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Special Issue Reprint

Buddhist Narrative Literature

Edited by
Ru Zhan and Jinhua Chen

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Editors

Ru Zhan
Jinhua Chen

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Editors

Ru Zhan
Department of South Asian Studies
Peking University
Beijing
China

Jinhua Chen
Asian Studies
The University of British Columbia
Vancouver
Canada

Editorial Office
MDPI
St. Alban-Anlage 66
4052 Basel, Switzerland

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About the Editors

Ru Zhan

Ru Zhan is a professor in Peking University's School of Foreign Languages, and the director of the Research Center for Buddhist Texts and Art at Peking University. Additionally, he is a vice president of the Buddhist Association of China and associate director of the Peking University Orientalism Research Institute. His areas of research include: Buddhist and Buddhist literature, the Indian Ministry of Buddhism, Dunhuang Buddhism, Buddhist system.

Jinhua Chen

Jinhua Chen is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada, and a professor of East Asian intellectual history (particularly religions) at the University of British Columbia, where he also served as the Canada Research Chair in East Asian Buddhism (2001–2011). He has extensively published on East Asian state-church relationships, monastic (hagio-)biographical literature, Buddhist sacred sites, relic veneration, Buddhism and technological innovation in medieval China, and Buddhist translations.

Preface

Any oral and written text can be considered literature in the broadest sense of the word, and Buddhist texts are no exception. The literary quality of Buddhist texts is intimately integrated with Buddhist moral and religious teachings, and it ultimately serves soteriological goals. The literary quality also varies with genre: Pali Theravāda texts are simple and pure in style, whereas Mahāyāna texts are often magnificent and sumptuous. Among the most stylistically unique genres are *jātaka* and *apadāna* stories, the Buddha's biographies, hagiographies, and various secular forms of literature influenced by Buddhism, including poetry, novels, theatres, admonitory tracks (*quanshi wen* 勸世文), folk songs, popular sermons (*sujiang* 俗講), and song-tales (*baojuan* 寶卷). Each of these genres possess unique charms in their narrative styles, and if we further consider the narrative techniques and literary tropes and styles employed by Buddhists in India, Japan, the Korean Peninsula, Mongolia, and Tibet, then Buddhist literature reveals an even more astonishing degree of stylistic diversity.

Buddhist influences in East and South Asian literature are first and foremost observable in the many Buddhist themes, motifs, and personalities that occupy the secular stories, while Buddhist philosophy also became seamlessly integrated with all kinds of literary genres. For instance, the theatre piece *Dou'e yuan* 竇娥冤 [*The Injustice to Dou E*] and the novel *Honglou meng* 紅樓夢 [*The Dream of Red Mansions*] both contain the Buddhist notion of karmic retribution. In terms of narrative style, Buddhism is at its most innovative in its interaction with the general population. Ever since it spread to China, Buddhism has been adapted into many popular forms of communication, including *sūtra*-copying, singsong sermons (*changdao* 唱導), popular sermons, and transformation tableaus (*bianwen* 變文). These popular mediums began to be adopted by monks who wandered and preached in the countryside, and they also became present during feasts and *dharma*-assemblies, thus greatly facilitating Buddhism's spread in China.

Buddhist narratives have their own inherent logics. Buddhist logics (Skt. *Hetuvidyā*; Ch. *yinming* 因明) originated in India and serve deductive and dialectical purposes. They also imply uniquely Buddhist epistemology, phenomenology and hermeneutics. Buddhist logics grapple with the doctrinal issues at the heart of Buddhism, acting both as tools for philosophical queries and as guiding principles for progressing through the stages of Buddhist praxis. These multivalent functions of Buddhist logics also mean that they have profoundly influenced Buddhist narrative literature.

The Buddhist doctrine of 'emptiness' instilled in East Asian literati a penchant to view life as ephemeral and impermanent, and it has been silently transforming East Asian aesthetics since medieval times. For instance, the Mādhyamika view on the mindmatter relationship, as well as the Chan/Zen view on nature (which was influenced by the Mādhyamika philosophy), instigated the uniquely Chinese notion of *jingjie* 境界 ('realm'). Additionally, the Buddhist emphasis on spiritual attainments has also enriched the literary and aesthetic concept of *shen* 神 (lit. 'spirit'; 'mysterious,' 'unthinkable') that has been developing since the Six Dynasties (222-589), while the idea of 'sudden enlightenment' and 'inspiration' espoused by the Chan tradition propelled the Chinese aesthetic emphasis on *jingjie* and enticed many literati to pursue mystical experiences that are of a 'taste beyond taste' 味外味.

