establish this kind of exchanges with *tulku* Daji has been Zhimin—the last of Nenghai's first generation disciples who passed away in

47 The former *tulku* Daji had taught Tibetan language to Nenghai when he first went to Kangding during the 1920s. Later, when Nenghai came back from Lhasa in 1932, he met the new incarnation (present-day *tulku* Daji).



FIGURE 10.16 Dharma hall for chanting services (Jixiang si). Photo by author.



FIGURE 10.17 Heart mantra of Mañjuśrī in Chinese script. Photo by author.

2017. From the Duobaojiang si in Zhejiang, Zhimin's disciples are encouraged to undertake periods of study both in Kangding Namosi and on Mount Wutai.<sup>48</sup>

Nenghai's original communities were characterized by the amalgamation of Chinese and Tibetan elements. Describing this synthesis John Blofeld writes,

symbolically, [Nenghai] wore robes of Lamaistic yellow-ochre cut in Chinese fashion with butterfly-wing sleeves. His monastery ... was outwardly like any other important Chinese monastery, but included a subsidiary Great Hall where initiates practised the higher branches of Vajrayāna meditation and rites.<sup>49</sup>

Though written about Nenghai's first community, this description would apply equally well to contemporary Sino-Tibetan monasteries on Mount Wutai. Their halls, statues, images, and other religious objects reveal a similar mixture of Chinese and Tibetan styles [Fig. 10.16]. So too does the religious life at these places of practice. While the organization of activities is mainly based on the Chinese Buddhist monastic regulations, the liturgies, rituals and meditation suggest strong Tibetan influences [Fig. 10.17]. Monks also continue to dress in yellow ochre gowns, a distinctive feature of the Sino-Tibetan tradition said to represent Yellow Mañjuśrī, the principal *yidam* of Nenghai's communities [Fig. 10.18].<sup>50</sup>

John Blofeld also discussed the differences he observed between Tibetan Buddhist monasteries such as the Pusa ding and Nenghai's community in terms of discipline. He wrote that at Nenghai's community "the food was strictly vegetarian, the sleeping rooms as simple as could be, the taking of wine, even for visitors, strictly forbidden."<sup>51</sup> The creation of a hall exclusively devoted to Vinaya studies (Xuejietang 學戒堂) in the Jinci si attests to Nenghai's focus on monastic discipline, as does his choice to rename Jixiang si a "Vinaya temple" (*lüyuan* 律院). In fact, Nenghai committed himself and his disciples to strict observance of the disciplinary rules. As a consequence, members of his

48 See above, note 15.

49 Blofeld, *The Wheel of Life*, 136.

50 This colour was uncommon not only in China but, for full robes, also in Tibet. According to a different explanation, this choice was meant to imitate the saffron yellow dress of Theravāda monks. Moreover, like Blofeld, other disciples suggested to me that yellow is the colour of Gelukpa monks' ceremonial hats and of part of their garments. In any case, yellow was chosen by Nenghai in order to distinguish his own tradition both from Chinese and Tibetan Buddhism and it became his most distinctive feature. In contemporary times, however, it is not uncommon that monks belonging to Chinese mainstream Buddhism also wear these garments (Rukong, personal communication, 25 July 2015).

51 Blofeld, *The Wheel of Life*, 139.



FIGURE 10.18 Evening service in Wenshu dong. Photo by author.

monastic communities on the mountain continue to emphasize compliance with the Vinaya requirements.<sup>52</sup>

### 3 Conclusions

Nowadays Mount Wutai Buddhist sites can be divided into three specific Buddhist traditions. In Taihuai, at the core of the mountain, one not only finds the main monasteries of the Chinese and Tibetan traditions (namely, Xiantong si 顯通寺 and Pusa ding), but also the centres of Sino-Tibetan Buddhism (Yuanzhao si and Tayuan si). Similarly, the path of the “short pilgrimage”

<sup>52</sup> Nenghai explained this on the basis of the importance held by monastic discipline in Tsongkhapa’s tradition; interestingly enough, he preferred to refer to the Vinaya texts of the Dharmaguptaka (*Sifenlü* 四分律, T 1428, 22), i.e. the version followed in China, rather than to those of the Mulasarvastivadin, which are followed by Tibetan Buddhists. On the role of monastic discipline in Nenghai, see Ester Bianchi, “*Yi jie wei shi* 以戒為師: theory and practice of monastic discipline in modern and contemporary Chinese Buddhism,” *Studies in Chinese Religions* and Wen, “Nenghai fashi jielü.” On Vinaya in Tsongkhapa’s works and personal life, see Wang-Toutain, “Quand les maîtres chinois,” 723.

(*xiaochaotai* 小朝台) moves from the Cave of Sudhana, a favourite worship place for Tibetan Buddhists,<sup>53</sup> passes by the stūpa of lama Nenghai and ends in the purely Chinese Dailuo ding monastery. The three traditions are equally represented in the immediate vicinity of Taihuai and scattered on the surrounding peaks.

The diversity of this landscape seems to mirror Mount Wutai throughout the centuries. What is new, today, is the presence of communities devoted to practicing Sino-Tibetan Buddhism, a legacy of Nenghai and Fazun. It is likely that reasons of a political nature may account at least in part for the recent growth in number and importance of these sites, which in fact provide a 'neutral' meeting ground between Chinese and Tibetan Buddhism. This can be inferred, for instance, from the description of Nenghai as "emissary for the cultural exchanges between Tibetan and Chinese Buddhism" that appears in the biographical notes placed in front of his relic stūpa. Yet political concerns are not, in my opinion, the most important factor here. The acceptance of Nenghai's communities by both Chinese and Tibetan local monasteries and—according to interviews I have conducted during fieldwork in the summer of 2006—by pilgrims of all traditions and ethnicities clearly shows that at the beginning of the 21st century the presence of Sino-Tibetan Buddhism on Mount Wutai has achieved historical legitimacy. The shared devotion toward Mañjuśrī is deemed sufficient as a unifying framework. [Fig. 10.19]

The long and fascinating history of visions of Mañjuśrī on the mountain has involved monks and lay people from every place of origin. A well known example in modern times concerns Chinese *chan* master Xuyun 虛雲 (1840–1959).<sup>54</sup> A more recent case is that of Tibetan *rinpoche* Jikmé Püntsock, founder of the Larung gar Five Sciences Buddhist Academy, who went on pilgrimage to Mount Wutai in 1987 after he had a vision of Mañjuśrī recommending that he visit the mountain.<sup>55</sup> Not surprisingly, miracles and visions connected with

53 Sudhana cave (Shancai dong) dates back to the Qing dynasty, when it was established as an exclusively Tibetan holy place (before the 20th century, no Chinese gazetteers refer to it). As seen above, Nenghai established his community here for a short while in 1937. After the Cultural Revolution, Jikmé Püntsock experienced visions in this place, thus revitalizing its Tibetan identity. Even if Chinese Buddhist monks currently administer Sudhana cave, Upper Sudhana cave continues to be a favorite site for Tibetan pilgrims. See Chou Wenshing, "A Visionary Pilgrimage in Post-Cultural Revolution China" (unpublished).

54 For the pilgrimage of Xuyun to Mount Wutai, see Daniela Campo, *La construction de la sainteté dans la Chine moderne: la vie du maître bouddhiste Xuyun (env. 1864–1959)* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2013), 95–101.

55 Once on Mount Wutai, Jikmé Püntsock experienced other visions, miracles and extraordinary events. See Germano, "Re-membering the Dismembered Body of Tibet: The Contemporary Tibetan Visionary Movements in the PRC," in *Buddhism in Contemporary*



FIGURE 10.19 Worshipping Mañjuśrī in Yanjiao si (Central Terrace). Photo by author.

Mañjuśrī are also to be found in the Sino-Tibetan Buddhist tradition. The bodhisattva is reported to have appeared to Nenghai himself many times. For instance, Mañjuśrī welcomed Nenghai when he first arrived at Mount Wutai disguised as an old man.<sup>56</sup> On another occasion, the vision came during meditation, giving his imprimatur to Nenghai's *Wuzi zhenyan* 五字真言, a work

*Tibet: Religious Revival and Cultural Identity*, eds. Melvin Goldstein and Matthew Kapstein (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 84–7.

<sup>56</sup> Haixin (personal communication, 28 July 2015).



FIGURE 10.20 Worship of Yellow Mañjuśrī (Wenshu dong). Photo by author.

which is indeed dedicated to Mañjuśrī and has become the basis of practice for the cleric's disciples.<sup>57</sup> Another relevant case is that of nun Longlian: according

57 *Wuzi zhenyan* is a comprehensive work including lower tantric practices and various exoteric topics, translations from the Tibetan and explanatory passages, the latter of which are in some cases clearly influenced by the Chinese Buddhist tradition. Nenghai conceived of the text as the basis for the Yamāntaka-Vajrabhairava tantric practice. The *yidam* of the text is Arapacana-Mañjuśrī, whose name recalls the five-syllable mantra mentioned in the title. The tantric practice within the *Wuzi zhenyan* is a translation into Chinese of a Yogatantra sādhana. See Bianchi, *The Iron Statue Monastery*, 132–5.

to her own recollection, Mañjuśrī the Youth manifested himself in front of her when she first arrived at Mount Wutai in 1957.<sup>58</sup>

For many centuries Mount Wutai has been a destination for pilgrims coming from every part of Buddhist Asia with the hope of having a face-to-face encounter with Mañjuśrī, who is said to appear before the most sincere and faithful [Fig. 10.20]. The passage of time does not seem to have affected the glory and the attractiveness of the mountain. Nenghai and Longlian are but two among many masters of the same lineage reported to have had the privilege of an encounter with the bodhisattva. To Buddhist believers this seems to be sufficient to fully justify the presence of Sino-Tibetan Buddhism on the sacred mountain.

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<sup>58</sup> Longlian also experienced other miracles on the mountain. For instance, she devoted herself to the study, recitation and practice of the *Prajñāpāramitā* until one night she saw the sacred book emitting bright rays of light. See Bianchi, "Subtle Erudition and Compassionate Devotion," 306.



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- tribution to the Development of Tibetan Buddhism in Chengdu]. *Zhongguo zangxue* 中國藏學 2 (2013): 156–61.
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# The Pure Land Teachings of Fazhao and the Mañjuśrī Cult of Mount Wutai

*Kai Sheng*

## 1 Preliminary Remarks

Fazhao 法照 (8th century) has an important position in the doctrinal history of Chinese Pure Land, venerated as either the third or fourth patriarch in Zongxiao's 宗曉 (1151–1214) six patriarch scheme and Zhipan's 志磐 (1220–1275) scheme of seven patriarchs in the Southern Song (1127–1279). He also held the honorific title of the Later Shandao (hou Shandao 後善導), Shandao 善導 (613–681) having himself been a revered Pure Land preacher. The Japanese scholar Tsukamoto Zenryū 塚本善隆 states, “Fazhao can be discussed alongside Shandao who lived under the reigns of Taizong and Gaozong in the Tang – Fazhao is an excellent representative in the history of Tang Pure Land doctrinal history in the time of Daizong and Dezong.”<sup>1</sup> Despite his significance, there are few accounts of this important figure, found only in monastic biographies and histories. Little is known of his thought and works; we only know that he established the practice called “five ways of *nianfo*” (*wuhui nianfo* 五會念佛).

Examination of the manuscripts preserved at Dunhuang has improved this situation somewhat. The 1900 discovery of a cave containing a repository of scriptures revealed many works that had been otherwise lost and these were collated and researched. During this process, works related to Fazhao also appeared, such as fascicles 2 and 3 of Fazhao's *Jingtu wuhui nianfo songjing guanxing yi* 淨土五會念佛誦經觀行儀 [Rite for intoning the Buddha's name, reciting scripture, and performing meditation in the five tones of the Pure Land] and the Japanese transmission of the *Jingtu wuhui nianfo lüe fashi yizan* 淨土五會念佛略法事儀贊 [Pure Land Five Styles of Reciting the Buddha's Name: Hymns for Ceremonies] which eminent Japanese monks had brought to Dunhuang. These were entered into the canon. As a result, many scholars

1 Tsukamoto Zenryū 塚本善隆, “Nangaku Shōon den to sono jōdo kyō” 南嶽承遠傳とその淨土教, in *Tsukamoto Zenryū chosakushū* 塚本善隆著作集, vol. 4 (Tōkyō: Daitō Shuppansha 大東出版社, 1976), 513.

used these new materials discovered at Dunhuang, and produced a great deal of noteworthy research on Fazhao.<sup>2</sup> In 1933, Tsukamoto Zenryū carried out specialized research on Fazhao and wrote *Tō chūki no jōdo kyō* 唐中期の淨土教 [Pure Land Teachings of the Mid-Tang], a significant scholarly contribution. Following a great influx of new material, the Chinese scholar Liu Changdong 劉長東 made new headway with respect to Fazhao's birthplace, dates, and life events.<sup>3</sup> I also carried out research on Fazhao's Pure Land thought, exploring its ideological features in terms of ordinary beings being reborn in the Pure Land, the causes for being reborn there, and different sects' adaptability.<sup>4</sup> Yang Mingfen 楊明芬 (Ven. Juemin 釋覺旻) examined the Dunhuang manuscript of the *Rite for Five Ways of Nianfo*, exploring its content and structure.<sup>5</sup>

Fazhao's most prominent contribution to Pure Land teachings was his five ways of *nianfo* in which one uses five melodies to recite the Buddha's name, inspiring faith for oneself and in others before subsequently achieving the *nianfo samādhi* (*nianfo sanmei* 念佛三昧). Although Chinese Pure Land can be divided into three streams—that of Huiyuan 慧遠 (334–416), Shandao and Cimin 慈潛—Fazhao's Pure Land teachings were absorbed into all three streams while also succeeding in becoming popular teachings.<sup>6</sup> A comprehensive view of Fazhao's life reveals that his time at Mount Wutai (Wutai shan 五臺山) constituted a critical juncture in his life between self-cultivation and proselytization, as well as the worldly and the spiritual. Research on mid-Tang (618–907) Pure Land and the Mañjuśrī cult of Mount Wutai is highly significant to understanding this figure as it shows the intrinsic relationship between the Mañjuśrī cult and the development of Fazhao's Pure Land teachings.

2 See Sheng Kai 聖凱, "Er'shi shiji Fazhao yanjiu zongshu" 二十世紀法照研究綜述, *Fa yuan* 法源 16 (1998). Later included in Sheng Kai, *Jin Tang Mituo jingtu de sixiang yu xinyang* 晉唐彌陀淨土的思想與信仰 (Beijing: Zhongguo Shehui Kexue Chubanshe 中國社會科學出版社, 2009), 198–208.

3 Liu Changdong 劉長東, *Jin Tang Mituo jingtu xinyang yanjiu* 晉唐彌陀淨土信仰研究 (Chengdu: Bashu Shushe 巴蜀書社, 2000), 376–409.

4 Sheng Kai, *Jin Tang Mituo jingtu de sixiang yu xinyang*, 208–233.

5 Yang Mingfen 楊明芬, *Tangdai xifang jingtu lichan fa yanjiu: Yi Dunhuang Mogao ku xifang jingtu xinyang wei zhongxin* 唐代西方淨土禮懺法研究：以敦煌莫高窟西方淨土信仰為中心 (Beijing: Minzu Chubanshe 民族出版社, 2007), 98–146.

6 Fujiwara Ryōsetsu 藤原凌雪, *Nianfo sixiang zhi yanjiu* 念佛思想之研究, trans. Yin Hai 印海 (Los Angeles: Fayin-si 法印寺, 1997), 329.

## 2 The Formation of the Mañjuśrī cult at Mount Wutai

Holy sites in Chinese Buddhism are formed primarily through the accumulation of Buddhist faith and traditions over a long period of time. They form through people training and visiting there, temple building, and spiritual experiences gained through pilgrimage. A cult on a famous mountain requires six major features: scriptural accounts, superior geography, legends of spiritual or supernatural experiences, a monastic community with stūpas and temples, devotees making pilgrimage, and state support.<sup>7</sup> Thanks to its unique natural environment, Mount Wutai became regarded as an auspicious site suitable for spiritual training by the Northern Dynasties period (386–581) at the latest. During this time, monks would go to the mountain to train primarily in Chan austerities (*dhūta*), reflecting how Chan practices flourished in this period.<sup>8</sup>

The following scriptures attest to Mount Wutai's growing significance. The Jin era (265–420) translation of the *Avatamsaka sūtra* (*Huayan jing* 華嚴經) records the following:

In the northeast there is a bodhisattva abode called Mount Qingliang [Pure-Refreshing Mountain]. Past bodhisattvas have taken up permanent residence there. Currently there is a bodhisattva named Mañjuśrī with a retinue of ten thousand bodhisattvas. He constantly preaches the Dharma to them.

東北方有菩薩住處，名清涼山。過去諸菩薩常于中住，彼現有菩薩，名文殊師利，有一萬菩薩眷屬，常爲說法。<sup>9</sup>

7 For related research see Sheng, "Zhongguo Fojiao si da mingshan de xinyang neihan" 中國佛教四大名山的信仰內涵, in *Shensheng kongjian: Zhonggu zongjiao zhong de kongjian yinsu* 神聖空間：中古宗教中的空間因素, ed. Chen Jinhua 陳金華 and Sun Yinggang 孫英剛 (Shanghai: Fudan Daxue Chubanshe 復旦大學出版社, 2014), 367–378. Sheng, "On the Veneration of the Four Sacred Buddhist Mountains in China," *The Eastern Buddhist* 44, no. 2 (2013): 121–143.

8 For research related to Mount Wutai see the following papers: Cui Zhengsen 崔正森, *Wutaishan Fojiao shi* 五臺山佛教史 (Taiyuan: Shanxi Renmin Chubanshe 山西人民出版社, 2000); Che Bok Hee 崔福姬, "Koshōryōden kara Kōshōryōden he no Monju shinkō no hensen: Monju gainen wo chūshin ni" 古清涼傳から廣清涼傳への文殊信仰の変遷：文殊概念を中心に, *Indogaku bukkyōgaku kenkyū* 印度學佛教學研究 52, no 1 (2003): 192–194; Che Bok Hee 崔福姬, "Godaizan Monju shinkō ni okeru kegen" 五台山文殊信仰における化現, *Bukkyō daigaku daigakuin kiyō* 佛教大學大學院紀要 33 (2005): 15–29.

9 T 278, 09: 590a3–5.



The Tang translation of the *\*Mañjuśrī-dharma-ratna-piṭaka-dhāraṇī-sūtra* (*Wenshu shili fabaozang tuoluoni jing* 文殊師利法寶藏陀羅尼經) contains the following account:

After my *nirvāṇa*, in the northeast of this Jambūdvīpa continent there will be a country named Mahā-cīna. In that country there is a mountain called Five Summits. The youth Mañjuśrī will travel and reside there teaching the Dharma to beings.

我滅度後，於此瞻部洲東北方，有國名大振那，其國中有山，號曰五頂。文殊師利童子遊行居住，爲諸眾生於中說法。<sup>10</sup>

Taking both sūtric accounts together, Mañjuśrī's home is at the Five Peaks Mountain or Mount Qingliang (Qingliang shan 清涼山) in Mahā-cīna (i.e., China).

Mount Wutai was well suited to become a holy site on a notable mountain because its geographical environment meets two conditions. First, it had to match the geographical characteristics described in the scriptures. Second, it had to possess the space necessary to build numerous temples and become a center of religious practice. Based on ten years of personal observations at Mount Wutai, and considering that Mount Wutai to the northeast of India has a frigid climate and five summits, Chengguan 澄觀 (738–839) states the following.

Mount Qingliang is Mount Wutai located in Yanmen County in Dai Prefecture. There presently is Qingliang si. It is called Qingliang [Pure-Refreshing] because every year hard ice accumulates and in the summer snow still flies. There has never been a hot summer. Five peaks protrude upward and at the peak there are not trees. There are platforms like ramparts, and therefore it is called Five Platforms

清涼山，即代州雁門郡五臺山也，于中現有清涼寺。以歲積堅冰，夏仍飛雪，曾無炎暑，故曰清涼。五峰聳出，頂無林木，有如壘土之台，故曰五臺。<sup>11</sup>

Because there are no trees at the summits, which resemble “platforms like ramparts”, the mountain is called Five Platforms (Wutai 五臺). Given the height of

<sup>10</sup> T 1185A, 20: 791c11–14.

<sup>11</sup> T 1735, 35: 859c6–10.

the terrain, mist is always present. The peaks are constantly hidden behind a curtain of mists and are only visible when, at times, the sky clears and clouds disperse. Huixiang 慧祥 (7th century), the author of the *Gu Qingliang zhuan* 古清涼傳 [Ancient Chronicle of Mount Clear and Cool], expressed admiration and praise that Mount Qingliang, in terms of location and climate, could be so similar to Mañjuśrī's dwelling as described in the *Avatamsaka sūtra*.

In light of such a sublime environment, the *Kuodi zhi* 括地志 [Treatise on Collected Geography] states:

As for the mountain ... The sublime mountains and gorges are not inhabitable by the vulgar. The residents are all gentlemen practicing meditation and of the type to cultivate mysteries. There is the thunder of Dharma, the sound of quaking, and fragrant smoke all around. The mind of compassionate awakening becomes profound and far reaching.

其山 ... 非薄俗可棲。止者。悉是棲禪之士。思玄之流。及夫法雷震音。芳煙四合。慈覺之心。邈然自遠。<sup>12</sup>

Clearly, Mount Wutai possessed not only a mysterious and holy atmosphere, but it was also a suitable place for practice including meditation.

At the same time, people came to understand a variety of religious experiences had by monks and laypeople as encounters with the bodhisattva. Such tales were spread by pious devotees and consequently sparked intense faith in the bodhisattva while prompting people to make pilgrimages to the site. Legends of exceptional encounters propelled the mountain cult's development. Mañjuśrī's emanations at Mount Wutai were highly appealing and attracted innumerable devotees on pilgrimage. The Japanese monk Ennin 圓仁 (794–864), travelling to Mount Wutai in the Tang dynasty, recorded his thoughts as follows:

At night in the fifth month here on Mount Qingliang it is extremely cold. Usually a cotton-padded jacket is worn. In the valleys of the mountain ranges the tree tips are long and not one tree is bent. When entering the great holy site one sees quite lowly people, but one dare not feel disdain. Even meeting with a donkey one wonders if this might perhaps be an emanation of Mañjuśrī. Whatever one raises one's eyes to look, thoughts of Mañjuśrī manifesting arise. The holy land makes people naturally feel veneration for the site.

<sup>12</sup> T 2098, 51: 1093a16–19.

此清涼山，五月之夜極寒，尋常著棉襖子。嶺上谷裡，樹木端長，無一曲戾之木。入大聖境地之時，見極賤之人，亦不敢作輕蔑之心；若逢驢畜，亦起疑心，恐是文殊化現歟。舉目所見，皆起文殊所化之想，聖靈之地，使人自然對境起崇重之心也。<sup>13</sup>

All pilgrims to Mount Wutai shared Ennin's devotional attitude towards emanations of Mañjuśrī. The mysterious legends of Mount Wutai combined completely with scriptural images of Mañjuśrī frequently manifesting to teach his wisdom. The quest to meet Mañjuśrī to attain wisdom ensured that pilgrimage to the mountain became the most important religious activity of the Mount Wutai cult.

To be able to bring about a surge of faith as a holy mountain, Mount Wutai required numerous monasteries, Buddhist images, and eminent monks. Buddhism was first transmitted to Mount Wutai in the Northern Wei period (386–534). According to Huixiang, by the Northern Qi period (550–577):

All the pagodas and temples amount to forty-thousand. Here the monasteries number more than two hundred. Also [some of] the taxes of the eight provinces are appropriated to supply the assemblies on the mountain with cloth and medicines. They are numerous based on this. The hermitages are sacred and blessed. They thus have only to touch the ground to multiply and prosper.

宇內塔寺。將四十千。此中伽藍。數過二百。又割八州之稅。以供山衆衣藥之資焉。據此而詳。<sup>14</sup>

During this time, the monk Lingbian 靈辯 (477–522) wrote the *Huayan lun* 華嚴論 [Treatise on the *Avataṃsaka sūtra*] in 100 fascicles, the first commentary on the *Avataṃsaka sūtra* in Chinese Buddhism. Mount Wutai gradually became a holy site in Northern China for study of the *Avataṃsaka sūtra*. In the Northern Dynasties period, though the holy Qingliang mentioned in the *Avataṃsaka sūtra* was already equated to Mount Wutai, the development of Buddhism at Mount Wutai had its own characteristics and, furthermore, the Mañjuśrī cult did not yet influence the site's development.

Court patronage changed this situation. In the Tang dynasty, Taizong 太宗 (r. 626–649) established the government ordination system and Gaozong 高宗

13 Ennin 圓仁, *Nittō guhō junrei kōki* 入唐求法巡禮行記, fasc. 2 (Shanghai: Shanghai Guji Chubanshe 上海古籍出版社, 1986), 108.

14 T 2098, 51: 1094a1–3.

(r. 649–683) ordered that monastics be exempt from taxation. Wu Zetian 武則天 (r. 690–705) ordered offerings and stūpa construction. She also ordered the śramaṇa Huize 會曠 (7th century) of Huichang si 會昌寺 in the western capital in 662 (year 2 of Longshuo 龍朔) to compile the *Qingliang shan lüezhuan* 清涼山略傳 (Abbreviated Tales of Mount Qingliang) in one fascicle. She also ordered that the monk superintendent (*sengtong* 僧統), the National Teacher Degan 德感 (7th–8th centuries), permanently reside at Qingliang si on Mount Wutai. With the support of Wu Zetian, the association between Mount Wutai and the Qingliang holy site of Mañjuśrī intensified and came under royal promotion. After this royal promotion, Mount Wutai began to be considered Mañjuśrī Bodhisattva's worldly center.

The Mañjuśrī cult centered at Mount Wutai was in full force during the Kaiyuan 開元 era (713–741) of the Tang, becoming Mañjuśrī's religious center with a great increase in number and types of monasteries on the mountain. In the reigns of Xuanzong 玄宗 (r. 713–756) and Daizong 代宗 (r. 762–779) the empire promoted esoteric teachings for the protection of the country. Mañjuśrī Bodhisattva, who played an important role in esoteric Buddhism for national protection, became an object of vigorous imperial support and veneration. Mount Wutai, established as the religious center of Mañjuśrī Bodhisattva in the Wuzhou period (under Wu Zetian), received vigorous imperial support during Daizong's time and became a link in the development of the esoteric Mañjuśrī cult.

The emperor and court's support were indispensable to the mountain's expanding influence. In the Northern Qi dynasty, various emperors ensured that "taxes of the eight provinces were appropriated so as to supply the assemblies on the mountain with cloth and medicines." Amoghavajra (Bukong 不空, 705–774), by means of Daizong's authority, energetically promoted the Mañjuśrī cult. In 769 (Dali 大曆 year 4), Daizong approved Amoghavajra's proposal to elevate Mañjuśrī to the elder seat of all monastery dining halls while appointing the bodhisattvas Samantabhadra and Avalokiteśvara as retainers, thereby establishing Mount Wutai as the chief monastic mountain complex.<sup>15</sup> Liu Yuxi 劉禹錫 (772–842) gave a summary of Buddhism at the time in the *Gu Hengyue Lü Dashi Xiangtan Tangxing si Yangong bei* 故衡岳律大師湘潭唐興寺儼公碑 [The ancient Yangong stele of Great Teachers of the Law of Hengyue of the Xiangtan Tangxing si] as follows:

Buddhadharma transforms [beings] everywhere throughout the Nine Provinces [China]. [The people of] Central China drown in glory and

15 T 2157, 55: 887c1–8.

profit. There is nothing like profound realization to destroy glory, thus it is Mount Song when speaking of silent meditative practices of Chan. In the north, people are adept in the military arts. There is nothing like revelation to frighten the warriors, thus we venerate Mount Qingliang when speaking of the path of gods. People of the south are frivolous. There is nothing like decorum to rein in frivolity, thus we venerate Mount Heng when speaking of the vinaya canon. These three sacred mountains are ornamented realms.

佛法在九州間，隨其方而化，中夏之汨于榮利，破榮莫若妙覺，故言禪寂者嵩山。北方之人銳以武力，懾武者莫若示現；故言神道者，宗清涼山。南方之人剽而輕，制輕莫若威儀；故言律藏者，宗衡山。是三名山爲莊嚴國。<sup>16</sup>

Liu Yuxi indicates that the major mountains of Chinese Buddhism at the time were Mount Song (Songshan 嵩山), Mount Wutai and Mount Heng (Hengshan 衡山) known for Chan, occult experiences and monastic discipline (i.e., the vinaya) respectively.

By the mid to late Tang, in society and in the contemporary Buddhist world there was a consensus that Mount Wutai was a holy mountain and center of practice. The nation continued to support construction through establishing a national ordination platform at Mount Wutai, a place where the sangha of the whole country could receive precepts and take refuge. At the same time, the sacred precincts of Qingliang were a special place where bodhisattvas appeared in the world, attracting even more devotees to the mountain on pilgrimage.

### 3 The Mañjuśrī Cult and Religious Experience in Fazhao's Pure Land Teachings

Fazhao (746–838) was born in present day Dadang village 大瀛里 in Yang county 洋縣 in the region of Hanzhong 漢中 in the south of Shaanxi province 陝西省. His secular family name was Zhang 張.<sup>17</sup> In his early years, Fazhao

16 See *Gu Hengyue lü dashi Xiangtan Tangxing-si Yangong bei* 故衡岳律大師湘潭唐興寺儼公碑. *Quan Tang wen* 全唐文, fasc. 610 (Shanghai: Shanghai Guji Chubanshe 上海古籍出版社, 1990), 2730–2731.

17 There are no records in extant documents with respect to Fazhao's birth and death dates. Liu Changdong has inferred that Fazhao was born in 746 (year 5 of Tianbao 天寶) and that he died at the age of 93 in 838 (year 3 of Kaicheng 開成). See *Jin-Tang Mituo jingtu xinyang yanjiu*, 376–383. For details on Fazhao's life see research by Liu Changdong.

wandered to Jiangnan 江南 where he took an interest in the legacy and teachings of Huiyuan 慧遠 (334–416) at Lushan 廬山. He went to Lushan and established a center for Amitābha Pure Land practice. In 765 (Yongtai 永泰 year 1), Fazhao left Mount Lu and studied under the famous Chengyuan 承遠 (712–802). Lü Wen in the *Nanyue Mituo si Chengyuan Heshang bei* 南嶽彌陀寺承遠和尚碑 [Stele of the Mituo si at Nanyue] states the following:

In the Yongtai period, an eminent monk Fazhao came forth from the Eastern Wu in search of Mount Lu. He venerated the teachings of Master Yuan and established a center for Western [Pure Land] practice. He entered a meditative state for several days. His vision took him to the side [of Amitābha]. He saw before the seat of Amitābha an old bhikṣu. He inquired who this was. They replied, “Nanyue Chengyuan. Please tell people in my [past] homeland that the superior conditions have come together and the true image will come manifest.” Fazhao left astonished and reverent. He travelled directly to the peak of Mount Heng. Having a panoramic view of the land beyond the clouds, [he found] it tallied with what he had seen in meditation. The causes and conditions were so clear that his tears of sorrow and joy flowed forth. He esteemed [the old monk] his master and wished to gain his care in becoming a spiritual heir.

永泰中，有高僧法照者，越自東吳，求於廬阜，尊遠公教跡，結西方道場。入觀積旬，至想傍達，見彌陀座下，有老比丘焉，啓問何人，答曰：“南嶽承遠，願告吾土，勝緣既結，真影來現。”照公退而驚慕，徑涉衡峰，一披雲外之塵，宛契定中之見。因緣昭晰，悲喜流涕，遂執摠衣之敬，願承入室之顧。<sup>18</sup>

The inscription emphasizes Fazhao's spiritual experiences during his meditative states, in which he saw Chengyuan serving Amitābha as a retainer. Clearly, repeated experiences like these were important factors in Fazhao's life. On the fifteenth day of the fourth lunar month in 766 (Yongtai 2), Fazhao was in Nanyue at the “hall of *pratyutpanna* on the Amitābha Terrace” where he drafted the practice of five ways of *nianfo* based on the *Wuliangshou jing* 無量壽經 (Sūtra of Immeasurable Life). Dunhuang document P.2066—*Jingtu wuhui nianfo songjing guan xingyi*—states the following:

18 See *Quan Tang wen*, fasc 630, vol. 3 (Shanghai: Shanghai Guji Chubanshe 上海古籍出版社, 1990), 2815.

Fazhao, on the fifteenth day of the fourth lunar month in Yongtai 2 at the Amitābha Terrace in Nanyue, made great vows. For *bodhi* and beings ... For ninety days every summer he would always enter the hall of *pratyutpanna nianfo* practice. ... On the night of the fourteenth day, he was alone in the center at the northeast of the terrace ... when doing true *nianfo* ... he suddenly saw a golden bridge appear before him extending to the realm of Sukhāvātī in the western region and, in an instant, was before Amitābha Buddha. ... Amitābha Buddha rejoiced and smiled slightly. He said to Fazhao, "...I have a profound Dharma – a priceless gem. I will now entrust it to you. Now take this Dharma gem and spread it far in Jambudvīpa, extensively benefiting immeasurable beings, both deva and human." ...The Buddha said, "There is one priceless practice of Indian recitation [known as] the five ways of *nianfo*. [Let it] properly flourish in that impure evil world. The present time is the Dharma ending age – it will be in line with the capacities of all beings. They shall hear you recite for a moment and all will generate *bodhicitta*."

照以永泰二年四月十五日於南嶽彌陀台廣發弘願，唯爲菩提，爲諸眾生 ..... 每夏九旬，常入般舟念佛道場。 ..... 至第二七日夜，獨在此台東北道場內 ..... 正念佛時 ..... 忽見一道金橋從自面前，徹至西方極樂世界，須臾即至阿彌陀佛所， ..... 阿彌陀佛歡喜微笑，告法照言：“..... 我有妙法無價珍寶，今付囑汝，今將此法寶于閻浮提廣行流布，普利天人無量眾生”。 ..... 佛言：“有一無價梵音五會念佛法門，正興彼濁惡世，今時末法，一切眾生，機感相應。聞汝暫念，皆悉發心。”<sup>19</sup>

This was Fazhao's second profound spiritual experience. After practicing *pratyutpanna-samādhi*, he experienced Amitābha Buddha bestowing onto him the five ways of *nianfo* practice at the hall of *pratyutpanna nianfo* in Nanyue. Fazhao's spiritual experience reveals the sacred nature of said practice, emphasizing that this rhythm is how the Buddha, bodhisattvas, waterfowl and trees recite sūtras and the many names of the buddhas in the western realm of Sukhāvātī.

Fazhao's third profound religious experience was in 767 (Dali 大曆 2) when he was eating porridge at the monastery's dining hall at Yunfeng si 雲峰寺 in Hengzhou 衡州. He saw a fantastic scene in his porridge bowl of mountain temples that he had never seen before. He asked the monks at this monastery about his vision. Jiayan 嘉延 and Tanhui 曇暉, who had been to Mount Wutai,

19 T 2827, 85: 1253b27 – c20.

told him that the fantastic scene that he saw was Mount Wutai. Their answer inspired Fazhao to go on a pilgrimage to Mount Wutai. In 769 (Dali 4) in the eighth lunar month he and several other likeminded men left Mount Heng, and on the fifth day of the fourth lunar month in 770 (Dali 5) they arrived at Mount Wutai.

The first two of Fazhao's three profound religious experiences were had in meditative states, while the third was had during a daily activity. All these experiences were states of inner realization, which illustrate that Fazhao was an eminent monk who valued religious inspiration. However, individual religious experience lacks a realistic and recognizable foundation from which everyone can be inspired. He absolutely required the Mañjuśrī cult's universality at Mount Wutai to transform his individual experience.<sup>20</sup> The five ways of *nianfo* might have been given to Fazhao by Amitābha Buddha, yet Amitābha is still a "Buddha of the other world" who does not possess this-worldliness.

The Dali reign era of Daizong was an age of flourishing for the Mount Wutai cult.<sup>21</sup> Central figures of each school, including Amoghavajra of Mantrayāna school, Chengguan of the Huayan school and Zhiyuan of the Tiantai school, all gathered at Mount Wutai, making Fazhao's choice to travel there opportune. Mount Wutai was a transformative space for faith and spiritual experiences. It was through the confirmation of the appearance or revelations of Mañjuśrī that individual religious experiences could possess immediacy grounded in this world.

These are reasons why Fazhao's fourth religious experiences occurred at Mount Wutai, where he personally witnessed the appearance of Mañjuśrī. As the *Guang Qingliang zhuan* 廣清涼傳 [Extended Chronicle of Mount Clear and Cool] records, Mañjuśrī Bodhisattva spoke to Fazhao as follows:

As to your *nianfo* practice, at the present time among various practices there is nothing surpassing *nianfo*. ... all Dharmas and *prajñāpāramitā*, the manifestation of deep *dhyāna* and the unexcelled awakening of buddhas all are produced from *nianfo*, thus know that *nianfo* is the king of Dharmas. You all should constantly recite the king of unexcelled Dharmas and let yourselves not rest.

20 Liu Changdong points out that Fazhao moved to Mount Wutai perhaps because he wanted to make use of Mañjuśrī's appearance at Mount Wutai to further confirm and increase the orthodoxy and authority of his *nianfo* practice, finally reaching the goal of fostering faith in others and increasing numbers of devotees while having them take up the Buddhist practice of Pure Land *nianfo*. See *Jin-Tang Mituo jingtu xinyang yanjiu*, 396.

21 Yamamoto Kenji 山本謙治, "Godaizan ni okeru seichi shinkō no keisei – Bukkyō seichi keisei no ichirei toshite" 五臺山における聖地信仰の形成——佛教聖地形成の一例として, *Jinbun kagaku* 人文科學 11 (1991): 68.



汝以念佛，今正是時，諸修行門，無過念佛。……一切諸法般若波羅蜜多，現深禪定，乃至諸佛無上覺，皆從念佛而生，故知念佛是諸法之王。汝等應當常念無上法王，令無休息。<sup>22</sup>

The *Guang Qingliang zhuan* also mentions that Fazhao took this revelation and either “inscribed it on an erected stone which is still present,” “gave a faithful account to all,” or “wrote it on the monastery’s wall” to “make it widely seen, with [everyone] together generating the superior mind and together hoping for the fruit of Buddhahood.”<sup>23</sup>

The aforementioned *Jingtu wuhui nianfo lie fashi yizan* contains praise for the “Great Holy Mañjuśrī Bodhisattva” (Tan dasheng Wenshushili pusa 歎大聖文殊師利菩薩) as follows.

Mañjuśrī! The son of the Excellent-Quality Dharma King – the patriarch of the Seven Buddhas and named the Venerated-Among-Nāgas King Buddha. Although having attained the path to Buddhahood, having turned the Dharma Wheel and entered *nirvāṇa*, he does not abandon the path of the bodhisattva, teaching beings. Having perfected all immeasurable merits and purified immeasurable buddha-lands, those who see and hear him are all benefited. No deed is left neglected. Now in the northeast direction in the Golden-hued realm of Mount Qingliang he abides in the *sūraṅgama-samādhi*. Together with an assembly of ten thousand bodhisattvas he benefits and pleases beings who suffer. Thus I long prostrate myself to him.

文殊師利，妙德法王之子，是七佛之祖師，號龍種上尊王佛。雖得佛道，轉於法輪，入於涅槃；而不舍于菩薩之道，教化眾生。無量功德皆成就，無量佛土皆嚴淨，其見聞者無不蒙益，諸有所作亦不唐捐。現在東北方金色世界清涼山內，住首楞嚴三昧，與一萬菩薩同會，利樂苦眾生，故我遙頂禮。<sup>24</sup>

In addition to promoting the five ways of *nianfo* at Mount Wutai, Fazhao built the famous Dazhulin si 大竹林寺 based on his third and fourth religious experiences.

Mount Wutai is Mañjuśrī Bodhisattva’s earthly abode. It was through the truth, sacredness, and excellence of the Mañjuśrī cult at Mount Wutai that Fazhao could transform the five ways of *nianfo* that he devised into a true,

22 T 2099, 51: 1114b26 – c4.

23 T 2099, 51: 1115c13–20.

24 T 1983, 47: 484c27–485a4.

sacred and excellent Dharma practice. He took an individual religious experience and transformed it into an activity of spreading the Dharma in an immediate and realistic way, thereby establishing an optimal foundation for spreading the practice of five ways of *nianfo*.

#### 4 The Mañjuśrī Cult and Recitation of Fazhao's Name

It was at Mount Wutai where Fazhao had his experience of Mañjuśrī. Furthermore, he obtained Mañjuśrī's confirmation of his practice of *nianfo* there. After this, he started spreading his teachings at Mount Wutai, and in Taiyuan and Chang'an. The end of Dunhuang document P.2483 (*Xifang shiwu yuanzan* 西方十五願贊) contains a lyric which describes Fazhao's travels from Mount Wutai to Taiyuan and from Taiyuan to Chang'an. The lyric states:

Monk Fazhao is not an ordinary monk – his liberation of beings is extensive and all the same. From the aspiration to make pilgrimage to holy sites, he personally observed the traces of Mañjuśrī at Mount Wutai. He transmitted the true word of the Dharma encouraging *nianfo*. From Taiyuan along one road he came to the capital.<sup>25</sup>

A document in the same fascicle (*Wutaishan zan* 五臺山贊) states, “The Chan Master from Liang Han 涼漢 [i.e., the Former Liang 前涼] transcended the mundane, and came from afar on pilgrimage to Mount Wutai. White light was drawn into the *vajra* cave and he was able to behold Mañjuśrī and Samantabhadra.”<sup>26</sup> These documents make clear that the appearance and confirmation of Mañjuśrī Bodhisattva was cause for people to believe in and hold Fazhao in high esteem.

As Lü Wen on the stele for Chengyuan (*Nanyue Mituo si Chengyuan heshang bei* 南嶽彌陀寺承遠和尚碑) states, “Late in the Dali era, the disciple Fazhao took leave from Wutai and went north with widespread repute. He was ordered before the Emperor, [to be present] at the altar and Inner Hall and to provide leadership in the capital.”<sup>27</sup> The emperors Daizong and Dezong esteemed Fazhao and asked to become a ‘national teacher’ (*guoshi* 國師) because of his propagation of *nianfo* practice.

Fazhao not only attained worldly success through propagating the five ways of *nianfo*, but he also built Dazhulin si and was venerated as national teacher.

<sup>25</sup> *Dunhuang baozang* 敦煌寶藏, vol. 121, 55.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. 121, 57.

<sup>27</sup> *Quan Tang wen*, fasc. 630, vol 3, 2815.

These successes were all inseparable from the Mañjuśrī's manifestation and Fazhao's encounters with him. However, works related to Fazhao stress that at the end of life one should "recite the name of Fazhao."

Fazhao's extant works include the *Jingtu wuhui nianfo songjing guanxing yi* in three fascicles. The second fascicle is found in P.2066. The top and bottom of this manuscript all indicate it to be the second or 'middle' fascicle, making a complete version of the second fascicle. The third or 'bottom' fascicle is found as two manuscripts (P.2250 and P.2963). Based on these manuscripts' overlapping parts, we can reconstruct the contents of the third fascicle. The first fascicle is lost. Taishō vol. 85 includes both the second and third fascicles. In addition, Taishō vol. 47 includes *Jingtu wuhui nianfo lüe fashi yi zan* in one fascicle, which is an abbreviated version of the aforementioned *Guanxing yi*. At the same time, a number of manuscripts related to the five ways of *nianfo* are preserved among Dunhuang documents, which together total sixty-four fascicles.<sup>28</sup>

In P.2066 we find the following "last words" of Fazhao:

As to one who seeks bodhi and to liberate beings, Fazhao, having been born in the Pure Land, will vow to return and instruct companions of the same type and training, always protecting these people. When rightly training, if māras, spirits and evil people or natural disasters, poisons and such difficulties as these come to disturb the practitioner, the practitioner has only at the time to sincerely recite the name of Fazhao. Spoken once or many times, they should recite it and then he shall come to the practitioner and act as guardian. There will immediately be some subtle response and the evils will immediately disperse. Generate *bodhicitta*, recite the name of the Buddha, together be intent on the Pure Land, realize non-retrogression, swiftly attain Buddhahood, and for the infinite future be without rest. I vow to protect all Buddhadharmas. I will not let this swift essential practice of the five ways of *nianfo* for the Pure Land be discontinued in transmission.

若至求菩提，爲度眾生者，法照生淨土已，誓來示爲同類同學伴侶，常當守護此人。正修學時，若有諸魔鬼神及諸惡人、水火、毒藥，如是諸難來惱行人，行人但于爾時至心稱念法照名字，一聲多聲，應念即至諸行人所，而爲外護，立有微感，令彼諸惡應時散滅。發菩提

28 Zhang Xiantang 張先堂, "Wan Tang zhi Songchu Jingtu wuhui nianfo famen zai dunhuang de liuchuan" 晚唐至宋初淨土五會念佛法門在敦煌的流傳, *Dunhuang yanjiu* 敦煌研究 1 (1998): 49-54

心，稱念佛名，同歸淨土，證不退轉，速得成佛，盡未來際，無有休息。誓當守護一切佛法，及此五會念佛淨土，速疾要門令不斷絕。<sup>29</sup>

According to this document, reciting Fazhao's name can do away with various difficulties such as māras, spirits, water and fire. This connects the sanctity of the five ways of *nianfo* as Dharma back to the sanctity of Fazhao as a person.

We find a text similar to these last words in P.2130:<sup>30</sup>

When building a center of practice, if difficulties or māra-related incidents occur, recite the name of Fazhao – it must be recited sincerely. His original last words state: When building a center of practice, if various unfortunate things should occur, one who recites my name will be saved as they speak. If it be someone who has not entered the center or if they do not enter the center, then empty recitation will be of no benefit. Having completed *nianfo* practice, when about to disperse one may recite the name of Fazhao one-hundred times. Namō Monk Fazhao!

正作道場時，若有難起摩（魔）事起，念法照名，當須至心稱念，當本遺言：作道場時，有諸惡事起時，念我名者，隨聲即救。若不入道場人，若不入道場時，空念無益。念佛了，欲散時，克數念一百法照名，南無法照和尚。<sup>31</sup>

P.2130 is a manuscript in fragments. The start of the fascicle relates Fazhao's spiritual experience at Mount Wutai and the circumstances of him going from Mount Wutai to Taiyuan to spread the Dharma, followed by a rite and praise verses related to the practice of the five ways of *nianfo*. At the end, there is a copy of chapter eight of the *Guanfo sanmei hai zang jing* 觀佛三昧海藏經 [Visualization of the Buddha Samādhi Ocean Depository Sūtra]. Based on Yang Mingfeng's research, P.2130 is not the first fascicle of the aforementioned *Guanxing yi*, but rather is a version separately compiled later on.<sup>32</sup>

In Fazhao's own last words, reciting Fazhao's name is a wish to eliminate māra-obstacles and difficulties. Under later devotees, it directly became *Namō* Monk Fazhao, demonstrating that the realism and immediacy of this man's sanctity was realized. Through the manifestation of Mañjuśrī and Fazhao's

29 T 2827, 85: 1255c1–10.

30 The provisional title is *Wenshu Puxian ersheng wei Tang Wutaishan Zhulinsi Fazhao shou ji yinyuan* 文殊普賢二聖為唐五臺山竹林寺法照授記因緣 [The Circumstances of the Revelation of Mañjuśrī and Samantabhadra Given to Fazhao of Zhulin si on Mount Wutai in the Tang].

31 *Dunhuang baozang*, vol. 115, 188.

32 Yang Mingfeng, *Tangdai xifang jingtu lichanfa yanjiu*, 121–122.

spiritual experience with him P.2383 states, “Monk Fazhao is not an ordinary monk – his liberation of beings is extensive and all the same ... from the aspiration to make pilgrimage to holy sites, he personally observed Mañjuśrī’s trace at Mount Wutai.” Not only did he perfect the sanctity of the Dharma of the five ways of *nianfo*, but in the end he also perfected his own sanctity.

## 5 Conclusion

The cult of a holy site on a famous mountain requires six major features: scriptural accounts, superior geography, legends of spiritual or supernatural experiences, a monastic community with stūpas and temples, devotees visiting on pilgrimage, and state support. However, it was a bodhisattva’s appearance and the associated spiritual experiences on a holy mountain that brought about an Indian bodhisattva’s move to such a holy site on a mountain, thereby actualizing the immediacy and “this-worldly” nature of the bodhisattva cult. At the same time, it was through the legends of such spiritual experiences that devotees made pilgrimage and the state provided support, resulting in the social and realistic qualities of the cult associated with the holy mountain.

Religious experiences of the same Pure Land character continued to appear throughout the rest of Fazhao’s life. Through his meditative experience at the hall of *pratyutpanna* practice, Fazhao obtained direct instructions from Amitābha Buddha, devising the five ways of *nianfo*, though this sort of spiritual experience was this-worldly and individual in nature. However, through pilgrimage to Mount Wutai, Fazhao personally witnessed the manifestation and prophecy of Mañjuśrī Bodhisattva, and subsequently realized the this-worldly qualities of the five ways of *nianfo* as dharma. Through Amitābha’s directions during his religious experience, he built the Dazhulin si and spread the Dharma in Taiyuan and Chang’an, thereby realizing his role as a propagator of the Dharma—the social and realistic qualities of religion.

Through the this-worldly nature of the Mañjuśrī cult and the social nature of the Mount Wutai cult, Fazhao was able to turn the transcendental and individual qualities of his spiritual experience into something that was this-worldly and social in nature, propagating teachings and gaining real benefits as a greatly venerated national teacher.

Finally, in his “last words” before death Fazhao stressed that “reciting the name of Fazhao” could do away with māra-obstacles and actualize a link between this and the other world. The origin of this link was the manifestation of Mañjuśrī Bodhisattva.

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## Fazhao, Jin Bifeng, and Constructed Histories of Buddhist Chant and Music at Mount Wutai

*Beth Szczepanski*

### 1 Introduction: Mount Wutai's Buddhist Music

Mount Wutai is home to a rich variety of Buddhist chant and music. Walking the lanes of Taihuai town, the village in the central valley of the region, a visitor hears a constant kaleidoscope of commercially-recorded Buddhist mantras blaring from loudspeakers in many shops. Local bands playing tunes from local opera, popular music, and some lengthy, stately instrumental suites enliven local funerals and weddings. At funerals, the amplified *suona* 唢呐, *sheng* 笙, and electric keyboard of these local bands often compete with the chanting of monks, who recite sūtras to speed the deceased along to a favorable rebirth. In Mount Wutai's temples, one can hear the distinctive sounds of Tibeto-Mongolian chanting and horns, thousand-monk feasts featuring scripture recitation in a style common across China, and unique local chant melodies and instrumental music. The streets outside the temples often host itinerant monks or nuns, some of whom chant sūtra texts to melodies that seem to be unique to each individual. This chapter will focus on histories that tie the origins of Mount Wutai's local Buddhist practice to eminent monks, and how those histories relate to the significance of chant and musical styles local to Mount Wutai.

Currently, Mount Wutai houses about fifty active temples in which a wide variety of Han Chinese and Tibeto-Mongolian Buddhist chant practices can be found. After the Cultural Revolution, most Mount Wutai temples of the Han Buddhist traditions adopted a style of chant more common across China as monks and nuns from across China arrived in the area to revive monastic practice there. Currently, monks in at least two temples, Shuxiang si 殊像寺 and Nanshan si 南山寺, continue to practice the local chant style, *beifang fanbei* 北方梵唄. This style differs from the national style in the melodies used to set texts. A thorough comparative study of the chant melodies used has yet to be completed, but it appears that *beifang fanbei* takes some of its melodic material from local folk music. In general, this chant style features quicker text declamation and longer phrases than one finds in the national style.



At four of Mount Wutai's active temples *shengguanyue* 笙管樂 wind and percussion music accompanies chant during some special ceremonies. In the *shengguan* ensemble, monks play *sheng* 笙 mouth organ, *guanzi* 管子 double-reed pipe, and *dizi* 笛子 flute, along with a battery of ritual percussion instruments. Two distinct traditions of *shengguanyue* coexist at Mount Wutai: one practiced in Chinese temples (now only in Shuxiang si and Nanshan si) and one in Tibeto-Mongolian temples (now only in Pusa ding 菩薩頂 and Zhenhai si 鎮海寺). *Shengguanyue* is found also in other north Chinese ritual practices, performed by both Daoist and Buddhist priests. Both of Mount Wutai's *shengguanyue* traditions differ from these in repertoire and performance practice.

Monks at Mount Wutai perform *shengguanyue* in a variety of contexts. At Shuxiang si, monks play wind instruments during most rituals performed at the request of donors. These include *jixiang pufu* 吉祥普佛, a ceremony requested by donors requiring blessings for endeavors such as opening a new business or taking the college entrance exam, and *wangsheng pufu* 往生普佛, a ceremony performed in order to secure a better rebirth for a deceased ancestor. The most complicated ritual currently performed at Shuxiang si with *shengguanyue* is *fang yankou* 放焰口, a four-hour Tantric ceremony intended to release hungry ghosts from suffering. Donors request *fang yankou* as a part of funeral observances; the good karma accrued by helping hungry ghosts can be transferred to the deceased to improve their chances of a good rebirth. Outside of the temple, Shuxiang si monks also perform *shengguanyue* in concert and for television specials and commercial recordings.

The *shengguanyue* melodies performed by Mount Wutai monks come from a wide range of sources, though most are difficult to trace with certainty. In the study of Chinese traditional music, tracing the origins of melodies is nearly always hampered by the astonishing rate at which tunes are exchanged from one repertoire to another and adapted to new purposes. In addition, Chinese traditional music privileges the contributions of performers in the adaptation of existing material over the production of new melodies, so names of composers and dates of composition are rarely recorded. In Mount Wutai's *shengguanyue*, some tunes, such as the *xiaoqu* 小曲 “Wannian hua” 萬年花, seem to have originated as opera melodies. The practice of adapting local tunes for use in Buddhist ceremony is common across China, and reflects the flexibility with which melodic material is treated in the recitation of sacred texts. Some tunes do appear to have been composed specifically for use in Buddhist ritual, though. One such tune, “Pu'an zhou” 普庵咒, will be analyzed below.

Like the origins of individual chant melodies, the historical development of *beifang fanbei* and the two styles of Mount Wutai *shengguanyue* is very difficult

to trace. Scholars who research Mount Wutai Buddhist music construct the histories of these practices from whatever materials can be gleaned from pilgrimage diaries, texts from the Tripitaka, and depictions of musical instruments in local Buddhist iconography. Two eminent monks, Fazhao and Jin Bifeng, play important roles in the development of Mount Wutai Buddhist music in these constructed histories.

## 2 Fazhao, Mount Wutai, and *Wuhui Nianfo*

Fazhao was an important figure in the dissemination of Pure Land beliefs and practices in Tang China. This master is credited with bringing Pure Land Buddhist practice to the Chinese elite. Indeed, in the late 770s Fazhao was named National Teacher by Emperor Daizong 代宗 (r. 762–779), becoming the first Pure Land-focused teacher to bear this title.<sup>1</sup> Prior to Fazhao's time, Pure Land practices had become popular among ordinary people, but Buddhists among China's wealthy and powerful focused almost exclusively on esoteric Tantric Buddhism. Fazhao's credibility as a teacher was bolstered by his numerous visions of buddhas and bodhisattvas. In one such vision, Fazhao learned a method for reciting the Buddha Amitābha's name as a means of attaining birth in Sukhāvati heaven and eventual enlightenment. He disseminated this method, called *wuhui nianfo*, throughout China, and versions of it remain popular throughout Buddhist East Asia.

Fazhao's connection to Mount Wutai lies in his visions. As recorded in the *Guang Qingliang zhuan* 廣清涼傳 [Extended Chronicle of Mount Clear and Cool], in the 760s Fazhao began seeing a vision of a mountain temple each day in his porridge. Someone told him the vision sounded like a description of Mount Wutai, so in 770 he went to Foguang si 佛光寺 to investigate. A white light led him from Foguang si to the site of his vision, a temple tucked away in a bamboo grove. The temple and surrounding bamboo grove were also a vision; at that time the site had neither temple nor bamboo.

Inside the temple, Fazhao saw the bodhisattvas Mañjuśrī (Wenshu pusa 文殊菩薩) and Samantabhadra (Puxian pusa 普賢菩薩). He asked Mañjuśrī how one may escape the cycle of birth and death. Mañjuśrī told Fazhao to recite the Buddha Amitābha's name, assuring the monk that this method alone would lead to rebirth in Sukhāvati heaven and eventual enlightenment.<sup>2</sup>

1 Patricia E. Karetzky, *Court Art of the Tang* (New York: University Press of America, Inc., 1996), 110.

2 *Guang Qingliang zhuan*, T51, 2099: 1108c08 – c09.

Another version of this vision appears in the *Jingtu wuhui nianfo lüe fashi yizan* 淨土五會念佛略法事儀贊 [Pure Land Five Styles of Reciting the Buddha's Name: Hymns for Ceremonies], purportedly composed by Fazhao himself in 774.<sup>3</sup> In this text, Amitābha instructs Fazhao how to recite, specifying five styles for doing so and naming this practice *wuhui nianfo* 五會念佛.<sup>4</sup> I will analyze these five styles below.<sup>5</sup>

The fact that the *Guang Qingliang zhuan* names Mañjuśrī the teacher in Fazhao's vision while the *Jingtu wuhui nianfo lüe fashi yizan* attributes this teaching to Amitābha demonstrates that authors have been constructing histories surrounding this practice to suit their needs for many centuries. While we cannot know precisely how this particular difference came about, it doubtless reflects the shifting state of Chinese Buddhism in the late 8th century. As noted above, Fazhao spread his teachings at a time when Pure Land practices were just beginning to make inroads among the wealthy and powerful in China, while Tantric Buddhism enjoyed great popularity. Tang-era Tantric Buddhism centers much of its belief and practice on Mañjuśrī. By attributing *wuhui nianfo* to Mañjuśrī, the *Guang Qingliang zhuan* draws a vital connection between that bodhisattva and Amitābha, likely lending Pure Land recitation more credibility among practitioners of esoteric Tantric Buddhism. This attribution also bolsters the association of Fazhao and *wuhui nianfo* with Mount Wutai; according to this account, the vision occurred in Mount Wutai and featured the teaching of Mount Wutai's resident bodhisattva. Such a claim is unsurprising in a text intended to record the importance of Mount Wutai as a site for enlightening visions. The *Jingtu wuhui nianfo lüe fashi yizan* is not a Mount Wutai-focused text, so it is plain to see why the author, purportedly Fazhao himself, attributed this teaching to Amitābha instead of Mañjuśrī. Who better to teach Fazhao how to recite Amitābha's name than Amitābha himself? It is impossible at this point to ascertain which version most closely aligns with Fazhao's spiritual experience.

The *Jingtu wuhui nianfo lüe fashi yizan* lists five styles described in Fazhao's vision as follows:

3 Hakuju Ei, "The Nembutsu-zen Followers of the Fifth Patriarch," *Eastern Buddhist* 29, no. 2 (1996): 217.

4 *Jingtu wuhui nianfo lüe fashi yizan*, T. 47, 1.

5 I have translated *hui* 會 as "styles," though the term more literally means "assemblies." I have seen *hui* translated in other sources as "tones," (Mark Blum, *The Origins and Development of Pure Land Buddhism: A Study and Translation of Gyōnen's Jōdo Hōmon Genrushō* [Oxford: Oxford University Press 2002], 188) based on the concept of five tones in Chinese music and as "rhythms," but since the instructions in the text provide both pitch and rhythmic indications for the five sections of *wuhui nianfo*, I prefer the broader term "style."

First, recite ‘Namo Amitufofo’ (Nanwu emituo fo 南無阿彌陀佛) on a single pitch in a slow tempo, second, recite ‘Namo Amitufofo’ with a rising (or higher) pitch at a slow tempo, third recite ‘Namo Amitufofo’ at a tempo neither fast nor slow, fourth recite ‘Namo Amitufofo’ at a gradually increasing tempo, and fifth recite the four syllables ‘Amitufofo’ quickly while walking.<sup>6</sup>

These instructions are unusually specific; pitch and rhythm are rarely so clearly laid out in Chinese texts describing Buddhist chant. The musical trajectory outlined moves from a slow tempo and low pitch to a higher pitch and increasing tempo, concluding with the highest expenditure of energy: rapid recitation while walking. This gradual increase in intensity, combined with the repetitive recitation of “Namo Amitufofo,” closely resembles other repetitive, intensifying musical practices intended to induce a transcendent state. On the efficacy of this practice, Ui Hakuju writes, “By means of these ‘five meetings’ of the voice, or *wu hui*, miscellaneous thoughts are eliminated and a state of ‘no-thought’ and ‘no-sound’ is achieved.”<sup>7</sup> The power of this form of recitation reached far beyond Mount Wutai and China, but its fame throughout East Asian Buddhism doubtless contributes to its value as a practice around which to construct a history for Mount Wutai’s local chant practices.

### 3 *Wuhui Nianfo* and Mount Wutai’s Local Chant Styles

Musicologists Xiao Yu 肖雨 and Han Jun 韓軍 cite *wuhui nianfo* as the basis for Mount Wutai’s *beifang fanbei*.<sup>8</sup> This idea carries much appeal; the remarkable musical detail in Fazhao’s account of *wuhui nianfo* provides a firm basis for the creation of a new chant style. Some hold Fazhao up as a patriarch of Pure Land Buddhism, and his status further heightens Fazhao’s appeal as the creator of Mount Wutai’s local chant.<sup>9</sup> Considering the master’s role in the construction

6 Original text: “第一會平聲緩念，南無阿彌陀佛；第二會上聲緩念，南無阿彌陀佛；第三會非緩非急念，南無阿彌陀佛；第四會漸急念，南無阿彌陀佛；第五會四字轉急念，阿彌陀佛；五會念佛竟，即誦《寶島》諸雜贊。” *Jingtu wuhui nianfo lüe fashi yizan* T, 47 1: 0476b27–0476c03.

7 Ei, “Nenbutsu-zen,” 233.

8 Han, *Wutaishan Fojiao Yinyue*, 10–11.

9 Robert Sharf calls into question the idea that Pure Land practice should be considered a separate school with a separate lineage of patriarchs. See Robert Sharf, “On Pure Land Buddhism and Ch’an/Pure Land Syncretism in Medieval China,” *T’oung Pao* 88, no. 4–5 (2002): 282–332. The concept of Pure Land as a separate school comprises yet another layer of constructed history to unravel.

of one of Mount Wutai's most important temples and his propensity for visions of the Buddhist pantheon, it is little wonder that scholars today continue to claim that Mount Wutai's *beifang fanbei* springs from *wuhui nianfo*.

This appealing attribution is not beyond question, however. Notwithstanding the unusual detail of the instructions for *wuhui nianfo*, we cannot know exactly what this chant practice would have sounded like at its inception. The name and idea of *wuhui nianfo* have remained important in Buddhist practice, especially in Japan, but to my knowledge the name *wuhui nianfo* does not appear in current Mount Wutai Buddhist repertoires. Today, forms of *wuhui nianfo* appear in temples and on commercial recordings of Buddhist chant. Each retains elements of *wuhui nianfo* as described above, such as a gradual increase in tempo. None of the current popular forms of *wuhui nianfo* that I have encountered, though, strictly adhere to the guidelines given in the *Jingtu wuhui nianfo lüe fashi yizhan*, and each interprets the instructions differently. Without a clear sense of its original form, and considering the broad international popularity of a wide variety of versions of *wuhui nianfo*, it is difficult to ascertain what if any role this practice had on the development of *beifang fanbei* at Mount Wutai.

Notwithstanding the absence of the title *wuhui nianfo* at Mount Wutai, monks do perform *wuhui nianfo*-like recitation at Shuxiang si and Nanshan si. During some ceremonies, monks play a unique local melody, now known as *Qianshengfo* 千聲佛, while circumambulating and chanting "Namo Amitufo." This tune displays some similarities to *wuhui nianfo*, and might be, as Han Jun purports, a surviving version of the Tang-era practice inspired by Fazhao's vision.

A comparison of *Qianshengfo* to *wuhui nianfo* reveals some similarities. The first style of recitation of "Namo Amitufo" in *Qianshengfo*, measures 1 through 8 in the transcription below, does not remain on a single pitch, though it does remain within a relatively narrow range of pitches.<sup>10</sup> The second style, measures 8 through 16, rises in pitch as prescribed, but it then falls back to its starting point. Following this passage, the long repeated and accelerating passage from measures 17 to 29 might correspond loosely to the third and fourth styles of *wuhui nianfo*, though it is unclear how this passage would be divided into two *hui*. *Qianshengfo* concludes with a recitation that is not particularly fast and that does not omit the term "Namo," as shown in measures 29 to 33 below.

10 Transcriptions in this chapter are based on field recordings made at Shuxiang si by the author between 2005 and 2007 and on *gongchi* 工尺 notation preserved at Shuxiang si. These transcriptions present only the basic melody of each piece, not the full heterophonic texture of an actual performance.

Na mo A mi tuo fo

5 Na mo A mi tuo fo Na

9 mo A mi tuo fo Na

13 mo A mi tuo fo Na

17 mo A mi tuo fo

21 Na mo A mi tuo fo Na mo

26 A mi tuo fo Na fo Na

30 mo A mi tuo fo

Detailed description: The image shows a musical score for the piece "Qiansheng Fo". It is written in a single staff with a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a 2/4 time signature. The melody consists of eighth and quarter notes, often beamed together. The lyrics are written below the notes, with horizontal lines indicating the syllable alignment. The score is divided into measures, with measure numbers 5, 9, 13, 17, 21, 26, and 30 marked at the beginning of their respective lines. A first and second ending bracket is present over measures 26-28. The piece concludes with a final whole note and a double bar line.

FIGURE 12.1 “Qiansheng Fo,” transcribed by the author from field recordings taken at Shuxiang si, Wutaishan, 2005–2007. Photo by author.

In several ways, then, this tune does not adhere to the forms prescribed in the *Jingtu wuhui nianfo lüe fashi yizan*.

In one important way, however, *Qiansheng fo* does adhere to the form of *Wuhui nianfo*. In performance, the tempo gradually increases as the monks chant “Namo Amitufo.” There is a general sense of increasing intensity as the monks circumambulate, and this musical structure might induce a trance-like state just as well as a faithful rendering of *Wuhui nianfo* would.

If *Qiansheng fo* is a version of *Wuhui nianfo*, it is a rather distant offshoot of the practice as described in the *Jingtu wuhui nianfo lüe fashi yizan*. Its pedigree as a *Wuhui nianfo* variant remains questionable as well because its title, unlike

some popular modes of reciting *Namo Amituofo*, includes no reference to *Wuhui nianfo*. The existence of numerous versions of *Wuhui nianfo* outside of Mount Wutai discredit any claim that the area's local chant practice features a unique focus the structure of *Wuhui nianfo*. Furthermore, the profusion of melodies used in *beifang fanbei* make a single text an unlikely source for the practice as a whole. Instead, it appears most likely that *beifang fanbei* is the product of a lengthy process of melodic absorption and adaptation in a site where geographic remoteness fosters local musical development while religious importance provides musical inspiration from Buddhist pilgrims from all over Asia. Fazhao's vision remains an important milestone in the origin mythology of Mount Wutai's local chant style. The Local tune *Qiansheng fo* could be a surviving local version of the chant prescribed by Mañjuśrī. However, there is no reason to believe that Fazhao's vision is the root of all, or even most, local Mount Wutai Buddhist chant.

#### 4 Jin Bifeng and Mount Wutai's Local *Shengguanyue* Practice

The question of how Mount Wutai's monasteries came to house *shengguan* ensembles fascinates music scholars because it is rare to find Chinese Buddhist monks playing melodic musical instruments. When Buddhist novices take monastic orders, they agree to follow ten basic precepts, ranging from "Kill no living thing" to "Do not sit on a high and broad couch." The precepts are intended to guide novices as they shed the attachments that prevent them from attaining enlightenment. The seventh of these states, "Do not take part in singing or dancing, in musical or theatrical performances, nor go to look on or listen."<sup>11</sup> The view that music distracts from spiritual attainment resonates in early Buddhist texts; Siddhartha's parents employed beautiful female musicians as a means of preventing their son from leaving the palace to pursue the life of a spiritual seeker. Exceptions to the proscription against music for Buddhist monks and nuns are rare; though monastic Buddhists around the world chant each day, strict traditionalists categorize chanting as a form of speech rather than as music. For this reason, there must be some extraordinary justification for the use of melodic musical instruments in Mount Wutai's monasteries, particularly since those instruments are played by monks. Han Jun and others cite the teachings of a second eminent monk, Jin Bifeng, as the justification for the establishment of Mount Wutai's unique monastic *shengguanyue*.

11 Ernest J. Eitel, *Handbook of Chinese Buddhism*, 2nd ed. (New Delhi: Asian Educational Services, 2004), 107.



FIGURE 12.2  
Young monks from  
Wutaishan  
performing Fang  
Yankou, photo by  
the author, 2006.

Unlike Mount Wutai's local chant style, the area's *shengguanyue* practice has no origin myth involving sacred visions by eminent monks. Scholars have thus far been unable to pinpoint a date of origin for Mount Wutai's monastic *shengguanyue* practice. There is evidence that the practice had not yet taken root in the mid-Tang era; Ennin 圓仁 (794–864), a Japanese pilgrim, went to Mount Wutai and wrote detailed descriptions of two large-scale rituals held at Zhulin si in 840. Ennin mentions several different types of chant and the use of ritual percussion instruments, but no melodic instrumental music.<sup>12</sup> *Shengguanyue* might have been absorbed from local folk ritual practices, an idea supported by the preponderance of local folk tunes in surviving *shengguanyue* repertoires. It is equally likely that the practice was adopted through the movement of musicians and repertoire from other Buddhist centers in north China. *Shengguanyue* has been practiced at Zhihua si 智化寺 in Beijing since the Ming era (1368–1644), and Mount Wutai's practice might have developed after musician-monks from the capital visited or moved to the area. Iconographic evidence suggests that the practice was in place by the 16th century. In Foguang si, one of Mount Wutai's oldest surviving temple complexes, paintings of arhats, some of whom play the instruments of the *shengguan* ensemble, line the walls of the Great Mañjuśrī Hall. This hall was completed around 1510.<sup>13</sup> Buddhist paintings of beings playing musical instruments need not represent

12 Ennin, *Ennin's Diary: The Record of a Pilgrimage to China in Search of the Law*. Tr. Edwin Reischauer (New York: Ronald Press, 1955).

13 Beth Szczepanski, *The Instrumental Music of Wutaishan's Buddhist Monasteries: Social and Ritual Contexts* (London: Ashgate, 2012), 8.



earthly practice; the many musical instruments depicted in the Pure Land art such as murals of the Mogao caves 莫高窟 at Dunhuang 敦煌 are played by bodhisattvas and heavenly beings and should not be interpreted as depictions of monastic Buddhist practice on earth. Since the murals at Foguang si depict earthly disciples of the Buddha rather than heavenly bodhisattvas and apsaras playing musical instruments, earthly monks rather than heavenly beings are the object of representation in this instance.

As mentioned above, Han Jun suggests that Chan master Jin Bifeng is responsible for introducing *shengguanyue* to Mount Wutai. Master Jin led disciples at Mount Wutai during the time of transition between the Yuan Dynasty (1271–1368) and Ming Dynasty. Han quotes the Chan master, “attempting to follow the *Avatamsaka sūtra* (*Huayan jing* 華嚴經), the sound of hymns of praise should be clear and elegant, with all forty-two *zou* 奏, as is the earthly practice.”<sup>14</sup> Han points to this passage as the beginning of instrumental music at Mount Wutai, taking Jin Bifeng’s term “*zou*” to refer to pieces of instrumental music. This is how the term is generally used in modern Chinese. If the *Avatamsaka sūtra* does indeed call for the use of instrumental music, we need look no further for justification for its use in Mount Wutai’s monasteries. In fact, though, surviving versions of the *Avatamsaka sūtra* makes no mention of forty-two instrumental pieces. Cui Wenkui 崔文魁 argues that this passage refers instead to the forty-two phonemes listed in the twenty-ninth book of the *Avatamsaka sūtra* that, when recited, lead through forty-two doors of wisdom.<sup>15</sup> This is a convincing explanation since it is easy to conceive of those forty-two phonemes as a worthy component of chant at Mount Wutai.

It would be convenient to claim that there is no plausible connection between Jin Bifeng’s *zou* and Mount Wutai’s *shengguanyue*. *Pu’an zhou* 普庵咒, a chant tune with *shengguanyue* accompaniment, however, complicates this picture. This melody has made its way into a variety of ceremonial and secular repertoires across China, but its title implies that it originated as a Buddhist chant. François Picard claims *Pu’an zhou* was composed in Mount Wutai.<sup>16</sup> It seems quite reasonable to attribute the origins of a tune for chanting *Avatamsaka* phonemes to a center for the study of the *Avatamsaka sūtra*.

14 Original text: “元、明之際，由金壁峰（寶金）“嘗制華嚴經，贊音清雅，凡四十二奏盛行於世”，把器樂引入五台山佛教，使五台山佛教音樂最終完善。” From Han, *Wutaishan Fojiao Yinyue*, 28.

15 Cui Wenkui, “Ming Qing Shiqi de Wutaishan Fojiao Yinyue” 明清時期的五台山佛教音樂 [Wutaishan Buddhist Music of the Ming and Qing Dynasties]. *Wutaishan Yanjiu* 五台山研究 3 (2005): 25.

16 François Picard, “The Musical Avatars of a Buddhist Spell: Pu’An Zhou.” *CHIME: The Newsletter of the European Foundation for Chinese Music Research* no. 3 (1991): 22–24.

The musical score for "Pu'an Zhou" is presented in a single staff with a key signature of two sharps (D major). The piece is divided into several measures, each with a measure number and specific markings:

- Measure 1: 4/4 time signature, marked with "5X" and a circled "8" symbol.
- Measure 5: 2/4 time signature, marked with a circled "5" above the staff.
- Measure 10: 3/4 time signature, marked with a circled "1" above the staff.
- Measure 14: 2/4 time signature, marked with "5X, then DS" above the staff.
- Measure 18: 3/4 time signature, marked with a circled "2" above the staff.
- Measure 23: 2/4 time signature, marked with "5X, then DS" above the staff.
- Measure 27: 3/4 time signature, marked with a circled "3" above the staff.
- Measure 31: 2/4 time signature, marked with "5X, then DS" above the staff.

FIGURE 12.3 "Pu'an Zhou," transcribed by the author from field recordings taken at Shuxiang si, Wutaishan, 2005–2007. Photo by author.

Today, monks at Shuxiang si chant *Avatamsaka* phonemes to the tune of *Pu'an zhou* accompanied by *shengguan* instruments during donor-sponsored ceremonies like *jixiang pufo* and *wansheng pufo*. *Pu'an zhou* might, then, point to a connection between Mount Wutai's Buddhist *shengguanyue* and the *Avatamsaka* phonemes.

The connection between *Avatamsaka* phonemes, *Pu'an zhou*, and the inception of *shengguanyue* at Mount Wutai remains tenuous. The monk Pu'an for whom this melody is named lived in the twelfth century, long before *shengguanyue* is likely to have been adopted in Mount Wutai's temples. Furthermore, Master Pu'an has no known connection to Mount Wutai. Finally, the

tune *Pu'an zhou* appears in myriad versions, and it is impossible to pin down its place of origin. The earliest surviving version is a *guqin* 古琴 piece dated to around the turn of the 17th century,<sup>17</sup> five centuries after the death of Pu'an and well past the likely date of the adoption of *shengguanyue* in Mount Wutai's monasteries. It remains possible that *Pu'an zhou* is a local Mount Wutai piece, and that it reflects a perceived connection between *Avatamsaka* phonemes and instrumental music based on the writings of Jin Bifeng. It is also possible that this connection was made after the time of Jin Bifeng; his writings may have been used by later Mount Wutai monastic leaders to justify the use of melodic instruments in monastic ceremony and to equate that use with the chanting of *Avatamsaka* phonemes.

Those who practice Mount Wutai's monastic *shengguan* music today are unsure of its origin; in 2005, Shi Guoxiang 釋果祥, the abbot of musically-active Shuxiang si, stated that his teacher told him the practice dated only to the Qing Dynasty (1644–1911), but he believed it must be older (Interview with Author, August 2005). Without a clear date of origin, it is impossible to determine if and how Mount Wutai's *shengguanyue* relates to similar practices in Beijing, Tianjin, and north Chinese villages. However, the precise age of the practice is not an issue of concern for today's practitioners. For the monks I interviewed, it suffices that *shengguanyue* is part of Mount Wutai's Buddhist tradition; its unclear origins, as well as its tricky status in relation to monastic precepts, do not detract from its value. Only scholars appear concerned with tracing the origins of Mount Wutai's Buddhist music back to famous monks.

## 5 Conclusion

The attribution of local developments in Buddhist chant and instrumental music at Mount Wutai to the eminent monks Fazhao and Jin Bifeng lacks historical credibility. These stories remain valuable, though, because they lend authority to local practices. The idea that Mount Wutai's chant style is rooted in Fazhao's vision of Mañjuśrī provides a rich spiritual pedigree for a practice that might otherwise lack the status of more widespread styles. Even if *Qian-sheng fo* bears only slight resemblance to *Wuhui nianfo*, this origin story bolsters both the credibility of local chant practice and the idea that Mount Wutai is the earthly abode of Mañjuśrī. Local monastic *shengguanyue* requires greater justification since it violates a basic monastic precept. The claim that Jin Bifeng prescribed the use of instrumental tunes in monastic practice lends

17 John Thompson, "Incantation of the Monk Pu'An." Online, Viewed 15 July 2015.

authority to the use of *shengguanyue* by Mount Wutai monks. Both of these claims provide a tidier explanation for the history and development of Mount Wutai's unique Buddhist soundscape than can otherwise be made.

In my experience, this constructed history is important to scholars but not to the monks who use local chant and music in their daily practice at Mount Wutai. While monks concern themselves only with carrying on ceremonial practices as they've received them, most recent Chinese writings on Mount Wutai Buddhist music construct elaborate histories for these practices that credit Fazhao and Jin Bifeng as creators of the local *beifang fanbei* and Mount Wutai *shengguanyue*. Scholars like Han Jun and Xiao Yu are likely motivated by the desire to enhance the perceived value of these practices by claiming they have a long history and connecting them to famous historical masters. This allows scholars to characterize today's monasteries as "living museums," and increases the political and economic value of Mount Wutai Buddhist music.

The complexity and uniqueness of Mount Wutai's Buddhist soundscape indicates that it must be the result of a lengthy and complex process of musical development. Fazhao and Jin Bifeng may have inspired some of the innovations in local chant and music at Mount Wutai, but their contributions cannot account for the great variety of Buddhist sounds produced in the area. The continued construction of histories attributing large-scale musical developments at Mount Wutai to eminent monks speaks more to the political and social value of these stories than to their historical veracity.

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**PART 4**

*Replicating Mount Wutai*







## The Legacy of the True Visage: The Mañjuśrī Statues at Zhenrong Yuan and Shuxiang Si of Mount Wutai

*Sun-ah Choi*

“There are twelve famous monasteries at Mount Wutai, but it is only Shuxiangsi that possesses the *True Visage*” (臺山名剎凡十二區，而藏佛真容者，唯殊像焉).<sup>1</sup>



In 1762, Emperor Qianlong (r. 1736–1796) issued an edict to construct a Buddhist temple at Xiang shan 香山 (Mountain of Fragrance), a mountain located to the west of the capital, Beijing. Named Baoxiang si 寶相寺 (Temple of the Precious Image), the temple was completed in 1767 and, according to an imperial stele set within its precincts, the intention for creating this temple was to save his elderly mother from the toils of journeys to Mount Wutai 五臺山 (Mountain of the Five Terraces; also known as Qingliang shan 清涼山).<sup>2</sup> Renowned as one of the Four Great Sacred Mountains (*sida mingshan* 四大名山) in China, since at least the seventh century Mount Wutai has been believed to be the abode of the bodhisattva Mañjuśrī and various types of visions were reportedly witnessed by the travelers and monks in-residence.<sup>3</sup> The fame and

1 This statement appears on a stele inscription written by Zhen Cheng for the renovation of Shuxiang si in 1608. Further information of the phrase as well as the inscription will be discussed below.

2 The inscription of the stele (御製寶相寺碑文) is transcribed in Zhang Yuxin, *Qing zhengfu yu lama jiao* (Lhasa: Xizang renmin chubanshe, 1988), 409–411.

3 About Mount Wutai and its Mañjuśrī cult, see Ono Katsutoshi and Hibino Jōbu, *Godaizan* (Tokyo: Zayuhō kankōkai, 1942); Raoul Birnbaum, “Thoughts on T’ang Buddhist Mountain Traditions and Their Context,” *T’ang Studies* 2 (1984): 5–23; “The Manifestation of a Monastery: Shen-ying’s Experiences on Mount Wu-T’ai in T’ang Context,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society* vol. 106, no. 1 (1986): 119–137; “Secret Halls of the Mountain Lords: The Caves of Wu-T’ai Shan,” *Cahiers d’Extrême-Asie* 5 (1990): 115–40; Daniel Stevenson, “Visions of Mañjuśrī on Mount Wutai,” in *Religions of China in Practice*, ed. Donald S. Lopez Jr. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 203–22.

popularity of the mountain as the center for both pilgrimage and imperial patronage never ceased in later periods, and the Qing dynasty (1636–1912) was no exception. Imperial support and travel continued almost without interruption, as evidenced by the sheer number of imperial trips to the site and lavish financial support offered by the throne for the renovation of the Buddhist monasteries there.<sup>4</sup>

Indeed, a thousand *li* away from the capital (one hundred and fifty miles west of Beijing), it took great effort for the Qianlong court to visit Mount Wutai. By 1762, the emperor had nevertheless already traveled to the mountain three times (1746, 1751, and 1761). Yet after his third trip he finally decided to bring the sacred site to his vicinity, making this very simple yet clear statement: “Xiang shan is only thirty *li* away from the capital, so we can go there year after year.”<sup>5</sup> The transposition of the sacred site into his own locale seemed to have been quite successful: Qianlong’s next trip to Mount Wutai did not occur till 1781, when his mother, for whom he built the surrogate mountain at Xiang shan, passed away.

In realizing the idea of bringing the mountain to his vicinity, Qianlong’s project was somewhat special. He had, after all, many choices available to him. For instance, he could have replicated a number of Mount Wutai’s buildings at Xiang shan 香山, as he did with Suzhoujie 蘇州街 at Yihe yuan 頤和園. Or he could have modified the iconography of Xiang shan’s landscape into something closer to its model, as he and his grandfather Kangxi did with the Summer Palace (*bishu shanzhuan* 避暑山莊) in Chengde 承德. However, he just chose one single Buddhist temple at Mount Wutai and replicated it at Xiang shan. And the temple Qianlong chose was Shuxiang si 殊像寺 (Temple of the Mañjuśrī Image), a modest Buddhist temple located on the edge of Taihuai village at Mount Wutai.

Why did Qianlong choose Shuxiang si when he brought the mountain to the capital? In pursuing an answer to this question, it should be noted that Shuxiang si was not the first of Mount Wutai’s temples Qianlong replicated at Xiang shan. Ten years earlier, in 1750, Qianlong had already commissioned a copy of

4 About Qing patronage of Mount Wutai, see David Farquhar, “Emperor as Bodhisattva in the Governance of the Ch’ing Empire,” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 38, no. 1 (1978): 5–34; Evelyn S. Rawski, *The Last Emperors: A Social History of Qing Imperial Institutions* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 252–63; Natalie Köhler, “Why Did The Kangxi Emperor Go To Wutai shan? Patronage, Pilgrimage, and the Place of Tibetan Buddhism at the Early Qing Court,” *Late Imperial China* 29, no. 1 (June 2008): 73–119; Mark C. Elliot, *Emperor Qianlong: Son of Heaven, Man of the World*, (New York: Pearson Longman, 2009), 72–6, etc.

5 清涼距畿輔千餘里，掖輦行慶，向惟三至焉。若香山則去京城三十里而近，歲可一再至。Zhang Yuxin, *Qing zhengfuyu lama jiao*, 408.

a Mount Wutai temple at Xiang shan following a trip to the mountain in the same year.<sup>6</sup> However, the temple he chose at the time was Pusa ding 菩薩頂 (Bodhisattva [Mañjuśrī]'s Peak). Although modest in scale, Pusa ding is a temple with a long history. Formerly known as Zhenrong yuan 眞容院 (the Hall of the True Visage), it was originally part of the Da Huayan si 大華嚴寺 (Great Huayan Monastery), which was allegedly built in the Northern Wei dynasty 北魏 (386-534) and had functioned as the foremost locus of the pilgrimage and imperial sponsorship during the medieval period. During the Qing dynasty, Pusa ding was used as the imperial residential quarters when the imperial family visited the mountain. Considering Pusa ding's historical significance as well as its contemporary status, it is not difficult to understand why Pusa ding was first chosen by the emperor to represent his beloved sacred site. Meanwhile, Shuxiang si has a relatively short history, compared to not just Pusa ding but also many other Buddhist temples in the mountain.<sup>7</sup> What made Qianlong focus on Shuxiang si in his subsequent attempt to bring Mount Wutai to this locale?

This paper begins with this rather simple question. The answer, however, entails an exploration of a more theoretical issue concerning the role of images in the formation and development of sacred sites. By tracing the course through which a special Buddhist icon, termed *zhenrong* or True Visage, emerged as the central focus in the pilgrimage of Mount Wutai, the first and second parts of this paper illuminate how the vague idea of sacred space became concretized through the worship of an image and how it affected the experiences of both insiders and outsiders of the cult during the medieval period. The final section of the paper deals with the reception of the *zhenrong* by Qianlong, an eighteenth-century emperor who was keenly interested in the role of images. By returning to the question just raised above, I discuss the

6 Dou Guangnai ed., *Qinding rixia jiuwen kao* (Beijing; Wuying dian; Taipei: Guangwen shuju, 1968) 103, 7; Huang Hai, *Zai Beijing de zangzu wenwu* (Beijing: Minzu chubanshe, 1993), 85; Lin Shixuan, *Qingdai menggu yu manzhou zhengzhi wenhua* (Taipei: Guoli zhengzhi daxue lishixue, 2009), 136–38. Named Baodi si 寶諦寺, the replica of Mount Wutai's Pusa ding at Xiang shan was almost destroyed in the early twentieth century. Some textual and pictorial references including the "Map of Eight Banners Brigade Barracks and the Yihe yuan Summer Palace" (*Yihe yuan baqi bingying tu* 頤和園八旗兵營圖) and an early twentieth-century photograph shows the location of the temple and its sumptuous stone gate that resembles the one currently at Pusa ding. For more on Baodi si, see Wen-shing Chou, "In the Likeness of His Apparition: Resemblance and Referentiality in Qianlong's Replicas of Wutai Shan," unpublished paper, presented at AAS, 2012. I would like to express my gratitude to Wen-shing Chou for sharing her paper with me.

7 The history of Pusa ding (formerly Zhenrong yuan) and Shuxiang si will be discussed in detail below.

legacy of the True Visage rediscovered and utilized by Qianlong in his attempt to translate Mount Wutai to his vicinities, Xiang shan and Chengde.

## 1 The Emergence of *zhenrong* at Mount Wutai

Modern scholars have devoted considerable effort to explaining how Mount Wutai became a legitimate abode of the bodhisattva Mañjuśrī. Beginning with Étienne Lamotte's seminal study, historians of Chinese Buddhism have thoroughly examined the historical process whereby scriptural interpolations, particularly under imperial auspices, successfully encoded the mountain as the place for the deity from the late seventh to the mid-eighth century.<sup>8</sup> This institutional point of view explained the historical and doctrinal course through which Mount Wutai obtained legitimacy as the place where the deity resides and makes his appearance. However, such a perspective rarely accounts for the cultural processes that gradually transformed the conception of the mountain into the site where the presence of the deity is "actually" experienced. While Buddhist clerics and imperial supporters strove to vindicate the legitimacy of Mount Wutai through scriptural manipulation, devotees of the mountain still faced another fundamental question of how the deity's presence at the site, as was prophesized in the scriptures, could be perceived and confirmed through experience.

The ways in which the deity's presence came to be located at the very place is an important issue, particularly when we are reminded of the special status of Mount Wutai among the Four Sacred Buddhist Mountains in China.<sup>9</sup> Beginning with Mount Wutai, medieval Chinese Buddhists gradually developed mountain cults in the Buddhist context, by associating a particular mountain in China with a specific bodhisattva. Accordingly, by the seventeenth century at the latest, Mount Wutai, Mount Emei (Emei shan 峨眉山), Mount Putuo (Putuo shan 普陀山), and Mount Jiuhua (Jiuhua shan 九華山) were grouped together as the four mountain abodes of the bodhisattvas Mañjuśrī, Samantabhadra, Avalokiteśvara, and Kṣtigarbha, respectively. In addition to notions of

8 Étienne Lamotte, "Mañjuśrī," *T'oung Pao* 48 (1960): 1–96. Some Tang emperors, particularly Empress Wu, used the promotion of Mount Wutai's status to their own political advantage. Regarding this aspect of its history, see Tansen Sen, *Buddhism, Diplomacy, and Trade: The Realignment of Sino-Indian Relations, 600-1400* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2003), 76–86.

9 This opinion is shared by the editors of the compilation *Pilgrims and Sacred Sites in China*. Susan Naquin and Chün-fang Yü eds., *Pilgrims and Sacred Sites in China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), xii.

the indigenization or Sinification of Buddhism with which modern scholars have frequently characterized the conceptualization of these four Buddhist mountains in China, the study of the cultural process through which this occurred reveals salient facets of Chinese Buddhism, particularly in relation to the role of religion in the development of space, and vice versa.<sup>10</sup> Although further research is required, it is clear that the developments of the four mountains seem to share similar patterns, as James M. Hargett in his comprehensive study on Mount Emei has briefly outlined.<sup>11</sup> The ways in which Mount Wutai, as the first among the four mountains, was shaped and reshaped as the abode of the bodhisattva must have served, to a certain degree, as a model in the formation of sacred sites in China, and specifically the other three Buddhist mountains.

As Chün-fang Yü's work has revealed, the historical process through which Mount Putuo was finally recognized as the abode of the bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara was entangled with competitions between different regions at different historical stages.<sup>12</sup> Another example is the Southern Marchmount (Nanyue 南嶽). Although it is not counted among the Four Great Buddhist Mountains, Southern Marchmount was also a site of struggle between various groups of people with different religious goals.<sup>13</sup> Mount Wutai, however, was never in competition with other sites, nor did it witness any serious conflicts among different religious or sectarian groups concerning the authority over the site.<sup>14</sup> Devoid of such competitions or conflicts, what was really at stake for both insiders and outsiders of the Mount Wutai cult in the formative stage was a purely self-critical question of how to locate and confirm the presence of the deity at the place. This was a critical issue pursued by the medieval writers

10 Bernard Faure, "Space and Place in Chinese Religious Traditions," *History of Religions* 25, no. 4 (1987): 337–56; Naquin and Yü, *Pilgrims and Sacred Sites*; James Robson, "Buddhism and the Chinese Marchmount System (Wuyue): A Case Study of the Southern Marchmount (Mt. Nanyue)," in *Religion and Chinese Society*, ed. John Lagerway (Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, 2004); idem, *Power of Place: The Religious Landscape of the Southern Sacred Peak (Nanyue) in Medieval China* (Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center, 2009).

11 James M. Hargett, *Stairway to Heaven: A Journey to the Summit of Mount Emei* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2006).

12 Yü, "P'u-t'uo Shan: Pilgrimage and the Creation of the Chinese Potalaka," in *Pilgrimage and Sacred Places in China*, eds. Susan Naquin and Chün-fang Yü (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 190–245.

13 Robson, "Buddhism and the Chinese Marchmount System."

14 For an intriguing example of a sectarian competition over a sacred site in China, see Bernard Faure, "Relics and Flesh Bodies: The Creation of Ch'an Pilgrimage Sites," in *Pilgrims and Sacred Sites in China*, eds. Susan Naquin and Chün-fang Yü (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 150–189.

about the mountain from the beginning of its Buddhist history throughout the next several centuries.