In order to provide a comprehensive exploration of Buddhist narrative literature (and of the causallogical issues associated with it) in the context of the larger Buddhist traditions of various regions, two partner universities of the Glorisun Global Network for the Studies of Buddhism—the Research Center for Buddhist Texts and Art at Peking University and the University of British Columbia (UBC)—jointly organized an international conference, "'Thus Have I Heard': Patterns and

Logics in Buddhist Narrative Literature" ("如是我聞"： 佛教敘事範式與邏輯) between November 25 and 27, 2022. Originally planned to be held in a hybrid online and offline format, the conference was eventually changed to exclusively online completely due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The conference was embraced with enthusiasm by scholars at home and abroad, with a total of 43 papers being received. In addition to the keynote speeches delivered by three prestigious scholars—Professor Victor Mair of Pennsylvania University, Professor Wang Bangwei 王邦維 of Peking University, and Professor Monika Zin of Leipzig University, papers presented to the conference were presented and discussed in the following 11 panels (https://glorisunglobalnetwork.org/thus-have-i-heard-schedule/):

1. Rehearse the "Heard" 既聞再問；
2. Speaking of the Buddha: Stories and Images 說佛畫佛；
3. Media, Metaphor and Message 媒介、譬喻、與訊息
4. Stories of Theories 道其不可道：佛教敘述對佛教理論的表現；
5. "Thus I have Heard" vs. "Once upon a Future Time" 既聞未聞、融鑄古今：佛教敘述的時空穿越；
6. Balls across the Board (and Borders) 含英咀華、和光同塵：佛教敘述的普適性；
7. Renderings Gendered 女身成佛，頓悟性別？；
8. Logic and Trans-logic: Tension of Words and Silence in Buddhist Narratives 淵默雷聲、心行處滅：佛教敘述中的語默張力；
9. Narrative Genres 敘述體裁；
10. Poem and Prose for Praising 歌辭交贊；
11. When the Mobile Meets with the Immobile: Text and Image for Buddhist Narratives 動靜會合、多維激揚：佛教敘述中的文本與圖像。

During the conference, panelists received constructive feedback and, through the intense discussions, gained many new insights and ideas about Buddhist narratives that affected their own thoughts on the topic . Within a few months after the conference, most of the scholars submitted revised versions of their papers to the conference organizers. After further selection and editing, some of these papers have been published in Special Issues of journals:

1. The English-language Special Issue "Buddhist Narrative Literature" is from the journal *Religions* (https://www.mdpi.com/journal/religions/special_issues/X39021C84T), which includes 14 papers originally submitted to the conference;
2. Some of the conference papers have been published in the *Hualin International Journal of Buddhist Studies* (in English), which is open access (https://glorisunglobalnetwork.org/hualin-international-journal-of-buddhist-studies/e-journal/);
3. Additionally, its sister journal, *Hualin guoji Foxue xuekan* 華林國際佛學學刊 [International Journal of Buddhist Studies] (in Chinese), is open access as well (https://glorisunglobalnetwork.org/chin-hijbs/e-journal/?lang=zh-hant);
4. *Whose Stories: Interdisciplinary and Multisourced Approaches to Buddhist Narratives. Hualin Series on Buddhist Studies* 8. Edited by Ru Zhan and Jinhua Chen. Singapore: World Scholastic Publishers, 2023.
5. *Rushi wowen: Fojiao xushi fanshi yu luoji* "如是我聞"：佛教敘事範式與邏輯 ["'Thus Have I Heard': Patterns and Logics in Buddhist Narrative Literature"]. *Hualin Foxue yanjiu shuxi* 華林佛學研究書系 8. Edited by Ru Zhan 湛如 and Jinhua Chen 陳金華. Singapore: World Scholastic Publishers, 2023.

The 14 essays collected here are from the abovementioned Special Issue of "Buddhist Narrative Literature" from the journal *Religions*. We hope that these quality papers will further advance the discussion of this important issue on a deeper and broader level.

Like all the above publication projects, the current one represents a phasal achievement of the 2018 project "Translation and Research of Important Literary and Artistic Texts of Indian Classical Sanskrit" 印度古典梵語文藝學重要文獻翻譯與研究，supported by the National Social Science Foundation of China 國家社科基金重大項目 (project No: 18ZDA286).

On the occasion of the publication of this collection of essays, the editors would like to express their deepest respect and gratitude to the Glorisun Charitable Foundation and Dr. Charles Yeung for their generous sponsorship of the conference and the publication of this collection of essays!