A chronological examination of the literatures on Mount Wutai available to us reveals significant changes in the mode of claiming and experiencing the divine presence, changes that are relevant to the disparate types of issues faced by writers in the course of concretizing the sacrality of Mount Wutai. In the long cultural process through which Mount Wutai became the unquestionable abode of the bodhisattva Mañjuśrī, the first issue to be addressed was a redefinition of the nature of the transcendental beings at the site in Buddhist terms. The eminent seventh-century Vinaya master and Buddhist historian Daoxuan 道宣 (596–667) sketches the early history of the mountain with a clear apologetic statement:

In ancient times, it was said to be the dwelling of divine transcendents (*shenxian* 神仙)...In Buddhist scriptures, it is clearly stated that Mañjuśrī leads five hundred transcendents and dwells on a clear and cool snowy mountain. This is that very place. That is why in ancient times masters seeking the *Dao* roamed this mountain. Their bequeathed vestiges and numinous caverns are still visible. They were not established in vain.<sup>15</sup>

As a way of re-territorializing the mountain as a Buddhist site, Daoxuan in the first place recognizes the traces of a different sort of supernatural power. However, he soon attributes their *raison d'être* to a Buddhist one. The presence of the bodhisattva Mañjuśrī at the site is the source of the mountain's inherent vigor. Superscribing the local memory, by redefining it in Buddhist terms, is the way the mid seventh-century Buddhist historian instantiates the deity's presence at the site.<sup>16</sup>

Daoxuan moves on to a brief sketch of the mountain. For instance, he describes the terrestrial feature of the central peak and the physical remains of Buddhist activities on the mountain, such as a small stone pagoda believed to be built by Emperor Wen 文帝 (r. 220–226) of the Wei 魏 (220–265), a statue of the bodhisattva standing nearby the Taihua pond (Taihua quan 太華泉), and the Dafu Lingjiu Monastery (Dafu Lingjiu si 大孚靈鷲寺), allegedly built by Emperor Ming 明帝 (r. 57–75) of Han 漢 (BCE 206–220 CE) who enshrined a statue

15 *Ji shenzhou sanbao gantonglu*, T no. 2106, 52: 424c22–424c27. Birnbaum has provided a good review of the early Tang views of Mount Wutai based on the passage. Birnbaum, "The Manifestation of a Monastery," 120–126.

16 I borrowed the expression "superscribe" from Duara's article. Presenajit Duara, "Superscribing Symbols: The Myth of Guandi, Chinese God of War," *Journal of Asian Studies* 47, no. 4 (1988): 780.

still standing in the hall. Despite being few in number, the presence of these material objects from antiquity from Daoxuan's perspective supports the alleged long history of imperial patronage of the mountain. In the middle of delineating these physical remains, Daoxuan reports on the mysterious experiences one might have on the mountain: bell sounds and fragrant smells that do not cease even for a single day, and frequent encounters with numinous monks around the Mañjuśrī statue near the Taihe pond. Among the various episodes that Daoxuan recounts, the story of the master Jietuo 解脫 (561–642), a well-known monk of the Zhenguan era (627–650), almost constitutes a climax: he is said to have witnessed, as many as four times, the bodhisattva Mañjuśrī flanked by his innumerable retainers filling the air in the northern sector of a garden located to the south of the Dafu lingjiu Monastery.<sup>17</sup>

These three elements in the textual representation of the mountain set by Daoxuan—its pre-Buddhist history, descriptions of its physical features, and various modes of experiencing the deity—continued to be the basic components in other monographs on the mountain. Huixiang 慧祥 (fl. mid-to late seventh century), a contemporary of Daoxuan, wrote the earliest treatise that has survived, the *Gu Qingliang zhuan* 古清涼傳 [Ancient Record of Mount Clear and Cool]. Written not long after Daoxuan's account, the text is based on Huixiang's personal travel to the mountain and contains numerous quotes from now-missing earlier works.<sup>18</sup> Consisting of five chapters, his work presents more comprehensive descriptions of the mountain, and detailed accounts of its supernatural quality. The transcendental color embedded in the initial stage of the development of Mount Wutai is one of the issues Huixiang must address,<sup>19</sup> but he steps forward to present in a more systematic manner the immanent matter of how one could experience the presence of the deity on the mountain in two separate chapters. The third chapter, "Famous Historical Sites

17 A native of the region, Jietuo was well-known for his meditative accomplishments and for his learned appreciation of the *Huayan sūtra*. He was responsible for the repair and refurbishing of the Foguang Monastery 佛光寺 in the late sixth century, where he lived and taught for fifty years until his death in 642. Birnbaum, "The Manifestation of a Monastery," 123.

18 As presented in the preface, Huixiang traveled to Mount Wutai in 667.

19 Huixiang as well did not ignore the indigenous Daoist color embedded in the initial image of Mount Wutai. Quoting an unidentified Daoist scripture, he states: "The name of Mount Wutai is Purple Palace 紫府. There constantly is a purple haze [emanating from the mountain] and transcendental beings lived here." 五臺山, 名爲紫府, 常有紫氣, 仙人居之. T. 2098, 51: 1093a13–14. He also noted that the fantastic anomalies in the natural world—a mysterious spring that bubbles up on the mountain peak, rare plants that blossom through the cold winter—are the basic indications of the spiritual activity on the mountain.

of the Past and Present” (*gujin shengji* 古今勝跡), describes the miraculous signs reported to have been seen at certain sites on the mountain, and the fourth chapter, “Spiritual Resonance [experienced by] Travelers and Pilgrims (*youli gantong* 遊禮感通),” presents chronologically the individual testimonies of visitors’ experience of the divine presence.<sup>20</sup>

The mystical signs introduced in these two chapters of the *Ancient Record* can be categorized into five types: perceiving a fragrant smell, hearing deep sounds of bells, seeing bright lights, meeting a spiritual monk, and witnessing the manifestation of the bodhisattva in his fleshly form. Among them, the olfactory and auditory experiences—fragrances and bell sounds—seemed to be more common than optical ones. Meanwhile, eyewitness reports of the bodhisattva’s manifestation in his human form are, as opposed to second-hand accounts of visions, relatively rare. Furthermore, their wishes to directly experience the deity’s presence were not answered by chance: in the case of master Jietuo, frequent sūtra recitation is mentioned as the means through which he accrued merit to achieve such a rare result. Meanwhile, the prince of the Northern Qi immolated his body as he could not see the bodhisattva. Although he could not fulfill his wish, the place where he undertook the severe practice became one of the sites where the bodhisattva responded to another devout one.<sup>21</sup> That sincere devotional acts are represented as prerequisites for the

20 As Birnbaum has rightly pointed out, while Huixiang in the fourth chapter introduced the supernatural occurrences in the mountain in the format of a biographical report, it is mainly about place and power, through which the supernatural quality of the mountain is vindicated. A collection of the miraculous signs experienced by faithful visitors plays important roles in the development of a sacred site. Those testimonies produced and collected by supporters of the cult, first of all, reinforce the position that Wutai shan is home to a divine presence, and thus validate the legitimacy of the site. The repeated manifestation of the deity at different places of the mountain witnessed by devotees from different periods verifies the deity’s ever-lasting presence, dispersed through geographic space, and stretched across chronological time. The presence of the deity imaginatively constructed through such testimonies, in turn, serves another role: it functions as a medium through which information and knowledge of the site were made known to outsiders of the cult and thus motivates further pilgrims. Raoul Birnbaum, “Light in the Wutai Mountains,” in *The Presence of Light: Divine Radiance and Religious Experience*, ed. Matthew Kapstein (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 200.

21 It was the eunuch, Liu Qianzhi 劉謙之, who finally saw the bodhisattva at the place where the prince had immolated his body. T. 2098, 51:1094c16–20. I thank Susan Andrews for this point. More on this story, see Susan Andrews, “The Temple of the Prince Who Torched His Body and the Making of Mount Wutai,” *Journal of Chinese Buddhist Studies* 29 (2016): 18–72; “Representing Mount Wutai’s Past: A Study of Chinese and Japanese Miracle Tales about the Five Terrace Mountain.” Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 2013. For self-immolation in Chinese Buddhism in general, and its relation to a practice at a sacred



experience of actual manifestation points up the rarity of witnessing the deity in his true form.

The rarity of witnessing the deity's manifestation in his fleshly form is also well illustrated in a mid-ninth century Japanese pilgrim monk's travelogue. Ennin 圓仁 (793–864), a learned Japanese monk who traveled in China with the purpose of meeting Chinese masters and obtaining Buddhist scriptures, left a detailed description of his experience at Mount Wutai from the fourth to the seventh lunar months in 840 in his well-known travel diary, the *Nittō guhō junrei kōki* 入唐求法巡禮行記 [The Record of a Pilgrimage to China in Search of the Law] (hereafter *Ennin's Diary*). Over the course of his three-month stay in the mountains, Ennin claimed to have witnessed various types of auspicious signs, such as the appearance of five-colored light and drastic changes of weather, which doubtless intensified his belief in the deity's presence at this numinous site.<sup>22</sup> On the second day of the seventh lunar month, the Japanese monk, standing atop the Southern Terrace, sincerely prayed that he might witness the manifestation of the deity. However, he did not see anything, and nightfall forced him to return to his cloister lodging. The deity's response to this Japanese pilgrim monk's prayer was made in a different way: instead of manifesting his true form, the bodhisattva presented a novel type of visionary phenomenon that thrilled the foreign monk. Ennin relates his experience:

In the first period of the night, in the sky above a ridge separated from the terrace to the east by a valley, we saw a sacred lamp. The assembled persons saw it together and venerated it. The glowing light of this lantern at first was about as large as an alms bowl. Later it gradually grew as large as a small house. The great assembly with utmost sincerity chanted with loud voices the name of the Great Sage. Then another lantern appeared near the valley. It also was like a rainhat [in size] at first and then gradually grew larger. To our gaze at a distance, it appeared that the two lanterns, with blazing light, were some ten *zhang* [a hundred feet] apart. Then at midnight they disappeared.<sup>23</sup>

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site, see James A. Benn, *Burning for the Buddha: Self-Immolation in Chinese Buddhism* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2007), 133–37.

22 Bell sounds and fragrant scents, both of which occupied the majority of transcendental signs in earlier mountain monograph, are not reported frequently in this ninth-century travelogue. What appeared more regularly was the experience of light.

23 *Nittō guhō junrei kōki*; Edwin O. Reischauer, trans, *Ennin's Diary: The Record of a Pilgrimage to China in Search of the Law* (New York: Ronald Press Company, 1955), 260.

Marking the climax of his travel, this experience of light in the form of a sacred lamp may have been spectacular enough to satisfy the Japanese pilgrim; no further wish to experience the deity's manifestation, especially in the form of the deity's manifested body, is expressed after the account of this marvel.

Devoid of an account of the direct witness of the deity, Ennin's diary, written two centuries after Huixiang's *Gu Qingliang zhuan*, shows significant changes in the mode of searching for the traces of the divine presence. Being a travelogue of an individual, *Ennin's Diary* presents the detailed sequence of Ennin's tour of the mountain. It begins with his panoramic view of the whole mountain, which made him prostrate himself on the ground and shed tears, so moved was he to have finally arrived at the "territory of Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī." Yet after entering the mountain, Ennin's itinerary is clearly marked by the monasteries where he visited and stayed. For instance, the Zhulin 竹林, Da Huayan 大華嚴, and Jin'ge 金閣 monasteries serve as the major centers of his activities—the viewing of sacred objects and meetings with eminent monks. The emergence of monasteries as the markers of the itinerary made this ninth-century visitor's travel more material oriented than the journeys of individuals recounted in *Gu Qingliang zhuan*. Sacred objects enshrined in the monasteries served as physical proxies that caused Ennin to experience the sense of the divine presence as well as the numinosity of the site. These included the portrait of the monk Daxie 大鞋, or Great Shoe, who reportedly obtained a shoe from the bodhisattva; various musical treasures allegedly transmitted from the times of the past Buddhas; paintings that depicted the historical moments when the deity in the guise of an old monk met Buddhapālita. The foreign monk weaved his travel around these architectural and material signposts.

The role of monasteries and sacred objects as significant markers in accounts of touring the mountain can also be traced in tenth-century textual sources, as is well illustrated in a manuscript discovered from the so-called "library cave" at Dunhuang. This manuscript contains a short biography and travelogue of an Indian monk, Puhua 普化 (fl. early tenth century), who came to China and traveled to Mount Wutai in 926. Puhua made several short notes about his itinerary for each of the thirteen days he spent at the sacred mountain. Like Ennin, his travel proceeded monastery by monastery, including the Da Huayan, Wangzi 王子, and Jin'ge monasteries, and centered on the viewing of artifacts and other types of physical remains said to possess traces of the deity in one way or another. For all the similarities, this tenth-century pilgrim monk's itinerary does show a significant modification. Unlike Ennin who started his travel with the Zhulin Monastery, Puhua began his tour at the Great Huayan Monastery. This different itinerary is, furthermore, related to a new role of a material signpost enshrined in the monastery: a statue of the

bodhisattva referred to as the “true visage” served the Indian monk as the focus and trigger of a visionary experience on the first day of his arrival at the mountain.

The nineteenth day of the fourth month, he safely reached the [Great] Huayan Monastery, and venerated the true visage (*zhenrong* 眞容). Finally, he realized his long-cherished wish. He beheld it till night and stayed one night in the hall. When he concentrated his mind more and more, suddenly a sacred lantern appeared. All the people [in the hall] witnessed it, and there was no one who was not delighted [with this manifestation].

The next day [i.e. on the twentieth], he prayed again with all his heart and visited the sacred hall. At night, he beheld the true form (*zhenxiang* 眞相). Suddenly, a slight light emanated and illuminated the holy visage. It looked like a bright moon hung in the mid air. Observing the divine omen, his mind became sincere and courteous.<sup>24</sup>

Two different types of light manifestation amaze him. One is the emergence of a sacred lantern, the type of light experience that had dazzled Ennin several decades before. The other is a sudden brightening of the statue’s face by a slight light emanating from somewhere. It is quite notable that a light effect like the one that illuminates a statue had no precedent in the surviving testimonies of Mount Wutai. What is perhaps more unusual is the fact that this visionary spectacle happens in association with a particular statue. As will be discussed in detail in the next section, Ennin had also seen the statue when he visited the Great Huayan Monastery on the fifth day of his travel. However, he reported neither a metaphysical experience nor having practiced deep meditation in front of the statue. On the contrary, Puhua reveals his special attitude toward the statue by stating that he has finally realized his wish by venerating the image. This remark indicates not only that he was aware of the special status of the statue before he arrived at Mount Wutai, but also that his veneration of the statue constitutes one of the important goals of his travel. He continued his trip southward after his visionary experiences. Compared to Ennin’s travelogue, Puhua’s accounts of other monasteries are very concise. This brevity, in

24 昨四月十九日平達華嚴寺，巡禮眞容，果諧夙愿。瞻虔至夜，宿在殿中。持念更深，聖燈忽現，舉衆皆睹，無不忻然。廿日再啓虔誠，重趨聖殿。夜觀眞相，忽現毫光，晃輝尊顏，如懸朗月。睹期聖瑞，轉切殷勤。P. 3931. I follow Du Doucheng’s transcription. Du Doucheng, *Dunhuang Wutai shan Wenxian Wenxian Xiaolu Yanjiu* (Taiyuan: Shanxi renmin chubanshe, 1991), 221–22. Also see Richard Schneider, “Un Moine Indien au Woutai chan: Relation d’un Pèlerinage,” *Cahiers d’Extrême-Asie* 3 (1987): 34.

sharp contrast with the detailed account of his experience in the first two days, strongly demonstrates the prominent position of the statue in the whole sequence of his travel experience.

In textual sources pertaining to another pilgrim who visited the mountain in the late tenth century, we find that the prominent role of the statue in a pilgrimage itinerary at Mount Wutai was not limited to Puhua's personal inclinations. A series of texts about Chōnen 喬然 (938–1016), another Japanese pilgrim monk who visited the sacred mountain in 984, reports miraculous signs directly stemming from the statue. As is indicated in Chōnen's repeated pledges made in order to obtain permission from the court to travel to China, the most crucial motivation for his travel to China was to visit Mount Wutai and meet the bodhisattva's very body (*feng Wenshu zhi ji shen* 逢文殊之即身).<sup>25</sup> When he finally realized his long-cherished wish of climbing the mountain, he was informed that a bright white light had appeared on the right shoulder of the statue housed in the Hall of the True Visage of the bodhisattva (Pusa zhenrong yuan 菩薩真容院), a compound within the Great Huayan Monastery, where he was to stay. He therefore rushed to the temple to witness this miraculous sign, which had lasted for hours, late into the afternoon, and attracted more than 300 monks and laymen.<sup>26</sup>

In addition to this, Chōnen seemed to witness a similar miraculous sign from the statue. This time, the sign occurred as the result of his devout prayer in front of the image. A manuscript recounting a brief biography of Chōnen and a detailed itinerary of his travel in China relates:

Chōnen prayed after he reached the Hall of the Bodhisattva's True Visage of the Great Huayan Monastery. Could he be other than reverent and devout? On that day, at the hour of the ape, the top of the Bodhisattva's right side miraculously emitted a white ray, which in the passage of time did not dispel.<sup>27</sup>

25 His pledges written in order to ask permission from the court for the travel to China are collected in *Honchō kōsō den* 本朝高僧傳 [Biographies of Eminent Monks in Japan], currently compiled in *Dai Nihon Bukkyō zensho* 大日本佛教全書 vol. 67, 373. Written twice, one in 970 and the other in 982, the pledges explain his motivation for travelling to China, focusing on his wish of visiting Mount Wutai. For the translation of these sentences, I consulted Wang Zhenping, "Chōnen's Pilgrimage to China, 983–986," *Asia Major* 3rd ser. vol. 7 (1994): 65–7.

26 *Song Shi*, vol. 491.

27 This passage appears in a document found in a cavity at the back of a Buddha statue at Seiryōji 清凉寺 in Japan. Brought by Chōnen from China, the statue contains a number of deposits relevant to Chōnen, including this manuscript. Written by a Chinese monk named Jianduan 鑿端 (d.u.), it contains a biographic description of Chōnen and various

Absent in ninth-century travelogues, such visionary experiences associated with the statue at the hall of the Great Huayan Monastery indicate the emergence of a new focus of pilgrimage to the mountain. In these accounts, the statue functions not only as a locus of vision that emanates miraculous signs, but also as an object of worship in front of which its viewers meditate and pray with their utmost devotion. Possessing such mystical qualities, it became a must-see for those who visited the mountain in search of the divine presence. With this new focus, pilgrimage to the mountain was no longer a “wandering and wondering” in search of the bodhisattva’s unpredictable manifestations. The newly emerged focus on the statue set a new pattern: visiting the Hall of True Visage of the Great Huayan Monastery and worshipping the icon became the starting point of the travel, as indicated in both Puhua and Chōnen’s cases.

## 2 Materialized Vision

The earliest extant text that mentions the statue enshrined in a hall of the Great Huayan Monastery is *Ennin’s Diary*. This Japanese pilgrim monk, unlike Puhua and Chōnen, did not claim to experience any miraculous vision centering on the image. He, however, did hear a legend concerning the origin of the statue from a monk at the then Cloister of the Bodhisattva Hall. As an eyewitness, he begins the story with a vivid impression of the statue:

We opened the hall and worshipped a great image of the bodhisattva Mañjuśrī (Da Wenshu xiang 大文殊像). Its appearance is solemn and majestic beyond compare. The figure riding on a lion fills the five-bay hall. The lion is supernatural (*jingling* 精靈). Its body is majestic, and it seems to be walking, and vapors come from its mouth. We looked at it for quite a while, and it looked just as if it were moving (*qiasi yundong yi* 恰似運動矣).

The venerable monk [in the hall] told us that when they first made [the statue of] the Bodhisattva, they would make it and it would crack. Six times they cast it, and six times it cracked to pieces. The master (*boshi* 博士) [of the image, i.e., the artisan] was disappointed and said, “Being of the highest skill, I am known throughout the empire, and all admit my unique ability. My whole life I have cast Buddhist images, and never

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events that transpired during his journey. For an annotated English translation, see Gregory Henderson and Leon Hurvitz, “The Buddha of Seiryōji: New Finds and New Theory,” *Artibus Asiae* 19, no. 1 (1956): 49–55.

before have I had them crack. When making the image this time, I observed religious abstinence with my whole heart and used all the finesse of my craft, wishing to have the people of the empire behold and worship it and be specially moved to believe, but now I have made it six times, and six times it has completely cracked to pieces. Clearly it does not meet the desire of His Holiness. If this be correct, I humbly pray that His Holiness the bodhisattva Mañjuśrī show his true visage to me in person (*wei wo qinxiang zhenrong* 爲我親現真容). If I gaze directly on his golden countenance, then I shall copy it.” When he had finished making this prayer, he opened his eyes and saw the bodhisattva Mañjuśrī riding on a gold-colored lion right before him. After a little while [Mañjuśrī] mounted on a cloud of five colors and flew away up into space. The master, having attained the vision of [Mañjuśrī’s] true visage (*boshi de xian zhenrong* 博士得現真容), rejoiced [but also] wept bitterly, knowing then that what he had made had been incorrect. Then, changing the original appearance [of the image], he elongated or shortened, enlarged or diminished it [as necessary], so that in appearance it exactly resembled what he had seen, and the seventh time he cast the image it did not crack and everything was easy to do, and all that he desired was fulfilled. After he had made this image, he placed it in the hall, and with tears welling up in his dewy eyes, he said, “Marvelous! What has never been seen before, I have now been able to see. I pray always to be the disciple of Mañjuśrī generation after generation and rebirth after rebirth.” And so saying, he died.<sup>28</sup>

Full of dramatic moments, this legendary narrative, however, scarcely gives us any conventional art historical information. It presents neither the exact date nor the systematic formal description of the image. We do not even learn the name of the artisan, who is just referred to as a “master.” Instead, this story elaborates on the course of events by which the image was born: it was created based on the artisan’s visionary experience, through which he was able to witness the deity’s “true appearance.” Only after this did he succeed in casting the image; without observing the appearance of the bodhisattva, the master could not avoid cracks in his creation, no matter how great his skill was. The recurring cracks were, as the artisan correctly understood, the sign made by the deity himself as a way of expressing his dissatisfaction with the incorrect form of his image. Accordingly, the bodhisattva, responding to the devout prayer, revealed himself to the human artisan so that he could finally correct what was

28 *Nittō guhō junrei kōki*, pp. 65–66. For the translation, I consulted Reischauer, *Ennin’s Diary*, 232–33.

wrong with the image. Despite its fleeting nature, visionary experience was indispensable to the translation of a rarely visible, if not indescribable, form of the transcendental being into material representation.

Though likely the stuff of fiction rather than historical fact, the tale of the birth of this icon has a special significance in the development of the Mount Wutai cult: it was the moment that something formally closer to the *real* was born. As sketched in the previous section, Mount Wutai, a sacred site that from early on had been marked as a mystic landscape, came to be crowded with human-made features like pagodas, monastic buildings, and divine images. Viewed in this line of development, the birth of the icon, as one of many material components that occupied the originally vacant natural ground, may be regarded as a part of the ongoing process of the materialization of the sacred space. However, in terms of nature, this statue embodies a different type of materialization. Given that the physical environments and artistic artifacts that already prevailed on the mountain were made for, and functioning as, registers for the presence of the deity, their relation with bodhisattva Mañjuśrī was, considered from the perspective of verisimilitude, rather indirect. In other words, they functioned as reminders of the presence, but such reminding is, to borrow Charles Sanders Peirce's tripartite semiotic model, indexical and symbolic rather than iconic.<sup>29</sup> For this reason, their values were often derived from their own history with an emphasis on the human protagonists of the event. However, in case of this Mañjuśrī statue, the human artisan, who remains anonymous, does not become an object of memorialization. As a faithful copy of what was shown in the vision, the value of the image solidly lies in its direct relation to the deity. The striving for verisimilitude grants the image iconic status in Peirce's terms and distinguishes the statue from the other types of representation found on the mountain. Although many, if not all, material objects associated with the mountain cult were created in relation to the visions manifested by the deity, this icon occupies a special position in that it was more than simply prompted by a vision: it was created through the process of materializing the vision itself. It was, in this sense, a "materialized vision."

The religious and cultural significance of this statue is clarified when the story is reviewed with a focus on two different but interrelated issues. One is the issue of the materialization of vision. Tracing the history of Mount Wutai, we find that this statue, in fact, was not the only case where what was manifested in visionary experience was directly translated into a material representation. There were at least four times when a monastery manifested in a vision

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29 On Charles Sanders Peirce and his theory on signs, see John Fitzgerald, *Pierce's Theory of Signs as a Foundational for Pragmatism* (The Hague: Mouton, 1966).

was supposedly materialized as an actual monastery. An eleventh-century monograph, *Guang Qingliang zhuan* 廣清涼傳 [Extended Chronicle of Mount Clear and Cool] introduces four such monasteries—Fahua 法華, Jin'ge, Bore 般若, and Zhulin, all of which are said to have been modeled on monasteries manifested in the visionary experiences of eminent monks. With little variation, the stories of the creation of the four monasteries all constitute dream-like visions in which monks enter a fantastic monastery and interact with the deity.<sup>30</sup> For instance, the story of Zhulinsi centers on the experience of Fazhao 法照 (747–821), a renowned Pure Land master, who arrived at Mount Wutai in 770. One night, he was staying in the Foguangsi, he witnessed a mysterious light that led him to cross a great golden bridge. From the bridge, he entered an unknown monastery composed of 120 cloisters, each magnificently adorned with jeweled pagodas, and full of clear brooks and flowering fruit trees. In the lecture hall, he was able to see the bodhisattvas Mañjuśrī and Samantabhadra preaching the dharma. Upon leaving through the door after a tour of the whole complex, the entire building, however, suddenly vanished. Only after this did Fazhao realize what he had experienced was a vision. He then erected a stone signpost to mark the location where the visionary monastery (*huasi*, 化寺) manifested, and several years later monastic buildings began to be built modeled after those of Fazhao's vision.<sup>31</sup>

The story of the visionary monastery informs us of the popularity of the idea of translating a vision into a physical representation in the development of the Mount Wutai cult. It shares a common narrative element with the story of the birth of the icon in that what was seen in the vision serves as the model for materialization. Without doubt, because of such stories, the four monasteries allegedly created out of vision gained more prestige than any other temples. Probably for this reason, Yanyi 延一 (b. 999), the compiler of *Extended Chronicle*, singled out the four stories of the visionary monasteries as independent sections, as he did with the legend of the birth of the Mañjuśrī statue, which also described the materialization of a vision.<sup>32</sup>

30 On Fahua si, see Birnbaum, "The Manifestation of a Monastery." On Zhulin Monastery, see Stevenson, "Visions of Mañjuśrī." On Jin'ge Monastery, see Birnbaum, "Thoughts on T'ang Buddhist Mountain Traditions," 18–19.

31 Concerning the term *huasi*, Lin has proposed to translate it as a "manifested monastery" rather than "visionary monastery," a translation rendered by Stevenson. Wei-Cheng Lin, *Building a Sacred Mountain The Buddhist Architecture of China's Mount Wutai* (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 2014), 182.

32 This *Extended Chronicle* is, among the three earliest extant monographs on Mount Wutai, the largest and most carefully structured compendium of sacred lore associated with the mountain. Birnbaum has suggested that its preface and twenty-three chapters, divided into three volumes, may be grouped into topical categories so that a sense of the contents



Another issue that this legend raises is the notion of miraculous image (*ruixiang* 瑞像) in medieval Chinese Buddhist culture.<sup>33</sup> At least two aspects of the statue securely situate it within the category of miraculous image, a particular type of image whose special authenticity is mainly declared through its ability to perform miracles and/or its possessing supernatural origins. Not only the fact that it is a miracle-working image, emanating lights and presenting metaphysical transformations through light effects, but also the legend recounting its unusual birth satisfy the commonly accepted criteria for miraculous images.

In some respects, the legend of this Mañjuśrī statue, however, goes beyond typical patterns. In most cases, the supernatural powers of miraculous images are presaged and guaranteed by the narrative of their magical origin, expressed by phrases such as “not made by human hands” or “miraculous finding.”<sup>34</sup> However, this Mañjuśrī statue, according to the legend, is not an *achaepoita*, a Greek expression that means an image “not made by human hands.” Instead, it was created by the hands of a human artisan whose knowledge of the real appearance of divine being was limited. Nor is it a “miraculously found” image: it is an earthly artifact, although there was divine intervention. Instead, this legend underscores the issue of verisimilitude as a criterion for the authenticity of the image. Verisimilitude is a decisive factor for an image, with all its material limitations, to be a truthful portrayal of a transcendental being. The

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of this work can be conveyed: virtues and abilities of Mañjuśrī, and his special association with the mountain (preface, chapters 1–3, 23); sacred geography—numinous sites, both natural and constructed, and rare flora that affirm the sacred quality of the mountain (chapters 4–7, 22); special forms of the manifestations of the Bodhisattva (chapters 8–10); unusual encounters with the Bodhisattva by famous pilgrim-monks and important officials (chapters 11–18); shorter accounts of the experiences of monks and nuns on the mountain (chapters 19–21). Among them, the stories about visionary monasteries appear in chapters 13 to 16, and the legend of the icon is recounted in chapter 10. Birnbaum, “Thoughts on T’ang Buddhist Mountain Traditions,” 17–8.

33 On definitions of the term *ruixiang*, see Roderick Whitfield, “*Ruixiang* at Dunhuang,” in *Function and Meaning in Buddhist Art*, eds. K.R. van Kooij and H. van der Veere (Groningen: Egbert Forsten, 1995), 149; Ning Qiang, *Art, Religion, and Politics in Medieval China: The Dunhuang Cave of the Zhai Family* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2004), 122–23; Wu Hung, “Rethinking Liu Sahe: The Creation of a Buddhist Saint and the Invention of a ‘Miraculous Image,’” *Orientalism* 29, no. 6 (November 1996), 36; Sun-ah Choi, “*Zhenrong* to *Ruixiang*: The Medieval Chinese Reception of the Mahābodhi Buddha Statue,” *Art Bulletin* 97, no. 4 (December 2015), 379.

34 The best-known example of the former is the so-called Udāyana image, a Buddha statue allegedly made for King Udāyana. See Martha L. Carter, *The Mystery of the Udāyana Buddha* (Naples: Istituto Universitario Orientale, 1990); Sun-ah Choi, “Quest for the True Visage: Sacred Images in Medieval Chinese Buddhist Art and the Concept of *Zhen*,” Ph.D. dissertation, University of Chicago, 2012, 61–72.

idea that an evanescent vision can be translated into a material proxy that represents the *real*, and that a deity can manifest his real form to a human artisan to serve as a model are quite novel ones with little precedent in medieval Chinese Buddhism.<sup>35</sup> Here lies the unusual role of vision: it not only decides the likeness of the material representation, but also guarantees the ontological legitimacy of the image. It is another mode of divine intervention that characterizes the uniqueness of this Mañjuśrī statue in the tradition of miraculous images.

Probably for this reason, a later version of the same story puts more emphasis on the way in which the image acquired the indisputable likeness of the deity. Yanyi, the compiler of *Guang Qingliang zhuan*, introduces the birth of the icon in an independent section, entitled “An Sheng’s Making of the True Visage Bodhisattva” (An Sheng su zhenrong pusa 安生塑真容菩薩). Unlike Ennin, who was a pilgrim witness of the statue, Yanyi, as a monk who institutionally belonged to the Hall of True Visage, places the story within a more historically structured frame:

To the north of the Dafu lingjiu Monastery, there is a little peak, whose top is flat and without trees. Its majestic form resembles the Vulture Peak of India. Above this peak, auspicious clouds often appear, and the sacred visage is frequently manifested. It is what the ancients said was the terrace of the Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī. In the Jingyun era (710-711) of the Tang, there was a monk named Fayun living in the Huayan Monastery [the later name for the Dafu linjiu Monastery]. [He thought that, though] each day the Great Sage revealed his manifestations, **but the region had no image to venerate and visitors from the four directions had nothing to look upon with reverence.** Thereupon he prepared a hall and summoned an artisan to fashion an image.

There was a recluse named An Sheng, from an unknown region. One day, he answered the summons to make the image for Fayun. Fayun pressed a large payment on him, wishing to rush the workman. **An Sheng said: “If I don’t see his true image (*ruo bu mudu zhenxiang* 若不目睹真相), then I cannot be without doubt.”** So he burned incense and made a supplication. After a short time, the Great Sage suddenly appeared in

35 Although rare in Buddhist sources, it is notable that such an idea—the deity’s intervention in the making of his representation by revealing his true form—is found in a ninth-century Daoist text, *Daojiao lingyan ji* 道教靈驗記 [Evidential Miracles (in support of) Daoism]. For more information of the *Daojiao lingyan ji*, see Franciscus Verellen, “Evidential Miracles in Support of Taoism: The Invention of a Buddhist Apologetic Tradition in Late Tang China.” *Young Pao* 78 (1992): 217-263.

the chamber. An Sheng jumped for joy and stamped on the ground, praying: “I vow to fast until I achieve a perfect model and a good form.” Then he modeled it. After a while, there was doubt in his mind. Every time he turned to look, he saw Mañjuśrī by his side. **After a year he finished [the image], having witnessed seventy-two manifestations.** The true appearance was squarely prepared (*zhenyi fangbei* 眞儀方備). For this reason, this hall is named as the “Cloister of the True Visage (Zhenrong yuan 眞容院).”<sup>36</sup> (emphasis mine)

Compared to the earlier version, this one invites us into the realm of seemingly factual ground: it specifies the date when the statue was made, as well as the names of the patron and artisan of the image. Although no further textual source regarding them is known, the alleged specificity, regardless of its historical reliability, makes the story something like a received history, rather than a casual episode.

Elaborations and modifications in this later version not only reframe the story, but also put more emphasis on the role of a vision in the creation of the statue. For instance, in this new version, the artisan realized that a vision was a prerequisite for his project before rather than after beginning his task. This modification may be related to the choice of An Sheng as the artisan in this new version. According to Song Minqiu’s 宋敏求 (1019–1079) *Chang’an zhi* 長安志 [Record of Chang’an], An was a specialist in making clay images and was particularly well known for *chuanshen* 傳神 or “translating the spirit.”<sup>37</sup> Even though he was a human artisan, his talent for capturing the spirit guaranteed the authenticity of the icon, as much as the rhetoric of an image having been “made not by human hands” does in other accounts of miraculous images. It is also notable that, rather than a fleeting vision, the manifestation occurred multiple times according to the later account. The artisan was able to enjoy it whenever he felt it necessary. In total he observed seventy-two

36 *Guang Qingliang zhuan*, T. 2099, 51: 110a13–110a26. For the translation, I consulted Mary A. Cartelli, “The Poetry of Mount Wutai: Chinese Buddhist Verse from Dunhunag” (Ph.D. Dissertation, Columbia University, 1999), 212–22.

37 Song Minqiu, the author of the *Chang’an zhi*, introduces An Sheng together with Song Fazhi 宋法智 (fl. mid-seventh century) and Wu Zhimin 吳志敏 (fl. mid-seventh century) as those who are good at making clay images, and particularly famous for their talent for *chuanshen*. It is notable that Song Fazhi is the one who accompanied Wang Xuance in 643 in his trip to India and sketched the “True Visage on a Diamond Seat” (*jin’gangzuo zhenrong* 金剛座眞容) of Bodhi Gaya. For more on the image, see Choi, “*Zhenrong to Ruixiang*,” 364–87. For the meaning of the term *chuanshen*, see Susan Bush and Hsio-yen Shih comps. and eds. *Early Chinese Texts on Painting* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985), 20–3.

manifestations, a number more than ten times larger than the earlier redaction held the unnamed artisan witnessed appearances.

The intensified verisimilitude made possible through such modifications contributes to a decrease in the intrinsic gap between a manufactured icon and the divine being it represents. Referred to as the true visage, or *zhenrong*, the icon gains a status similar, if not identical, to what it represents. The special reception of the statue as the material substitute for the *real* is well conveyed in the striking statement concerning the rationale for the commission of the image: “[T]he visitors from the four directions had nothing to look upon with reverence.”<sup>38</sup> This remark, inserted at the beginning of the story, opens up the possibility that the icon has a new status: it is as a must-see during the pilgrimage to Mount Wutai. Here the image itself attracts pilgrims, a role played by the hard-to-get visionary experiences provided by the deity.

The story of a layman Wang Zai illustrates well this point:

Wang Zai was a resident of Dezhou. He was quite rich. In the summer of 1090, he traveled to Mount Wutai with his wife and servant. They stayed one night at the Hall of the True Visage. The next day, they properly wore all their costumes and went to venerate the Mañjuśrī statue. When night came, they showed disrespect and even made noises. [Then] they went [back] to the hostel.

Monk Shengyan, who was in charge of the guests, visited Zai and said, “I have lived here almost for forty years. The guests that I have welcomed are numerous. Your veneration today seemed to be, at first, attentive, but later became lax. In addition, your face does not look happy. Why is it?”

Zai lost his temper and said, “The reason why I came here is because I heard people saying that a flesh-body bodhisattva resides here. Thus, I came here without considering a thousand miles distant. Now looking at it, it is merely a lump of clay. Remembering the laborious road I trod [to come here], how could regarding it not be painful for me?”

Yan said, “What does this mean? Earlier, the Great Sage resided in this Vulture Terrace. He often manifested his auspicious appearance. An

<sup>38</sup> In relation to this phrase, it is quite important to note that Yanyi is a resident monk at the Hall of True Visage. Written by a monk closely associated with the cult of the statue, the text may tend to emphasize and idealize the ontological status of the image in the course of retelling. For the idealization couched in *Extended Chronicle*, see Birnbaum, “Thoughts on T’ang Buddhist Mountain Traditions,” 18. In relation to Yanyi’s affiliation with the temple, the economic and social value of the statue cannot be neglected as well, particularly for the wealth and prestige of the monastery that possessed and promoted the statue. I thank Paul Copp for this point.

Sheng fashioned it with clay after seeing it himself. [When] there was a doubt in his mind, he prayed and [the bodhisattva] manifested himself seventy two times. For this reason, Emperor Ruizong of the Tang granted a tablet and entitled the Hall of the True Visage. How can you speak so naively? Furthermore, this mountain is guarded by a dragon god. If he gets angry, you will not find a place to hide your body.”

Zai asked, “How could [even] a dragon harm me?” Yan replied. “When you came here, you looked down upon the appearance of the statue, and disrespected the dragon god. I am just afraid the calamity [for you] will be immeasurable. Please repent as soon as possible. Otherwise, your body must be smashed into pieces by the dragon god’s claws.” [However] Zai did not change his mind.

Three days later, Zai went to the Eastern Terrace with hundreds of people. They stayed at the Hall of Manifestation on top of the Terrace. In the middle of the night, it suddenly thundered severely, as if the sky had cracked open, and the earth had gaped wide. On the wall of the hall was made a hole through which a flame of fire soared in. Soon, the flame went out through the hall and Zai’s body was already burnt into ashes.<sup>39</sup>

Unlike Puhua and Chōnen who enjoyed visionary experiences of the statue, Wang Zai’s denial of the fusion between the image and its divine prototype brings about horrifying results. This outcome, however, further intensifies the ontological meaning of the statue: retaining a status commensurate to the *real*, the statue, as a depository of power through which divine messages are channeled, can take vengeance on those who doubt its dignity. The disrespect of the statue is directly transferred to the deity, collapsing the intrinsic gap between a material representation and its divine prototype. Now, the statue is no different from what it represents.

### 3 The Legacy of the True Visage

For all the fame it enjoyed at Mount Wutai during the medieval period, the current whereabouts of the *zhenrong* at the Zhenrong yuan are not known. The Hall of the True Visage, where this much-revered icon was once enshrined, is supposed to be located in the monastic complex currently called Pusa ding.<sup>40</sup>

39 *Guang Qianliang zhuan*, T. 2099, 51: 1125c18–1126a14. Translation is mine.

40 The Hall of True Visage was rebuilt in 977 at the order of Song Taizong (r. 976–997) and was shortly thereafter made a repository of one of five copies of the entire *tripitaka*, which

Taking on the new name during the Ming Yongle period (1403–24), Pusa ding still functions as the climax of modern pilgrimages, even in a casual sightseeing trip to the mountain.<sup>41</sup> However, the attraction of the monastic complex has been, if not totally altered, diversified. The complex was expanded during the Qing period as an official center of Tibetan Buddhism, and at the same time came to serve as a residential area for Qing emperors during their excursions to the mountain. As a result, multiple facets of historical significance appeal to visitors.<sup>42</sup> Moreover, in the Hall of Mañjuśrī (Wenshu dian 文殊殿), the most renowned pavilion in the temple complex, stands a modern replacement of a Ming-period bronze bodhisattva triad consisting of Mañjuśrī, Avalokiteśvara, and Samantabhadra, instead of the *zhenrong* who greeted, amazed, or sometimes disappointed medieval visitors. Now fossilized in the textual corpus, the traces of statue are searched for only by those who remember the celebrated past of the materialized real.<sup>43</sup>

In contrast to the absence of the historically-sanctioned Tang-dynasty *zhenrong* icon, a phrase from a seventeenth-century record relates an interesting story: “There are twelve famous monasteries at Mount Wutai, but it is only Shuxiang si that possesses the *True Visage*.”<sup>44</sup> This bold statement, on the one hand, confirms the disappearance of the *zhenrong* of the Zhenrong yuan at this time period.<sup>45</sup> On the other, it informs us of the presence of another *zhenrong* at Shuxiang si during the seventeenth century. The phrase is from a stele

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Taizong had ordered inscribed in gold characters. For the later history of this hall, see Ono and Hibino, *Godaizan*, 77–128; Xiao Yu, “Pusa ding de fojiaolishi,” *Wutai shan yanjiu*, no. 1 (1996): 3–17, 48.

- 41 For instance, climbing the 108 stone steps leading up to the complex is still one of the highlights of travel to the site.
- 42 In addition to the Ming dynasty reconstruction, Shunzhi emperor (r. 1644–61) of the Qing dynasty renovated it extensively into an official imperial establishment with yellow-glazed tiles and installed a Tibetan Buddhist lama from Beijing. Both the Kangxi and Qianlong emperors stayed there during their numerous visits to Mount Wutai.
- 43 In spite of its absence, there are some clues by means of which the original appearance of the *zhenrong* icon can be traced. For more on this issue, see Choi, “Quest for the True Visage,” 174–201.
- 44 臺山名剎凡十二區，而藏佛眞容者，唯殊像焉 Xiang Wen comp., “Shuxiang si beiwen,” *Wutaishan yanjiu* no 3 (1996), 45.
- 45 It is highly likely that the statue was lost sometime between the late Yuan (1271–1368) and early Ming dynasties (1368–1644). The Great Huayan Monastery, where the Zhenrong yuan stood, was in ruins in the early Ming. Imperial patrons thus tried to revive the fortune of the monastery in the early Ming dynasty by supporting reconstruction efforts. Three separate monasteries were built on the ruins of the Great Huayan Monastery: the Great Xiantong monastery, the first to be rebuilt by the Hongwu emperor (r. 1368–1398), then the Pusa ding (the Bodhisattva Peak) and the Great Pagoda monastery in the Yongle reign (1403–24). Puay-peng Ho, “Building for Glitter and Eternity: The Works of the Late Ming Master Builder Miaofeng on Wutai Shan,” *Orientalisms* 27, no. 5 (May 1996): 67.

inscription composed for commemorating the renovation of Shuxiang si in 1608 by Zhen Cheng 鎮澄 (1546–1617). Zhen is also an author of *Qingliang shan zhi* 清涼山誌 [Gazetteer of Mount Clear and Cool]. In the volume, he had introduced the history of Shuxiang si with those of sixty four temples in the mountain. The Great Xiantong si (Da Xiantong si 大顯通寺), formerly the Great Huayan si, comes first, while Shuxiang si comes twenty-first. Zhen's record of the temple is quite brief, but phrases about a statue in the temple are quite appealing: "The temple has a statue of the bodhisattva Mañjuśrī on a lion. It was created by divine hands, and makes the viewer solemn."<sup>46</sup> Interestingly, the same statue was further praised for its divine nature in the stele inscription Zhen composed for Shuxiang si: "The temple has an old hall, which enshrines the True Image of the Great Sage bodhisattva Mañjuśrī. Due to the [fame of the] statue, the temple is named Shuxiang (Mañjuśrī's Image). According to legends, the image was created by divine hands of the Tang."<sup>47</sup>

Although Zhen attributed the origin of the statue to the Tang dynasty, another record on the temple, which was written earlier than Zhen's, indicates that the image was created sometime in the late fifteenth century. It is a stele inscription composed during the late Hongzhi era (1488–1505). It describes how Shuxiang si was rediscovered and renovated by a monk named Tielin'guo 鐵林果禪師 during the fifteenth century.<sup>48</sup> According to the record, Tielin'guo came across a devastated temple when he roamed around Mount Wutai, and a stele in the temple which related that the temple was originally built by an empress of the Yuan dynasty (1271–1368). The temple was first named as Shuxiang si 殊祥寺 (Temple of Mañjuśrī's Auspiciousness), but renamed to Shuxiang si 殊像寺 (Temple of the Mañjuśrī Image), as the fame of the icon, which was commissioned to enshrine in the hall of the temple, increased and became widely known.<sup>49</sup>

The source of the image's fame is well illustrated in the legend.<sup>50</sup> It goes as follows: when the renovation was almost complete, the chief priest of the

46 有文殊駕狻猊像，神人所造。見者肅然，生難有想 *Qingliang shan zhi*, juan 3, 55.

47 寺有古殿，供奉文殊大聖真像，故以名殊像。據傳唐神人所造也 *Xiang Wen comp.*, "Shuxiang si beiwen," 45.

48 *Xiang Wen comp.*, "Shuxiang si beiwen," 44.

49 Zhen indicates in the 1608 stele inscription that the image survived the turmoil during the Six dynasties, but it is unlikely, as there is no record on Shuxiang si in the *Gu Qingliang zhuan* and *Guang Qingliang zhuan*. Zhu Ying also saw that the image was commissioned by Tielinguo in 1496 along with five hundred arhat images. Zhu Ying, "Shuxiang si fojiao jianshi," 3.

50 Gao Minghe, "Shuxiang si jianzhu yu suxiang gaishu," *Wutai shan yanjiu*, no. 3 (1996), 37; Huan Yu, "Shuxiang si li de chuanshuo gushi," *Wutai shan yanjiu*, no. 3 (1996).

temple wanted to hire an artisan who could make a good image for the main hall. Long after, an artisan finally responded to the call and rushed to mold a statue corresponding the priest's order. When the image was nearly finished, the artisan remained hesitant to complete the job as he was not sure how to represent the bodhisattva's face. Several days passed, and the bodhisattva Mañjuśrī appeared all of a sudden astride a lion. While everyone in the temple was deeply moved and prostrated in front of him, only the artisan hurriedly ran into the kitchen and brought a piece of dough which was prepared for lunch. He molded the deity's face on it exactly after what he was seeing. When the molding was almost done, the bodhisattva disappeared. Finally, the artisan was able to complete the image based on his dough sample. Although the story sounds quite secular, those who were familiar with the earlier Tang dynasty legend would easily recognize that the major skeleton of the narrative is almost identical with the later version. What is essential in both stories is that the image was not randomly made, but created based on the artisan's first-hand witness of the deity. Due to this common ground, the Mañjuśrī statue at Shuxiang si was called *zhenrong*, and finally regarded as the only *zhenrong* at Mount Wutai during the seventeenth century. Taking on the renowned status and the legendary origin of the old *zhenrong*, Shuxiang si seems to have functioned as a replacement for the absent glory of the Zhenrong yuan. In this sense, a sacred site, as Bernard Faure has rightly put it, is never simply a given but in constant flux, incessantly modified by the actions and perceptions of residents and visitors.<sup>51</sup>

Such an aspect of the Mañjuśrī image seems to have been enough to shift Qianlong's attention to Shuxiang si in his second attempt to translate Mount Wutai to Xiang shan. Indeed, Qianlong praised the auspiciousness of the image in the stele inscription he composed for Baoxiang si.<sup>52</sup> He even made sketches of the image en route back to Beijing and ordered that his sketch be translated onto a stele along with his eulogy. He went so far as to ask that a statue of the bodhisattva for Baoxiang si be created based on what was copied on the stele.<sup>53</sup> In the same year, Qianlong also ordered court painter Ding

51 Faure, "Relics and Flesh Bodies," 150.

52 中臺現身，寺曰殊像。我昔瞻禮，發大宏願，虔誠祝釐，普諸福緣。Zhang Yuxin, *Qing zhengfu yu lama jiao*, 409.

53 歲辛巳，值聖母皇太后七旬大慶，爰奉安輿詣五臺，所以祝釐也。殊像寺在山之麓，為瞻禮文殊初地，妙相端嚴，光耀香界，默識以歸。既歸，則心追手摹，係以讚而勒之碑。香山南麓，向所規菩薩頂之寶諦寺在焉。迺於寺右度隙地，出內府金錢，飭具庀材，營構藍若，視碑摹而像設之。Zhang Yuxin, *Qing zhengfu yu lama jiao*, 409; 寶相寺，乾隆二十七年建。先是，歲在辛巳，駕幸五臺，回鑾後御寫殊象寺文殊象而系以讚，并命于寶諦寺旁建茲寺，肖象其中。Dou Guangnai, ed., *Qinding rixia jiuwen kao*, juan 103, 7.



Guanpeng to draw Mañjuśrī images based on his own sketches.<sup>54</sup> Tracing Qianlong's activities around 1761, it is clear that the Mañjuśrī statue at Shuxiang si was the main reason why he chose the temple as a media with which he translated Mount Wutai at Xiang shan.

The primacy of the *zhenrong* icon at Shuxiang si may have overpowered the seemingly unquestionable historicity of Pusa ding, which was the original locus of the currently absent *zhen*. The relocation of power from Pusa ding to Shuxiang si as a part that represents the whole is further strengthened by another project Qianlong initiated almost ten years later in Chengde. When he needed to build another Buddhist monastery after he successfully transposed the abode of the bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara to Chengde through the replication of the Potala Palace in Tibet in 1771, he chose Shuxiang si again to be the abode of the bodhisattva Mañjuśrī transposed to Chengde. This time, he even brought the name of the temple and clearly explained the reason why Shuxiang si was chosen: "it is the place where Mañjuśrī manifested himself in vision (*Wenshu shixian chu* 文殊示現處)."<sup>55</sup> The significance of the true image in the transposition of a sacred space is confirmed in a clearer manner in this new location.

However, this transposition was not entirely simple. Curiously enough, Qianlong specified two different models for the creation of Shuxiang si in Chengde. According to him, the architectural plan and the image of Mañjuśrī was made after the image at Baoxiang si, whereas the halls and pavilions were based on the original one at Mount Wutai.<sup>56</sup> In other words, it was not based on the real Shuxiang si statue at Mount Wutai, but on its replication at Xiang shan that the Mañjuśrī statue at Chengde's Shuxiang si was created. Now Qianlong conflated the real with its replication, blurring the ontological distinctions between the two; the replicated real, in Qianlong's logic, was metaphorically sanctioned as another real, to the extent that it could serve as a model for another replication.

54 乾隆二十六年四月十八日：十八日接得員外郎安泰押帖一件，內開本月十七日奉旨著丁觀鵬用舊宣紙畫文殊菩薩像着色工筆畫，得時裱掛軸，欽此 (*Zhongguo diyi lishi dang'an guan*, ed., *Qing gong neiwufu zaobanchu dang'an zonghui*, vol. 26, 693; 乾隆二十六年十二月十五日：十二月十五日接得達色押帖一件，內開十四日太監胡世傑持來御筆文殊像二幅，丁觀鵬畫文殊像一幅傳旨著觀鵬仿蠟身樣法身起稿，仍用舊宣紙另畫三幅，其塔門暫且放下，先畫文殊像，欽此 (*ibid.*, 729-730).

55 Zhang Yuxin, *Qing zhengfu yu lama jiao*, 443.

56 營構藍若，莊校金容，一如香山之制；而堂殿樓閣，略仿五臺山，亦名以殊像，從其朔也。Zhang Yuxin, *Qing zheng fu yu lama jiao*, 443.

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## Khotan and Mount Wutai: The Significance of Central Asian Actors in the Making of the Mountain Cult

*Imre Hamar*

Because Mount Wutai stands within the borders of today's China, it is easy to imagine that this place was and is a Chinese place. Perhaps for this reason, when seeking to understand Mount Wutai's development as a Buddhist holy site, scholars have tended to overemphasize the roles that local actors played in this process. Studying Khotanese connections to this locale reveals the site's genuinely international significance. The substantial links between the Central Asian territory and the Mountain of Five Plateaus, as we will see here, highlight the rich potential that a pan-Asian approach holds for scholars of Mount Wutai and Buddhism more generally.

### 1 Khotan and the *Buddhāvataṃsaka sūtra*

It is well known that one of the scriptural proofs for the identification of Mount Wutai as the abode of Mañjuśrī bodhisattva is the *Buddhāvataṃsaka sūtra* (The Flower Ornament Scripture). The origin or the compilation of this voluminous Mahāyāna sūtra might be closely associated with Central Asia, as Indian *śāstra* literature refers to some chapters of *Buddhāvataṃsaka sūtra* as independent sūtras but never as part of the *Buddhāvataṃsaka sūtra*. Although the Sanskrit title *Buddhāvataṃsaka sūtra* was preserved in the colophon of a Sanskrit sūtra, the content of this sūtra is not certain, but it probably also included a collection of sūtras different from the extant version of the *Buddhāvataṃsaka sūtra*.

If we consider the Central Asian origin or edition of this scripture, Khotan (Yutian 于闐, Hetian xian 和田縣 today) could be a possible candidate for the site of its creation, as this scripture seems to have been very important in this Central Asian oasis state. This sūtra was held in high esteem by the Khotanese king, as when Zhi Faling 支法領 (d.u.) went to Khotan to receive this scripture in 392, the sacred scriptures were jealously guarded and foreigners were not allowed to take them out of the country. Ultimately, he succeeded in

persuading the king to present him with the first part of the *Buddhāvataṃsaka sūtra*, which consisted of 36,000 *ślokas* (jie 偈). Zhi Faling asked Buddhahadra (Fotuobatuoluo 佛陀跋陀羅, 359–429) to translate the *Buddhāvataṃsaka sūtra*, which he had brought with him from Khotan. On the tenth day of the third month of 418, he began the work and he completed it in the sixth month of 420. This became the first Chinese version of the *Buddhāvataṃsaka sūtra*, which was later called the 60-fascicle *Huayan jing* 華嚴經 [Flower Ornament sūtra].

Most likely, it was a Khotanese monk called Tiyunbore 提云般若 (?–690?), whose original name could be reconstructed as Devendraprajñā,<sup>1</sup> who told Empress Wu Zetian 武則天 (623/625–705) that a more complete version of the *Buddhāvataṃsaka sūtra* was to be found in Khotan. He probably arrived at Luoyang around 688, as Divākara, the famous translator monk died in that year, and Devendraprajñā could be invited to take over his leading role in the translation office at Weiguodongsi 魏國東寺.<sup>2</sup> Wu Zetian must have been very interested in the *Buddhāvataṃsaka sūtra* as she ordered him to translate sūtras related to this scripture first. The Khotanese master supposedly did not take the Sanskrit manuscript of the larger *Buddhāvataṃsaka sūtra* with him to China, but had two shorter texts. Thus he first translated the *Da fangguang fo huayan jing bu siyi jingjie fen* 大方廣佛華嚴經不思議佛境界分 [Section on the Inconceivable Buddha-realm of the *Buddhāvataṃsakamahāvaiṣṭya sūtra*]<sup>3</sup> and the *Da fangguang fo huayan jing xiuci fen* 大方廣佛華嚴經修慈分 [Section on the Cultivation of Loving Kindness of the *Buddhāvataṃsakamahāvaiṣṭya sūtra*].<sup>4</sup>

These two sūtras do not correspond to any of the chapters of the larger *Buddhāvataṃsaka sūtra* but Chinese catalogues classify them as works related to the *Buddhāvataṃsaka sūtra* (*Juanshu jing* 眷屬經).<sup>5</sup> This might mean that

1 Antonino Forte, “Le Moine Khotanais Devendraprajñā,” *Bulletin de l’École Française d’Extrême-Orient* 66 (1979): 285.

2 Ibid., 290. 《大乘法界無差別論疏》卷 1：「有于闐國三藏法師提雲般若。此云天慧。其人慧悟超倫。備窮三藏。在於本國。獨步一人。後為觀化上京。遂齋梵本百有餘部。於垂拱年內屆至神都。有勅慰喻。入內供養。安置魏國東寺。令共大德十人翻譯經論。仍令先譯華嚴。余以不敏。猥蒙徵召。既預翻譯。得觀寶聚。遂翻得華嚴不思議境界分。華嚴修慈分。大乘智炬陀羅尼經。諸佛集會陀羅尼經。已上各一卷成。造像功德經二卷。法界無差別論一卷。T. 1838, 44: 63c22–64a2).

3 T 10: 300.

4 T 10: 306.

5 Hamar, “The History of the *Buddhāvataṃsaka-sūtra*: Shorter and Larger Texts,” in *Reflecting Mirrors: Perspectives on Huayan Buddhism*, ed. Imre Hamar (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2007), 139.

the genesis of these texts must be linked to the larger *Buddhāvataṃsaka sūtra*, or even that they might have been included in some editions. The importance of these two scriptures in Khotan is attested by their Khotanese translations, which were discovered recently.<sup>6</sup>

The longest extant Buddhist work that was originally composed in Khotanese is the Book of Zambasta, dating from the 5th century.<sup>7</sup> It has emerged that the third chapter of this poetic work is a parallel text of the *Da fangguang fo huayan jing xiuci fen*.<sup>8</sup> This is a meditation text that explains how to use loving kindness in Buddhist practice.<sup>9</sup> This is not the only chapter of the book that can be related to the larger *Buddhāvataṃsaka sūtra*. The first chapter, which is unfortunately not complete, contains a teaching of Samantabhadra referring to the *Gaṇḍavyūha* chapter of the sūtra. This could serve as a good beginning for a manual on Mahāyāna teachings.<sup>10</sup> The description of bodhisattva practice is an essential part of the larger *Buddhāvataṃsaka sūtra*: the fifty-two stages of the bodhisattva were formulated on the basis of this scripture. Bodhisattva practice plays an important role in the book of Zambasta; it contains references to the *Daśabhūmika sūtra*, a chapter of the larger *Buddhāvataṃsaka sūtra*. In the Khotanese manuscript collection of the British Library a fragment from a Khotanese text, IOL Khot 147/5 (H. 147 NS 106), was identified as the Khotanese version of the other sūtra, the *Da fangguang fo huayan jing bu siyi jingjie fen*.<sup>11</sup>

Devendraprajñā, who seems to have been a master of *Buddhāvataṃsaka sūtra*, was a scholar-monk highly respected not only in Wu Zetian's court but also by the Khotanese royal family. The Khotanese prince Viśya Vākrraṃ (Bidzaya Bikrama, Fudu Jing 伏闍璿) followed his father Viśya Saṃgrāmā (Bidzaya

6 Chen Huaiyu was able to make this identification on the basis of Prof. Skjervø's *Catalogue*, which includes the English translation of Khotanese fragments. See Huaiyu Chen, "Newly Identified Khotanese Fragments in the British Library and their Chinese Parallels," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, Third Series* 22, no. 2 (2012): 265–279.

7 For an English translation, see Ronald E. Emmerick, *The Book of Zambasta: A Khotanese Poem on Buddhism* (London: Oxford University Press, 1968).

8 For the edition of the Khotanese text with English translation, Chinese parallel text and vocabulary, see Duan Qing, *Yutian – fojiao – gujuan* (Shanghai: Zhongxi shuju, 2013), 57–108, 285–334.

9 For a detailed study of this work, see Giuliana Martini, "Mahāmaitrī in a Mahāyāna Sūtra in Khotanese — Continuity and Innovation in Buddhist Meditation," *Chung-Hwa Buddhist Journal* 24 (2011): 121–194.

10 Mauro Maggi, "Khotanese Literature," in *The Literature of Pre-Islamic Iran* (Companion Volume 1 to A History of Persian Literature), eds. R.E. Emmerick et al. (London: Tauris, 2009), 351.

11 Chen, "Newly Identified Khotanese Fragments," 265–279.



Sangrama, Fudu Xiong 伏闍雄) to China in 674 after they fought against the Tibetans. His father probably died in China, and the Chinese placed the prince on the Khotanese throne in 692. The prince must have known his famous compatriot Devendraprajñā, who died a few years after his arrival at China and was only able to translate six scriptures. The *Li yul lung bstan pa* (Prophecy of the Li country) records that after his return to Khotan Viśya Vākraṃ built a vihāra for his “pious friend” Ārya Arhat Devendra the Great (dgra-bcom-pa debendra chen-gyi). This friend can be none other than Devendraprajñā, and the monastery must have been dedicated to his memory.<sup>12</sup>

The Sanskrit original manuscript of the second version of the *Huayan jing* was also brought from Khotan under the command of Empress Wu Zetian, who gave lavish support to Fazang 法藏 (643–712), who could be regarded as the founder of the Huayan school in China.<sup>13</sup> Probably because this was an imperial mission, the Khotanese royal family seems not to have been reluctant to provide the manuscript. A Khotanese monk, Śikṣānanda (Shicha‘nantuo 實叉難陀 652–710), brought the work to China and later settled at the Dabian si 大遍寺 in the eastern capital, where he began translating it. This Sanskrit manuscript was longer than the sixty-fascicle *Huayan jing* by 9,000 ślokas and consisted of a total of 45,000 ślokas. The work commenced on the fourteenth day of the third month of 695 and was completed in the Foshouji si 佛授記寺 on the eighth day of the tenth month of 699, with a foreword written by the empress herself. This version of the *Huayan jing* is called the 80-fascicle *Huayan jing*. It is important to note that Bodhiruci (Putiliuzhi 菩提流支 ?–727) joined Śikṣānanda to translate the *Buddhāvataṃsaka sūtra* in 694. Later, he translated the *Wenshushili baozang tuoluoni jing* 文殊師利寶藏陀羅尼經 [Scripture Spoken by the Buddha on the Dhāraṇī of Mañjuśrī’s Precious Treasury of the Dharma] in 710 which has the reference to Mount Wutai as an abode of Mañjuśrī.

It is interesting to note that Wu Zetian seems to have shown more favour to the Khotanese Śikṣānanda than to the Chinese pilgrim monk Yijing 義淨 (635–713). The latter went to India to study at Nālanda, the most important center of Buddhist knowledge, and returned with scriptures that represented the most important works of Indian Buddhism. Even so, Wu Zetian had more respect for

12 John E. Hill, “Notes on the Dating of Khotanese History,” *Indo-Iranian Journal* 31 (1988), 102; Duan, *Yutian*, 48. I adopted the Khotanese names from Duan.

13 For a new perspective on Fazang’s role in Chinese Buddhism and his association with Wu Zetian, see Chen Jinhua’s very detailed biography of the cleric. See Jinhua Chen, *Philosopher, Practitioner, Politician: The Many Lives of Fazang (643–712)*. (Leiden: Brill, 2007).

the Central Asian monk, which indicates her personal interest in Central Asian Buddhism.<sup>14</sup>

## 2 Mount Wutai and Mount Niutou in the *Huayan jing*

The passage that served as a scriptural basis for Mañjuśrī's presence on Mount Wutai first appeared in Buddhābhadrā's translation of the *Buddhāvataṃsaka sūtra* in the chapter called The Abodes of the Bodhisattvas. The often-cited passage reads:

There is a place in the northeast named Mount Clear-and-Cool. From ancient times till the present, bodhisattva assemblies have dwelt there. At present, there is a bodhisattva named Mañjuśrī who, together with his retinue and assembly of bodhisattvas numbering ten thousand persons, is always in its center, extensively preaching the Dharma.<sup>15</sup>

東北方有菩薩住處，名清涼山，過去諸菩薩常於中住；彼現有菩薩，名文殊師利，有一萬菩薩眷屬，常為說法。<sup>16</sup>

This passage is almost identical in the 80-fascicle version:

北方有處。名清涼山。從昔已來。諸菩薩眾。於中止住。現有菩薩。名文殊師利。與其眷屬。諸菩薩眾。一萬人俱。常在其中。<sup>17</sup>

However, as Lamotte pointed out in his seminal work on Mañjuśrī, the Tibetan translation of the sūtra prepared in the first quarter of the ninth century by two Indian masters, Jinamitra (Shengyou 勝友, d.u.) and Surendrabodhi (d.u.), in association with the Tibetan master Ye-shes-sde (d.u.), does not confirm this.<sup>18</sup>

kye rgyal-ba'i sras-dag / byang phyogs logs-na sngon byang-chub sems-dpa' bzhugs bzhugs-pa'i ri spong ri zhes bya-ba yod-de / de-la byang-chub

14 Duan, *Yutian*, 175.

15 Raoul Birnbaum, "The Manifestation of a Monastery: Shen-Ying's Experiences on Mount Wu-t'ai in T'ang Context," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 106, no. 1 (1986), 124.

16 *Da fanguang fo huayan jing* 大方廣佛華嚴經, T. 278, 9: 29. 590a3-5.

17 *Da fanguang fo huayan jing* 大方廣佛華嚴經, T. 279, 10: 241b20-23.

18 Étienne Lamotte, "Mañjuśrī," *T'oung Pao* 48 (1960): 1-96.

sems-dpa' 'jam-dpal zhes bya-ba / byang-chub sems-dpa'i 'khor stong  
phrag bcu dang ldan-pa chos ston-to /<sup>19</sup>

First of all, in the Tibetan text the northern direction is listed twice<sup>20</sup> and Mañjuśrī is mentioned at the second appearance of the Northern direction. The 60 fascicle and the 80 fascicle versions have the northeastern direction instead of northern direction. Both Chinese versions designate the mountain Clear and Cool (Qingliang 清涼) in this northeastern direction, while the Tibetan text calls it Grass Covered Hill (Ri spang ri). It is quite clear that the direction and the name of the mountain were deliberately inserted into the text in order to provide grounds for the identification of Mount Wutai as an abode of Mañjuśrī bodhisattva. This chapter of the *Buddhāvataṃsaka sūtra* seems to have been intended to incorporate the eight mountains of the eight directions known from Indian mythology and to extend them to include further abodes of bodhisattvas.<sup>21</sup> We cannot be sure who inserted the name Clear and Cool into the text. It could have been done in Khotan, where the text was obtained, or during the translation in China. Lamotte argued that it is not very likely that Buddhahadra or his team would have inserted this material into the text, as in that early period this sūtra was not very influential. On the other hand, it is possible that they wanted to attract the Chinese audience by means of this interpolation.

Analysing further this chapter of this sūtra we find that altogether twenty three abodes are listed, but from the tenth abode only the location and the name of the place are provided.<sup>22</sup> No resident bodhisattva is named. No bodhisattva attendants are enumerated. The discrepancy provides further evidence of the later translators' creativity.

### 3 The Ox-head Mountain in Khotan

Next, we turn to the Ox-head Mountain (Niutou shan 牛頭山, gnas-pa glang-gi mgo-bo) which is listed as the eighteenth abode in the country Shule (Shuleguo 疏勒國) in the 80 fascicle version. The oasis state Shule, which is situated

19 Bka' gyur stog pho brang 705.

20 Lamotte used the Derge edition where the text has the eastern direction twice. Lamotte, "Mañjuśrī," 70.

21 For the eight directions and eight mountains, see W. Kirfel, *Die Kosmographie der Inder. Nach den Quellen hergestellt* (Bonn and Leipzig, 1920), 95, 218.

22 The list follows this order: 80 fascicle, 60 fascicle, Tibetan and the Sanskrit provided by Lamotte, "Mañjuśrī," 79.

TABLE 14.1 The Abodes of the Bodhisattvas in the *Buddhāvataṃsaka sūtra*

	Direction/country	Name of abode	Preaching bodhisattva	Number of bodhisattvas
1.	東方 東方 shar phyogs logs	仙人山 仙人起山 ri drang srong Rṣyutpāda	金剛勝 金剛勝 rdo-rje'i dpal Vajraśrī	300 300 300
2.	南方 南方 lho phyogs logs	勝峯山 勝樓閣山 ri dbal-gyi phung-po Śrīkūṭa	法慧 法慧 chos-kyi blo-gros Dharmamati	500 500 500
3.	西方 西方 nub phyogs logs	金剛焰山 金剛焰山 ri rdo rje 'od 'phro 'phro-ba can Vajrārcis	精進無畏行 無畏師子行 seng-ge'i 'gros-su 'gro-ba Simhavikrāntagāmin	300 300 300
4.	北方 北方 byang phyogs logs	香積山 香聚山 ri spos-kyi phung-po Gandhakūṭa	香象 香象 spos-kyi glang-po Gandhahastin	3000 3000 3000
5.	東北方 東北方 byang phyogs logs	清涼山 清涼山 ri spong ri Śādvalaparvata	文殊師利 文殊師利 'jam-dpal Mañjuśrī	10000 10000 10000
6.	海中	金剛山	法起	1200
9.	四大海中	枳怛	曇無竭	12000
6.	byang dang shar-gyi phyogs mtshams logs	ri rgya-mtsho chen-po bzhi'i gnas rdo-rje ri Caturmahāsamudrastha Vajraparvata	chos-kyi 'phags-pa Dharmodgata	1200
7.	東南方	支提山	天冠	1000
6.	東南方	枝堅固	天冠	1000
7.	shar dang lho'i phyogs mtshams logs	ri mchod-rten Caityaparvata	lha'i phung-po Devacūḍa	1000
8.	西南方	光明山	賢勝	3000
7.	西南方	樹提光明山	賢首	3000
8.	lho dang nub-kyi phyogs mtshams logs	ri skar-ma'i 'od Prabhāparvata	bzang-po'i dpal Bhadraśrī	3000
9.	西北方	香風山	香光	5000
8.	西北方	香風山	香光明	5000
9.	nub dang byang-gi phyogs mtshams logs	ri spos-kyi ngad-can Gandhamādana	spos-kyi 'od-zer rab- tu 'gyed-pa Gandharaśmipramukta	5000

TABLE 14.1 The Abodes of the Bodhisattvas in the *Buddhāvataṃsaka sūtra* (cont.)

	Direction/country	Name of abode	Preaching bodhisattva	Number of bodhisattvas
10.	大海之中	莊嚴窟		
10.	海中	功德莊嚴窟		
10.	rgya-mtsho chen-po	gnas phug bzang-po		
11.	昆舍離南	善住根		
11.	昆舍離城南	善住		
11.	yul shin-tu yangs-pa lho phyogs-na	gnas rtsa-ba shin-tu btan		
12.	摩度羅城	滿足窟		
12.	巴連弗邑	金燈僧伽藍		
12.	yul pad-la'i bu	dge-'dun-gyi kun dga' ra-ba-na gser-gyi gling		
13.	俱珍那城	法座		
14.	拘陳那耶國	法座		
14.	yul ril-ba gtong-ba	gnas chos-kyi stan		
14.	清淨彼岸城	目真隣陀窟		
15.	清淨彼岸國	牟真隣陀功德		
13.	yul mthur	gnas tshim-par byed-pa'i phug		
13.	摩瑜羅國	長養功德		
15.	yul dge-ba'i phul-du phyin-pa	gnas btang bzung-gi phug		
15.	摩蘭陀國	無礙龍王建立		
16.	風地內	無礙龍王所造		
16.	yul-pe'u-ra	gnas thu-ba zhes bya-ba klus btsugs-pa		
16.	甘菩遮國	出生慈		
17.	甘菩國	最上慈		
17.	yul kam-po tsha	gnas byams-pas 'phags-pa		
17.	震旦國	那羅延窟		
18.	真旦國土	那羅延山		
18.	rgya'i gnas	gnas mthu-bo tshe'i phug		
18.	疏勒國	牛頭山		
19.	邊夷國土	牛頭山		
19.	yul kha-sha	gnas-pa glang-gi mgo-bo		
19.	迦葉彌羅國	次第		
20.	罽賓國土	鬱提尸山		
20.	kha-che'i yul	gnas shin-tu ston-pa		
20.	增長歡喜城	尊者窟		
21.	難提拔檀那城	梯羅浮訶		
21.	yul dga'-ba 'phel-ba	gnas brtan-gyi phug		

TABLE 14.1 The Abodes of the Bodhisattvas in the *Buddhāvataṃsaka sūtra* (cont.)

	Direction/country	Name of abode	Preaching bodhisattva	Number of bodhisattvas
21.	菴浮梨摩國	見億藏光明		
22.	菴浮梨摩國	正治邪曲		
22.	yul chu 'dzin	gnas khyor-po ston-pa		
22.	乾陀羅國	苦婆羅窟		
23.	乾陀羅國	寂靜窟		
23.	yul sa 'dzin gyi dkyil-'khor	gnas-pa brgyags-kyi phug		

at near Kashgar, is one of the thirty six countries in the Western Region in the Chinese historiography.<sup>23</sup> The Tibetan version has yul Kha-sha, which could be the Khaśa kingdom situated at Northern India.<sup>24</sup> Xuanzang 玄奘 (602–664) says that Shule is the old name for Qusha 佉沙 and describes it as a Buddhist country where more than ten thousand monks follow the Sarvāstivāda school.<sup>25</sup> As the character *qia* 佉 is used for the transliteration of the Sanskrit “kha” it is quite clear that this country must be Khaśa. It is quite obvious from both versions that the Ox-head Mountain mentioned in the sūtra must have been in India and not in Khotan. However, in the 60 fascicle Chinese version the location is identified as *bianyi guotu* 邊夷國土 which means only “a country on the borderland.” Fazang in his commentary on the 60 fascicle *Huayan jing* identifies the Ox-head mountain with the Ox-head mountain in Southern China.<sup>26</sup> Li Tongxuan 李通玄 (635–730) says that Shule is the abbreviated name of Qulushudale 佉路數怛勒 which used to be called Kapiśa (Jibin guo 罽賓國).<sup>27</sup> Li Tongxuan is probably not correct when he identifies Shule with Kapiśa, although they must have been quite close. Chengguan 澄觀 (737–838) comments that although it could refer either to Mount Niutou in Khotan or to the mountain with the same name in South China (now near Nanjing), he is quite

23 For a detailed study on this name, see Paul Pelliot, *Notes on Marco Polo, I* (Paris: Adrien-Maisonneuve, 1959), 196–214.

24 See Surya Mani Adhikary, *Khasa Kingdom: Trans Himalayan Empire of the Middle Ages*, (Nirala, 1998).

25 *Da Tang Xiyu ji* 大唐西域記, T. 2087, 51: 942 c11–23.

26 今但潤州江南有牛頭山。彼中現有佛窟寺也則北印度境。傳云有四辟支佛影。時時出現。又此潤州古時亦有蠻居此處。現蠻王陵故。亦名邊夷也。  
*Huayan jing tanxuan ji* 華嚴經探玄記, T. 1733, 35: 391c1–4.

27 疏勒國。正云佉路數怛勒。此方存略但云疏勒。迦葉彌羅國。舊云罽賓國。  
*Xin Huayan jing lun* 新華嚴經論, T. 1739, 36: 931b27–28.

certain that it refers to the mountain in Khotan,<sup>28</sup> and his sub-commentary cites the relevant passages from the *Xiyu ji* 西域記 [Record of Travels to the Western Regions] in great detail.<sup>29</sup>

The *Xiyu ji* tells us the following about Mount Niutou:

More than twenty *li* to the southwest of the royal city is Gośṛṅga (meaning Cow's horn) Mountain, with two peaks rising high and surrounded by precipitous cliffs. In the valley a monastery was constructed in which the Buddha's image often emitted a bright light. In the past the Tathāgata once came here and briefly preached the essence of the Dharma to men and heavenly beings. He prophesied that a country would be founded here and that the people would revere his teachings and follow Mahāyāna tenets.<sup>30</sup>

王城西南二十餘里，有瞿室 [飢-几 + 夔] 伽山 (唐言牛角)。山峯兩起，巖隙四絕，於崖谷間建一伽藍，其中佛像時燭光明。昔如來曾至此處，爲諸天、人略說法要，懸記此地當建國土，敬崇遺法，遵習大乘。<sup>31</sup>

Stein identifies this mountain as Mount Kohmāri on the bank of Karakāsh in Ujvat. He describes the mountain in the following way:

Opposite to the large village of Ujat, famous for its grapes, there rises immediately above the eastern bank of the Kara-kāsh a bluff conglomerate ridge to a height of about 250 feet above the river-bed. It forms the last offshoot of a detritus-covered spur descending towards the plain from the eroded range which separates the Kara-kāsh and Yurung-lash valleys where they approach the Khotan oasis. The part of the ridge known as Kohmāri falls off towards the river with an almost vertical cliff face. In order to reach its top I had first to cross the gravel-filled bed of the Kara-kāsh, here about a mile broad, but dry at the time of my visit except for a

28 然牛頭山在今于闐國。此云地乳。佛滅百年方立此國。具如西域記。以集經之時未開。尙屬疎勒故耳。晉本但云邊國。故或指江表牛頭。今譯既明。定非此也。 *Da fangguang fo huayan jing shu* 大方廣佛華嚴經疏, T. 1735, 35: 860c14–18.

29 *Da fangguang fo huayan jing sui shu yanyi chao* 大方廣佛華嚴經隨疏演義鈔, T. 1736, 36: 603 b17–604c1. For the description of Khotan in the *Xiyu ji*, see *Da Tang Xiyu ji* 大唐西域記, T. 2087, 51: 943a14–944a3.

30 Rongxi Li, trans., *A Biography of the Tripitaka Master of the Great C'en Monastery of the Great Tang Dynasty, translated from the Chinese of Śramaṇa Huili and Shi Yancong* (BDK English Tripitaka 77) (Berkeley: Numata Center for Buddhist Translation and Research, 1995), 378.

31 *Da Tang Xiyu ji* 大唐西域記, T. 2087, 51: 943c14–18.

few small channels, in a south-eastern direction to just below the little village of Nussia. Here the river face of the ridge is less steep, showing on its surface mostly gravel and loose stones, and a rough road ascends its slope in the direction of Kohmâri. From the top, where the precipitous portion of the ridge is reached, the track turns eastwards for a short distance and then winds between dune-like hillocks of gravel back to the brink of the cliff.<sup>32</sup>

Stein believed he had found the cave which is described in the *Xiyu ji*. He did not find any trace of Buddhism, but the local people regarded it as a sacred place, and the manuscript fragments of the *Dhammapada* were said to have been discovered in this cave, although Stein did not find any place in the cave where the treasures could be hidden, thus he concluded that the fragments had not originated from this cave. This is the story about the cave in the *Xiyu ji*:

Upon the rocks of Cow's horn Mountain, there is a large cave in which an Arhat is absorbed in the Meditation of Mental Extinction, waiting for the advent of Maitreya Buddha. For several hundred years offerings have been made to him without cease. Recently the rocks collapsed and blocked the entrance to the cave. The king sent the soldiers to clear away the fallen stones, but a swarm of black wasps flew out to sting them. Thus up to now the entrance has not been opened.<sup>33</sup>

牛角山巖有大石室，中有阿羅漢，入滅心定，待慈氏佛，數百年間，供養無替。近者崖崩，掩塞門徑，國王興兵欲除崩石，即黑蜂群飛，毒螫人眾，以故至今石門不開。<sup>34</sup>

Since the Tibetan kingdom conquered Khotan several times, some important historical works were translated into Tibetan and other Tibetan documents related to the history of Khotan have survived. The *Prophecy of Khotan* (*Li yul lung bstan pa*) also records the legend that Buddha used to come to Khotan, which was a great lake at that time.<sup>35</sup> Sitting on a lotus of the lake Buddha prophesied that there would be a country in the place of the lake. Buddha stayed on Mount Niutou for seven days. His disciples Śāriputra and Vaiśravaṇa

32 Aurel Stein, *Ancient Khotan: Detailed Report of Archaeological Explorations in Chinese Turkestan*, 2 volumes (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1907), 187.

33 Li, *A Biography of the Tripitaka Master*, 378.

34 *Da Tang Xiyu ji* 大唐西域記, T. 2087, 51: 943c19–22.

35 For an English translation, see Ronald Emmerick, *Tibetan Texts Concerning Khotan* (London: Oxford University Press, 1967), 1–77.



made the water disappear, and Buddha asked eight bodhisattvas—Mañjuśrī, Avalokiteśvara, Maitreya, Samantabhadra, Ākāśagarbha, Kṣitigarbha, Mahāsthāma and Bhaiṣajyarāja—to protect this land.<sup>36</sup>

Khotanese influence on Chinese Buddhism increased in the 8–10th centuries. After the An Lushan rebellion (755–763) Chinese influence decreased in the Western Regions, and the Tibetan Kingdom was able to occupy Dunhuang in 786 and Khotan in 796. The relationship between Khotan and Dunhuang became closer through marriages between the Khotanese royal family and the Cao family which ruled Dunhuang. Visa Sambhava (Li Shengtian 李聖天), king of Khotan (r. 912–966), married the daughter of Cao Yijin 曹議金 (?–935), the ruler of Dunhuang. The name of the prince is Zongchang 宗嘗 in the Chinese sources and Zongchang 宗常 in a manuscript from Dunhuang. This close affiliation is substantiated by the copious written Khotanese documents found in cave no. 17 of Dunhuang and by paintings of the Khotanese king, princess and patrons of the walls of Dunhuang caves.<sup>37</sup>

In 1975 a new iconographic representation of Mañjuśrī was discovered by chance in a wall painting in the cave 220 of Dunhuang. Mañjuśrī is flanked by a young boy and a bearded Central Asian man who is actually leading the bodhisattva's lion. The painting has an exact dating on the wall: the third year of the Tongguang 同光 period of the [later] Tang dynasty, which is 925.<sup>38</sup> It has turned out that this form of Mañjuśrī is not a unique example, as similar depictions were found on many Dunhuang blockprints. This representation can also be found in Japan, where Mañjuśrī is depicted with the five peaks of Mount Wutai and four attendants.<sup>39</sup> The Pelliot collection also includes a painting of Mañjuśrī on Mount Wutai that is very similar to the representations mentioned above. The bodhisattva with his attendants float in the sky, and their appearance seems to be a vision.<sup>40</sup> That Central Asian man must be the Khotanese king, probably Li Shengtian 李聖天 (912–966). This is attested by the *Guang Qingliang zhuan* 廣清涼傳 [Expanded Chronicle of Mount Clear and

36 Ibid., 3–13.

37 For a detailed summary of the relationship between Khotan and Dunhuang, see Rong Xinjiang and Zhu Lishuang, *Yutian yu Dunhuang* (Lanzhou: Gansu jiaoyu chubanshe, 2013).

38 Ning Qiang, *Art, Religion, and Politics in Medieval China: The Dunhuang Cave of the Zhai Family* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2004), 77–105.

39 Raoul Birnbaum, *Studies on the Mysteries of Mañjuśrī* (Boulder: Society for the Study of Chinese Religion, 1983), 19–25.

40 Lilla Russel-Smith, *Uygur Patronage in Dunhuang: Regional Art Centers on the Northern Silk Road in the Tenth and Eleventh Century* (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 215–221.

Cool], which tells a story about the manifestation of Mañjuśrī with the Khotanese king.<sup>41</sup>

However it was not only Mount Wutai that was frequently painted in Dunhuang as a sacred place of Buddhism; Mount Niutou as one of the Khotanese auspicious images can also be seen in wall paintings from the 8th century.<sup>42</sup> The head of a cow appears in the lower part of these paintings, and iconographic references to the magical establishment of Khotan can be found.<sup>43</sup> There are two forms of these Niutou paintings. One depicts Buddha seated on Mount Niutou and the other shows Buddha standing on the peak.<sup>44</sup> The most interesting representation in terms of Mount Wutai and Mount Niutou is a painting in cave 32 of Yulin 榆林, which combines the previously described Mañjuśrī image of Mount Wutai with Mount Niutou.<sup>45</sup> The surprising feature of this Niutou painting is that Samantabhadra appears on the mountain.<sup>46</sup> It seems that the painter was influenced by the *Huayan jing* and painted these two sacred places mentioned in the sūtra in one cave.

Connections between Khotan and the pre-tenth century Mount Wutai cult, as this discussion has shown, were extensive. Not only may this have been the region in which the *Buddhāvataṃsaka sūtra* originated, but during the period in which the mountain emerged as a center of international devotion Wu Zetian heavily patronized clerics from Khotan and enlisted them to produce Chinese renderings of this sūtra and materials related to it. In later periods, visual sources attest to the intimate ties between Khotan and the Mountain of Five Plateaus. Depictions of Mañjuśrī preserved at Dunhuang, for instance, show the bodhisattva accompanied by the tenth-century King of Khotan and present China's Mount Wutai and Khotan's Mount Niutou together with this rendering of Mañjuśrī above. Khotanese actors, as these examples attest, played meaningful roles in the creation of the Mount Wutai cult. Their participation in this process highlights the genuinely pan-Asian importance of this long-standing place of religious practice and draws attention to the need for scholars to explore how actors throughout the Buddhist world participated in the process of imagining and reimagining Mount Wutai.

41 *Guang Qingliang zhuan* 廣清涼傳, T. 2099, 51: 1109 b26 – c12.

42 Rong and Zhu, *Yutian*, 245–250; Sun, *Dunhuang fojiao*, 83–100.

43 Zhang Xiaogang, “Dunhuang suo jian Yutian Niutou shan shengji ji ruixiang” *Dunhuang yanjiu*, no. 4 (2008): 6–11.

44 Ibid.

45 Chen Suyu, *Cong Yutian dao Dunhuang – yi Tang Song shiqi tuxiang de dong chuan wei zhongxin* (Beijing: Fangzhi chubanshe, 2014), 195–214.

46 Chen Suyu, “Yulin 32 ku Wenshu, Puxian bing shicong tu yu pusa zhudi de taolun,” *Meishu yanjiu*, no. 3 (2013): 24–41.

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## Transnational Mountain Cult, Local Religiopolitical and Economic Concerns: Mount Wutai and the Kamakura period miracle tales of Tōnomine

*Susan Andrews*

From the time of its inception, Buddhists have endeavoured to create an international network of practitioners. Following Śākyamuni's purported mandate to spread the teachings far and wide, these women and men have established thriving communities from San Francisco to Berlin to rural Shanxi where today Mount Wutai 五臺山 stands. In the process of expansion, Buddhists—like practitioners of other so-called world religions—have confronted the considerable challenges that practicing in new geographical contexts and at a remove from one's religious homeland entails. Mount Wutai's multiplication—like the remaking of Gṛdhrakūṭa, Mahābodhi Temple, and Saikoku, for instance—constitutes one strategy through which the initially foreign religion has taken root in new environments.

Yet while the practice of replication is widespread, local histories and religious cultures have given shape to the ways that holy territories have been recreated at particular times and places. Kamakura period (1185–1333) stories asserting the thirteen-tiered pagoda at Japan's Tōnomine 多武峰 duplicated one at China's Mount Wutai make this plain. These materials illustrate how local interests (here those of a powerful court family) informed the transnational mountain cult's development; these accounts tie Mount Wutai and its Japanese replica to Fujiwara no Kamatari 藤原鎌足 (614–669), the powerful Nara period (710–794) courtier venerated as the founder of the Fujiwara line and an instantiation of Vimalakīrti. The timing of the narratives' compilation, moreover, illuminates how in reconstructing Mount Wutai Buddhists responded to sometimes very immediate religiopolitical concerns. While Tōnomine's connections with Kamatari can be traced to the eighth century, its association with the Chinese site is much later; it seems to have been emphasized following the thirteen-tiered pagoda's 1173 destruction by individuals affiliated with Nara's Kōfukuji 興福寺. In this example, stories of Mount Wutai's recreation affirmed Tōnomine's importance and helped garner support for its rebuilding. Close study of early Kamakura period narratives connecting Tōnomine and Mount Wutai, then, has much to teach us about the ways that communities

use narrative to establish centers of religious importance and sheds light on what was at stake for local practitioners in the territory's global multiplication.

## 1 The Site and Sources: Tōnomine and the *Tōnomine ryakki*

Tōnomine, also known as Tanzan Jinja 談山神社, stands on the southern outskirts of present-day Sakurai Japan. While today it feels somewhat off the beaten track, for much of its history the peak stood in a hub of religiopolitical activity. Rising approximately 400 meters above the Yamato Plain, Tōnomine is located in the center of early Japanese civilization. A mere 30 kilometers to Nara's south, the site is close to the capital established as Heijō-kyō 平城京 by Empress Genmei 元明皇后 (r. 707–715) in 712. It is little wonder, given its geographical situation, that Tōnomine regularly appeared on the imperial radar and remained entangled in affairs of the capital city in the centuries leading up to and following the compilation of the *Tōnomine ryakki* 多武峰略記 [A Brief History of Mount Tōnomine].

The *Tōnomine ryakki*, from which the stories at the heart of this paper are taken, is the earliest extant text devoted to Tōnomine. It was compiled by Seiin 靜胤 (c. 12th century)<sup>1</sup> in the twelfth century.<sup>2</sup> Divided into twenty three sections, records of the thirteen-tiered pagoda's creation and purported relationship to Mount Wutai appear in the text's fifth, *sōsō* 草創 section, a title that refers to a temple or stūpa's founding. The chapter on topography (*chikei* 地形) and the one recounting the lives and careers of some of its most famous resident practitioners (*jūro* 住侶) also contain accounts of the structure's beginnings.

The *Tōnomine ryakki* is but one of many texts that can help us to understand relationships between Mount Wutai and the archipelago. As references to earlier materials throughout the chronicle indicate, the peak appears in sources such as the tenth-century *Tōnomine Shōshō Monogatari* 多武峯少將物語 [The Tale of the Lesser Captain of *Tōnomine*].<sup>3</sup> Later sources, especially the *Tōnomine*

1 Perhaps this is the same individual that the *Tōnomine ryakki* identifies as the twenty-seventh Bunji 文治 (1185–1190) and early Shōji period (1199) supervisor (*kengyō* 檢校) of the shrine-temple complex, as well as a superintendent monk (*sōgō* 僧綱) in the Office of Monastic Affairs.

2 While scholarly consensus seems to be that the *Tōnomine ryakki* was compiled in 1197, I remain puzzled by a reference to the Shōji 正治 (1199–1201) era in the lengthy section dealing with monastic officers (*kanshoku* 官職).

3 Though its title references the mountain, the tenth-century *Tōnomine Shōshō Monogatari* is largely an account of the noble Fujiwara no Takamitsu's 藤原高光 (c. 939–994) renunciation written by an individual close to the courtier-turned-cleric after he took up residence at Mount

*engi* 多武峰縁起 [The Origin of Tōnomine] compiled by Ichijō Kanera 一条兼良 (1402–1481) and the seventeenth-century *Tōnomine engi emaki* 多武峯縁起絵巻 [The Illustrated Scroll of the Origins of Tōnomine], also have much to teach us about the history of this place. So too do hagiographies of the monk Jōe preserved in texts such as the *Genkō Shakusho* 元亨釈書 [Buddhist Chronicle of the Genkō Era] by Kokan Shiren 虎關師練 (1278–1346), Shibana's 師蠻 (1626–1710) *Honchō kōsō den* 本朝高僧傳 [Biographies of Eminent Monks in Japan] and Kōsen Shōton's 高泉性激 (1633–1695) *Tōgoku kōsō den* 東國高僧傳 [Biographies of Eminent Monks of the Eastern Country].

Scholars such as Paul Groner, Mikael Adolphson, and Allan Grapard have taught us much about Tōnomine's history. While Groner's study of the tenth-century cleric Ryōgen 良源 (912–985) draws attention to the site's connections with key Tendai figures,<sup>4</sup> Adolphson's work on the political roles of temples and monks in the eleventh through fourteenth centuries illuminates a background against which the narratives affiliating Tōnomine with Mount Wutai discussed here are meaningful. In Allan Grapard's scholarship this site provides a window through which to understand the highly imbricated nature of the Japanese religious landscape prior to the implementation of the Meiji period (1968–1912) *shinbutsu bunri* 神仏分離 (the separation of Shintō and Buddhist divinities) policy. In *The Protocol of the Gods* and "Japan's Ignored Cultural Revolution," he outlines the Fujiwara no Kamatari cult's development, including the history of the first Fujiwara's affiliation with Tōnomine.