Ru Zhan and Jinhua Chen

Editors

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Article

Regional, Ideological and Inheritable Characteristics of Knowledge: A Survey of Three Compilations of Buddhist Encyclopedias in China from 1950s to 2000s

Wenli Fan [1,2]

[1] School of Philosophy, University of Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, Beijing 100732, China; wenlifan@outlook.com
[2] Institute of Philosophy, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, Beijing 100732, China

Abstract: Three official compilations of Buddhist encyclopedias were undertaken in China between the 1950s and 2000s. A sociological examination of these compilations reveals notable characteristics of the Buddhist knowledge system. Firstly, the production of knowledge manifests distinct regional attributes; it is not a process of standardization or objectification, but reflects local idiosyncrasies determined by its place of origination. Secondly, the majority of modern encyclopedia compilations are integral to the construction of national knowledge systems; hence, a nation's ideological tendencies profoundly influence the articulation of knowledge. Lastly, knowledge is transferred through two mediums: texts and people. Given the immutability of classical knowledge and the consistency of knowledge producers during this period, the results of the three compilations exhibit numerous commonalities.

Keywords: encyclopedia; Chinese Buddhism; sociology of knowledge; knowledge system

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1. Introduction

Between the 1950s and 2000s, China embarked on three official compilations of Buddhist encyclopedias: the compilation of the English *Encyclopedia of Chinese Buddhism* commencing in 1956 (abbreviated as ECB1956); the compilation and publication of the five-volume Chinese *Zhongguo Fojiao* 中國佛教 (Chinese Buddhism) beginning in 1979 (abbreviated as ZF1979); and the compilation of Buddhist entries in the *Zhongguo dabaike quanshu: Zongjiao* 中國大百科全書·宗教 (Encyclopedia of China—Religion) starting in 1980 (abbreviated as ZDQZ1980). The three compilations exhibit both commonalities and variances, as presented in the following table (Table 1).

The working files and historical records of these compilations have been preserved, providing insights into the endeavors of the Chinese Buddhist community to establish their Buddhist knowledge system. Previous studies (Fan 2018; Huang 1994; Sodō 1968) focus on the historical details of these events, yet systematic and in-depth analyses are lacking and numerous questions are still to be answered. From the perspective of the social history of knowledge, "The selection, organization and presentation of knowledge is not a neutral, value-free process. On the contrary, it is the expression of a world-view supported by an economic as well as a social and political system." (Burke 2000, p. 176). For instance, in ECB1956, a project carried out in China but obligated to supply information for a Sri Lankan encyclopedia that claimed to present a global vision, how does the regional shift influence the articulation of knowledge? The compilations discussed are all initiated by official departments or national governments, so how does the official background influence the knowledge system created by these encyclopedias? Three compilations of Buddhist encyclopedias were undertaken in China in such a short period—how and why are they similar and different? This paper explores the distinctions and overlaps in the three compilations from three standpoints—the regional, ideological, and inheritable characteristics

of knowledge—with the intention to foster a profound comprehension of the construction of the Buddhist knowledge system in China.

Table 1. Three compilations of Buddhist encyclopedias.

Abbreviated Name	**ECB1956**	**ZF1979**	**ZDQZ1980**
Full Description of the Project	The compilation of the English *Encyclopedia of Chinese Buddhism* commencing in 1956	The compilation and publication of the five-volume Chinese *Zhongguo Fojiao* 中國佛教 (Chinese Buddhism) beginning in 1979	The compilation of Buddhist entries in the *Zhongguo dabaike quanshu: Zongjiao* 中國大百科全書·宗教 (Encyclopedia of China—Religion) starting in 1980
Sponsor	Sri Lankan government	BAC	Chinese government
Project Executor	Buddhist Association of China (中國佛教協會, abbreviated as BAC)	BAC	BAC and the Institute of South Asian Studies of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences
Editor-in-Chief	BAC[1]	BAC	Ju Zan 巨贊, Huang Xinchuan 黃心川[2]
Number of Participants	38[3]	59 (38 + 21)[4]	67[5]
Working Period	1956 to the middle of 1960s	1979–2004	1980–1988
Feature of Independency	Part of a comprehensive Buddhist encyclopedia	An independent encyclopedia in Chinese Buddhism	Part of a religious volume in a Grand Encyclopedia