## 2 The Saint and Stūpa: Fujiwara no Kamatari and Tōnomine's Thirteen-tiered Pagoda

Tradition new and old celebrates the peak's association with the Fujiwara patriarch. Well-known to scholars of East Asia, Kamatari was born Nakatomi no Kamatari 中臣鎌足 in 614 and received the family name Fujiwara in 669 when the emperor also recognized him with the title Taishokukan 大織冠. Having led the 645 coup d'état that ousted the competing Soga clan from their positions of influence at court, Kamatari took on the role of minister of the center for more than twenty years. In that capacity, he forwarded a series of policies

Hiei's 叡山 Enryakuji 延曆寺 but perhaps before he relocated to Tōnomine. Paul Groner, *Ryōgen and Mount Hiei Japanese Tendai in the Tenth Century* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press 2002), 389.

4 Groner highlights important ways that individuals such as Jisshō 實性 (892–956) and Zōga 增賀 (917–1003) shaped practice at this place.

known as the Taika 大化 (Great Transformation) Reforms intended “to extend [the court’s] political and fiscal control over the country...[and establish] a Chinese type of centralized administration over areas that previously had enjoyed considerable autonomy under hereditary clan chieftains.”<sup>5</sup> Legend holds that the name by which the site is better known today, Tanzan Jinja (Discussion Mountain Shrine), recalls conversations between Kamatari and future-ruler Tenji Tennō 天智天皇 (c. 614–671) at the peak in which they conspired to wrest the throne from the Soga.<sup>6</sup>

Though the present-day structure dates from 1532, tradition recorded in the *Tōnomine ryakki* holds that the thirteen-level pagoda was established in the seventh-century and narratives connecting Kamatari, his son Jōe 定慧 (643?–665, 714?), and the multilevel memorial mound can be traced to the eighth century.<sup>7</sup> In the fifth, *sōsō* section of the *Tōnomine ryakki*, Seiin cites a number of these early sources concerning cleric Jōe’s travels to Tang China and the re-interring of his father Kamatari’s remains at the peak following the cleric’s return to Japan. These include, for instance, the eighth-century *Nihon Shoki* 日本書記 [Chronicle of Japan] and *Toshikaden* 藤氏家伝 [Biographies of the Fujiwara Family]. The following passage from the *Fusō shū* 扶桑集 [Collection of Japan], a tenth-century poetry collection compiled by Kino Tadana 紀齊名 (957–999), is representative of the type of material we find here: “In the ninth year of the Tenji period (670) and the seventh year of the sexagenary cycle in the intercalary ninth month on the sixth day, Taishokukan’s shrine was moved to Tōnomine.”<sup>8</sup> Several of the traditions Seiin introduces identify the Mount Ai 阿威山 in Settsu 攝津 Province as Kamatari’s original burial place and others, such as the *Nihon Shoki*, specify that Jōe placed his grave beneath the thirteen-story pagoda. The range of materials Seiin cites suggests that traditions connecting the monk Jōe and his father Fujiwara no Kamatari with Tōnomine

5 William Theodore De Bary, *Sources of East Asian Tradition Premodern Asia, Vol. 1: Premodern Asia* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 667.

6 The brief account of Kamatari’s association with Tōnomine on Tanzan Jinja’s official website, for instance, makes this connection. It reads:

When Kamatari died at the age of 56, his tomb was built on Mt. Ai (Jap. Ai-yama) in the Province of Settsu (today’s Osaka). In 678 A.D. the tomb was moved to Mt. Tōnomine, where Kamatari used to ponder of the plan for the Reformation [of the Taika Era]; a thirteen-storied memorial Stupa was erected next to his tomb.

Surely the stuff of legend rather than history, this contemporary version of an early story recalls the *Tōnomine ryakki* founding legends and highlights the thirteen-tiered pagoda’s importance in constructions of the summit’s significance. “Tanzan-Jinja Shrine,” 談山神社, last modified October 4, 2018, <<http://www.tanzan.or.jp/english/>>.

7 Louis Frédéric, *Japan Encyclopedia*. (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2002), 146.

8 The text reads: 扶桑集云 天智天皇九年庚午閏九月六日、移大織冠廟於多武岑云々。



were known in the centuries before the chronicle's compilation. Inconsistencies between these materials and the mid-eighth century *Toshikaden* account of Jōe's life and career, some of which Seiin himself discusses, indicate that the founding legend postdates the Nara period (710-794).<sup>9</sup>

The second, often-cited *Tōnomine ryakki* entry related to Jōe and Tōnomine but not the pagoda concerns directions purportedly given to the cleric by his father. Likely because it situates the territory vis-à-vis other peaks, the passage appears in the topography (*chikei*) section. The speaker is Kamatari:

Tōnomine is a superior site. To the east, in Takayama at Ise, the Great kami Amaterasu protects Japan. To the west, on Mount Kongō, Hōki Bosatsu benefits living beings by expounding the dharma. To the south, on Mount Kinpu, the Avatar Zaō is awaiting the coming of Maitreya. To the north, on Mount Ōmiwa, the hypostasis of the Tathāgata leads people to salvation. At the center is Tōnomine, location of the marvelous cavern of the Immortals. How could that site differ from [the five peaks of the Tang]? Should you place my tomb there, my descendants shall rise to superior ranks (DBZ 118: 485).<sup>10</sup>

These lines frame Tōnomine as the center in a pentad of peaks that parallels the configuration of five mountains absorbed into Chinese imperial cult.<sup>11</sup> The

9 Seiin notes, for instance, that according to the *Toshikaden* Jōe died in the sixteenth year of the Hakuho 白鳳 period (645-710) when Fujiwara no Kamatari was still alive. Though the *Tōnomine ryakki* compiler does not mention it, the eighth-century text purports that an individual from Paekche poisoned Jōe. I return to this topic below.

10 The above is Grapard's rendering of the passage below. I have made very minor changes to it. Most significantly, rather than "[d]iffer from Mount Wu-t'ai in China?," I read the passage 豈異大唐五岳 as a reference to the famous five peaks (*wuyue* 五岳).

談岑勝絕之地也、  
東伊勢高山天照大神方護倭國、  
西金剛山法起菩薩說法利生、  
南金峯山大權薩埵待慈尊出世、  
北大神山如來垂迹拔濟黎民、中談峯也、  
昔神仙之靈嶠、豈異唐五岳、  
若墓所點於此地、子孫上大位云々、  
大織冠告定慧和尚給御話也、

Allan G. Grapard, "Japan's Ignored Cultural Revolution: The Separation of Shinto and Buddhist Divinities in Meiji ('Shimbutsu Bunri') and a Case Study: Tōnomine," *History of Religions* 23, no. 3 (1984), 237-238.

11 At the time of the *Tōnomine ryakki*'s composition these would have been Mount Tai 泰山 (east), Mount Heng 恆山 (north), Mount Song 嵩山 (center), Mount Heng 衡山 (south) and Mount Hua 華山 (west). On the five peaks see James Robson, *Power of Place: The Religious Landscape of the Southern Sacred Peak (Nanyue) in Medieval China* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 2009).

chronicle implies that Tōnomine's continental counterpart is Mount Song 嵩山, the central mountain in this initially unstable system of summits. It further claims for Kamatari a status matching that of Śākyamuni Buddha and three major autochthonous deities: Amaterasu, Hōki Bosatsu 法起菩薩 (Dharmôdgata)<sup>12</sup> and Zaō Gongen 藏王權現.<sup>13</sup> While the fifth, *sōsō*, section tells us that Kamatari's burial site changed, this third, *chikei* section, explains why the move took place.

Finally, the division of the *Tōnomine ryakki* on stūpas (*tōba*) narrates the circumstances surrounding the thirteen-level pagoda's construction. Significantly, the first lines of the legend announce that this structure is the stūpa of the Baochi yuan 寶池院 (Jeweled Lake Cloister) transported from Mount Wutai (DBZ 118: 498).<sup>14</sup> The cleric gathered the materials for its construction while in Tang China, the text continues, but because the ship he boarded to return home was extremely cramped he was forced to abandon some of the timber and tiles. After returning to Japan, Jōe began construction at Tōnomine. Regrettably, he had only enough materials to create a twelve (rather than thirteen) level pagoda. "At midnight" on the day that Jōe made this discovery, the text states, "there was lightning and terrifying thunder, there was a great rain and great wind. Then suddenly the skies cleared. The following morning [the monk] saw [the pagoda] where timber and tiles had accumulated. The shape and color were indistinguishable [from the first twelve-stories he had made]. [Jōe]," the entry concludes, "knew that they had flown to that place."<sup>15</sup> Here

12 Tradition holds that Hōki Bosatsu is the being from which En no Gyōja 役行者 (seventh, eighth century) emanated. He is associated with Mount Katsuragi 葛城山.

13 I wonder what significance we ought to draw from the fact that Hōki and Zaō Gongen hold important places in the Shugendō 修驗道 tradition of mountain ascetics.

14 The entry reads:

件塔移清涼山寶池院塔、  
和尚在唐時、調材木瓦等、  
依乘船狹、一重之具留棄渡海、  
攀登此岑、歎言、  
材瓦不備、所願何遂、  
漸及十二重、歎息無措、  
夜半雷電霹靂大雨大風、忽然天晴、  
明朝材瓦積重、形色無異、知飛來也、  
和尚感然伏地、見聞奇異云々 ...

I have found no references to this site in accounts of China's Mount Wutai such as Hui-xiang's 慧祥 (seventh-century) *Gu Qingliang zhuan* 古清涼傳 (Ancient Chronicle of Mount Clear and Cool) and Yanyi's 延一 (998?-1072) eleventh-century *Guang Qingliang zhuan* 廣清涼傳 (Extended Chronicle of Mount Clear and Cool).

15 DBZ 118: 498.

the *Tōnomine ryakki* ties the extraordinariness of the monument and, by corollary, the mountain to Mount Wutai.<sup>16</sup>

While connections between Tōnomine and Mount Wutai are absent from early sources, later legend accentuates this link. The following *Genkō Shakusho* rendering of Jōe's hagiography, which weaves the *Tōnomine ryakki* materials into a coherent narrative, illustrates this point.

...During Jōe's stay in the Tang, Taishokukan [Fujiwara no Kamatari] had died. [Jōe] asked his younger brother chief minister Fuhito: "Where is our ancestor buried?" He was answered: "At the Ai mountains in Settsu Province." Jōe said: "Our ancestor once told me secretly: 'Tōnomine in Yamato<sup>17</sup> is a numinous and superior area not inferior to [Mount] Wutai 五臺 of the Great Tang. If I would be buried there, it would be of great advantage for my children and grandchildren.' [Jōe continued]: When I was at Mount [Wu]tai, I dreamed I was at Tōnomine and our ancestor told me: 'I have already been born in heaven. If you build a temple in this place and practice Buddhism, I will descend again and protect it forever after.' This was in the second watch of the 16th night of the 10th month in 669." When the chief minister (Fuhito) heard this, he cried and said: 'This was just the time when our ancestor died. The master's dream was not empty.'

Then Jōe and his followers went up the Ai Mountain, took the remains (of Kamatari) and buried them at Tōnomine. Thereupon they erected a 13-level pagoda. The materials for the building Jōe had already selected and prepared while in the Tang. When he came back he brought them along by boat but the boat was too small (to hold material for) one of the levels. The pagoda was a copy of the pagoda at the Baochi Cloister of Mount Wutai.<sup>18</sup> When they erected it (atop Tōnomine), it only had twelve

16 The version of the monk's hagiography preserved in the *Tōnomine ryakki* section devoted to resident monastics (*jūryo* 住侶) also mentions Mount Wutai in conjunction with Jōe. The entry states that after arriving in the Tang capital Chang'an, Jōe trained with Yogacara master Xuanzang's 玄奘 (602-664) disciple Shentai 神泰 (seventh century), venerated Mount Wutai, and then traveled to Paekche before returning to Japan and establishing *Tōnomine* as a place of practice. The entry reads:

以神泰法師爲師、受成學道、  
或禮五臺、或遊百濟、  
歸朝之後、草創當寺、  
止住修行、春秋四十有二遷化

17 The text reads Washū 和州, an alternate name for Yamato 大和. The *Dai Nihon Bukkyō zensho* offers タウノミ子 (Taunomiko) for 談岑. I have rendered it Tōnomine.

18 The text uses Mount Qingliang 清涼山 (Mount Clear and Cool), an alternate name for Mount Wutai, here.

stories. Jōe regretted that he left one level behind in the Tang and that the construction could not be finished. One night there was a thunderstorm with lightning bolts flashing through the sky and the mountain trembling. The next morning in the first light, there was the rest of the pagoda material, just as if it had flown from afar. There was neither too much of it, nor too little. The minister (Fuhito)<sup>19</sup> and the people of the province were all deeply moved. The minister (Fuhito) also carved an image of the Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī and placed it in the pagoda. Jōe died in the seventh year of Wadō (714 CE).<sup>20</sup>

In the *Genkō Shakusho* passage, Mount Wutai not only provides the inspiration for the pagoda erected by Jōe and his followers but it is also the place where the cleric encounters his deceased father in an oneiric vision. Moreover, in the later hagiography it is not Mount Song but rather Mount Wutai to which Fujiwara no Kamatari compares his chosen burial place, Tōnomine, favorably.

Differences between earlier and later redactions of Jōe's hagiography and the Tōnomine founding legend indicate that the materials are better read as legends than accurate accounts of the past. The first records of the cleric's life and career make no mention of the events that the *Tōnomine ryakki* and *Genkō Shakusho* foreground. The early eighth-century *Nihon Shoki* mentions Jōe in two places, presenting him as one cleric among many who traveled to the Sui and Tang.<sup>21</sup> His much lengthier *Toshikaden* hagiography mentions neither Tōnomine nor Mount Wutai and specifies that he died soon after returning to Japan via Paekche. If, as the mid-eighth century text indicates, Jōe's death preceded that of his father, it would have been impossible for the monk to have interred his father's remains at Tōnomine before constructing a stūpa there.<sup>22</sup> These discrepancies suggest that later proponents of the Tōnomine cult

19 I suspect Bokuya 僕射 refers to a ministerial role held by Fuhito.

20 DBZ 101: 239. I have made only the most minor changes to Bingenheimer's translation. Marcus Bingenheimer, *A Biographical Dictionary of the Japanese Student-monks of the Seventh and Early Eighth Centuries: Their Travels to China and Their Role in the Transmission of Buddhism* (München: Iudicium, 2001), 117–118.

21 The chronicle states only that Jōe traveled to the Tang aboard a ship that departed in 653 and returned in 665 and that he was the son of Fujiwara no Kamatari. W.G. Aston, *Nihongi: Chronicles of Japan from the Earliest Times to A.D. 697* (Rutland, Vt.: C.E. Tuttle Co., 1972), 242–244.

22 Further indications that the *Tōnomine ryakki* material creates rather than describes the past include the absence of any reference to the cleric in Chinese accounts of Mount Wutai and the similarities Marcus Bingenheimer has noted between accounts Jōe's life and career and the record of the Silla (668–938) monk Chajang 慈藏 (590–658) in Iryon's 一然, (1206–1289) *Samguk Yusa* 三國遺史 [History and Legends of the Three Kingdoms].

fashioned links between the Fujiwara cleric, Mount Wutai and this peak in the centuries following the *Toshikaden's* compilation. The following sections will pursue answers to the question: what did the re-writing of the past in this way and at this time accomplish?

### 3 The Story's Broader Significance: Making Buddhist Places in the Japan

Firstly, the construction of early links between the Japanese peak and Mount Wutai constituted a strategy for creating and, at the time of the *Tōnomine ryakki's* twelfth-century compilation, sustaining the site as a holy place. The notion that the towering structure at the heart of this shrine-temple multiplex had flown to the archipelago from the continent surely lent force to the chronicle's central claim: Tōnomine is extraordinary. In addition to its Mount Wutai connections, *Tōnomine ryakki* compiler Seiin finds the specialness of the mountain on multiple grounds. He notes, for example, the auspiciousness of the mountain's topography and states that it resembles a large dragon.<sup>23</sup> He discusses the illustrious residents who have practiced there and describes the vast array of statuary enshrined in its many halls.<sup>24</sup> The claim that Tōnomine's thirteen-level pagoda replicated Mount Wutai's Baochi yuan was thus one of many things that in Seiin's estimation rendered the peak remarkable.

The notion that a stūpa—or an entire mountain—came to Japan from elsewhere in the Buddhist world is not unique to Tōnomine. Quite the opposite, as Allan Grapard explains in “Flying Mountains and Walkers of Emptiness,” the trope of the flying mountain played an important role in the creation of a Japanese sacred landscape. Ḡḍhrakūṭa's (Vulture or Eagle Peak) transposition to new locales is an often-cited example of this phenomenon. Mount Miwa 三輪山 and Mount Kinpu 金峰山 among other locales have been identified as local counterparts to the Indian summit.<sup>25</sup> Early records of China's Mount Wutai hold that one of its lesser peaks is the summit on which Śākyamuni

23 These comments appear in the third, *chikei* section on topography.

24 In the twelfth section on resident monastics (*jūryō*), Seiin discusses practitioners including Zenju 善珠 (727–797), Jisshō, Nyōkaku 如覺 (c. 939–994), and Zōga 增賀 (917–1003). The lengthy *dōsha* 堂舎 or “halls” chapter details the images contained in the shrine-temple multiplex's many halls.

25 Allan Grapard, “Flying Mountains and Walkers of Emptiness,” *History of Religions* 21, no. 3 (1982): 218; Heather Elizabeth Blair, *Real and Imagined the Peak of Gold in Heian Japan* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 2015), 44.

purportedly preached many sūtras.<sup>26</sup> At Tōnomine, as in each of these contexts, the correspondence between a site in the archipelago and one on the continent contributed to the sense that they constituted worthy objects of devotion.

Traditions about the re-placement of locales had implications not only for specific sites but also the understandings of the relationship between the territories that comprised the Buddhist world more generally. In Kamakura period Japan (when the *Tōnomine ryakki* was compiled), according to Mark Blum, it was widely held that India, China, and Japan constituted the holy world.<sup>27</sup> Reflecting on the appeal of this triple-nation (*Sangoku* 三國) paradigm in Japan, Blum writes:

... the triple-nation model worked for a number of reasons, but most obviously because India and China were well established centers of religious authority, because they represented two easily identifiable language groups that were both revered in Japan, and because in this formula Japan is placed on an equal footing of authority, exclusive of all other Buddhist nations.<sup>28</sup>

Much like this *sangoku* model—which in Blum’s words resolved “Japan’s real issue [which was] trying to justify its Buddhist tradition vis-à-vis China (and perhaps Korea)” —accounts of local site’s intimate connections with Mount Wutai reconfigured the relationship between the three components of the *sangoku* paradigm suggesting that, rather than a remote backwater on the holy world’s periphery, the archipelago was home to important sacred sites where Mount Wutai’s landscape could be gleaned. Japan constituted a vital religious realm.

Scholars of East Asian religion have made this point about other pilgrimage destinations. “[G]eographical transpositions,” Blair writes in her discussion of Mount Kinpu’s identification as *Ḡṛdhraḱūṭa*, “localized pan-Buddhist cosmology, reimagining nominally peripheral locations as centers in their own right.”<sup>29</sup> In *Buddhism, Diplomacy, and Trade*, Tansen Sen described how:

26 Daoxuan 道宣 (596–667) made this claim in the *Daoxuan liushi gantong lu* 道宣律師感通錄 [Record of Miraculous Instruction Given to Vinaya Master Daoxuan], which contains numerous records of Mount Wutai T. 2107, 52: 437a – b.

27 Mark Blum, “The sangoku-mappō construct: Buddhism, nationalism, and history in medieval Japan,” in *Discourse and Ideology in Medieval Japanese Buddhism*, eds. Richard Payne and Dan Leighton (London and New York: Routledge, 2006), 32–33.

28 Ibid., 32.

29 Blair, *Real and Imagined*, 44.

[t]he emergence of Mount Wutai as a famed Buddhist center inspired Indian clergy to travel to China, it seems, not as transmitters of Buddhist doctrines, as had been the case previously, but as pilgrims to a country formerly dismissed as peripheral and an inappropriate dwelling place for the Buddha.<sup>30</sup>

Mapping distant landscapes onto new locales, as these examples suggest, afforded local practitioners an opportunity to negotiate their situation vis-à-vis the translocal Buddhist community. Little wonder, then, that we find Mount Wutai replicated around Japan and throughout the world.<sup>31</sup>

#### 4 The Story's Specific Significance: Explaining Tōnomine's Importance vis-à-vis Kōfukuji

At the same time, the mapping of Mount Wutai's landscapes onto Tōnomine also helped to resolve a pair of needs particular to the time and place of the *Tōnomine ryakkī's* compilation. During this period, both Tōnomine and nearby Kōfukuji were active sites of devotion to Fujiwara no Kamatari and, in the decades immediately preceding the *Tōnomine ryakkī's* compilation, rivalry between them resulted in the Tōnomine stūpa's destruction. The compilation of narratives affiliating the structure with Mount Wutai in the decades following these events supplied the practice of venerating Fujiwara's remains and effigy at Tōnomine with an early, continental precedent. Moreover, the recording and retelling of the extraordinary events that attended the thirteen-level pagoda's construction provided a rationale for the monument's rebuilding amidst

30 The development, further, facilitated Wu Zetian's 武則天 (r. 690–705) efforts to cast herself as the *cakravartin* ruler of this foremost Buddhist realm. See Tansen Sen, *Buddhism, Diplomacy, and Trade: The Realignment of Sino-Indian Relations, 600-1400* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2003), 86.

31 In Japan, Tōnomine was not the sole location connected to Mount Wutai. The eponymous Godaisan 五臺山, as well as Mount Kinpu, Mount Atago 愛宕山 and the Seiryōji 清涼寺 were believed to be counterparts to the Chinese site. Elsewhere I have discussed Japanese instantiations of the Wutai cult. Please see Susan Andrews, "Shenji de fuzhi yu nizhuan: Jianshi Shi Diaoran shengtu zhuan zhong de Wutaishan miaoshu" 神跡的複製與逆轉: 檢視釋齋然聖徒傳中的五臺山描述, in *Shensheng kongjian; Zhonggu zongjiao zhong de kongjian yinsu* 神聖空間: 中古宗教中的空間因素, eds. Jinhua Chen and Yinggang Sun, 379–398 (Shanghai: Fudan daxue chubanshe, 2015) and Susan Andrews, "Representing Mount Wutai's 五臺山 Past: A Study of Chinese and Japanese Miracle Tales about the Five Terrace Mountain" (PhD diss., Columbia University, 2013).

Tōnomine's conflicts with neighboring Kōfukuji, the traditional center of devotion to Fujiwara no Kamatari.

Kōfukuji is the family temple (*ujidera* 氏寺) of the Fujiwara clan. Its construction began in Nara between 714 and 717 under the direction of Kamatari's second son (and cleric Jōe's brother) Fuhito 不比等 (659–720). It was erected nearby the clan's main ritual center, the Kasuga Shrine 春日大社, with which it was intertwined until the Meiji period (1868–1912). While by the mid-eighth century the Kasuga Shrine's sacred status was largely founded on its affiliation with four autochthonous deities, including Fujiwara guardian kami and ancestor Ame no koyane 天兒屋根, the Kōfukuji's significance relied on its connection with Kamatari.<sup>32</sup> Indications of the Kōfukuji's preeminence during the period included its vast landholdings and, after 802, its status as the sole location at which the annual Yuima'e 維摩會—a six-day *hōe* (dharma gathering) of public lectures and ceremonies dedicated to Vimalakīrti—could be held. In the centuries leading up to the *Tōnomine ryakki's* compilation, Fujiwara no Kamatari came to be identified as an instantiation of Mañjuśrī's lay companion.

Legend preserved in Fujiwara Yoshiyo's 藤原良世 (823–900) *Kōfukuji engi* 興福寺縁起 [The Origin History of Kōfukuji] reveals the long history of the Fujiwara founder's association with Vimalakīrti. The text provides the following explanation of the Yuima'e's origins:

The Prime Minister Fujiwara no Kamatari humbly spoke a Great Vow dedicated to the Peace and Quiet of the Imperial House and the Eternity of the State and started this assembly [Yuima'e] for the first time. Soon afterwards, the Prime Minister was overcome by illness. In order for him to recover, a meditation nun from Paekche named Pōmmyōng<sup>33</sup> told the Prime Minister: 'I practice the Great Vehicle and there is a sūtra called the Vimalakīrti in which a chapter on illness is included. I will read and recite it for you and maybe you will recover from your illness.' Before she had even finished one chapter, the illness of the Prime Minister settled. At that time, the Prime Minister bowed his head, folded his hands and spoke: 'Continuous life cycles return in accordance with the teachings of the Great Vehicle. The meditation nun will become lecturer and lecture

32 It is for this reason that, Elizabeth Ten Grotenhuis contends, eighth-century "temple authorities...suggest[ed] that the temple's origins lay in Kamatari's household chapel in Yamasina." Elizabeth ten Grotenhuis, *Japanese Mandalas: Representations of Sacred Geography* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1999), 145.

33 While Bauer gives the Chinese and Japanese renderings of this name, Hōmyō and Faming.



on the *Vimalakīrti sūtra* incessantly for a period of three days.' In the period after Fujiwara no Kamatari, the ritual was discontinued. This was in Keiun 2 (705), the year of the Wood Snake, in the seventh month of autumn."<sup>34</sup>

According to legend, the *Vimalakīrti sūtra* came to be important at the Kōfukuji because of its association with the patriarch's healing.<sup>35</sup> In the centuries following the *Kōfukuji engi*'s compilation, the relationship between the first Fujiwara and Vimalakīrti intensified; a document issued by the Kōfukuji in 1158 indicates that by this time the former was viewed as an avatar of the latter.<sup>36</sup>

A study of the *Tōnomine ryakki* establishes the shrine-temple multiplex's association with many of the same traditions. A version of the story identifying the origins of the Yuima'e in Fujiwara no Kamatari's healing, for instance, appears in the tenth, *chishu* 地主 section<sup>37</sup> of the text as part of a detailed version of Fujiwara no Kamatari's hagiography. The fourteenth, *butsuji* 佛事 (Buddhist affairs), division of the *Tōnomine ryakki*, states that the Yuima'e was performed at the peak. The text reports that it was one of four services held annually in the lecture hall (*kōdō* 講堂). While the Yuima'e was conducted in the tenth month, the remaining three services were held in the second month (nirvāṇa assembly, *nehan e* 涅槃會), third month (Avataṃsaka assembly, *kegon e* 花嚴會), and sixth month (*Lotus sūtra* assembly (*renge e* 蓮花會)). These materials indicate the importance of Vimalakīrti-related traditions not only at Kōfukuji but also Tōnomine.

While continuities existed between Kōfukuji and Tōnomine, Kamatari's veneration took on a unique form at the latter site. In his *The Protocol of the Gods*, Allan Grapard explains how, according to tradition, Kamatari not only signaled his presence at Tōnomine through natural phenomena such as earthquakes but also predicted events through cracks that appeared on his effigy installed there. While Grapard's focus is seventeenth and eighteenth examples of this practice,<sup>38</sup> the final section of the late twelfth-century *Tōnomine ryakki*

34 DDB 119: 321–322. This translation is Mikael Bauer's "The Power of Place: An Integrated History of Medieval Kōfukuji." (PhD diss., Harvard University, 2010), 23.

35 Mikael Bauer argues convincingly that sectarian rivalry, rather than the restoration of Kamatari's health, likely explains this development. Mikael Bauer, "The Power of Place: An Integrated History of Medieval Kōfukuji" (PhD diss., Harvard University, 2010).

36 Grapard, "Japan's Ignored Cultural Revolution," 254.

37 The title is a reference to Fujiwara no Kamatari's status as the deity of this place.

38 In his *The Protocol of the Gods*, Grapard quotes extensively from prognostications preserved in the early seventeenth-century *Tōnomine Haretsuki*. The *Tōnomine Haretsuki* proposes that a northward flowing light that appeared at the mountain in 1711, for instance, may have forecast a fire in the palace the next day. Allan Grapard, *The Protocol of*

also references the statue's auguries. According to the text, unusual happenings related to the image, especially the emission of light, occurred during the more than one hundred-year period between Eishō 1 永承 (1046) to Bunji 3 文治 (1187). While the existence of an entire seventeenth-century work devoted to this topic—the *Tōnomine Haretsuki* 多武峰破裂記 [Chronicle of the Cracks at Tōnomine]—indicates the prominent role this tradition came to play at the site, the *Tōnomine ryakki* material establishes that from a much earlier date traditions related to Fujiwara no Kamatari took on a distinct shape at the mountain. In somewhat different fashion, both Kōfukuji and Tōnomine claimed to be the location at which the deceased courtier's power could be harnessed. Read against this backdrop, *Tōnomine ryakki* stories about the Nara period courtier expressing his wish to be interred at the summit contributed to the sense that it was the legitimate center of the founder cult.

In the two centuries leading up to the *Tōnomine ryakki*'s compilation, the tensions between the Kōfukuji and Tōnomine often erupted in violent clashes. The conflict between the competing hubs of devotion to Fujiwara no Kamatari was largely rooted in Tōnomine's affiliation with Mount Hiei 叡山 and the Tendai tradition centered there. As the text explains, Tōnomine was designated a branch temple (*matsuji* 末寺) of Mount Hiei's Mudōji 無動寺 —itself a sub-temple of Enryakuji 延暦寺—in the Tenryaku 天曆 era (947–956). Clerics with strong Tendai affiliations dominate the *Tōnomine ryakki* section on the mountain's eminent monastic residents. The text describes the decisive roles that Jisshō, Nyokaku, and Zōga, among others, played in its development during this period. Their presence surely contributed to the site's association with Tendai that, Mikael S. Adolphson tells us, formed part of “a substantial spurt in the creation of Tendai affiliations [that] took place during the late tenth century.”<sup>39</sup>

Beginning in the eleventh century, inter-temple rivalry resulted in the destruction of edifices, including the thirteen-storied pagoda. The *Tōnomine ryakki* records, for example, that in Eiho 1 永保 (1081) and Tennin 1 天仁 (1108) Kōfukuji supporters set the shrine-temple complex aflame. In the third year of the Jōan period 承安 (1173), just two decades before the text's compilation, parties linked with Kōfukuji burned many structures atop the peak the ground, retaliation for Tōnomine monks having destroyed tollgates erected by Kōfukuji

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*the Gods: A Study of the Kasuga Cult in Japanese History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 237–238, 241.

39 Mikael S. Adolphson, *The Gates of Power: Monks, Courtiers, and Warriors in Premodern Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2000), 69, 422.

in Yamato.<sup>40</sup> A pair of *Tōnomine ryakki* records indicates that the thirteen-level pagoda—together with the monastery's lecture hall (*kōdō* 講堂), the Lotus Hall (*hokkedō* 法華堂), scripture repository (*hōzō* 寶藏), stūpas, and the monks' quarters—were destroyed. These events—which continued long after the *Tōnomine ryakki*'s compilation—help us to appreciate what was at stake in the stories of Mount Wutai's relationship to the former site. Narratives celebrating the extraordinary circumstances surrounding its creation helped to explain for late twelfth-century audiences and potential donors why this structure and the shrine-temple multiplex where it stood were worth rebuilding. The stories assert that Tōnomine was both a legitimate center of devotion to Fujiwara no Kamatari and a counterpart to China's Mount Wutai.

## 5 Concluding Remarks

The study Tōnomine founding legends demonstrates how religious practitioners used stories of Mount Wutai's replication to address pressing local concerns. Fabricating a Mount Wutai counterpart to the thirteen-level stūpa, legends preserved in the *Tōnomine ryakki* claimed for the Japanese site deep religious significance and global ties that marked the peak out as an extraordinary. The notion that one could gaze on the Chinese mountain's built landscape at this locale—and elsewhere in the archipelago—had implications, in turn, for the way that Kamakura period practitioners imagined their situation vis-à-vis the larger Buddhist world. Like the development of a local religious landscape more generally, the mapping of Mount Wutai onto Japanese soil contributed to the sense that the archipelago was a Buddhist realm equal to its western neighbors in importance.

At the same time, the fashioning of a history in which the summit and its purported founder Jōe were affiliated with Mount Wutai helped to explain both Kamatari's veneration as Vimalakīrti and his association with Tōnomine. Placing his descendants and, in later tellings, the patriarch himself at the Chinese site, records of the thirteen-level pagoda's founding deepened the Fujiwara founder's connection with Mañjuśrī's lay companion. Depicting him expressing a desire to be interred at Tōnomine, the *Tōnomine ryakki* asserted a connection between the comparatively minor site and Kamatari intended to rival that of the Kōfukuji. Though the Kōfukuji was the Fujiwara family temple

<sup>40</sup> Adolphson is the expert on this topic and gives a detailed account of the events that I describe here based on my reading of his *The Gates of Power Monks, Courtiers, and Warriors in Premodern Japan* and the *Tōnomine ryakki*.

or *ujidera*,<sup>41</sup> the *Tōnomine ryakki* purported that this nearby summit housed Kamatari's actual remains. Moreover, the patriarch's effigy communicated with mountain residents and visitors via strange occurrences, fulfilling his *Genkō Shakusho* promise to "descend again and protect [the peak] forever after."

Friction between these competing hubs of the Fujiwara no Kamatari cult may help to explain why the stories presented in the *Tōnomine ryakki* gained traction during this period. Having been repeatedly damaged and destroyed by supporters of the Kōfukuji, this branch temple of the Mudōji regularly required repairs and, following the 1173 attack, needed to be rebuilt from the ground up. Assertions that the thirteen-story pagoda and, by corollary, the summit on which it stood had a special relationship with Mount Wutai may have helped generate support for these construction projects. In this manner narratives about Mount Wutai's replication both facilitated the formation and re-formation of religious identity that was neither territorially nor temporally bound and gave voice to concerns associated with particular times and places.

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41 According to the mid-fourteenth century *Sanshū Shido Dōjō engi* 讚州志度道場緣起 (The Origin History of Shido Temple in Sanuki Province), the shrine-temple complex possessed something of a contact relic in the form of a tiny image of a Shaka Nyōrai 釋迦如來 that Kamatari purportedly wore in his hair during his lifetime. The text asserts that after Kamatari's death this object was enshrined within a massive statue of the same figure at the Kōfukuji. Royall Tyler has translated this text. Royall Tyler, "The True History of Shido Temple," *Asian Folklore Studies* 66, no. 1-2 (2007): 55–82.

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## The Emergence of the “Five-Terrace Mountain” Cult in Korea

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The story of the Silla cult of Mount Odae (Wutai 五臺) is passed down to us through two Koryŏ dynasty texts, and the story, as we first read it, is that of transmission and localization.<sup>1</sup> It involves the right kind of details for the kind of story that it seems to be: in the seventh century, Chajang 慈藏, an elite court monk, a Sinophile, and a pilgrim to Mount Wutai, upon his repatriation from years of study in China, introduces the Chinese Buddhist practice of Mañjuśrī veneration on a “five-terrace mountain” into Silla Korea;<sup>2</sup> Poch'ŏn 寶川 and

1 “Transmission and localization” is but one of many binary terms that can represent the same process. “Transplantation and domestication,” “importation and indigenization,” “propagation and assimilation,” “dissemination and adaptation,” and many others are possible. The application of the transmission-localization model of cultural diffusion especially abounds in the study of the East Asian Buddhist traditions, one of the staple subjects of which has been the “Sinification” of Indian Buddhism. In many cases, this model does offer the most intuitive, plausible, and satisfactory explanation available as to a cultural element’s distribution across different regions and its varying developments in those places, but its limitation has also been well noted. The following are some of the discipline’s theoretical or meta-theoretical studies on this model: Zürcher, “Buddhism in a Pre-modern Bureaucratic Empire: The Chinese Experience,” in *Buddhism in China: Collected Papers of Erik Zürcher*, ed. Jonathan A. Silk (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 99–103, attempts to classify the patterns of Indian Buddhist elements’ assimilation into Chinese culture; Robert E. Buswell, “Patterns of Influence in East Asian Buddhism: The Korean Case,” in *Currents and Countercurrents: Korean Influences on the East Asian Buddhist Traditions*, ed. Robert E. Buswell, Jr., (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2005) is a critique of the unidirectional model of the transmission of religious innovations in the East Asian cultural sphere; Robert M. Gimello, “Random Reflections on the ‘Sinicization’ of Buddhism,” *Society for the Study of Chinese Religion Bulletin* 5 (1978): 52–89; and Robert H. Sharf, *Coming to Terms with Chinese Buddhism: A Reading of the Treasure Store Treatise* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2002), 1–27, offer critiques of the adequacy of the model of Sinification in studying Chinese Buddhism. See also E.M. Pye, “The Transplantation of Religions,” *Numen* 16, no. 3 (1969): 234–39, for an attempt at developing a general model of the transmission and transformation of religious traditions.

2 Chajang, who is said to have left Silla “lamenting the fact that he was born in the borderlands, yearning westwards for the great civilization” 自嘆邊生西希大化 (*Memorabilia*, T. 2039, 49: 1005a28), was the most enthusiastic proponent of the Sinicization of Silla society. The cultic practice of Mount Wutai is often treated as one of the various things Chajang purportedly introduced from China to Korea, the list of which includes Sinitic sartorial codes in the court,

Hyomyōng 孝明, two princes of the Silla dynasty, pious lay practitioners of Buddhism, members of the cultural and political elite, elaborating on Chajang's identification of the Korean "five-terrace mountain," develop a uniquely Sillan expression of the cultic practice that continues to the present day.<sup>3</sup> It appears to be yet another story of Chinese culture's "transplantation" to the empire's periphery and of its subsequent "indigenization" by the local elites. Indeed, it is by invoking this familiar model of cultural diffusion that most scholars have accounted for the development of the Mount Odae cult in Korea.<sup>4</sup>

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official use of Chinese era names, monastic regulations, Buddhist relics, and a set of the Tripitaka. See for example, James Huntley Grayson, *Korea: A Religious History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 54–56. Many other scholars consider Chajang's pilgrimage to Mount Wutai to be a fabricated legend. Kwak's recent study cogently demonstrates many anachronistic aspects of Chajang's alleged pilgrimage. See Kwak Roe, "Silla Odaesan Munsu sinang yōn'gu" (Ph.D. Dissertation, Dongguk University, 2016), 36–53. For a discussion and translation of Chajang's biography in Daoxuan's 道宣 *Xu Gaoseng zhuan* 續高僧傳, see Pankaj N. Mohan, "Wōn'gwang and Chajang in the Formation of Early Silla Buddhism," in *Religions of Korea in Practice*, ed. Robert E. Buswell, Jr. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007), 51–64. For Buddhism's role in the Sinicization of Korea, refer to Inoue Hideo, "The Reception of Buddhism in Korea and Its Impact on Indigenous Culture," trans. Robert Buswell, in *Introduction of Buddhism to Korea: New Cultural Patterns*, eds. Lewis R. Lancaster and C.S. Yu (Berkeley: Asian Humanities Press, 1989), 29–78. For an account of Mount Wutai's emergence in China as a Buddhist pilgrimage site, see Tansen Sen, *Buddhism, Diplomacy, and Trade: The Realignment of Sino-Indian Relations, 600–1400* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2003), 76–86.

- 3 For the history of Mount Odae's Buddhist temples during the Koryō and Chosōn dynasties, see Hwang In-gyu, "Yōmal Sōnch'o Naong mundo ūi Odaesan chunghūng Pulsa," *Pulgyo yōn'gu* 36 (2012): 255–86. The mountain is still a popular pilgrimage destination for Korean Buddhists. Although the temples were rebuilt many times, the configuration of the "five terraces," as well as the Buddhist deities worshiped thereon, largely conforms to the description of the two Koryō dynasty accounts of the cult.
- 4 The following are some of the notable studies on the Mount Odae cult that advance the narrative of the cult's transmission and localization: Eun-su Cho, "Manifestation of the Buddha's Land in the Here and Now," in *Images, Relics, and Legends: The Formation and Transformation of Buddhist Sacred Sites*, eds. James Benn, Jinhua Chen, and James Robson (Oakville, Ontario: Mosaic Press, 2012), 138–63; Kim Pok-sun, "Silla hadae Hwaōm ūi illye: Odaesan sajōk ūl chungsim ūro," *Sach'ong* 33 (1988): 1–24; Richard D. McBride, *Domesticating the Dharma: Buddhist Cults and The Hwaōm Synthesis in Silla Korea* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2008), esp. 109–16; Pak Mi-sōn, "Silla Odaesan sinang ūi sōngnip sigi," *Han'guk sasang sahak* 28 (2007): 131–60; Pak No-jun, "Han-Chung-Il Odaesan sinang ūi chōngae kwajōng," *Yōngdong munhwa* 6 (1995), esp. 136–41; Rhi Ki-yōng, "Brief Remarks on the Buddha-Land Ideology in Silla during the Seventh and Eighth Centuries," in *Tang China and Beyond*, ed. Antonino Forte (Kyoto: Istituto Itaiano di Cultura, Scuola di Studi sull'Asia Orientale, 1988), 163–79; Sin Tong-ha, "Silla



However, fitting this seemingly commonplace story of the “five-terrace mountain” cult’s transmission and localization in Korea into recorded history turned out to be not so simple a task. Scholars realized that the Koryŏ dynasty accounts of the cult, which provide us with the above details, were in fact bristling with anachronisms and historical inaccuracies, and in order to account for them, a number of possibilities of textual corruption were suggested, along with accordingly reconstructed histories and re-identified agents of the cult’s formation in Korea. The extent of disagreement between the practices of the Silla Mount Odae cult described in the Koryŏ accounts and those of the cult’s Chinese archetype posed another problem, which scholars attempted to explain away by attributing it to Silla Buddhists’ mobilization of some of the most Esoteric passages in the Buddhist canon. But in the absence of enough information, these explanations had to depend largely on speculation, and no decisive argument about any of the major details of the alleged history of the cult’s transmission and localization has as yet been presented.

The present study explores an alternative approach to the two Koryŏ dynasty accounts of the Mount Odae cult. It investigates what would come of reading these texts without making the two assumptions that have invariably guided the previous studies of the cult’s history: that these accounts must be some kind of reflection of historical reality, however remote and distorted it may be, and that transmission and localization must have been the process through which the cult came into existence and developed in Korea.

From a textual analysis of the two Koryŏ dynasty accounts of the Mount Odae cult, this study will first establish that both these accounts were to a great extent faithful reproductions of some “old records” that Koryŏ historians had obtained from Mount Odae. Further investigation of the nature of these “old records” will reveal that they were manuscript copies of propaganda literature compiled and circulated by the Mount Odae Buddhists with the purpose of establishing the historical and religious legitimacy of their cultic practice.

This finding will enable us to read the narratives preserved in the Koryŏ texts as a reliable reflection of an authorship we can identify, not just as potential, anonymous echoes of past historical events. By tracing the inadvertent marks left by the original narrators of these stories, the study will argue that the cultic practitioners of Mount Odae, contrary to the claims of their propaganda, did not have close ties with the religious and political elites of Silla, let alone direct contact with Chinese culture, and that the peculiarities of their

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Odaesan sinang ūi kujo,” *Inmun kwahak yŏn’gu* 3 (1997), esp. 24–28; Sŏ Yun-gil, *Hanguk Milgyo sasangsa yŏn’gu* (Seoul: Pulgwang Chulp’anbu, 1994), esp. 91–101.

form of Buddhism, as well as their narratives' inaccurate depiction of Silla society and history, should be attributed to their cultural and geographical isolation.

The study will conclude by suggesting that the story of the Korean Mount Odae cult may then be better told as that of inspiration and emergence than of transmission and localization, that the cult should be understood as an indigenous, independent materialization of the floating abstract idea of "Mañjuśrī's five-terrace mountain" by the isolated Buddhist community of this remote mountain region.

## 1 The "Old Records" from Mount Odae

The earliest extant accounts of the Silla cult of Mount Odae are found in the following two texts from the late Koryŏ period: *Samguk yusa* 三國遺事 [the Memorabilia of the Three Kingdoms; henceforth the *Memorabilia*] compiled by the Buddhist scholar-monk Iryŏn 一然 (1206–1289), and the *Odaesan sajŏk* 五臺山事蹟 [Traces of the Past Events of Mount Odae; henceforth the *Past Events*] compiled by a Confucian official and court historian Min Chi 閔漬 (1248–1326).<sup>5</sup>

Both Iryŏn and Min Chi state that their accounts of the Silla Odae cult are based on certain "old records" (*kogi* 古記) whose provenance was the Mount Odae region. In fact, as we will see, a large part of their accounts must have been faithful reproductions of these "old records." This section will explore the nature of Mount Odae's "old records" by probing their possible contents, authorship, readership, and purpose. If we succeed in answering these questions, we will be in a better position to study the two Koryŏ texts' accounts of the Silla Odae cult, as they are textual derivatives of Mount Odae's "old records."

5 The *Memorabilia* is included in the Taishō Tripiṭaka, as text no. 2039 in vol. 49. For a critical discussion of this text, see Richard D. McBride, "Is the *Samguk yusa* Reliable? Case Studies from Chinese and Korean Sources," *Journal of Korean Studies* 11, no. 1 (2006): 163–89. There are two versions of Min Chi's *Past Events*, the Kap-Ŭl version and the Pyŏng-Chŏng version. This study uses the Kap-Ŭl version the full text of which is yet to appear in an academic publication. See the appendix for a discussion about these two versions and the study's choice to use the Kap-Ŭl version. The Pyŏng-Chŏng version can be found in the following publications: Yi Nŭng-hwa, *Chosŏn Pulgyo t'ongsa*, vol. 3 (Keijō: Sinmun'gwan, 1918), 132–38; "73–74 yŏndo haksul tapsa pogo," *Kungmunhak nonjip* 7-8 (1975): 330–34. A partial publication of the Kap-Ŭl version appears in Yŏm Chung-sŏp, "Chajang ũi chŏn'gi charyo yŏn'gu" (Ph.D. Dissertation, Dongguk University, 2015), 505–37. For a survey of Min Chi's historical and Buddhist writings, see Yi Ch'ang-guk, "Wŏn kansŏpki Min Chi ũi hyŏnsil insik: Pulgyo kirok ũl chungsim ũro," *Minjok munhwa nonch'ong* 24 (2001): 93–147.

### 1.1 *The “Old Records” of the Two Historians*

Iryŏn’s *Memorabilia* is a compilation of folklore tales about the three ancient Korean kingdoms. It contains 137 entries categorized under nine chapters according to their subjects. Each of these entries has a unique title that summarizes its content. As is common among the texts of this genre, these entries are mostly products of Iryŏn’s compilation and adaptation of the primary sources he gathered, rather than of his original composition.<sup>6</sup>

In the “Stūpas and Images” (“T’apsang” 塔像) chapter of the *Memorabilia*, we find three entries on the Buddhist cult of Mount Odae that are compiled one after another. The first of these three entries, the “Taesan oman chinsin” 臺山五萬真身 (Fifty thousand true bodies of Mount Odae), begins with Iryŏn’s specification that the entry’s source was “an old tradition of [Odae] Mountain” (*san chung kojŏn* 山中古傳). Although the word “tradition” (*chŏn* 傳) by itself can mean a number of things, Iryŏn refers to the same source also as “this record” (*ch’a ki* 此記), “the old record” (*kogi* 古記), or simply “the record” (*ki* 記) in his editorial notes on this entry, which rules out the possibility that the entry’s source was an oral transmission. The last entry on the Mount Odae cult, “Taesan Wŏlchŏngsa o ryu sŏngchung” 臺山月精寺五類聖眾 [Five groups of holy ones of Wŏlchŏng Temple on Mount Odae], begins likewise by stating that its source is “[an] old record transmitted in [Wŏlchŏng] Temple” (*sa chung sojŏn kogi* 寺中所傳古記). The source of another entry, “Myŏngju Odaesan Pojilto T’aeja chŏn’gi” 溟州五臺山寶叱徒太子傳記 [The biography of Crown Prince Pojilto of Mount Odae in Myŏngju], is not specified, but it appears between the other two entries on Mount Odae, and it will be evident in the later discussion that this entry was also an adaptation of a source from Mount Odae.

Min Chi’s *Past Events* is an independent, freestanding compilation of stories about Mount Odae. The circumstances of the compilation of this work are vividly recounted by Min Chi himself in the text’s colophon as follows:

Mount Odae is the place where the true bodies of Buddhist saints permanently abide; Wŏlchŏng Temple is the place where the five groups of great saints manifested their traces. [.....] Since having suffered the war [with the Mongols], our country had experienced many difficulties. Offerings [to the mountain] had quickly diminished, and [its] monasteries

6 For more about this common editorial practice, see John Kieschnick, *The Eminent Monk: Buddhist Ideals in Medieval Chinese Hagiography* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 1997), 10–11. For the applicability of this knowledge to Iryŏn’s *Memorabilia*, refer to McBride, “Is the *Samgukyusa* Reliable?”

also had been severely damaged. Monk Iil 而一 saw this and lamented sorrowfully. Having repaired these sites with great commitment, he came to visit me. He said, “The name of the mountain is known all over the country. But the old documents kept there (*soyu kojök* 所有古籍) are all in a vernacular language from the Silla dynasty (Nadae *hyangön* 羅代鄉言), so they are not understandable to the gentlemen of the world. Even if one wanted to let people study the numinous miracles of [Odae] Mountain and [Wölchöng] Temple, how could he? And if an envoy of the Chinese Emperor one day visited the mountain and requested to see those old records (*kogi* 古記), how could one ever show them to him? I merely hope that you will translate its vernacular language using literary language (*i mun yök ki hyangön* 以文易其鄉言) and let all the readers understand the traces of the numinous miracles of the great saints as clearly as the sun and moon in their brightness.” I agreed with what he said. Even though I knew that my literary talent was insufficient to meet his wish, since his request was difficult to refuse, I have edited them (*p’ilsak* 筆削).

五臺山者，佛聖真身常住之所也。月精寺者，五類大聖現迹之地也。[.....] 自經兵火已來，國步多艱。供養屢絕，寺亦頽圯已甚。沙門而一見之，慨然發歎。既已殫力修葺，來謂予曰。是山之名，聞於天下。而所有古籍，皆羅代鄉言，非四方君子所可通見。雖欲使人人能究是山寺之靈異，豈可得乎？若他日或有天使，到山而求觀古記，則其將何以示之哉？願以文易其鄉言，使諸觀者，明知大聖靈奇之跡，如日月皓然耳。予聞其言，以爲然。雖自知爲文不能副其意，亦重違其請而筆削云爾。

We see here that Min Chi’s *Past Events*, like the entries of the *Memorabilia*, was compiled by editing and adapting some “old records” that originated from Mount Odae. The colophon further notes that these “old records” were written in “a vernacular language from the Silla dynasty” (Nadae *hyangön* 羅代鄉言), and that they thus had to be rendered into proper literary Chinese before they could be comprehensible to literati. We can imagine that Min Chi, being a court historian, must have been known to possess the necessary skills for translating primary sources written in vernacular writing systems,<sup>7</sup> and that this

7 For a general survey of Korean vernacular writings systems, refer to Sohn Ho-min, *The Korean Language* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 124–28 and Lee Ki-moon and S. Robert Ramsey, *A History of the Korean Language* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 51–58. For the use of vernacular language in Korean Buddhism, see Kim Sang-hyön, “The Identity of Korean Buddhism within the Context of East Asian Buddhism,” trans. Pankaj N. Mohan, in *Korean Buddhism in East Asian Perspectives*, ed.

would have led the monk Iil to visit Min Chi with the “old records” he found on Mount Odae.

It is unlikely that the “old records” of Iryŏn and the “old records” of Min Chi were the same physical set of documents. Moreover, the degree of disagreement between the two Koryŏ texts suggests that these two sets of “old records” were not even variant copies of some identical texts: the two Koryŏ texts differ from each other too extensively in many details to be regarded as having been based on variant copies of the same texts, even if we consider the possibility that many of their disagreements could very well be by-products of translating, adapting, and editing the primary sources.<sup>8</sup> For the same reason, it is futile to attempt to establish the exact genealogical relationship between the two sets of the “old records” or among their constituents. Nevertheless, in a more abstract and perhaps in a more important sense, the “old records” of the two historians must have resembled each other very closely, as we will now see.

### 1.2 *The Contents of the “Old Records”*

Both Iryŏn’s *Memorabilia* and Min Chi’s *Past Events* present their accounts of the Mount Odae cult with the following three stories:

- A. Chajang’s search for Mañjuśrī Bodhisattva in China and in Silla
- B. Religious activities of two Silla princes on Mount Odae
- C. Layman Sinhyo’s encounter with the deities of Wŏlchŏng Temple

The organizations of these stories in the two Koryŏ texts are shown below. Numbers are added to designate variant versions of the three stories more conveniently and do not represent a genealogical relation between them.

Three entries concerning the cult of Mount Odae in the *Memorabilia of the Three Kingdoms* (*Samguk yusa* 三國遺事)

1. “The Fifty Thousand True Bodies of Mount Odae” 臺山五萬真身:<sup>9</sup> A1 and B1
2. “The Biography of Crown Prince Pojilto of Mount Odae in Myŏngju” 溟州五臺山寶叱徒太子傳記:<sup>10</sup> B2

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Geumgang Center for Buddhist Studies (Seoul: Jimmundang, 2007), 13–15. However, I do not think that the term “*hyangŏn*” necessarily implies a well-developed vernacular writing system. It could just as well refer to the language of a piece of writing that appeared strange because it was written by someone with an inferior command of literary Chinese.

8 See note 12 and the quotations in the following section for some examples.

9 The *Memorabilia*, T. 2039, 49: 998b19–999c10.

10 *Ibid.*, T. 2039, 49: 999c11–1000a9.

3. “The Five Groups of Holy Ones of Wölchǒng Temple on Mount Odae” 臺山月精寺五類聖眾:<sup>11</sup> C<sub>1</sub>

The *Traces of the Past Events of Mount Odae* (*Odaesan sajök* 五臺山事蹟)

1. “The Holy Traces of Mount Odae and the Biography of Crown Prince Chǒngsin of Silla” 五臺山聖跡并新羅淨神太子傳記: B<sub>3</sub>
2. “The Biography of the Founding Patriarch of Wölchǒng Temple on Mount Odae” 五臺山月精寺開創祖師傳記: A<sub>2</sub>
3. “The Biography of Layman Sinhyo” 信孝居士傳: C<sub>2</sub>

As represented above, both Koryŏ texts contain at least one version of A, B, and C, and these make up most of the two texts’ accounts of the Mount Odae cult. Thus, we know that these three stories must have been the main content for either of the two original sets of “old records” obtained respectively by Iryŏn and Min Chi.

Furthermore, by comparing the variant versions of these three stories and identifying the agreements between them, we can deduce various details—from something very concrete, like a phrase, to rather abstract similarities, like a particular sequence of events—with which a certain story must have been originally recounted in either of the two sets of the “old records” the historians availed themselves of. For example, since both C<sub>1</sub> and C<sub>2</sub> use the unusual term “five groups of holy ones” (*oryu sǒngjung* 五類聖眾), we can attribute this term to the “old records” rather than to the Koryŏ historians, and conclude that both historians’ sets of the “old records” must have included a document that employed this term in recounting the narrative C. Also, since B<sub>1</sub>, B<sub>2</sub>, and B<sub>3</sub> all describe what could be generalized as “a state of political turmoil” as the cause of a certain event, we know that both historians’ sets of the “old records” will likely have included one or more documents that attributed this event to *some* kind of political disruption in narrating B.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., T. 2039, 49: 1000a10 – b2.

<sup>12</sup> Another possible explanation for the resemblance between the two texts would be that Min Chi made use of Iryŏn’s *Memorabilia* without giving the scholar-monk due credit. This may seem chronologically possible, since according to its colophon, the *Past Events* was compiled in the year 1307, the eleventh year of the Yuan dynasty’s Dade 大德 era, which is eighteen years after Iryŏn’s death. However, not only does this explanation entail the unwarranted denial of the otherwise trustworthy account of the *Past Events*’ compilation we read in its colophon, it also results in the rejection of the scholarly consensus that the first circulation of the *Memorabilia* is not likely to have taken place earlier than the 1310s, when some circumstances suggest that Iryŏn’s disciple Mugŭk 無極 might have carried out the task. For contemporary scholars’ understanding of the circulation of the *Memorabilia*, refer to Kim Sang-hyŏn, “*Samguk yusa* ūi p’yŏnch’an kwa kanhaeng e taehan yŏn’gu hyŏnhwang,” *Pulgyo yŏngu* 26 (2007), 30–33. An assessment in English of one of the works discussed in Kim’s paper can be found in McBride, “Is the *Samguk yusa*

If we make rough outlines of the three stories based on such shared narrative elements only, they are as below. A reasonable exception to this principle was made to exclude from the outline any element that, although shared by both texts, is clearly identified by one of the historians as having come from a primary source that was not part of the “old records.”<sup>13</sup>

- A. During the Tang dynasty’s Zhenguan 貞觀 era (627–649), Chajang leaves Silla and makes a pilgrimage to Mount Wutai in China. He falls asleep near a Mañjuśrī statue on the mountain, and receives a “Sanskrit” verse from the bodhisattva Mañjuśrī in the dream, which he memorizes but does not understand. The next morning, he meets a monk who translates the verse for him and bestows on him Śākyamuni Buddha’s relics. The monk enjoins him to visit the “ten thousand Mañjuśrīs” (*ilman munsu* 一萬文殊) on Mount Odae in Silla. On his way to Silla, Chajang encounters the dragon of Lake Taihe 太和 who tells him that the monk he met was the true Mañjuśrī. Upon returning to Silla, he visits Mount Odae in the hope of meeting the bodhisattva again, but fails despite days of effort.
- B. In the first year of the Silla dynasty’s T’aehwa 太和 era (648), two Silla princes retreat to Mount Odae to lead the life of recluses. They experience various visions of Buddhist deities on each of the Five Terraces of the mountain—including that of the “ten thousand Mañjuśrīs” on the Middle Terrace—and start worshipping them. After some time,

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Reliable?” 184n5. Moreover, there are a number of details that are unique to the *Past Events* but are unlikely to have been introduced by a Confucian historian such as Min Chi. For example, between the two Koryŏ texts, only the *Past Events* consistently mentions Maitreya as the deity of the Northern Terrace. Also, whereas the *Past Events* states that it was the bodhisattva Mañjuśrī who ordered the organization of the cultic societies on the mountain, the *Memorabilia* states that it was Crown Prince Poch’ŏn who made the order. The *Past Events* also has a different list of Mañjuśrī’s thirty-six manifestations from the one in the *Memorabilia*. These disagreements should rather be attributed to the difference in the primary sources the two historians had than to the Confucian official Min Chi, which then implies that Min Chi had his own access to a different set of “old records.” It is even less likely that the *Memorabilia* entries on Mount Odae were supplemented after Iryŏn’s death based on the *Past Events*. This study will not make a separate argument for this since it follows from one of the conclusions of the following section’s discussion of the story of the two Silla princes, that the *Memorabilia* entries must be preserving the original form of the “old records” better than Min Chi’s *Past Events*.

13 This exception is applicable to the following two details: the dragon of Lake Taihe’s request to build a stūpa in Silla and Chajang’s visit to Chŏngam Temple 淨岩寺. Although these two details appear in both A1 and A2, Min Chi’s interlinear notes in A2 indicate that they were quoted from a source other than the “old records.” Iryŏn’s notes in A1, although not as clear, can be taken as suggesting that he also added these two details from another source. See the *Memorabilia*, T. 2039, 49: 998c7–8 and c9–10.

political turmoil erupts in Silla, and people of the capital send out four generals to locate the princes. The elder prince refuses to leave, so the younger prince returns to the capital and ascends the throne. In the first year of the Tang dynasty's Shenlong 神龍 era (705), the now-king returns to the mountain and has the hermitage of the Middle Terrace rebuilt into a temple. The elder prince who stayed becomes capable of flying by drinking numinous water of the mountain and converts a cave deity. He continues to practice on the mountain for fifty more years. Mañjuśrī predicts his future achievement of Buddhahood. It is ordered that a system of seven religious societies, which are based on the visions of the two princes, be created on the mountain, and tax revenues of the region be allotted for the maintenance of these societies.

- C. Layman Sinhyo 信孝居士, while hunting for meat to feed his mother, shoots an arrow at a flock of five cranes. One of the cranes leaves a feather behind. Sinhyo watches people with his eyes covered with the feather and realizes that people around him are in fact animals. He offers his mother a chunk of his own flesh and leaves home. When he reaches Hasol, where Mount Odae stands, he realizes that the people of the region appear as people even when he uses the feather, and decides to settle there. An old lady, who is in fact an incarnation of Avalokiteśvara, recommends a place to live, which is where Chajang briefly stayed in the past. Before long, the "five groups of holy ones" appear in the form of five monks and demand Sinhyo's feather. The feather turns out to have been a lost piece of one of their *kāṣṭhyas*. Sinhyo's settlement later develops into Wölchǒng Temple owing to the efforts of two eminent Silla monks.

As it turns out, the few narrative elements that could not be represented in the above summary because of their complete absence in either one or the other of the two Koryŏ texts are mostly inconsequential, supplementary details.

This analysis, in addition to allowing us to reconstruct the contents of the "old records," lends some insights into the relation between the "old records" and the Koryŏ texts and that between the two sets of "old records." First, the extent of the agreement in the way the two Koryŏ texts narrate the three stories implies that the bulk of the two texts' accounts of the Mount Odae cult must have derived from the "old records." Thus in addition to our general knowledge about how such texts were compiled, we have concrete evidence for supposing that the two Koryŏ accounts of the cult were indeed to a great extent faithful reproductions of the "old records." Second, since the above analysis shows that the two sets of the "old records" must have contained essentially the same



stories about the mountain cult, it would be safe to assume that the two sets of “old records” of Iryŏn and Min Chi, despite the fact that they could not have been copies of identical texts, should be regarded as having been of the same type of text and having originated from the same textual tradition.

### 1.3 *The Nature of the “Old Records”*

We have seen that the two sets of “old records” of the two historians must have been of the same nature, despite various irreconcilable differences in detail. Then what, exactly, was their nature? Were they a random collection of texts from the mountain region or some kind of purposive compilation? Who would have authored, compiled, and/or copied them? And whom did they expect to read them?

What we realize from the outline of the contents of the “old records” is the close relationship among their three stories. First, the three stories are tightly woven together by a number of references to one another. For example, in A, Mañjuśrī invites Chajang to visit Mount Odae in Silla to meet “ten thousand Mañjuśrīs.” This is a very unique concept and is not found in any other extant Buddhist lore, but in B, the Silla princes indeed encounter the “ten thousand Mañjuśrīs” on the Middle Terrace of Mount Odae. The ten thousand Mañjuśrīs comprise one of the five homogenous groups of multiple Buddhist deities each of which is associated with one of the five terraces of Mount Odae. The belief that there abide on the mountain five homogenous groups of Buddhist deities is expressed in another strange concept we find in C, the “five groups of holy ones” (*o ryu sŏngjung* 五類聖眾) who manifest themselves as five individual persons (the manifestation of the five groups of deities as five individuals makes better sense when the five groups are seen to be homogenous groups). Another example is C’s specification that Sinhyo ended up settling where Chajang had previously stayed, which is a reference to an event described in A, that Chajang had visited the mountain in search of the ten thousand Mañjuśrīs according to the request of the bodhisattva.

In addition, the mutually corroborating relation between A and B-C should be noted. Without the two Silla princes’ witnessing of the ten thousand Mañjuśrīs in B or Layman Sinhyo’s encounter with the five groups of holy ones in C, the authenticity of Mañjuśrī’s request to Chajang recounted in A would be undermined, since there is no narrative element within A that verifies the bodhisattva’s statement that he could be visited on Mount Odae in Silla (recall that Chajang himself fails to meet Mañjuśrī on Korean Mount Odae).<sup>14</sup> On the other hand, without Chajang’s encounter with Mañjuśrī, the legitimacy of the

<sup>14</sup> It may be reiterated here that the few narrative elements that could not be represented in this theoretical abstraction of the “old records” were mostly inconsequential details; had

religious experiences of the two Silla princes and Layman Sinhyo would not be as well supported, since within B or C there is no outside source of authority that could objectively authenticate their experiences on the mountain as having been genuine. Thus Chajang's dialogue with Mañjuśrī in A and Silla Buddhists' experiences in B-C function as confirmatory devices for each other: "How do you know if what the Silla princes and Sinhyo met on the mountain was the true Mañjuśrī?" is answered by "because Mañjuśrī himself told Chajang that he could be visited there." And "how do you know if Mañjuśrī really told Chajang that he could be visited on Mount Odae?" is answered by "because the Silla princes and Sinhyo witnessed him on the mountain."

In light of this analysis, the "old records" the Koryŏ historians obtained appear to have been anything but a purposeless collection of random manuscripts found on Mount Odae. We can see that even before being organized into coherent texts by the historians, the "old records" were capable of setting forth a unique thesis on their own. The stories of the "old records," interrelated with various references to one another, form a distinctive cluster of narratives, and when and only when taken as such, they together articulate the claim that Mount Odae is a genuine abode of Buddhist deities and that the devotional practices carried out on the mountain are authentic Buddhist practices. Given the explicitness of this claim, the people who participated in the reproduction and circulation of this cluster of stories must have themselves acknowledged the religious authority of the Mount Odae cult. Considering the geographical provenance of the "old records," it is then likely that these three stories were a part of the mountain region's local lore that were often circulated together as a unit, in some form or another, by the region's Buddhists for the purpose of accounting for their cult's religious legitimacy and its historical roots, to both themselves and to others. The "old records" the two Koryŏ historians obtained from Mount Odae must have been written copies of this specific cluster of stories.

Some circumstances further support this hypothetical function of the "old records." Earlier in the colophon of the *Past Events*, we saw Iil's concern that if the imperial envoys of Yuan China ever visited Mount Odae, one would have to present them the "old records" that were written in improper Chinese. This could be an indication that manuscripts of such nature and content were expected to be brought out for perusal when powerful people (and thus possible patrons) visited a temple. The narratives of such manuscripts, in addition to

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there been only in A1 or only in A2 such a narrative element that corroborated Mañjuśrī's statement, it would not have been considered an inconsequential detail.

TABLE 16.1 The deities of Mount Odae

Terrace	Leading deities	Attending deities
Eastern	None	Ten thousand Avalokiteśvaras 一萬觀音
Southern	Eight Great Bodhisattvas 八大菩薩	Ten thousand Kṣitigarbhas 一萬地藏
Western	Amitāyus 無量壽如來	Ten thousand Mahāsthāmaprāptas 一萬大勢至
Northern	Śākyamuni 釋迦如來	Five hundred Arhats 五百大阿羅漢
Middle	Vairocana 毘盧遮那	Ten thousand Mañjuśrīs 一萬文殊

confirming that their visit to the temple was worthwhile, would have offered entertainment and prompted donations. In this case, Min Chi's *Past Events* must have been meant to replace the original copies of Mount Odae's "old records" to be used for such occasions in the future. Indeed, Wŏlchŏng Temple is the place where the manuscript copies of the *Past Events* have been handed down, and their postscripts tell us that this text was in fact presented in similar situations in the past.<sup>15</sup>

Then in more concrete terms, the "old records" can be seen as copies of what may be best described as propaganda literature, the equivalent of tourist brochures and booklets distributed in modern-day Buddhist temples, in which local lore and traditional origin stories of the temple are often reproduced.

## 2 The Stories of Mount Odae

The previous section concluded that the "old records" of Mount Odae, the source of the three stories reproduced in the Koryŏ dynasty accounts of the cult, must have been manuscript copies of propaganda literature which was used to assert the religious legitimacy of the cult's beliefs and practices. Although this possibility by itself does not necessarily disprove the reliability of the claims preserved in the Koryŏ dynasty accounts, it nevertheless problematizes the

15 For example, the Kap-pon and the Ŭl-bon of the Odaesan *sajŏk* Manuscripts have a postscript which explains that a new copy of the *Past Events* was prepared for the retired former king's (*tae sangwang* 太上王) visit to the mountain in the year 1400. This is an event verified by the official history. See the entry on the 26th day of the tenth month and on the 13th day of the eleventh month in the year 1400 in the *Chŏngjong sillok*, vol. 6, in the *Chosŏn wangjo sillok*.

previous studies' assumption that they are generally objective, albeit not very accurate or well-informed, reflections of the cult's history, and calls for a more careful and critical reading of them.

Therefore, instead of attempting to assess the historicity of the claims they make, the present section will approach the three stories of Mount Odae by first asking what these claims reveal about their original authors and circulators. That is, what kind of people did the Buddhists of the Mount Odae cult have to be for them to have made the claims we read in the stories of their propaganda? If this indirect investigation of Mount Odae's religious society results in a conclusion that is consistent with the explicit claims of their propaganda literature, we might then attempt to reconstruct the history of the cult based on those claims. But if it does not, we will after all have a good reason to doubt the reliability of the stories of the "old records" as a historical source.

### 2.1 *Chajang's Search for Mañjuśrī Bodhisattva in China and in Silla*

There are two variants of Chajang's story, one in the "Fifty Thousand True Bodies of Mount Odae" entry of the *Memorabilia*, which we named A<sub>1</sub>, and the other in "The Biography of the Founding Patriarch of Wŏlchŏng Temple on Mount Odae" section of the *Past Events*, which we named A<sub>2</sub>. The following analysis of this story will show that the understanding that Chajang identified the Korean "five-terrace mountain" upon Mañjuśrī's request remained for a long time as a unique belief of the Mount Odae people and was not necessarily shared with other Korean Buddhists.

We can tell from Min Chi's interlineal notes in A<sub>2</sub> that he drew upon two major sources when compiling this section. His first source was a biography of Chajang attributed to the Silla scholar-monk Wŏnhyo 元曉 (617–686). Min Chi refers to this biography with expressions such as "Wŏnhyo *soch'an chŏn*" 元曉所撰傳 [Biography compiled by Wŏnhyo]. The other source Min Chi used was the Mount Odae version of Chajang's biography, which he refers to as "Taesan *pon chŏn'gi*" 臺山本傳記 [the Mount Odae biography], and which must have been included in the "old records" he received from the monk Iil.

Min Chi's interlineal notes furthermore suggest that in compiling A<sub>2</sub>, he integrated the elements of these two versions of Chajang's biography that agreed with each other into a single narrative while reproducing and juxtaposing the elements that did not. He also clarified the versions of the biography in which such different details appeared. This editorial practice enables us to single out from A<sub>2</sub> a number of anecdotes as having been unique to the "Taesan *pon chŏn'gi*" and to reconstruct the approximate contents of the "Wŏnhyo *soch'an chŏn*."

If we first review what can be identified as the contents of the “Wŏnhyo *soch’an chŏn*,” we find that this text must have been a fairly extensive biography of Chajang that was comparable to the one found in the *Memorabilia* in terms of its scope. It deals with Chajang’s birth, his activities before leaving for China, his pilgrimage to Mount Wutai, his activities after coming back to Silla, and the circumstances of his death. The text’s treatment of Chajang’s visit to Mount Wutai must have been especially thorough, since it seems to have incorporated three anecdotes about his pilgrimage that are in the case of the *Memorabilia* scattered across three different entries, one of which is its lengthy biography of Chajang.<sup>16</sup>

However, despite such comprehensiveness, the “Wŏnhyo *soch’an chŏn*” seems to have lacked the following three anecdotes. We can tell from the inter-linear notes before and after these passages that Min Chi supplemented them from the “old records” version of Chajang’s biography, the “Taesan *pon chŏn’gi*.”

- (1) ..... ([Min Chi’s note:] The above is found in the “Wŏnhyo *soch’an pon chŏn*.”) He (the Indian monk, a manifestation of Mañjuśrī) also said, “In the land of Myŏngju in your country, there also is a five-terrace mountain. It is the place where the ten thousand Mañjuśrīs always abide. When you go back to your country, you should visit the place yourself.” ([Min Chi’s note:] The above is found in the “Taesan *pon chŏn’gi*.”) .....

... ◦ (已上出元曉所撰本傳) 又曰。卿之本國，溟州之地，亦有五  
 坵山。一萬文殊常住之所也。卿還本國可往親參。(已上出臺山本  
 記) ... ◦

- (2) ..... ([Min Chi’s note:] The above is found in the “Wŏnhyo *soch’an ki*.”) Another [record] says the following: The dragon of the lake (Lake

16 These three anecdotes are found in the *Memorabilia*, T. 2039, 49: 990b18–23, c10–21, and 1005b1–6. The last of these three anecdotes, in which Chajang receives a “Sanskrit” verse from Mañjuśrī in his dream and meets the following morning a manifestation of Mañjuśrī who interprets the verse for him, seems to have been especially popular among Silla Buddhists. It appears in his biography in the *Memorabilia*, 1005b1–6, and the interlinear note in this passage suggests that the same anecdote was recounted also in one of the sources Iryŏn used for the “Hwangnyongsa kuch’ūng tap” 黃龍寺九層塔 entry (*Memorabilia*, 990c2–991a29). Min Chi’s editing of A2 indicates that both the “Wŏnhyo *soch’an chŏn*” and the “Taesan *pon chŏn’gi*” contained this anecdote, and A1 of the *Memorabilia* also recounts the same anecdote. Thus it seems that Mount Odae Buddhists adapted this popular anecdote of Chajang to meet their agenda by appending to it the anecdote I quote in (1) below.

Taihe) appeared and said, “The Indian monk who explained the verse to you was the true Mañjuśrī. After receiving my offerings, he left and went towards the eastern capital on the sea. I hope that the master will also receive my seven-day offering.” Thereupon the master received offerings according to his wish, and then he returned to the country (Silla). ([Min Chi’s note:] The above is found in the “*Taesan pon chŏn’gi*.”) .....

...。(已上出元曉所撰記) 一云。是池龍出而言曰。解偈梵僧，真文殊也。今授我供而去向海上東京而往。願師亦受我七日供養。師於是從請受供，然後還國。(已上出臺山本傳記) ...。

- (3) ..... ([Min Chi’s note:] The above is found in the “*Wŏnhyo soch’an chŏn*.”) Another [record] says the following: The master, having returned to the country, enshrined the Buddha’s clothes, his alms bowl, and his skull bone in Hwangnyong Temple. He stayed at the temple and made offerings [to the relics]. Wishing to meet Mañjuśrī, he went to Mount Odae in Myŏngju. Having reached the site of present-day Wŏlchŏng Temple, he put up a makeshift hermitage out of grass and stayed there for three days. But at the time the darkness around the mountain did not vanish, and he left the place without having witnessed the bodhisattva’s body. Later he came back to the same place, established an eight-*ch’ŏk* 尺 building, and stayed there for seven days... and so on. ([Min Chi’s note:] The above is found in the “*Taesan pon chŏn’gi*.”) ...

...。(已上出元曉所撰傳) 一云。師既還國，以梵僧所授佛依佛鉢菩提腦骨等入安皇龍寺，仍留其寺而供養。爲欲面見文殊，尋往溟州五臺山。到今月精寺地，假立草庵，留至三日。于時是山陰況不開，未審其形而去。後又復來，創八尺房而住者，凡七日云云。(已上出臺山本傳記) ...。

Thus, it was only in the “old records” from Mount Odae that Min Chi was able to find the anecdote of Mañjuśrī’s request to meet him again in Silla on another “five-terrace mountain” and the anecdote of Chajang’s identification of the mountain. This leads us to suspect that these anecdotes simply might not have been in circulation among the people whose narrative exchange and collective memory would have made possible the comprehensive account of the “*Wŏnhyo soch’an chŏn*” of Chajang’s pilgrimage to Mount Wutai.<sup>17</sup> Considering the significance of these two anecdotes for both Chajang’s life and Korean

<sup>17</sup> For the social nature of such anecdotes, see Robert Ford Campany, *Signs from the Unseen*

Buddhists, this seems to be the only probable explanation as to their absence in the “Wŏnhyo *soch’an chŏn*.”

The above three anecdotes are found in the *Memorabilia*, but also only in its entries that were based on the “old records.” The following are the three anecdotes as they are recounted in the “Fifty Thousand True Bodies of Mount Odae” entry (A1) which begins with the phrase, “according to an old tradition of the mountain” (*an san chung kojŏn* 按山中古傳).

- (1) He (the monk, a manifestation of Mañjuśrī) also said, “In the north-eastern region of your country, within the borders of Myŏngju, there is a five-terrace mountain. Ten thousand Mañjuśrīs always abide there. You should go there and meet them.” Having said this, he disappeared.

又曰。汝本國良方溟州界有五臺山。一萬文殊常住在彼。汝往見之。言已不現。<sup>18</sup>

- (2) When the master, after visiting all the numinous traces [of Mount Wutai], was about to return east [to Silla], the dragon of Lake Taihe manifested itself and expressed its wish to give alms, and made offerings for seven days. The dragon then told the master, “The old monk who transmitted the verse to you was the true Mañjuśrī.”

遍尋靈迹，將欲東還，太和池龍，現身請齋，供養七日。乃告云。昔之傳偈老僧是真文殊也。<sup>19</sup>

- (3) The master arrived on this mountain (Mount Odae) in the seventeenth year of the Zhenguan era (643). He wished to witness the true body [of Mañjuśrī], but darkness continued for three days, and he returned without having accomplished [his wish].

師以貞觀十七年來到此山。欲覩真身，三日晦陰，不果而還。<sup>20</sup>

And the following is the “Five Groups of Holy Ones of Wŏlchŏng Temple on Mount Odae” entry’s recounting of the third anecdote. This entry likewise

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*Realm: Buddhist Miracle Tales from Early Medieval China* (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2012), 23–30.

18 The *Memorabilia*, T. 2039, 49:998c3–5.

19 Ibid., T. 2039, 49: 998c5–7.

20 Ibid., T. 2039, 49: 998c8–9.

begins with Iryōn's identification of its source as an "old record" from the mountain.

According to an old record transmitted in the [Wōlchǒng] temple, the following is told: Master Chajang first arrived on Mount Odae wishing to witness the true body [of Mañjuśrī]. At the foot of the mountain, he wove a shelter out of grass and stayed there. But for seven days, [the bodhisatva] did not appear. He then went to Mount Myobōm and founded Chōngam Temple. Later, there was a layman called Sinhyo...

按寺中所傳古記云。慈藏法師初至五臺欲覩真身。於山麓結茅而住七日不見。而到妙梵山創淨岩寺。後有信孝居士者...。<sup>21</sup>

In fact, the above passages are the only places in the entire *Memorabilia*, including its lengthy biography of Chajang, where Chajang's relation to Mount Odae or Wōlchǒng Temple is ever mentioned in any manner.<sup>22</sup> Thus, in the *Memorabilia*, the relationship between Chajang and Mount Odae is established solely by the entries based on the "old records," the propaganda literature of Odae Buddhists, and moreover, by the very anecdotes which Min Chi explicitly identifies as having been unique to the "old records." This contrasts with the fact that in the *Memorabilia*, Chajang's relation to other major Silla Buddhist sites, such as Hwangnyong Temple 皇龍寺 and T'ongdo Temple 通度寺, is mentioned multiple times, often in passing, in a number of mutually unrelated entries.<sup>23</sup> This again leads us to suspect that the people who collectively produced what became the primary sources for the *Memorabilia's* entries on Chajang simply did not know about these anecdotes that asserted the monk's relation to Mount Odae.

Supposing a certain discontinuity between the worlds of the Mount Odae cult and of the rest of Silla society offers an explanation as to why this could have happened:<sup>24</sup> Silla society was a world where the relation between

21 Ibid., T. 2039, 49: 1000a11–13.

22 Moreover, other than these four passages, there is only one place in the *Memorabilia* where Korean Mount Odae is mentioned, and it is a late Koryō period record of a folktale of the region which does not pertain to the Silla cult. See Ibid., T. 2039, 49: 1001b12–26.

23 The relation between Chajang and Hwangnyong Temple is mentioned in four different entries, in T. 2039, 49: 3.989a25, 990b20, 990c16, 993b3, 4.1005b17, and the relation between him and T'ongdo Temple is mentioned in three different entries, in T. 2039, 49: 3.991a04, 993b04, 994a28, 4.1005c5, 1006a1.

24 Yi Ki-baek, "Pusōksa wa T'aebaeksan," in *Sambul Kim Wōl-lyong Kyosu chōngnyōn t'oeim kinyōm nonch'ong*, eds. Sambul Kim Wōl-lyong Kyosu Chōngnyōn T'oeim Kinyōm Nonch'ong Kanhaeng Wiwōnhoe (Seoul: Ilchisa, 1987), 574–77, also observes that Silla



Chajang and major Silla Buddhist sites such as Hwangnyong Temple and T'ongdo Temple was a commonly accepted fact, and a world where various anecdotes about Chajang's alleged pilgrimage to Mount Wutai were being exchanged among people until they were eventually woven into the coherent and comprehensive narrative of the “Wŏnhyo *soch'an ki*.” This is the world where mainstream Silla Buddhism flourished. Mount Odae was not a part of this world. The people of Mount Odae told themselves that their mountain was the Silla counterpart of Mañjuśrī's sacred abode and that this was confirmed by the bodhisattva himself via the eminent monk Chajang, but without being heard by anyone outside their own world. The cultic practitioners of Mount Odae were isolated from mainstream Silla society, and they therefore were not able to participate in Silla people's discourse on Chajang and his pilgrimage to Mount Wutai and propagate their own version of the story to the rest of society.

This of course would not be the only possible explanation of our finding, but the analyses of the remaining two narratives of the “old records” together provide reasons to prefer this hypothesis over others.

## 2.2 *Two Silla Princes on Mount Odae*

There exist three extant variants of the story of the two Silla princes, B<sub>1</sub> and B<sub>2</sub> in the *Memorabilia* and B<sub>3</sub> in the *Past Events*. As we will see, this story involves a number of unsolvable historical contradictions. Iryŏn's editorial notes on the story, which are unusually lengthy, clearly show that he was dissatisfied with the corrections he had attempted.<sup>25</sup> Min Chi's attempts to reconcile the story with other historical records are likewise palpable in the *Past Events*, but he also only partially succeeded. Starting from Iryŏn and Min Chi, many scholars have attempted to establish the historicity of the story of the two Silla princes, but without much success.<sup>26</sup> Perhaps the question we should ask is not how we are to correct and normalize the story, but why this story is in need of so much correction and normalization.

The following is a summary of the “Fifty Thousand True Bodies of Mount Odae” entry's recounting of the story of the two Silla princes (B<sub>1</sub>). The details

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Buddhists would have considered Mount T'aebaek 太伯山 as the abode of Mañjuśrī instead of Mount Odae.

25 The *Memorabilia*, T. 2039, 49: 3.998c14–18, c21-24, 999a23–26.

26 The most exhaustive attempt so far would be Sin Chong-wŏn, “Silla Odaesan sajŏk kwa Sŏngdŏk Wang ūi chŭgwi paegyŏng,” in *Hanguk sahak nonch'ong*, ed. Ch'oe Yŏng-hŭi Sŏnsaeng Kinyŏm Nonch'ong Kanhaeng Wiwŏnhoe (Seoul: T'amgudang, 1987), 90–131.

which Iryōn deemed erroneous and which he thus relegated to the interlineal notes were used together with the main text in this summary.<sup>27</sup>

- (1) In the year 648, the first year of the Silla dynasty's T'aehwa 太和 era, "the crown princes of the Great King Chōngsin, the two brothers Poch'ōn and Hyomyōng" 淨神大王太子寶川孝明二昆弟 retreat to Mount Odae.
- (2) The "two crown princes" (*i taeja* 二太子) build hermitages on the mountain and start worshipping the Five Terraces. They experience visions of five throngs of buddhas and bodhisattvas on each of the Five Terraces (see Table 1). Mañjuśrī begins to manifest himself in thirty-six different forms on the Middle Terrace every dawn. The brothers make offerings of tea to Mañjuśrī when this happens.
- (3) "King Chōngsin's younger brother quarrels with the King for the throne, so the people of the capital depose him" 淨神王之弟與王爭位, 國人廢之.
- (4) The people of the capital decide to bring back the "two crown princes" (*yang taeja* 兩太子) and send four generals to Mount Odae for this task. The elder crown prince, Poch'ōn, refuses and stays. The younger crown prince, Hyomyōng, accedes to the throne.
- (5) After ruling the country for more than twenty years, in the year 705, the first year of the Tang dynasty's Shenlong 神龍 era, the King visits Mount Odae. He has the temple on the middle terrace rebuilt and a clay image of Mañjuśrī enshrined therein. He orders surrounding districts to provide various goods to the temple.
- (6) Poch'ōn becomes capable of flying by drinking the water from a numinous ravine on the mountain. He goes to the "country of Ulchin" (Ulchin-guk 蔚珍國) and confers bodhisattva precepts on a cave deity, then comes back. He continues to practice in a cave on Mount Odae for fifty more years and is visited by various Buddhist deities.

<sup>27</sup> For example, in B<sub>1</sub>, in his editorial note on the two princes' withdrawal into Mount Odae, Iryōn observes, "The 'old record' says that 'The King hid in the mountain at the beginning of the eighth month of the first year of the T'aehwa era, the year of *wushen*'. It seems that this statement is a great error 恐此文大誤." He then gives the grounds of his suspicion and concludes, "Since we know from this the fallacy of this statement, I did not adopt it 故不取之." (T. 2039, 49: 998c21–24). This detail is indeed missing in the main text of B<sub>1</sub>, but we read similar (but not identical) specifications of the time of the princes' retreat in the corresponding passages of the other two variants of the story, B<sub>2</sub> and B<sub>3</sub>, in their main texts.

One day, Mañjuśrī anoints him and predicts his future achievement of Buddhahood.

- (7) Before passing away, Poch'ŏn leaves a detailed prescription on how the various sites of the mountain should be managed and what kinds of benefit this would bring to the country. The prescription includes the creation of religious societies on each of the Five Terraces where people would venerate the images of the terrace's deities and recite specific sets of Buddhist scriptures. One of the stipulations is that tax from “eight states in Hasŏ district-province” (Hasŏ-budo *nae pal chu* 河西府道内八州) should be used for supporting the religious societies on Mount Odae.

The above story exhibits a number of peculiarities in its language and its understanding of Silla history and Buddhist doctrines. To begin with, none of the three members of the Silla royal family mentioned, King Chŏngsin, Crown Prince Poch'ŏn, and Crown Prince Hyomyŏng, is found in any extant record other than the story's own variants. Moreover, none of the royal family members we know matches the historical descriptions the narrative provides: In 648, Queen Chindŏk 真德 was reigning, not a king;<sup>28</sup> we do not have any record of an event that is even remotely similar to a quarrel for the throne between a king and his brother around the time (moreover, why this would result in enthroning one of the princes is unclear); in 705, King Sŏngdŏk 聖德 was ruling the country, but he was born only as late as 691 and had been on the throne only for three years at the time, not twenty years, so King Sŏngdŏk cannot be Hyomyŏng. This is a rare case even for the *Memorabilia* that is replete with legends and folktales about the members of the Three Kingdoms' royal families: whether fact or fiction, the events described are normally attributed to actual figures we can identify.

Doctrinally, in addition to the unique concepts of “ten thousand Avalokiteśvaras,” “ten thousand Kṣitigarbhas,” and the like, the story's allocation of the Buddhist deities on the Five Terraces disagrees with the East Asian Buddhist conceptions of sacred space.<sup>29</sup> Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva is considered to exist in the southern or the western region but the story places him in the east.

28 Although the terms “*wang* 王” and “*taewang* 大王” are applicable to a queen, the description that “Chŏngsin Taewang 淨神大王” had crown princes rules out the possibility that this particular “*taewang*” was a queen.

29 The following studies on Silla Buddhist icons provide evidence for the normative potency of such doctrines in mainstream Buddhism. Yi Suk-hi, “T'ongil Silla sidae Obangbul ūi tosang yŏn'gu,” *Misulsa yŏn'gu* 15 (2002): 3–44 and An Yŏ-jin, “T'ongil Silla hadae (9–10 segi) sabang Pulsang ūi tosang kwa hyŏngsik,” *Kangjwa Misulsa* 37 (2011): 49–74.

We would expect to see Akṣobhya or Bhaiṣajyaguru, the buddhas of the eastern paradises, in the arrangement but they are completely missing. The bodhisattva Maitreya, whose special significance in aristocratic Silla Buddhism is well noted, is also absent.<sup>30</sup> Inclusion of the “Eight Great Bodhisattvas” as the leading deities of the south is also strange insofar as they would normally encompass at least some of the bodhisattvas attributed to other directions in this arrangement. Placing Kṣitigarbha Bodhisattva in the south is also uncommon. Moreover, other than the very basic correspondence that there are “five terraces” and that Mañjuśrī Bodhisattva and Vairocana Buddha are the most important deities that are placed at the centre, there is nothing about the Mount Odae cult’s conception of religious space that attests to influence from the Chinese Wutai cult.<sup>31</sup> Poch’ŏn’s practice of drinking numinous water and his attainment of the ability to fly as its result is also notable.

Linguistically, we see in the story a number of terms that deviate from Sino-Korean norms. For example, throughout its narrative, the story denotes both Silla princes with the word “crown prince” (*t’aeja* 太子) and employs terms such as “the two crown princes” (*yang t’aeja* 兩太子 and *i t’aeja* 二太子), “elder crown prince” (*hyŏng t’aeja* 兄太子), and “younger crown prince” (*che t’aeja* 弟太子). But the normal Sinitic custom is that there can be only one crown prince at a time.<sup>32</sup> Also, the text employs unique terms for denoting Silla regions such as “country of Ulchin” (Ulchin-guk 蔚珍國) or “eight *chus* in Hasŏ-budo” (Hasŏ-budo *nae p’al chu* 河西府道内八州) that are unattested elsewhere. These expressions deviate from the normative Silla administrative divisions, according to which they should instead be “Ulchin prefecture” (Ulchin-gun 蔚珍郡) and “nine prefectures” (*ku kun* 九郡) of “Hasŏ-ju” 河西州.<sup>33</sup>

“The Biography of Crown Prince Pojilto of Mount Odae in Myŏngju” entry of the *Memorabilia* (B2) advances an almost identical narrative with B1 but also

30 McBride, *Domesticating the Dharma*, 33–61.

31 Compare, for example, Chengguan’s 澄觀 *Dafangguang fo huayan jing suishu yanyi chao*, T. 1736, 36: 600b18 – c14.

32 For the usage of the term “*t’aeja* 太子” in Korean histories, refer to Ch’oe Chae-sŏk, “Kodae Samguk ūi wangho wa sahoe,” in *Sambul Kim Wŏl-lyong Kyosu chŏngnyŏn t’oem kinyŏm nonch’ong*, eds. Sambul Kim Wŏl-lyong Kyosu Chŏngnyŏn T’oem Kinyŏm Nonch’ong Kanhwaeng Wiwŏnhoe (Seoul: Ilchisa, 1987), 591–95. There are rare cases where multiple crown princes of a king can be mentioned in the same sentence. For example, if a prince is appointed as the crown prince but dies before succeeding to the throne, and the same sequence of events happens again to his younger brother, both of them may be referred to posthumously with the term “*t’aeja*.” See, for example, the *Memorabilia*, T. 2039, 49: 2.975b5.

33 Refer to the *Samguk sagi*, vol. 35 for the administrative divisions of the region during the Silla occupation, and vol. 37 during its earlier occupation by Koguryŏ.

disagrees on some details. Iryŏn omits some passages that must have been largely identical with B<sub>1</sub> by using expressions such as “refer to the ‘The Fifty Thousand True Bodies of Mount Odae’ entry” (*kyŏn* “Taesan oman chinsin” *chŏn* 見臺山五萬真身傳) and “*un un* 云云,” meaning “and so on,” in the inter-linear notes. In the passages that are not omitted, most of the details noted above are again identified: B<sub>2</sub> also uses terms such as “the great country of Ulchin” (Ulchin *taeguk* 蔚珍大國) and “two crown princes” (*yang t’aeja*); it mentions the same two specific years (the first years of the T’aehwa and Shenlong eras); it specifies that Hyomyŏng had been on the throne for about twenty years when he visited the mountain again; it recounts the elder prince’s attainment of the ability to fly from drinking magical water; it depicts the same arrangement of the deities of the Five Terraces.

The most salient disagreement between B<sub>1</sub> and B<sub>2</sub> pertains to the name of the elder crown prince and the political event that necessitates the princes’ return to the metropolis. The equivalent passages for (1) and (3) of the above summary of B<sub>1</sub> read as follows in B<sub>2</sub>:

- (1) ... “Crown Prince Chŏngsin of Silla, [who is also known as] Pojilto, together with his younger brother Crown Prince Hyomyŏng” 新羅淨神太子寶叱徒與弟孝明太子, retreat to Mount Odae.
- (3) “Crown Prince Chŏngsin’s younger brother, who was the *pugun* (another term for crown prince), is killed in Silla while quarrelling for the throne” 淨神太子弟副君在新羅爭位誅滅.

As we can see, it is impossible to reconcile the above two obscure statements of B<sub>2</sub> with the corresponding statements of B<sub>1</sub>. This could have been the reason behind Iryŏn’s unusual decision to include both versions in the *Memorabilia* (these two entries are the only instance of such a decision in the compilation); had he succeeded in reconciling them, only one entry on the Silla princes’ story that resulted from the integration of B<sub>1</sub> and B<sub>2</sub> would have been available to us.

“The Holy Traces of Mount Odae and the Biography of Crown Prince Chŏngsin” in Min Chi’s *Past Events*, which we named B<sub>3</sub>, again offers an almost identical story and shares most of the details pointed out in the previous discussion of B<sub>1</sub>. The major differences between B<sub>3</sub> and B<sub>1</sub> are as follows: B<sub>3</sub> mentions “ten thousand Maitreyas” (*ilman Mirŭk* 一萬彌勒) in addition to the five hundred arhats as the attending deities of the Northern Terrace; it has a different list of thirty-six manifestations of Mañjuśrī; it recounts that the one who made the stipulations we read in (7) was the bodhisattva Mañjuśrī, not Crown Prince Poch’ŏn.

In addition, B<sub>3</sub> almost always uses the term “prince” (*wangja* 王子) instead of “crown prince” (*t'aeja*) for denoting the Silla princes, and it has the following for the narrative elements (1) and (3):

- (1) ... “Two Silla princes, the elder one named Chöngsin and the second one named Hyomyöng” 新羅王子二人長曰淨神次曰孝明, retreat to Mount Odae.
- (3) “In the second year of the Tang dynasty Wuzetian’s (Tang Zetian 唐則天) Chang’an reign (702), the year of *renyin*, King Hyoso of Silla passes away without a son” 至唐則天長安二年壬寅新羅孝昭王薨而無子.

The event depicted in (3) of B<sub>3</sub> can be found in the official history,<sup>34</sup> and B<sub>3</sub> goes on to elucidate that prince Hyomyöng who then succeeds to the throne is in fact King Söngdök (691–737, r. 702–737). One of the details that prevented this interpretation in the case of B<sub>1</sub> and B<sub>2</sub>—that the king had been on the throne for twenty years when he visited Mount Odae again in the year 705—is lacking in B<sub>3</sub>, although the other one—that the two princes first entered the mountain in the year 648—appears.

Some scholars have argued that the garbled details about the royal family members we read in B<sub>1</sub> and B<sub>2</sub> must be the result of textual corruption of the details that survive in B<sub>3</sub> and that Hyomyöng thus must indeed be King Söngdök. But it is hard to imagine why such a radical process of corruption took place only in those few passages that so lucidly disclosed the identity of the king while leaving the rest of the text relatively intact. A better explanation of this disagreement, as well as B<sub>3</sub>’s preference for the term “prince” over “crown prince,” would be that they were amendments introduced by the court historian Min Chi into a primary source that would have resembled B<sub>1</sub> and B<sub>2</sub> closely.<sup>35</sup>

In this discussion, I have identified a number of linguistic and doctrinal peculiarities and historically problematic details from the story of the Silla princes and argued that most of these traits must also have been present in the original “old records” from Mount Odae. Again, the assumption that the

34 See the eleventh year of the King Hyoso’s reign and the beginning of the King Söngdök’s reign in the *Samguk sagi*, vol. 8.

35 The *Samguk sagi* must have been Min Chi’s source for these amendments. B<sub>3</sub> makes an explicit reference to this text in an interlinear note when describing the enthroning of Hyomyöng. Also, the Zhou dynasty’s era name “Chang’an 長安” and the epithet “Tang Zetian 唐則天” that appear in the main text of B<sub>3</sub> of the *Past Events* are also used in the *Samguk sagi*’s description of this event. See the *Samguk sagi*, vol. 8.

authors and circulators of this story must have been culturally isolated from mainstream Silla society offers an explanation of these findings. Because of their isolation, the Buddhists of the Mount Odae cult would not have had reliable access to knowledge about Silla royalty and the monarchy and about Sino-Korean elite language practices, and this would have made possible the cult’s production of the flagrantly flawed story of the Silla princes and the continued use of the story in their propaganda. Also, the Mount Odae cult’s isolation from mainstream Buddhist institutions and their normalizing influence could explain the cultic society’s unique understanding of Buddhist deities and practices.<sup>36</sup>

### 2.3 *Layman Sinhyo and the Five Groups of Holy Ones*

The above analyses have led us to suspect that the people who compiled and circulated the stories of the “old records” might have been in cultural isolation from mainstream Silla society. Despite their stories’ explicit claims, the cultic practitioners of Mount Odae do not seem to have had close contact with elite Korean or Chinese culture. Far from being an example of elite, royal, cosmopolitan Silla Buddhism, the cult appears to have begun as a locally confined religious movement of the mountain.<sup>37</sup>

The story of Layman Sinhyo also coheres with the portrayal of the Mount Odae cult as an essentially parochial religious society.

Some time later, there was a certain layman named Sinhyo. Some say that he was an incarnation of the bodhisattva Yudong 幼童. Sinhyo’s home was in Kongju. He took care of his mother with sincere filial piety. Because his mother only ate meat, Sinhyo would go out to fields and mountains to obtain meat. [One day,] he saw five cranes on the road and shot an arrow at them. One of the cranes left a feather before fleeing. Sinhyo

36 The list of Buddhist sūtras marshalled in section (7) of the story is quite extensive. But in any version of the story, this part is a prescription of how the cult should be organized and not a description of how it was being organized, and their knowledge about the titles of these scriptures does not necessarily mean that they had them in their possession or substantiate the presence of elite clerics on Mount Odae. Given the common Buddhist belief in the magical power of the sūtras, which is also explicitly expressed in (7), the cultic practitioners would have known about the existence of these texts regardless of their actual possession of them, and would have craved them as they did the prestige of being affiliated with Silla royalty.

37 John Jørgensen, “Problems in the Comparison of Korean and Chinese Buddhism: From the 16th Century to the 19th Century,” in *Korean Buddhism in East Asian Perspectives*, ed. Geumgang Center for Buddhist Studies (Seoul: Jimmundang, 2007) points out a general scholarly disregard for the possibility of regional differences within “Korean” Buddhism.

picked up the feather and covered his eyes with it. When he thus gazed at people, they all appeared to be animals. So he could no longer obtain meat. He therefore cut out flesh from his thigh and offered it to his mother. Later he left his home and proffered his house as a temple. This now is Hyogawön 孝家院. Sinhyo left the borders of Kyōngju 慶州 and arrived at Hasol 河率. When he saw people [of Hasol], many of them appeared in human form. He therefore decided to stay there. He met an old lady on the road, and asked her where it would be fit to stay. The lady said, “Past the west hill, there is a ravine facing north. It is a good place to live in.” Having said this, she disappeared. Sinhyo then realized that this was Avalokiteśvara’s instruction. He therefore went past Sōngopyōng, arrived at the place where Chajang had first made a cabin out of grass, and stayed there. Not long after, five monks appeared, of whom one said, “Where is the piece of *kāṣāya* you brought with you here?” Sinhyo was baffled. The monk said, “The feather you used to watch people is it.” Sinhyo took out the feather and presented it to the monk. The monk placed the feather into a hole in his *kāṣāya*, and it matched perfectly. The feather had in fact been a piece of fabric. Sinhyo parted with the five monks. It was only later that he finally realized that they had been a manifestation of the five groups of holy ones.

後有信孝居士者，或云幼童菩薩化身。家在公州，養母純孝。母非肉不食。士求肉出行山野。路見五鶴射之。有一鶴落一羽而去。士執其羽遮眼而見人，人皆是畜生，故不得肉。而因割股肉進母。後乃出家。捨其家爲寺，今爲孝家院。士自慶州界至河率，見人多是人形，因有居住之志。路見老婦，問可住處。婦云：“過西嶺有北向洞可居。”言訖不現。士知觀音所教。因過省烏坪，入慈藏初結茅處而住。俄有五比丘到，云：“汝之持來袈裟一幅，今何在？”士茫然。比丘云：“汝所執見，人之羽是也。”士乃出呈。比丘乃置羽於袈裟闊幅中相合，而非羽乃布也。士與五比丘別。後方知是五類聖眾化身也。<sup>38</sup>

As we can see, the story is claiming that people of other regions of Silla, such as Kongju and metropolitan Kyōngju, are in fact animals, and that Hasol, where Mount Odae is located, is the only place where real human beings live.

The geopolitical history of the region provides a context for understanding this unique local identity of the residents of the Mount Odae region as well as their socio-cultural isolation from the rest of Silla society. Myōngju 溟州, also known as Hasōju 河西州, Hasūla 何瑟羅, and Hasol 河率, was one of the

<sup>38</sup> The *Memorabilia*, T. 2039, 49: 1000a13–26.



mountainous peripheries of the ancient Korean civilizations, and throughout much of Silla history, the region resisted integration into Silla society and was beyond the reach of the administration of the Kyŏngju central government.<sup>39</sup> The region originally belonged to a tribal polity called Ye 濊 then was conquered by Koguryŏ. It seems to have been under direct control of the Silla government for a brief period in the seventh century but soon was turned into a militarily contested territory between Silla and the proto-Manchu Malgal 靺鞨 tribes.<sup>40</sup> In the ninth century, the region became a stronghold for the rebellious military group that eventually founded the succeeding Koryŏ dynasty.<sup>41</sup> Also, although only found in the geographies compiled as late as the Chosŏn dynasty, there is a tradition that speaks about an autonomous monarchy that was founded in the region by an expelled Silla aristocrat during the eighth century.<sup>42</sup>

In this section, from the analysis of the three stories of Mount Odae’s “old records,” I have argued that the understanding that Mount Odae was the sacred abode of Mañjuśrī Bodhisattva was not shared by the majority of Silla people, that the Buddhists of Mount Odae had imperfect access to Sino-Korean elite culture and Buddhist doctrinal norms, and that they had a distinctive regional identity that emphasized their spiritual superiority over the people of the Silla capital. And it was shown that the simple hypothesis that the Mount Odae Buddhists must have been in isolation from mainstream Silla society suffices to explain all these characteristics of the mountain cult. Lastly, I pointed out that this hypothesis is also supported by the geopolitical history of the Mount Odae region during the Silla period.

### 3 Conclusion

The above findings about the Silla Odae cult are not well accounted for by the process of transmission and localization. The Buddhists of Mount Odae, at least during the cult’s early development, do not seem to have had the

39 For the limitations of central Silla government’s administration, refer to Sem Vermeersch, *The Power of the Buddhas: The Politics of Buddhism during the Koryŏ Dynasty (918–1392)* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008), 32–40 and Ellen Salem Unruh, “Reflections of the Fall of Silla,” *The Korea Journal* 15, no. 5 (1975): 54–62.

40 A brief history of Myŏngju can be found in the *Samguk sagi*, vol. 35.

41 See the entries on the fifth and eighth years of Queen Chinsŏng’s 真聖 reign in the *Samguk sagi*, vol. 11.

42 See for example the entry on Kangnŭng Taedohobu 江陵大都護府 in the *Sinjŭng tongguk yŏji sŭngnam*, vol. 44 and the entry on Myŏngju-guk 溟州國 in the *Chŭngbo munhŏn pigo*, vol. 14.

necessary social resources for carrying out contact and interaction with the Mount Wutai Buddhists, nor do they seem to have been well integrated with the religious, cultural, or political elites of Silla who were capable of such interaction. Also, other than the most basic agreement that there exist five terraces and that Mañjuśrī Bodhisattva is at the centre of their devotional practice, there is nothing much in common between the Silla Odae cult and the Chinese Wutai cult. Thus, the cultic society of Mount Odae was socially too insulated for its formation to be convincingly attributable to the process of systematic transmission, and the cult's beliefs and practices were too different from those of its Sinitic archetype for the process of gradual localization to offer a plausible explanation as to their divergence. But if the transmission-localization model fails to explain these findings, it is not the only way we can account for the formation of the Korean version of the Mount Wutai cult.

The following might be another major mode of cultural diffusion whose relevancy to the study of religious history is yet to be fully explored:<sup>43</sup> Naturally, ideas travel faster and farther than things, as all that is required for an idea to travel is a chain of hearsay reports; a successful passage of an abstract idea has to overcome fewer challenges even than that of the simplest prayer or that of the smallest icon.<sup>44</sup> An abstract idea about a cultural element first reaches

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43 The possibility of a similar diffusion process has been previously noted and well articulated with many examples—some indubitable and others only speculative—in technology, art, and literature in Kroeber, “Stimulus Diffusion” *American Anthropologist* 42, no. 1 (1940): 1–20. Kroeber terms such a process “idea-diffusion” or “stimulus-diffusion” and defines it as follows: “It occurs in situations where a system or pattern as such encounters no resistance to its spread, but there are difficulties in regard to the transmission of the concrete content of the system. In this case it is the idea of the complex or system which is accepted, but it remains for the receiving culture to develop a new content.” Although most of the examples he gives pertain to generic cultural elements such as writing systems, poetry, plays, sculpture, and grammar, the true virtue of this model lies in the fact that it provides an alternative possibility to be considered with regard to the diffusion of very specific and particular cultural elements whose particularity leads us to uncritically attribute their distribution to the process of direct transmission and their variations to the process of localization. It is in the cases of non-generic cultural elements such as the Mount Wutai cult that the model of “idea-diffusion” becomes a more significant and contestable alternative because in these cases, the possibility of purely coincidental and independent re-invention of the element is safely ruled out. Also, for an example of the role of non-elite oral media such as gossip and hearsay in the spread of religious ideas, see Scribner, “Oral Culture and the Diffusion of Reformation Ideas,” in *Popular Culture and Popular Movements in Reformation Germany*, 49–69 (London: Hambledon Press, 1987).

44 A successful passage of an icon or a prayer must always be accompanied by the idea of what they are supposed to be (otherwise what travels would only be meaningless lumps or syllables). Thus wherever an icon or a prayer goes, the idea goes, and even when they are lost or corrupted, the abstract idea may still be passed on through oral media.

a region in such a way, and inspires the local people to independently materialize, concretize, actualize the idea using completely different details. This results in the *re-emergence*, rather than direct transmission, of the cultural element. In this case, we do not have to assume a process of localization in order to explain the difference between the original expression of the idea and the local expression of it; the need for such postulation simply disappears. This local materialization of the idea moreover would anticipate the more integral and systematic transmission of the original manifestation of the idea from its foreign birthplace, and if the foreign, original expression of the idea were ever eventually introduced into the region, this local, independent materialization of the idea would furthermore compete and interact with the foreign one. This complex interactive process might be what is truly responsible for the formation of many of the so-called localized, e.g. “Sinified” or “Koreanized,” expressions of cultural elements.

Likewise in the case of the Silla cult of Mount Odae, there may never have been a specific agent or agents who studied the practices of the Mount Wutai cult in China and transplanted them into Korea, or an agent or agents who then transformed them into the form we know now. It may just as well have been exchanges of hearsay reports among the populace that made the reproduction of the mountain cult in Korea possible: A Korean merchant who went to China learns that there is a certain “five-terrace” mountain, the sacred abode of Mañjuśrī Bodhisattva, somewhere in China. Without even having visited the mountain or knowing where it exactly is or how they are practicing Buddhism there, the merchant tells this to a random compatriot, who then tells it to another. This series of hearsay reports reaches a group of Buddhist practitioners in a remote mountain region of the Korean peninsula and inspires them to reimagine their surrounding space according to their own understanding of Buddhism, resulting in the emergence of the Korean Mount Odae cult.

Such a process of inspiration and emergence is all that is required for the formation of the Korean “five-terrace mountain” cult. It is a more parsimonious explanation, since all it presupposes is the existence of an anonymous, nondescript mass of people, spread across the East Asian region, among whom the idea of the holy mountain could have aimlessly floated around owing to their basic familiarity with Buddhism. Moreover, this process explains how the Mount Odae Buddhists were able to reproduce the foreign cult despite their isolation from the centres of Sino-Korean elite culture, and also offers a better account of the extensive practical differences between the Korean cult of Mount Odae and its Chinese archetype.

## Appendix: Brief Notes on the Odaesan *Sajök* Manuscripts

“*Sajök*” 事蹟 (traces of past events) is a common term for denoting records of a temple’s historical events. The *sajök* compiled by Min Chi for Mount Odae (which I refer to as “the *Past Events*”) is found in four manuscripts that are owned by the museum of the mountain’s Wölchöng Temple. (I am deeply grateful to the museum for granting me access to digital images of these manuscripts.) The four manuscripts are referred to by the museum as the Kap-pon 甲本, the Ŭl-bon 乙本, the Pyöng-bon 丙本, and the Chöng-bon 丁本 of the Odaesan *sajök*.

The colophon of the Ŭl-bon was written in 1902 by the monk Manhwa Kwanjun 萬化寬俊 (1850–1919) who had been appointed as the *suho wönjang* 守護院長 (director of protection) of the Middle Terrace’s relics shrine (Chöngmyölbogung 寂滅寶宮) earlier the same year. The colophon says that this copy was made based on “the least damaged volume” 其小破者一卷 among “the three old books of the temple’s *sajök*” 此寺之事蹟舊本三冊 which he had referred to for editing a new and more comprehensive *sajök*. It is said that this copy was made since he deemed it “inappropriate not to pass on [to posterity] the old volume together [with the new version]” 舊冊子亦不可無并傳故. The scribe of the copy is identified as Hyönu Sönja 玄牛禪子.

The new *sajök* mentioned in the Ŭl-bon’s colophon is the Chöng-bon, one of whose colophons that was written by the same monk Manhwa Kwanjun in the same year, 1902, describes the same bibliographical project: As he “reviewed the *sajöks* [of Mount Odae],” he found out that “not only were their order disarrayed and their letters damaged, but their biographies were also deficient” 謹按事蹟非惟秩散字壞亦乃傳記不全.<sup>45</sup> He invited another monk named Nangüng Kyöngwang 郎應鏡王, and they “collected all the written *sajöks*, discussed them together, and wrote them into a single book, in order to pass it on to posterity” 取諸文蹟相爲討論書爲一冊以傳來後.

The Pyöng-bon seems to have been a spare or a later copy of the Chöng-bon: Leaving out an additional entry describing an event that took place in 1914, the content of the two *pons* is identical, but the Pyöng-bon is missing the seal imprint of Manhwa Kwanjun which appears on the Chöng-bon.

The Kap-pon is the least well preserved among the four Odaesan *sajök* manuscripts, and there is no indication that it was created together with or after the other three manuscripts. What remains of the Kap-pon (at least two pages are missing and some are damaged) matches almost verbatim the contents of the Ŭl-bon: There is no significant phraseological disagreement, and all the differences between the two can be

45 The remark that “the order was disarrayed” must have been a reference to the organization of the Kap-Ŭl version *Past Events* that placed the story of the Silla princes before Chajang’s story. In the Pyöng-Chöng version newly edited by Manhwa Kwanjun, Chajang’s story precedes the story of the Silla princes, following chronological order.

explained as simple scribal errors. Thus it would be reasonable to assume that the Kap-pon either was itself the basis for the Ŭl-bon or was another copy of what became the basis for the Ŭl-bon.

All these four manuscripts include Min Chi's *Past Events* as one of their main components, but that of the Kap-pon and the Ŭl-bon differs significantly from that of the Pyŏng-bon and the Chŏng-bon. The version of the *Past Events* in the Pyŏng-bon and the Chŏng-bon contains more information overall than that in the Kap-pon and the Ŭl-bon. But most of the additional pieces of information about Mount Odae in the Pyŏng-Chŏng version of the *Past Events*, which are distributed throughout all three sections of the text, deal with the enshrinement of Śākyamuni Buddha's relics on the mountain, which is a detail completely absent in the Kap-Ŭl version (and also in the *Memorabilia*). This leads us to suspect that the Pyŏng-Chŏng version of the *Past Events* was fabricated based on the Kap-Ŭl version with the purpose of propagating the understanding that Mount Odae is a place where the relics of Śākyamuni Buddha are enshrined.

Two other *sajŏks* of the Mount Odae region suggest that this understanding must have been a relatively new one. The *Wŏlchŏngsa chunggŏn sajŏk pi* 月精寺重建事蹟碑 written in 1752 says that the relics enshrined in the stone pagoda of Wŏlchŏng Temple are those of Venerable Upagupta (Ch. Youpojuduo 優婆鞠多), the fourth patriarch of the Chan lineage in India.<sup>46</sup> This understanding is shared by the Kap-Ŭl version of the *Past Events* but explicitly brought up and discredited as an “erroneous tradition” in the Pyŏng-Chŏng version, which instead claims that Śākyamuni Buddha's relics are enshrined in the same pagoda. Also, *Kangnŭng-gun Chŏnghaksa sajŏk* 江陵郡青鶴寺事蹟, which was compiled in 1876 by appropriating a section of Min Chi's *Past Events*, is also lacking the corresponding Pyŏng-Chŏng version section's statement that Chajang enshrined the Buddha's relics on Mount Odae's Middle Terrace.<sup>47</sup>

I was not able to find any incongruity or anachronism in the Kap-Ŭl version of the *Past Events* that would problematize its attribution to the late Koryŏ dynasty court official and historian Min Chi. On the other hand, Min Chi's detailed colophon written in 1307 (see the first section of this study) seems credible, and the ways in which the complier engages with the source material—for example, leaving detailed interlinear notes, identifying the sources, emending the term “*t'aeja* 太子” to “*wangja* 王子,” and making citations from the official history (see the second section of this study)—fit the profile of a person such as Min Chi. Moreover, in the Kap-pon and the Ŭl-bon, following Min Chi's colophon, we find some additional fragmentary postscripts that are dated 1313, 1434, 1442, and 1400 (all in Chinese era names) in the order of appearance. The postscripts dated 1313 and 1400 describe situations in which new copies of Min

46 *Chōsen jisatsu shiryō*, vol. 2, 33–35.

47 *Ibid.*, 52–59.

Chi's *Past Events* were made, and the other dates might also have been added in similar situations. (It seems that when a new copy of the *Past Events* was made, the new scribe copied all the older scribes' postscripts and added his own, but that at one point, some details of these postscripts were lost and their order confused.) These circumstances support the attribution of the Kap-Ŭl version of the *Past Events* to Min Chi.

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# Flying Mañjuśrī and Moving Mount Wutai Towards the Xi Xia Period: As Seen from Dunhuang Caves

Wei-Cheng Lin

## 1 Introduction

The most important text of the Tangut Xi Xia State (982–1227) that documents its rise and fall is a chronicle entitled the *Complete Topically Arranged History of the Xi Xia* (*Xi Xia jishi benmo* 西夏纪事本末). Dated to the 1800s, the chronicle includes a map of its territory located in the northwest of China in today's Ningxia province (Map 17.1).<sup>1</sup> In the map, to the north of its capital in Xingqing 興慶, near present-day Yinchuan is a mountain range known as Mount Helan (Helanshan 賀蘭山),<sup>2</sup> next to which is a label that reads Wutaishan si 五台山寺, or Monasteries of Mount Wutai. Mount Wutai, as it is usually known, is located in northern Shanxi, approximately 3,000 km from Mount Helan. It has since the fifth or sixth centuries been identified as the sacred mountain of Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī; and no doubt, by the time of the Xi Xia,<sup>3</sup> the Tanguts, also supporters of the sacred mountain cult, were fully aware of the sacred site's religious import and reputation.<sup>4</sup> Unlikely a misnomer, the label on the map certainly did not refer to *the* Mount Wutai. It is, in fact, a reference to a *new* Mount Wutai replicated by the Tangut State.

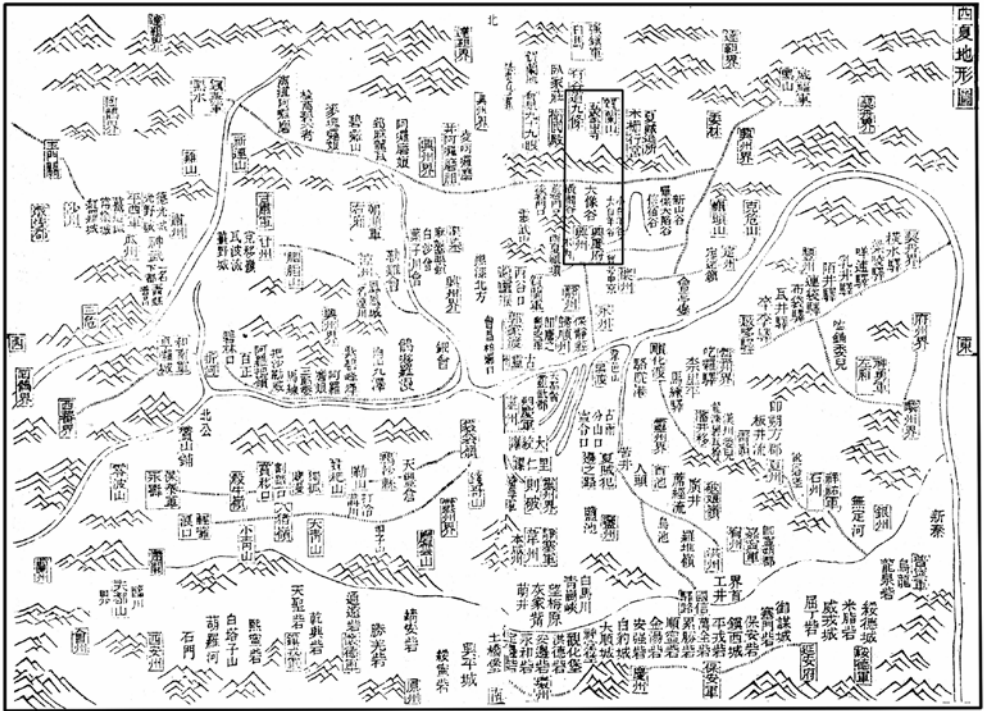
Located to Song China's northwest, the Xi Xia bordered Jurchen Jin and Khitan Liao to its east and north, and Tibet and Uighur to its west (Map 17.2). It occupied an area extending from today's Inner Mongolia to Xinjiang, including Dunhuang at the western end of the Hexi Corridor. Based on the evidence from the caves in the Dunhuang region, the cult of Mañjuśrī had already spread into this area at the latest during the ninth century and devotion to the

1 Zhang Jian, *Xi Xia jishi benmo*, annotated by Gong Shijun et al. (Lanzhou: Gansu wenhua chubanshe, 1998).

2 For the location of the capital and its nearby mountain, see Qi Renlu, *Xixia dili zhi* (Yinchuan: Ningxia renmin jiaoyu chubanshe, 2012).

3 For the early history of Mount Wutai, see Wei-Cheng Lin, *Building A Sacred Mountain: The Buddhist Architecture of China's Mount Wutai* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2014).

4 For the history of Buddhism in the Xi Xia, see Cui Hongfen, *Xi Xia Hexi fojiao yanjiu* (Beijing: Minzu chubanshe, 2010).



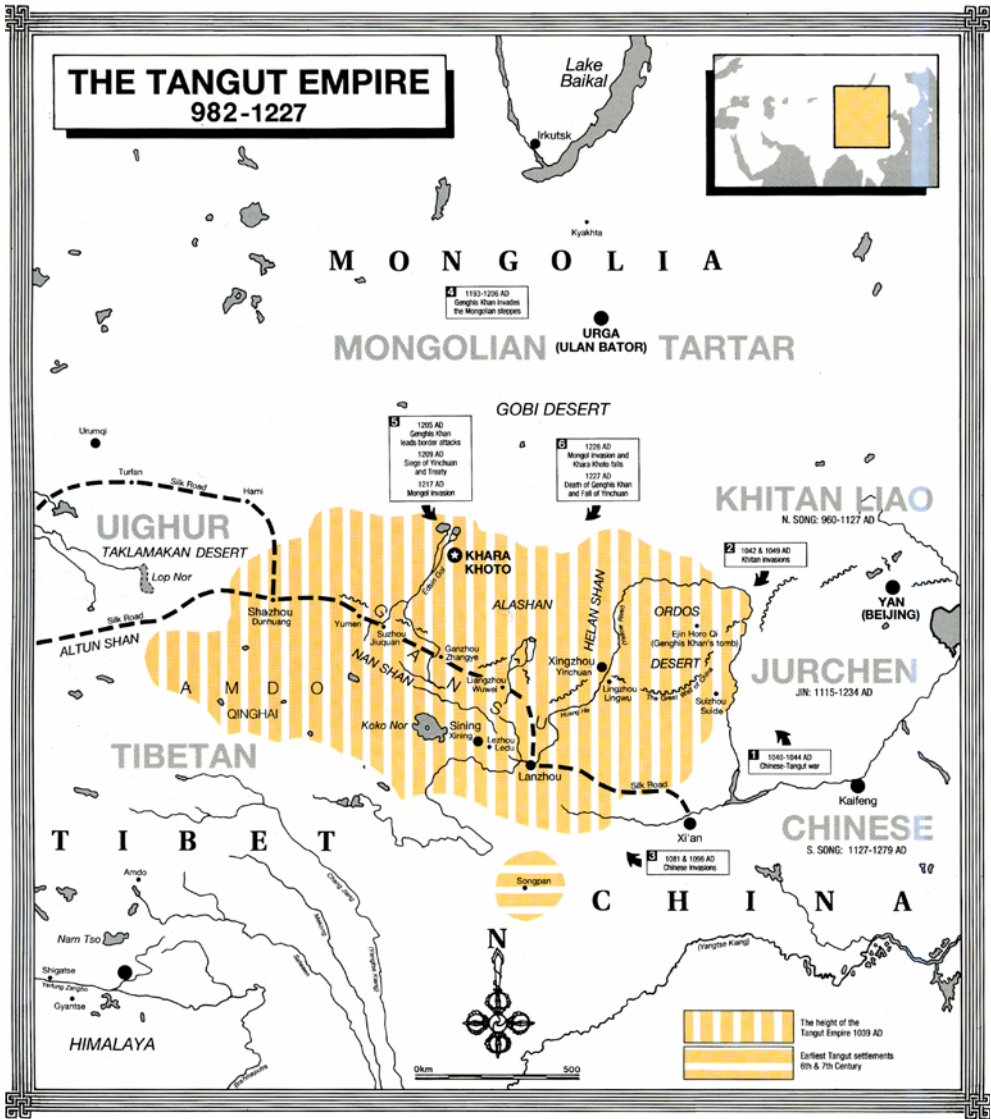
MAP 17.1 “Map of Xi Xia’s Territory,” in *Xi Xia jishi benmo* 西夏紀事本末 [Complete Topically Arranged History of the Xi Xia], ca. 1800s.

bodhisattva flourished there in the tenth.<sup>5</sup> After the Tanguts took over the region under the reign of Li Deming 李德明 (r. 1003–1031) in the early 1000s, it is recorded that Deming donated funds to renovate the ten major monasteries at Mount Wutai on behalf of his late mother.<sup>6</sup> In 1038, Li Yuanhao 李元昊 (r. 1031–1048), who inherited the throne in 1031, also sent a request to the Song court for permission to dispatch envoys to make offerings at Mount Wutai and, again, to renovate the ten major monasteries.<sup>7</sup> After 1038, however, no official documents of the Xi Xia were found again about Mount Wutai. The ill-fated relations with the Song court might have contributed to the tension between them, while the emergence of the Khitan Liao on China’s northern border directly interrupted pilgrimage to Mount Wutai. Replicating the sacred

5 See Du Doucheng, *Dunhuang Wutaishan wenxian jiaolu yanjiu* (Taiyuan: Shanxi renmin chubanshe, 1991); Wang Zhongxu, “Tufan shiqi Dunhuang ‘Wutaishan huaxian tu’ yu Wutaishan Xinyang,” *Meishushi yanjiu*, no. 3 (2009): 53–60.

6 It is recorded in *Songshi*, *juan* 485, 13990.

7 *Ibid.*, 13995.



MAP 17.2 Map of the Tangut Empire, 982–1227

mountain nearby seems to have been the solution to the problem that Mount Wutai’s distance and inaccessibility posed.

Replicating Mount Wutai elsewhere was nonetheless not unprecedented. It was preceded by a few notable examples. If the record in the Korean *Samguk yusa* 三國遺事 [Legends and History of Three Kingdoms] is trustworthy, a Mount Wutai, or Odaesan in Korean, was identified in Silla as early as the

seventh century.<sup>8</sup> Initiated by the monk Chōnen 喬然 (938–1016), a Japanese counterpart was also planned at Mount Atago 愛宕 near Heian-kyō after Chōnen returned from China in 986.<sup>9</sup> Close to home in Hebei, multiple textual sources testify to five prominent peaks near today’s Weixian 蔚縣 recognized as Mount Wutai of the Liao, which was “also called East Mount Wutai to be differentiated from Mount Qingliang (i.e., Wutai) in Shanxi” to its west.<sup>10</sup> Still many other similarly established Mount Wutai throughout the country are known to us.<sup>11</sup> In all cases, making the sacrality of the site more readily accessible and thus sparing individuals what was at times arduous travel to the actual Mount Wutai seems to have been the common motivation. The Xi Xia Mount Wutai, also known as North Mount Wutai (Bei Wutaishan 北五台山) located in Mount Helan would have been similarly conceived.

Unlike the Liao Mount Wutai and many others, however, we know very little about the Xi Xia Mount Wutai’s exact location. Also, no records about which of the five peaks in the expansive Helan mountain range were designated as Mount Wutai were found.<sup>12</sup> On the other hand, our knowledge of Xi Xia Mount Wutai is informed to a much greater extent by visual evidence, namely the many murals from cave sites near Dunhuang. Starting from the eleventh

8 See Ilyon, *Samguk Yusa: Legends and History of the Three Kingdoms of Ancient Korea*, trans. Tae-Hung and Grafton K. Mintz (Seoul: Yonsei University Press, 1972), 257–264; for the Korean Mount Wutai, also see Hyonguk Park, “Kankoku ni okeru Godaisan shinko ni tusite: Kankoku Godaisan shinko no kaiso to sareru Jizō ni kansuru kōsatsu,” in *Bukkyō bijutsu to rekishi bunka: Manabe Junshō hakasei kanreki kinen ronshū*, ed. Manabe Junshō (Kyoto: Hōzōkan, 2005), 73–97; Eun-su Cho, “Manifestation of the Buddha’s Land in the Here and Now: Relic Installation and Territorial Transformation in Medieval Korea,” in *Images, Relics, and Legends: Essays in Honor of Professor Koichi Shinohara*, eds. James Benn, Jinhua Chen, and James Robson (Oakville: Mosaic Press, 2012), 138–163.

9 See Susan Andrews, “Representing Mount Wutai’s Past: A Study of Chinese and Japanese Miracle Tales about the Five Terrace Mountain” (PhD Diss. Columbia University, 2013), Chapters 5 and 6.

10 又曰，有別於晉之清涼山。See Li Shunchen, *Weixian zhi* 蔚縣志 [Gazetteer of Wei County], *juan* 30, 2, published in the fourth year of the Qianlong reign, 1739. See also, Timothy Barrett, “On the Road to China: The Continental Relocation of Sacred Space and Its Consequences,” in *Images, Relics, and Legends: Essays in Honor of Professor Koichi Shinohara*, eds. James Benn, Jinhua Chen, and James Robson (Oakville: Mosaic Press, 2012), 46–67.

11 See Yang Fuxue, “Xi Xia Wutaishan xinyang zhenyi” 西夏五臺山信仰辯議, *Xi Xia yanjiu* 1 (2010): 20.

12 Scholars have suggested that the area where the twin pagodas stand at Baisigou 拜寺溝 might have been part of the Xixia Mount Wutai; the archaeological excavation of the site, however, found no direct evidence of a connection. See Ningxia wenwu kaogu yanjiusuo, ed., *Baisigou Xi Xia fangta* 拜寺沟西夏方塔 [Xi Xia’s twin pagodas in Baisigou], Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2005.

century, the Tangut patrons built new caves and renovated and refurbished even more of the existing caves. The Tanguts would have been familiar with the imagery of Mount Wutai, such as the well-known mural that depicts the panorama of the sacred site inside Mogao Cave 61 constructed around the mid-10th century (see fig. 17.15). During the Xi Xia period, the imagery of the sacred site with its presiding bodhisattva continued to be made inside the caves, yet with a new factor to consider: the newly built Xi Xia Mount Wutai. Indeed, in Mogao Cave 444, inscriptions were found left by monks from Qingliang 清凉 and Foguang 佛光 Monasteries at North Mount Wutai, both among the most well-known monasteries at *the* Mount Wutai and both prominently depicted in the mural of Cave 61.<sup>13</sup> Though still missing pieces, it is not too farfetched to surmise that the transmission of the sacred mountain cult to the Dunhuang region before the Xi Xia period eventually led to the creation of North Mount Wutai. This may in turn have prompted the production of more imageries of the sacred mountain in the Dunhuang caves after the Xi Xia Mount Wutai became known.

The purpose of this paper is thus twofold: first, to investigate the ways in which Mount Wutai was visualized in the image cave and what Buddhist notion of the sacred geography was revealed in the visualization before the Xi Xia period. Second, to ask if the earlier imagery of Mount Wutai in any way mediates or informs Xi Xia Mount Wutai in either its physical appearance, sacred presence, or conceptual ideas. Put another way, what are the relations between Mount Wutai and its imagery and between the imagery and the sacred mountain cult? As will be argued, rather than fixed and static, the sacred site's visual form and religious significance changed over time as its cult was transmitted. Following its bodhisattva, often depicted treading lightly through the sky, Mount Wutai in a figurative sense seems able to move just as the conception of its sacrality continued to evolve. After the Xi Xia Mount Wutai was established, I will argue, the iconography of the flying bodhisattva and the changing imagery of Mount Wutai should be considered anew, as their different religious function in the cave reveals a changing concept and religious content of Mount Wutai specific to this outlying region—contrasting those of *the* Mount Wutai in China's central plain.

13 See Dunhuang yanjiuyuan, ed., *Dunhuang Mogaoku* (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1986), 168; Shi Jinbo and Bai Bin, "Mogaoku Yulinku Xi Xia wen tiji yanjiu," in *Dunhuang yanjiu wenji: Dunhuang shiku kaogu pian*, ed. Dunhuang yanjiuyuan (Lanzhou: Gansu renmin chubanshe, 2000), 505–533.

## 2 Airborne Bodhisattva: Flying Mañjuśrī in the Chronotopic Space of Caves

A ritual banner uncovered from the Library Cave (Cave 17) and now in the collection of the Musée Guimet depicts Mañjuśrī on a lion surrounded by his entourage, together carried by clouds in midair (fig. 17.1). The long and spectacular cloud trail suggests the flight of the celestial group, traceable from its sacred abode in the background. Dated to the 11th century, the banner was likely made in the early Xi Xia period,<sup>14</sup> with motifs inherited from earlier representations of the sacred site in Dunhuang caves. The flying bodhisattva, though recalling many other buddhas and bodhisattvas similarly riding clouds sailing through the sky in cave murals, actually carries specific iconographic implications as to how Mount Wutai, through images, became moveable conceptually in the outlying areas far away from the actual sacred site.

The most typical imagery of Mañjuśrī in Dunhuang caves has the bodhisattva mounted on the lion's back, and from its appearance in the early seventh century, it was paired with Bodhisattva Samantabhadra riding an elephant in a similar but opposite composition.<sup>15</sup> With a few exceptions, the majority of the paired bodhisattvas are seen in the murals on the west wall flanking the central niche. In either of the murals, as illustrated in Cave 159 (fig. 17.2), the bodhisattva mounted on his divine beast is accompanied by a large heavenly retinue, carried by clouds towards the central niche, in which the main Buddha statue often appears in a preaching mudra (though many of the statues have long been lost). The ensemble of the murals and statues in the cave is not unlike the scene of the Dharma Sermon (*faxi* 法席) painted on the banner dated to 836 (fig. 17.3). In the banner, the Bhaisajyaguru is seen at the top center delivering

14 The date of the banner is based on its rather hybrid style and content informed by earlier imagery of Mount Wutai and possibly Uygur and Tangut pictorial conventions. See the discussion in Lilla Russell-Smith, *Uygur Patronage in Dunhuang: Regional Art Centers on the Northern Silk Road in the Tenth and Eleventh Centuries* (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 215–221. About the stylistic origin, Smith writes: “This type of representation of Mañjuśrī may have come to the Tanguts through the mediation of the Uygurs, although, as the material is not convincingly dated, it is difficult to draw conclusions at this stage,” *ibid.*, 220.

15 The image of Samantabhadra mounted on an elephant is most likely based on the *Lotus Sūtra*, although that of Mañjuśrī on a lion is less clear; and its pairing with Samantabhadra is unlikely derived from a specific canonical work. See Pan Yuliang, “Dunhuang Tangdai de Wenshu pusa tuxiang shixi,” *Dunhuang yanjiu* 3 (2013): 86–102; Chen Qingxiang, “Dunhuang Tufan shidai de Wenshu pusa tuxiang tantao,” in *Dunhuang Tufan tongzhi shiqi shiku yu Zangchuan fojiao yishu yanjiu*, ed. Fan Jinshi (Lanzhou: Gansu jiaoyu chubanshe, 2012), 236–260.



FIGURE 17.1 Mañjuśrī on Mount Wutai, Dunhuang, ca. 10th century. Ink, color, and gold on silk, 164 × 107.5 cm. Musée Guimet, Paris (EO3588).

the sermon to an audience, including Mañjuśrī and his entourage at the lower right and Samantabhadra and his at the lower left that complete the scene. The inscription (not legible in the illustration) in the cartouche in the middle, indeed, lists the three most important components in the composition, as it reads: “Bhaisajyaguru on his dharma seat is respectfully painted, [with] one group of Mañjuśrī’s assembly and Samantabhadra’s assembly (*hui* 會).”<sup>16</sup> The

<sup>16</sup> “敬畫藥師如來法席 / 一舖文殊普賢會一舖,” see Roderick Whitfield, *The Art of*





FIGURE 17.2 West wall, Cave 159, Mogao, Dunhuang, ca. 9th century.



FIGURE 17.3 Paradise of Bhaiṣajyaguru (detail), Dunhuang, ca. 9th century. Ink and color on silk, 152.3 × 177.8 cm.



FIGURE 17.4  
Detail of Fig. 17.3,  
showing trails of the  
cloud that carry the  
bodhisattva.

rather typical triangular composition of the preaching scene, however, is not as stationary as one expects from any of the usual paradise murals that have a similar composition. When inspecting closely, one should find the two bodhisattvas with their respective entourages are carried by billowing clouds approaching from the unidentified landscape at top corners, indicated by the curvilinear trails of the clouds (fig. 17.4). Seen as such, the “assembly,” or *hui*, of the two bodhisattvas in the inscription may also be read as *fuhui* 赴會, or

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*Central Asia: The Stein collection in the British Museum*, 2 vols. (New York: Kodansha International, 1982), 311-312. The portion shown in figure 3 is above another set of icons with Avalokiteśvara at the center outside the image illustrated here.



FIGURE 17.5 Mural depicting Mount Wutai in two panels, lower register, north side of west wall, Cave 159, Mogao, Dunhuang, ca. 9th century.

“arriving to attend the sermon,”<sup>17</sup> taking into account their motion and air travel that draws one’s eye to follow their descent until the moment of their arrival.

In either the 836 banner (see fig. 17.3) or the murals in Cave 159 (see fig. 17.2), though a great sense of movement is suggested, the place whence the celestial assembly comes or arrives is not clearly indicated. Once the imagery of Mount Wutai began to be circulated in the Dunhuang region after the early ninth century, the answer to this question becomes clear.<sup>18</sup> One of the earliest murals that depict Mount Wutai is also from Cave 159, located just below the mural of the Mañjuśrī assembly. Spreading over two panels (fig. 17.5), Mount Wutai is depicted with prominent peaks rolling from one panel to the other, while

17 For *fuhui*, see Li Yongning, “Dunhuang Mogaoku di 159 ku Wenshu, Puxian fuhuitu,” *Dunhuang yanjiu* 4 (1993): 26–30.

18 The transmission of the sacred mountain cult is often linked to the historical records in which the Tibetan State, which ruled over the Dunhuang region during 781–848, made requests to the Tang court for images of Mount Wutai; see Zhualuo, “Tufan qiu ‘Wutaishan tu’ shishi zakao,” *Minzu yanjiu* 1 (1998): 95–101.



FIGURE 17.6  
Mural depicting  
Mañjuśrī riding a lion  
with Mount Wutai in  
the background, south  
side of west wall, Cave  
144, Mogao, Dunhuang,  
ca. mid-9th century.

dotted by pilgrims, monasteries, and other miraculous events. Mañjuśrī riding a lion in profile is encircled by a nimbus flying over the sacred terrain. By the end of the Tibetan period in 848, the initially separate murals of Mañjuśrī in Cave 159 just discussed—the bodhisattva’s assembly on top and his flight over his sacred abode at the bottom—merged into one mural as seen in Mogao Caves 361, 144, and 9. For example, flanking the central niche from the left side (fig. 17.6), the Mañjuśrī assembly in Cave 144 carried by clouds is seen gliding across the bodhisattva’s sacred domain visible in the lower section of the mural. It seems to suggest that Mañjuśrī riding a lion is not just “arriving” here to attend the sermon (presumably delivered by the Buddha in the niche), but arriving from Mount Wutai, a journey of the divine that negates the otherwise

unbridgeable distance between the cave and the sacred site in an imaginative vision. It is precisely this intention to overcome the distance that eventually “transported” Mount Wutai to the bordering area.<sup>19</sup>

This last observation can also be observed by a later, new style of imagery of the bodhisattva called *Xinyang Wenshu* 新樣文殊, or new-mode Mañjuśrī. The origin of the term and its visual representation is from the mural, made in 925, located at the corridor that leads to Cave 220 (fig. 17.7).<sup>20</sup> In the image, Mañjuśrī engages his viewers frontally, looking out attentively in stillness, while his roaring lion appears in an animated stance that responds to the billowy clouds, whose trail stretches and undulates along the right side of the frame, drawing the viewer’s eye until it disappears outside the frame. Rather than merely a new pictorial style, as I have argued elsewhere,<sup>21</sup> the particular “mode” of presentation animates the bodhisattva’s manifestation right before the faithful by virtue of the contrast and balance between the movement and stillness of the frontally positioned bodhisattva. More important, it suggests a flight of the deity traceable temporally and spatially from his sacred abode—even though the depiction of Mount Wutai is not included. In an early-tenth-century woodblock print (fig. 17.8), a similar new-mode Mañjuśrī is depicted with dedicatory text below. The text makes it explicit where the airborne bodhisattva comes from, as the verses read: “This is the true appearance of the Great Sage Mañjuśrī at Mount Wutai, who manifests himself in diverse forms and whose might and magic are unfathomable.”<sup>22</sup> In the image, Mount Wutai is also not in sight, but taking into account the iconic economy of the iconography (i.e., Mañjuśrī

19 I discuss in much greater detail the merging of the murals in the examples of Mogao Caves 361, 144, and 9 in Wei-Cheng Lin, “Relocating and Relocalizing Mount Wutai: Vision and Visuality in Mogao Cave 61,” *Artibus Asiae* 71, no. 2 (2013), 86–92.

20 See Dunhuang yanjiusuo, “Mogaoku di 220 ku xin faxian de fubi bihua 220” [The newly uncovered underlying mural inside Mogao Cave 220]. *Wenwu* 12 (1978): 41–46. In regard to the “new-mode Mañjuśrī,” see Wutian Sha, “Dunhuang P. 4049 ‘xinyang wenshu’ huagao ji xiangguan wenti yanjiu P. 4049” [A study of the sketch of the new-mode Mañjuśrī from Dunhuang Manuscript P4049 and its related issues]. *Dunhuang yanjiu*, no. 3 (2005), 26–32.

21 Since the publication of Sun Xiushen’s article on the “new-mode” Mañjuśrī determined by the number of attendants in the set of icons with Mañjuśrī riding a lion in the center, many scholars have discussed the new iconography. As will become clearer in the following discussion, I take the “new-mode” Mañjuśrī as an iconography that is intended to engage viewers with Mañjuśrī’s frontal view and his movement traceable through the cloud trails. I discuss this interpretation of the new iconography in Lin, “Relocating and Relocalizing Mount Wutai,” 92–96. For the earlier scholarship, see Sun Xiushen, “Zhongguo xinyang wenshu Riben wenshu sanzunxiang wuzunxiang zhi bijiao yanjiu,” *Dunhuang yanjiu* 1 (1996): 44–58.

22 此五臺山中文殊師利大聖真儀，變現多般，威靈巨測。See Lin, “Relocating and Relocalizing Mount Wutai,” 96.



FIGURE 17.7 Mural depicting “new-mode” Mañjuśrī, north wall of the corridor leading to Cave 220, Mogao, Dunhuang, dated 925.



FIGURE 17.8 "New-mode" Mañjuśrī, woodblock print, Mogao, Dunhuang, ca. 944–974. 27.9 × 16.8 cm. Gray shading added to indicate the could trails.



FIGURE 17.9  
Mural depicting  
“new-mode”  
Mañjuśrī with his  
entourage, north  
side of west wall,  
Cave 100, Mogao,  
Dunhuang, 935–939.

riding a lion) discussed thus far, seeing the flying bodhisattva suspended in air and tracing its airborne journey helps the viewer visualize and thus partake in the power and sacrality of his sacred mountain. After one visualizes the sacred site with the image on top, one could, as the end of the verses below reads, “direct the merits [accrued from the visualization] to all beings and together with them take refuge in the land of the eternal bliss [of the bodhisattva’s sacred site].”<sup>23</sup>

Indeed, once the “new-mode” Mañjuśrī became available, it began to endow earlier imagery of the bodhisattva with a new layer of meaning. In Cave 100, constructed between 935 and 939, the mural on the north side of the west wall is painted with the typical Mañjuśrī assembly approaching the central niche (fig. 17.9). Upon closer inspection, the bodhisattva with his entourage appears

23 Dunhuang yanjiusuo, “Mogaoku di 220 ku,” 42.





FIGURE 17.10 “New-mode” Mañjuśrī flying over its sacred abode, south side of east wall, Cave 32, Yulin, ca. 10th century.

as the new-mode Mañjuśrī: with his front view, while the cloud trail visible at the top corner is indicative of the sacred site whence the bodhisattva assembly is arriving. In other words, by the tenth century, the airborne Mañjuśrī *was* the most recognizable iconography related to the sacred mountain cult at Mount Wutai. Yet more specifically, the iconography of the bodhisattva served to re-configure the otherwise limited cave interior as a spatiotemporal framework in which the air travel of the bodhisattva from Mount Wutai could be imagined and visualized both temporally and spatially. The *chronotope* (i.e., the re-configuration that fuses time and space) of the cave, furthermore, also has greater implications in how the Buddhist sacred geography was restructured and thus re-conceptualized, mediated through the cave.<sup>24</sup>

In Yulin Cave 32 near Dunhuang, the mural (fig. 17.10) features the new-mode Mañjuśrī in the glowing, double halos suspended in midair above the sacred mountain dotted with monastic buildings, pagodas, and pilgrims. On

24 For a discussion on “sacred geography” in an early East Asian Buddhist context, see Chen Jinhua, “Dongya fojiao zhong de ‘biandi qingjie’: lun shengdi ji zupu de jiangou,” *Foxue yanjiu* 21 (2012): 22–41. The term “chronotope” was proposed in M.M. Bakhtin, “Forms of Time and Chronotope in Novel,” in Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination, Four Essays*, ed. Michael Holquist, trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981), 84–258.



FIGURE 17.11 Mount Niutou, detail of the mural depicting Samantabhadra riding an elephant, on the opposite wall from the mural in Fig. 17.10, Cave 32, Yulin, ca. 10th century.

the opposite wall, Samantabhadra riding the elephant, as one might expect, is seen emerging from a similarly depicted landscape, yet with details not found in the mural of Mount Wutai.<sup>25</sup> At the lower right corner, for example, is a mountain hill shaped as an open-mouthed ox head approachable from a ladder (fig. 17.11), a motif that identifies the mountain hill as Niutoushan 牛頭山, or Mount Niutou (i.e., Mount Ox-head, also known as Gośṛṅga in Sanskrit).<sup>26</sup> It was allegedly located in the State of Khotan (or Yutian 于闐 in Chinese) on the south branch of the Silk Road that ran along the southern edge of the Taklamakan Desert in the Tarim Basin to the west of Dunhuang. According to *Datang xiyu ji* 大唐西域記 [Great Tang Records on the Western Regions] authored by Xuanzang 玄奘 (602–664) in 646, it was said that Śākyamuni once preached at Mount Niutou where he predicted that a Buddhist State would be built there. The prediction later served as the founding legend of the Khotanese State,

25 At this time, Samantabhadra was not yet linked to his future sacred mountain at Mount Emei; for the history of Mount Emei as it developed into a Buddhist sacred mountain, see James M. Hargett, *Stairway to Heaven: A Journey to the Summit of Mount Emei* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2006).

26 For Ox-Head Mountain depicted in murals in the Dunhuang region, see Zhang Xiaogang, “Dunhuang suojian Yutian Niutoushan shengji ji ruixiang,” *Dunhuang yanjiu* 4 (2008): 6–11, as well as Imre Hamar’s article in this volume.

which was established in the region during the third century BCE,<sup>27</sup> and Mount Niutou was thereafter identified as its sacred site. During the tenth century, the Khotanese became closely tied with the Cao family who ruled in the Dunhuang region through diplomatic and marital negotiations. In this light, it is not surprising that the legend of Mount Niutou spread eastwards and was depicted in the mural of Dunhuang caves around this time.<sup>28</sup> Interestingly, in a text uncovered from the Sūtra Library that includes an account of the same legend, Śākyamuni was said to have “arrived [at Mount Niutou] by clouds,” which then led to the creation of a Śākyamuni statue as the token of the prophesy. The image of the statue was one of the *ruixiang* 瑞像, or “auspicious image” (i.e., images with miraculous powers), popular among the Buddhist communities in the Dunhuang region.<sup>29</sup> In Cave 237, on the ceiling of the western niche, the *ruixiang*-image of the Śākyamuni at Mount Niutou (fig. 17.12) is found with a cartouche that reads, “This is the image which arrived at Mount Niutou from Gṛdhrakūṭa (e.g., Vulture Peak) by air.” Inside Yulin Cave 32, accordingly, the flying Samantabhadra above Mount Niutou recalls the legend, but more important for our purpose, it corresponds well to the flying Mañjuśrī above Mount Wutai on the opposite mural. Mount Niutou located to Dunhuang’s west was therefore paired with Mount Wutai, to its east. Through the two flying bodhisattvas, the two murals in Yulin Cave 32 bring the two sacred mountains to the cave interior in the Dunhuang region. The cave, by means of its iconography and visuality, hence maps out the sacred geography, reconceived with its very locale in Dunhuang as the center.

With the flying bodhisattva, Mount Wutai had moved much closer to the Dunhuang region. Its movement from northern China proceeded in steps: the pictorial depiction of the air-travel bodhisattva first bridged the distance between Mount Wutai and the Dunhuang region and then brought the sacred mountain to the proximity of the cave; and the cave space in turn mapped out the sacred geography in which Mount Wutai could be located. The series of reconceptions of Mount Wutai’s locality eventually culminated in a relocation of the sacred mountain in Mogao Cave 61.

One of the largest caves, Cave 61 (fig. 17.13) was built sometime between 947 and 951, the only cave in the region specifically dedicated to the cult of Mañjuśrī

27 Xuanzang 玄奘, *Da Tang Xiyu ji* 大唐西域记, T. 51, 12: 943b24–c18.

28 See Rong Xinjiang, “Yutian wangguo yu Gua Sha Caoshi,” *Dunhuang yanjiu* 2 (1994): 111–119.

29 The tales of “auspicious images” were compiled in a collections called *Ruixiang ji* 瑞像記. For a discussion of this genre, see Zhang Guangda and Rong Xinjiang, “Dunhuang ‘ruixiang ji,’ ruixiang tu jiqi fanying de Yutian,” *Tulufan wenxian yanjiu lunwenji* 3 (1982): 69–147.



FIGURE 17.12  
Śākyamuni at Mount Niutou, on the ceiling  
of the western niche, Cave 237, Mogao,  
Dunhuang, ca. 9th century.

at Mount Wutai. The cave is so identified because of an expansive mural (13.45 × 3.42 meters) on the rear wall (fig. 17.14) that depicts a panorama of the sacred mountain.<sup>30</sup> It is believed that the new-mode Mañjuśrī mounted on the lion

30 For the cave, see Lin, “Relocating and Relocalizing Mount Wutai”; Zhao, *Dunhuang shiku yishu*. On the mural, see Dorothy C. Wong, “A Reassessment of the Representation of Mt. Wutai from Dunhuang Cave 61,” *Archives of Asian Art* 46 (1993): 27–52; Zou Qingquan, “Dunhuang bihua ‘Wutaishan tu’ xinkao—yi Mogaoku di 61 ku wei zhongxin,” *Zhongguo guojia bowuguan guankan* 2 (2014): 77–93.



FIGURE 17.13 Interior view of Cave 61 as seen from the eastern entrance, Mogao, Dunhuang, 947–951.

would have been at the center of a group of now missing statues on the central altar.<sup>31</sup> Mañjuśrī on the lion would have been seen surrounded by his attending bodhisattvas painted on a screen wall that joined the rear side of the altar and the ceiling. Entering the cave through the corridor, one approaches the altar while the bodhisattva looms large as if flying in to manifest his holy presence. As one walks around the altar clockwise towards the rear, the details of Mount Wutai in the mural begin to come to light and into focus. Rolling hills, pilgrim routes, buildings and flying deities, seen from one's eye level, all appear to ascend into the farther landscape close to the top of the mural. At the lower left corner of the mural is an image of a gate-tower labeled, "Taiyuan in the Hedong Circuit" (Taiyuan Hedong dao 太原河東道), which serves as a starting point for one to enter the mural on the rear wall. One then walks along the mural and approaches the darker area behind the screen wall, and feels as though he or she continues to ascend until reaching the center of the entire mural where the triadic images of Buddha flanked by Mañjuśrī and Samantabhadra inside a monastery below the Central Peak become visible (fig. 17.15). After worshipping on one's knees, one then moves on and begins to descend until reaching the lower right corner, where there is another gate-tower labeled "Zhenzhou in the Hebei Circuit" (Zhenzhou Hebei dao 鎮州河北道), through

31 See Sha Wutian and Liang Hong, "Mogaoku di 61 ku zhongxin fotan zaoxiang wei huisu jiehe 'xinyang wenshu' shikao," in *Yungang shiku yanjiuyuan* (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2005), 441–456.



FIGURE 17.14 Mural depicting Mount Wutai, west wall, Cave 61, Mogao, Dunhuang, 947–951.



FIGURE 17.15 The triadic images of Buddha flanked by Mañjuśrī and Samantabhadra inside a monastery, “Hall of the True Body of the Great Sage Mañjuśrī,” the central part of the entire mural on the west wall, Cave 61.

which one departs the sacred mountain. One then returns to the front. This experience of the cave’s “virtual mountain” while walking is visionary, or a sort of “peripatetic vision,”<sup>32</sup> but the mural and cave architecture—its scale and space—cause it to transpire, such that the cave is not just a representation but a spatiotemporal construct that relocated Mount Wutai right here and now in Mogao.

With the forgoing analysis in mind, the ritual banner (see fig. 17.1) discussed at the outset of the paper should be viewed in a new light. The iconography of Mañjuśrī should be familiar by now: the frontally portrayed new-mode Mañjuśrī riding on his lion carried in midair by flying clouds. The celestial

32 The term is borrowed from Eugene Y. Wang, “Watching the Steps: Peripatetic Vision in Medieval China,” in *Visuality Before and Beyond the Renaissance: Seeing as Others Saw*, ed. Robert S. Nelson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 116–142.

group seems to emerge via the undulating cloud trails from the sacred peaks in the background to meet the viewer's eye. The five peaks are arranged clockwise around the bodhisattva's manifestation: starting from the top left, West, Central, North, East, and South Peaks at the lower right. The composition is designed in such way that, along with the two standing monks at the lower left, one could "visually" tour, enter, and circumambulate through the sacred mountain by following the thirty and more cartouches around the celestial group at the center. This visual pilgrimage is not unlike the visionary one that one could take to the "virtual mountain" in Cave 61. In fact, as so many details of the banner can also be found verbatim in the mural of Mount Wutai in Cave 61, the former may well be considered as a portable counterpart, or replication, of the physical cave.<sup>33</sup> Its portability would thus enable its visual imagery to literally transport the "virtual mountain" and transmit its religious experience.

### 3 Moving Sacred Mountain: Mount Wutai Recreated in the Xi Xia

If the ritual banner made the sacred mountain cult transportable in the first half of the eleventh century when Li Yuanhao 李元昊 (r. 1038–1048), who succeeded Deming, declared the founding of the Great Xia and himself as the emperor in 1038, a relocated Mount Wutai seemed no longer sufficient. In 1036–38, the Tanguts took over the Guazhou-Shazhou-Suzhou region that covered the whole western part of today's Gansu province, including the Dunhuang region, and annexed it to the empire's extended territory. The important Buddhist center, Khara Khoto in Western Inner Mongolia, was also established around this time.<sup>34</sup> Entering this Xi Xia period, in which the Tanguts left indelible marks on the building of the period, the making of the Mañjuśrī imagery continued, testifying to the popularity of the bodhisattva's sacred mountain cult still thriving in the region.<sup>35</sup> Yet the new political order made the journey to Mount Wutai much more difficult. The endless border skirmishes between the Tangut Xia and Song China since 1038 led to two major battles in 1081–1086 and 1096–1099. Khitan Liao also found ways to exploit the hostilities between them, while

33 Although not all the cartouches can be deciphered, most of the details in the banner, such as the divine miracles above the mountain peaks, the radiant ball, multicolor rays, the golden bridge, body halo, and apparitional Buddha head can be located in the mural in Cave 61. For a detailed discussion, see Zhang Nannan, "Gime tōyō bijutsukan sōzō 'Godaisan monju bosatsu kagenzū' ni tsuite" [On "Picture of Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī Manifesting at Mount Wutai" collected in Musée Guimet], *Kyoto bigaku bijutsushi gaku* 5 (2006): 69–101.

34 Chen Bingying, *Xixia wenwu yanjiu* (Yinchuan: Ningxia renmin chubanshe, 1985), 88–92.

35 See Gong Weizhang, "Xi Xia shiqi Dunhuang de Wutaishan wenshu xinyang," *Taishan xueyuan xuebao* 2 (2009): 14–21.



invading Tangut territory at times.<sup>36</sup> It may therefore not be coincidental that the last official envoys sent by the Xi Xia to Mount Wutai were recorded in 1038, marking the point after which the sacred site became increasingly and more decisively inaccessible.

Turning its back to the east, the Tangut maintained peace with Uygurs and Tibet to its west and south through diplomatic relations. Both polities also had previously helped build some of the Dunhuang caves during the ninth and tenth centuries, the same period in which the cult of Mount Wutai first flourished in the region.<sup>37</sup> Details of the ritual banner of Mount Wutai in figure 17.1—for example, the decorative pattern of the flames surrounding the Mañjuśrī's halos and mandorla, the red-and-pink color palette, the form of the dhoti—suggest possible Uygur influence correlated with the Tangut painting style. In other words, while the iconography of Mañjuśrī on his lion hovering over Mount Wutai remained the same, the painting was executed in the regional visual convention and style. I have discussed previously that the first Xi Xia emperors were interested in the sacred mountain cult at Mount Wutai. As pilgrimage to the sacred mountain had become unviable after 1038, it is only reasonable to see the eventual creation of a new Mount Wutai, or North Mount Wutai, located to the north of its capital in Xingzhou, the political and religious center of the Xi Xia empire.<sup>38</sup>

Exactly when North Mount Wutai was established is uncertain but a more important question for our purposes is: whether the newly designated sacred site would have changed the perception and conception of Mount Wutai during the Xi Xia period. Looking again at the ritual banner of Mount Wutai (see fig. 17.1), presumably dated to the early Xi Xia period, one more striking feature should not be overlooked: namely the overall composition of the rolling hills rendered in monochrome ink, contrasting with the usual more loosely and less-defined mountainscape in a green-and-blue color scheme from murals of earlier Mogao caves. Without more evidence, it will be hard to draw a direct correlation between the new Mount Wutai and the rather different look of the mountainscape, and yet as we shall see in the next section, the changes observed in the banner should be examined along with the shifting iconography of the flying Mañjuśrī and his “moved” sacred site.

36 See Evgeny Ivanovich Kychanov, “The State of Great Xia (982-1227 AD),” in *Lost Empire of the Silk Road: Buddhist Art from Khara Khoto*, ed. Mikhail Piotrovsky (Milano: Milano: Electa, 1993), 49–58.

37 For the Uygur patronage of Buddhism in the Dunhuang region, see Russell-Smith, *Uygur Patronage in Dunhuang*; Du Doucheng, ed. *Hexi Fojiao shi* (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 2009), ch. 8.

38 See Ruth W. Dunnell, *Great State of White and High: Buddhism and State Formation in Eleventh-Century Xia* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1996), 21–22.

#### 4 Shifting Iconography of Mañjuśrī in Dunhuang Caves during the Xi Xia Period

It should be clear by now that rather than a simple representation, the iconography of Mañjuśrī and imagery of Mount Wutai in the Dunhuang cave have much to say about the intention of the faithful in the outlying region to relocate Mount Wutai and localize its significance. It follows that as the same iconography and imagery evolved and shifted over time, the ways in which Mañjuśrī and his sacred mountain were conceived would have, again, changed accordingly. This seems precisely the case when we take a close look at the flying bodhisattva over its sacred site depicted in the Dunhuang caves built after the early eleventh century.<sup>39</sup>

The first and most significant change is the location of the iconography inside the cave. As has been discussed, the paired bodhisattvas, Mañjuśrī riding a lion and Samantabhadra riding an elephant, most often appear on both sides of the western niche facing the central icon. During the Xi Xia period, however, only one cave (Cave 88) out of the eighteen in Mogao arranges the paired bodhisattvas in this convention. In all others, rather than flanking the western niche, the pair of bodhisattvas is now moved to the walls close to the cave entrance on the east side. In Cave 153, for instance, Mañjuśrī sitting on the lion portrayed frontally is painted on the north wall not attached to the niche (fig. 17.16). The moving clouds with trails that stretch from the north wall to the adjacent west mural effortlessly transport the bodhisattva and his usual attendants. Instead of facing the central niche, the celestial group is moving away in the opposite direction. No longer bonded to the central niche, the image of Mañjuśrī riding a lion is now independent as an isolated iconography or iconographic motif. As a result, the figure loses altogether its previous implications in the cave: manifesting the bodhisattva's holy presence from his sacred abode. This "Mañjuśrī riding a lion" is no longer capable of transporting Mount Wutai and bridging the distance between the viewer and the sacred site.

Equally significant is the different depiction of the sacred mountain, or lack of it. Mañjuśrī and his attendants just seen in Cave 153 are sailing across the mural; yet the area they traverse is curiously empty and lacks any reference to a mountain site. In another example, a similarly portrayed Mañjuśrī riding a lion surrounded by his attending bodhisattvas in Mogao Cave 164 appears on the north side of the east wall next to the entrance (fig. 17.17). The celestial group carried by clouds is, however, the only familiar portion of the mural. In the background, four bands of horizontal lines, hitherto unseen with the imagery of Mañjuśrī, fill the sky in the distance. These bands seem to be a shorthand

39 See Sha Wutian, "Dunhuang Xi Xia shiku fenqi yanjiu zhi sikao," *Xi Xia yanjiu*, no. 2 (2011): 23–34.



FIGURE 17.16  
Mañjuśrī on a lion,  
north wall, Cave 153,  
Mogao, Dunhuang, Xi  
Xia period

for the mountain peaks, for the marvels such as the multicolor body halos and rays emerging from them resemble those seen in the background of the ritual banner (see fig. 17.1). In the lower section of the mural are hills and monasteries, yet depicted rather insignificantly in both their scale and details.<sup>40</sup> Taken

40 Zhao Xiaoxing also makes this observation in Zhao Xiaoxing, “Xi Xia shiqi de Dunhuang Wutaishan tu” 西夏時期的敦煌五臺山圖. Unpublished manuscript. In *Xi Xia xue* 11 (2015): 233–239.



FIGURE 17.17  
Mañjuśrī on a lion,  
north side of east wall,  
Cave 164, Dunhuang, Xi  
Xia period

as a whole, the iconography of Mañjuśrī riding a lion flying over his sacred abode appears drastically stylized. Without the long trailing cloud tails, the bodhisattva and his entourage also become less dynamic as an agent, which, via its iconic power, transports Mount Wutai and transmits its sacrality. This is also the case for the Mañjuśrī riding a lion in Mogao Cave 245 (fig. 17.20), whose image appears in the mural to the south of the entrance on the east wall. Figure 17.18 shows the mural depicting Samantabhadra riding an elephant to the north of the entrance as it shows better the background in which either of the



FIGURE 17.18  
Samantabhadra on an  
elephant, north side of  
east wall, Cave 245,  
Dunhuang, Xi Xia period

bodhisattvas manifests. The horizontal bands, cloud patterns, and miraculous rays in the background are the new elements of Mount Wutai in the Xi Xia caves. What seems to have gone from the earlier tradition is the vision and visionary experience of the sacred mountain the mural previously was made to evoke. Mañjuśrī riding a lion no longer conjures the same pilgrimage experience inside the earlier caves.

The more naturalistic depiction of Mount Wutai did return but not until the late Xi Xia period (late 12th and early 13th c.) in Yulin. Dated 1193, Cave 29 has a



FIGURE 17.19 Mañjuśrī on a lion surrounded by his entourage on a cloud, central mural of east wall, Cave 29, Yulin, 1193

mural of Mañjuśrī mounted on a lion and his entourage, appearing in the middle of the east wall inside the south-facing cave (fig. 17.19).<sup>41</sup> The frontal view of Mañjuśrī and the cloud trail that undulates in and out of the peaks along the right side of the composition are familiar. The landscape from which the celestial group emerges—its composition, color palette, and components—however, resembles nothing from its earlier tradition such as the one in Yulin Cave 32 (see fig. 17.10) discussed previously. Painted in a subdued color, its vegetation scattered over the rolling hills with each of the trees rendered separately in simple strokes harks back to that depicted in the ritual banner likely dated to the early 11th century (see fig. 17.1). In contrast to the abundant details related to the lore of Mount Wutai in the banner, still close to earlier depictions of the sacred site in Dunhuang caves, the mural in Cave 29 lacks the usual topographic features, legends, or miraculous visions that identify Mañjuśrī's

41 For the cave art in Yulin during the Xi Xia period, see Duan Wenjie, "Yulin ku de Xi Xia yishu," in *Zhongguo shiku: Anxi Yulin ku* (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1997); For the dating of Cave 29, see Liu Yuquan, "Yulinku di 29 ku kuzhu jiqi yingzao niandai kaolun 29" [On the construction date and major sponsor of Yulin Cave 29], in *Duan Wenjie Dunhuang yanjiu wushi nian jinian wenji*, ed. Dunhuang yanjiusuo (Beijing: Shijie tushu chubanshe, 1996), 130–138.

sacred abode. Is it possible that the mountainscape depicted in the mural does not refer to the Mount Wutai with which we are familiar?

Indeed, it may not be coincidental that the iconography of Mañjuśrī riding a lion and the imagery of his sacred mountain began to change in the Dunhuang region when the Xi Xia Mount Wutai began to develop after 1038. Located inside the Xi Xia territory, the new Mount Wutai, just to the north of its capital, would have necessarily required a different kind of travel for pilgrims. The visual transposition of the sacred site such as that attempted in Mogao Cave 61 was also no longer needed. In all likelihood, the creation, or invention, of Xi Xia Mount Wutai would have entailed a conception and visualization of the sacred site that were different from those in the earlier periods.

A description of the new Mount Wutai appears in the twelfth-century Tangut encyclopedia, entitled *The Sea of Meaning Established by the Saints*, or *Shengli yihai* 聖立義海 in Chinese. The relevant entry in the section for mountains reads:

At the Holy Mount Helan... [Mount] Wutai built with Palaces of Purity [is the site] at which bodhisattvas and holy ones manifest their sacrality and monasteries [miraculously] appear. Those who search for the divine and practice meditation come [to the mountain, at which] the laity also take refuge. It is such a virtuous realm that wild animals are not afraid of seeing people!<sup>42</sup>

賀蘭山尊 ... 五臺淨宮，菩薩聖眾，生化寺顯，禪合經修，民庶依歸，處是善宮，野獸人見不駭。

Cited in the Tangut encyclopedia, Mount Wutai here must refer to the one established in the Xi Xia territory. Characterized by numinous features—its mysticism, purity, and virtue—the Mount Wutai described in this entry differs from the thriving, religiously animated, and miracle-studded sacred mountain in Northern Shanxi.<sup>43</sup> Likewise, extant textual records of the Xi Xia Mount Wutai mention no individual peaks; considering its location in the mountain range of Mount Helan, further north from Mount Wutai in Shanxi, the landscape of the Xi Xia Mount Wutai would have appeared differently. In the Ming

42 The text is translated, transcribed, and annotated in E. Kychanov, Li Fanwen, and Luo Maokun, *Shengli Yihai yanjiu* (Yinchuan: Ningxia renmin chubanshe, 1995), 58–59. For the Tangut text, see Shintarō Arakawa, “On the Tangut Verb Phrase in *The Sea of Meaning, Established by the Saints*,” *Central Asiatic Journal* 57 (2014): 15–25.

43 Poetry of Mount Wutai uncovered from Dunhuang describes the thriving and animated pilgrimage scene; see Mary Anne Cartelli, *The Five-Colored Clouds of Mount Wutai: Poems from Dunhuang* (Leiden: Brill, 2013).

gazetteer of the region near the Xi Xia capital, Mount Helan was described as follows: “Filled with vegetation are its peaks and hills, whose cliffs are sharp and steep, rolling and stretching for more than five hundred *li*.”<sup>44</sup> We may never know if the Xi Xia Mount Wutai was the mountainscape depicted in the mural inside Cave 29, but it may be argued that once the Xi Xia established its own Mount Wutai, the visual convention, in which the sacred mountain was depicted and the holy presence of its residing bodhisattva was visualized, could no longer remain the same.

## 5 The “New” Iconography of Flying Mañjuśrī and Mount Wutai during the Xi Xia Period

The Mount Wutai recreated in the Xi Xia territory, indeed, made any attempt to transport Mount Wutai in vision from northern Shanxi unnecessary. In turn, the new Mount Wutai located in Mount Helan, the Holy Mountain (or *shanzun* 山尊) of the Xi Xia Empire, would again reconfigure the conception of the sacred geography and its imagination.<sup>45</sup> The shifting iconography of the flying Mañjuśrī just discussed in caves of the Xi Xia period thus must have corresponded to, or reflected, the changed sacred geography. With Mount Wutai recreated, Mañjuśrī riding a lion in these caves is no longer indicative of the bodhisattva’s air travel from northern Shanxi. Instead the airborne bodhisattva should be now understood as a “new” iconography incorporated in the Xi Xia caves, suggesting a rather different visualization of the sacred site. With this in mind, let’s reconsider the murals of Mount Wutai in the Xi Xia caves.

The most representative depiction of Mount Wutai from the Xi Xia caves is that in the mural inside Yulin Cave 29 just discussed. Mount Wutai here depicted as a cluster of mountain hills spread over the upper half of the mural, from which the celestial group of Mañjuśrī riding a lion emerges in the foreground. In comparison with the Mount Wutai painted in Yulin Cave 32 (see fig. 17.10), dated to the tenth century, three new features of the Xi Xia Mount Wutai in the later cave should be noted: first, Mount Wutai depicted in Cave 29 is *not* distinguished by its five prominent sacred peaks. Second, Mañjuśrī and his entourage carried by the clouds occupy the lower half of the mural in front of, rather than hovering over, its sacred mountain in the background. Third, Mount Wutai, composition-wise separated from its residing bodhisattva, is

44 “[賀蘭山...]峰巒蒼翠，崖壁險峭，延亙五百余里，” in Yang Shouli, ed., *Jiajing Ningxia xinzhi, juan 1* (1540), 5.

45 The phrase is used in the entry quoted earlier from the encyclopedic work in n.42.





FIGURE 17.20  
Samantabhadra on  
an elephant, west  
wall, Cave 5, Dong  
Qianfodong, Xi Xia  
period

depicted without marvels or legends typically associated with the history of the sacred site that dotted its landscape. The same features can also be seen in the Xi Xia mural inside Cave 5 of the cave site in Guazhou 瓜州, known as Dong Qianfodong 東千佛洞, or Eastern Thousand Buddhas Caves, located in the region further east from Dunhuang.<sup>46</sup> The mural of Mañjuśrī riding a lion on the east wall of the cave can no longer be deciphered because of the extensive damage, but the mural on the opposite wall that depicts Samantabhadra riding a lion is well preserved (fig. 17.20). It shows the usual celestial group of the bodhisattva moving along the foreground of the mural on clouds with the undulating trails reaching back to mountains in the background. The mountain similarly takes up the upper portion of the mural without distinguishable sacred peaks. The clouds shaped as clusters of flowers that prominently enclose the holy group also resemble those depicted in the mural from Yulin Cave 29 (fig. 17.21). Perhaps most important, both murals in Yulin Cave 29 and East Qianfodong Cave 5 appear alongside murals of other iconographies on the

46 See Zhang Baoxi, *Guazhou dong Qianfodong Xi Xia shiku yishu* 瓜州東千佛洞西夏石窟藝術 (Beijing: Xueyuan chubanshe, 2012).



FIGURE 17.21  
Detail of the mural in  
Figure 17.19

same cave wall. In East Qianfodong Cave 5, for example, the mural of Mañjuśrī mounted on the lion is next to a mural that depicts a three-head and eight-arm Avalokiteśvara and the other, a Cintāmanicakra Avalokiteśvara.<sup>47</sup> Mañjuśrī

47 For the iconographic program in Yulin Cave 29, see Li Yuebo, “Tan Anxi Yulin ku, Dong Qianfodong Xi Xia wanqi de Zangmi tuxiang: Yi Yulin ku di 3, 29 ku wei zhongxin,” in *Yulin ku yanjiu lunwenji*, ed. Dunhuang yanjiu yuan (Shanghai: Shanghai cishu chubanshe, 2012), vol. 2, 526–538.

riding a lion flying over his sacred abode in the cave now serves an iconographic purpose, losing its earlier visionary function in conjuring the actual Mount Wutai.

As the conception of the sacred site changed discernibly in its visual image, the relation between the *sight* of the flying bodhisattva and the *site* of the sacred mountain also seems to have been restructured. In the mural from Yulin Cave 29 (see fig. 17.19), Mañjuśrī and his entourage are moving toward the left side of the mural with the cloud trails undulating along the right. While the cloud trail is a visual mechanism that transports the celestial group over the pictorial space, a second cloud-like emanation curvilinearly arises from Mañjuśrī's head linking the bodhisattva with a circle in the background over the sacred mountain. The content of the circle, however, cannot be fully deciphered. In East Qianfodong Cave 5 (see fig. 17.20), a similar circle carried by clouds, with indiscernible content, again can be seen in the background. The circle together with four other clusters of clouds, as they appear, all carry some sort of objects, or emblems, of the bodhisattva.<sup>48</sup> Considering their positions in the mural seemingly overlapping the sacred peaks in the background, the five objects seem to have emblematically represented the five sacred peaks of Mount Wutai. If that is the case, the circle in the background of the mural from Yulin Cave 29 might symbolize the sacrality of Mount Wutai with the object inside, providing the bodhisattva with its esoteric powers.

Interestingly, the general conception of the sacred site and visual components of the mural in Yulin Cave 29 are comparable to those in a painting (fig. 17.22) uncovered from Khara-Khoto, located in the southern part of the Gobi Desert in the Xi Xia territory (see map. 17.2).<sup>49</sup> In the painting, Amitābha and his two attending bodhisattvas are all carried by well-defined clouds that have swirling trails pointing to the background from which they descend.<sup>50</sup> The second emanation—here a ray of light shooting from the Amitābha's ūrnā

48 The only discernible object is a five-pronged vajra carried by the second cloud from the right. Since murals in this cave are largely related to esoteric Buddhism, it would not be too far-fetched to speculate the things being carried by clouds are emblems or objects related to the bodhisattva in an esoteric context. For the esoteric content of the cave, see Su Bai, "Dunhuang Mogaoku mijiao yiji zaji, xia," *Wenwu* 10 (1989): 68–86.

49 For Khara-Khoto, see Mikhail Piotrovsky, ed., *Lost Empire of the Silk Road: Buddhist Art from Khara Khoto* (Milano: Electa, 1993). A discussion of the painting can also be found in the exhibition catalogue, Arnoud Bijl and Birgit Boelens, eds., *Expedition Silk Road: Journey to the West, Treasures from the Hermitage* (Amsterdam: Hermitage Amsterdam, 2014), 106.

50 For the topic of this painting that also appears in several other paintings uncovered from Khara-Khoto, see Zhang Yuanlin, "Cong Amitufo laiying tu kan Xi Xia de wangsheng xinyang," *Dunhuang yanjiu* 3 (1996): 76–81.



FIGURE 17.22  
Greeting the  
Righteous Man on the  
Way to the Pure Land  
of Amitābha, scroll,  
142.5 × 94 cm,  
Khara-Khoto, 13th  
century

to reach a sitting (presumably deceased) monk at the lower left corner—guides his soul to the Buddha’s Pure Land. Though not in sight, the ultimate joyful field of rebirth, also known as *Sukhāvati* in Sanskrit, is represented by a white lotus being carried in golden clouds in the background.<sup>51</sup> Paintings such as this one most likely serve as ritual aids, helping the believer visualize an ascendance to the future paradise in the next life. Perhaps similarly, the mural from

51 Indeed, according to Zhang Yuanlin cited in note 50, the scene depicted in the painting is based on the description of nine reincarnations into the Amitābha’s Pure Land in *Amitāyurdhyāna-sūtra* (T. 365, no. 12.); see *ibid.*, 77. For the sūtra, see Julian F. Pas, *Visions of Sukhāvati: Shan-tao’s Commentary on the Kuan Wu-Liang-Shou-Fo Ching* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995).

Yulin Cave 29 serves the same function, assisting the practitioner in visualizing the divine realm of the bodhisattva in the background through the holy manifestation of its residing bodhisattva in the foreground. Without such details as pilgrims, buildings, marvels, or legends—namely the elements used to define and identify Mount Wutai—the mural provides not a virtual tour into the sacred site, but meditational aids for ritual visualization.

By the late 12th century when Yulin Cave 29 was constructed, Mount Wutai would have been thoroughly localized in the visual convention, iconography, and conception of the sacred site in the Xi Xia State. The history, legends, and religiosity that made Mount Wutai in Shanxi a sacred site became less relevant to the cult of Mount Wutai in the Dunhuang region, even when the actual sacred site was meant to be evoked inside the cave. In Yulin Cave 3, the pair of murals that flank the west-facing entrance depict Mañjuśrī riding a lion in the right and Samantabhadra riding an elephant in the left. Dated to the late Xi Xia period, the right mural (fig. 17.23) shows Mañjuśrī and his extended entourage in the foreground sailing across a landscape of Mount Wutai that occupies the upper half of the mural, the typical binary composition also used in the murals of Yulin Cave 29 and East Qianfodong Cave 5. In each of the two murals in Yulin Cave 3, a circle that contains an alternative manifestation of the bodhisattva can be found above the mountains in the background, corresponding to the bodhisattva's holy presence in the foreground. What is unprecedented is the landscape of the sacred mountain painted in a style unmistakably from Chinese sources—in its painterly rendering of the landscape and meticulously drawn architecture—closely resembling landscape paintings of the Song style.<sup>52</sup> Inside a cave that comprises murals of iconographies, featuring several esoteric topics and mandalas—made in painting conventions distinctive of the Xi Xia-Tibetan style (fig. 17.24),<sup>53</sup> the Mañjuśrī mural was clearly to be used for visualizing *the* Chinese Mount Wutai. Its details—e.g., mountains, landscapes, buildings—however, recall nothing of the actual Mount Wutai in northern Shanxi. Rather, I argue, the mural evokes an idealized “Chinese” landscape of salvation, yet following the visual convention, iconography, and

52 On the painting style seen in the mural, see Zhao Shengliang, “Yulin ku di 3 ku shanshui-hua chutan,” in *Yulin ku yanjiu lunwenji*, ed. Dunhuang yanjiu yuan (Shanghai: Shanghai cishu chubanshe, 2011), 682–695.

53 For the esoteric topics and iconographies in the cave, see Li Yuquan, “Yulinku di 29 ku kuzhu jiqi yingzao niandai kaolun 29” [On the construction date and major sponsor of Yulin Cave 29], in *Duan Wenjie Dunhuang yanjiu wushi nian jinian wenji*, ed., Dunhuang yanjiusuo (Beijing: Shijie tushu chubanshe, 1996), 130–138; for the tradition of the Xi Xia art filtered through Tibetan style, see Kira Fyodorovna Samosyuk, “The Art of the Tangut Empire: A Historical and Stylistic Interpretation,” in *Lost Empire of the Silk Road: Buddhist Art from Khara Khoto*, ed., Mikhail Piotrovsky (Milano: Electa, 1993), 68–80.

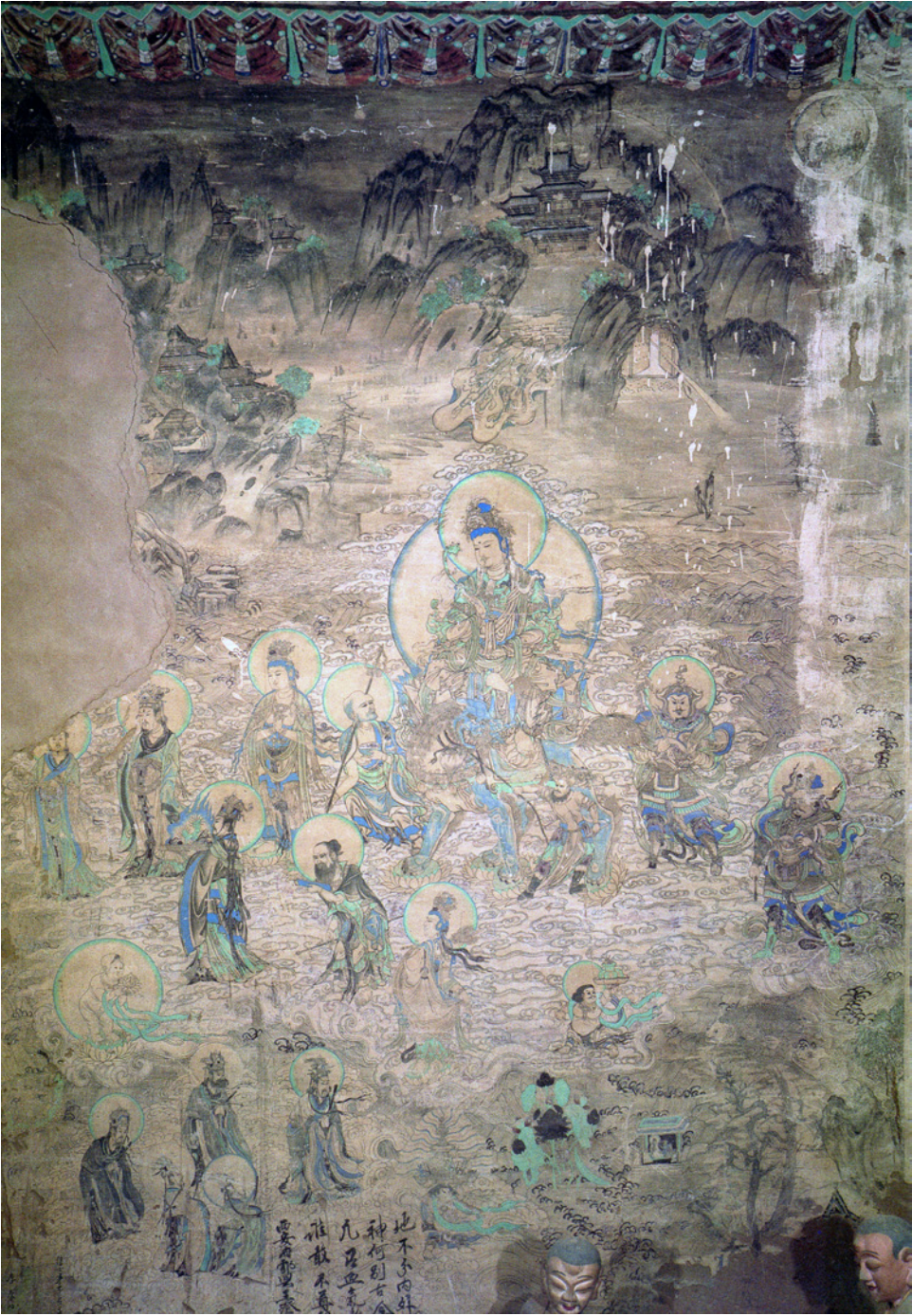


FIGURE 17.23 Mañjuśrī riding a lion, right side of the west wall, Cave 3, Yulin, Xi Xia period



FIGURE 17.24 Interior view of Cave 3, Yulin, Xi Xia period

conception of Mount Wutai held by the faithful in the outlying region of this particular historical period. No longer for enacting a pilgrimage to Mount Wutai by visually relocating and relocalizing the sacred site, the mural helps the practitioner meditate and visualize the imaginary paradise of the bodhisattva that could rival the earthbound sacred mountain.

## 6 Conclusion

To a great extent, the iconic image of Mañjuśrī riding a lion was highly consistent during the time span of our discussion, while Mount Wutai was visualized in many different forms. As argued throughout the paper, the many different imageries of Mount Wutai inform different conceptions and understandings of the site and its sacrality as the sacred mountain cult was transmitted westward. At first, the transmission was facilitated through mural images of Mañjuśrī flying over his sacred abode, drawing Mount Wutai closer to the Dunhuang region, followed by a greater ambition to recreate/relocate the sacred site in the region by building Mogao Cave 61, which offered a virtual pilgrimage to Mount



FIGURE 17.25 Mañjuśrī riding a lion, south wall, Cave 6, Dong Qianfodong, Yuan Dynasty

Wutai. The transmission of the sacred mountain cult and relocation of the sacred site as such, it seems, eventually brought about the creation of Mount Wutai under the auspices of the Xi Xia. The new sacred mountain, named North Mount Wutai, in turn, reshaped the imagery of the sacred mountain, which then became a new iconography that revealed its different function and conception of Mount Wutai during the Xi Xia period. With the series of transmission, relocation, and recreation of Mount Wutai, I wish to suggest that the history of sacred mountain cult outside its place of origin is a history of the dialectic relations between the sacred site and its visual representation.

Following its flying bodhisattva, Mount Wutai, through imagery, appeared as though it could be relocated and eventually relocalized in the Xi Xia territory. Yet once it was recreated in a locale that could be pinpointed on a map, the new Mount Wutai did not just appear as a replica of its prototype but one that could develop a different identity and sacrality such that it would necessarily restructure the sacred geography of the region around it. The new sacred site consequently reshaped the visual conventions in which Mount Wutai was represented and changed its iconographic function inside the cave during the Xi Xia period. Indeed, once the Xi Xia established its own Mount Wutai, no longer could its visual representation in the region stay the same even after the Xi Xia fell into the hands of the Mongols in 1227. In East Qianfodong Cave 6,



dated to the Yuan (1271–1368), the mural of Mañjuśrī riding a lion (fig. 17.25) appears on the south wall with the cave entrance facing west. The celestial group—Mañjuśrī sits on his lion frontally surrounded by his attendants carried by sailing clouds that occupy the foreground—stays the same, but the mountains represented with soaring spiky peaks are yet again different from the Xi Xia model. The cloud trails that meander through the mountain peaks are fantastic but unfamiliar. The floating clouds carrying a Chinese-style building nonetheless hark back to the legends of “apparitional monasteries” developed in the history of the original Mount Wutai.<sup>54</sup> When the Xi Xia Mount Wutai, along with its Empire, declined by the early thirteenth century, it seems that the imagery of Mount Wutai changed again—idiosyncratic but no longer relevant to any actual site.

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54 See Lin, *Building A Sacred Mountain*, 120–124.

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