2. The Three Compilations of Buddhist Encyclopedias

The ECB1956 was triggered by the *Encyclopaedia of Buddhism* project initiated by Sri Lanka. Upon the invitation of Sri Lanka's Prime Minister John Lionel Kotelawala, the Premier of China, Zhou Enlai 周恩來, acceded to China's commitment to compile the section related to Chinese Buddhism. This task was assigned to the Buddhist Association of China. The BAC promptly set up the "Editorial Committee for *Encyclopedia of Chinese Buddhism*" at Guangji Temple 廣濟寺. Zhao Puchu 趙樸初, the Vice President and Secretary-general of BAC, assumed the role of chairman of the Editorial Committee, with renowned Buddhist scholar, Lü Cheng 呂澂, as Vice Chairman. The committee, based at the Jinling Scriptural Press (Jinling kejingchu 金陵刻經處) in Nanjing, enlisted numerous professionals to author entries for this encyclopedia, including Fazun 法尊, Gao Guanru 高觀如, Guo Yuanxing 郭元興, Zhang Keqiang 張克強, Huang Chanhua 黃懺華, Juzan 巨贊, Li An 李安, Lin Ziqing 林子青, Longlian 隆蓮, Mingzhen 明真, Su Jinren 蘇晉仁, Tian Guanglie 田光烈, Yu Yu 虞愚 and Zhou Shujia 周叔迦, among others. The workflow of the compilation involved designing the framework and contents of entries; drafting by authors in Chinese; the review and revision of the Chinese drafts by the committee; the translation of the final Chinese drafts into English by the translation team (See Figure 1); and another round of review and revision of the English drafts by the committee. After nearly a decade of effort,

by 2 February 1966, the committee had generated a total of 357 English manuscripts for the Sri Lankan Buddhist encyclopedia, 154 of which had been sent to Sri Lanka (Fan 2018, p. 130). The dispatched articles were disassembled and integrated into different entries of the Sri Lankan *Encyclopaedia of Buddhism*, dispersed throughout the volumes. The million-word English manuscripts have not been fully published as a single piece yet.[6] Among them, barring a few manuscripts damaged by water, 300 written English manuscripts, totaling 1.15 million words, remain intact. Additionally, the Chinese manuscripts from this compilation were later published in the ZF1979 project.

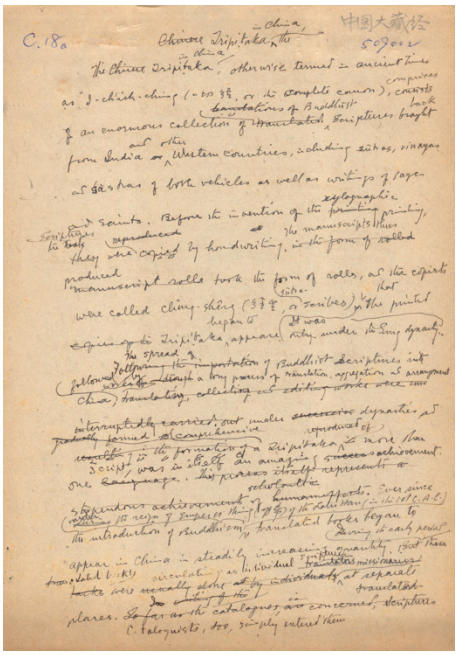

Figure 1. An image of the manuscript of *Encyclopedia of Chinese Buddhism* (Entry C18: Chinese Tripitaka). Note: The copyright of this picture belongs to Research Institute of Chinese Buddhist Culture of Buddhist Association of China (中國佛教協會中國佛教文化研究所). I have obtained an official usage permission from the institute.

The ZF1979 compilation drew upon the Chinese manuscripts created in the 1950s and 1960s for the ECB1956, with minor additions and modifications. Under the initiative of Zhao Puchu, the then-president of the BAC, and Zheng Guo 正果, the then-leader of the BAC research group, the Chinese manuscripts were organized from 1979 onwards and subsequently published under the title *Zhongguo Fojiao*. In June 1980, the first volume of *Zhongguo Fojiao* was released by Knowledge Publishing House (Zhishi chubanshe 知識出版社) in China. Ming Zhen, Lin Ziqing and Zheng Guo, among others, undertook the principal review work, with Jing Hui 淨慧 and Wang Xin 王新 serving as the primary editors. In the early 1980s, very few newly published Buddhist books existed. This was the first Buddhist encyclopedia compiled by the Chinese Buddhist community following the establishment of the People's Republic of China. The publication garnered a robust social response, with media outlets such as *Guangming Daily* 光明日報 and *Dushu* 讀書 in Beijing, *Wen Hui Po* 文匯報 in Shanghai, *Ta Kung Pao* 大公報 in Hong Kong, and *Hinaka Bukkyō* 日中佛教 (Sino-Japanese Buddhism) in Japan, reporting on the event consecutively (Shuangmu 1981, p. 40). The second volume was published in August 1982, the third and fourth volumes were published in May 1989, and the fifth volume was published in June 2004. Wang Xin primarily oversaw the editing of these subsequent volumes. *Zhongguo Fojiao* largely utilized the older manuscripts composed over 20 years ago, complemented by a small number of new manuscripts. For instance, some articles under the theme of Buddhist teachings in the fourth volume were newly written in the 1980s; and in the fifth volume, about half of the articles on *Tripiṭaka* were newly written.

The compilation of ZDQZ1980 was rooted in the editorial initiative for the *Zhongguo dabaike quanshu* 中國大百科全書 (Encyclopedia of China), which commenced with the "Guanyu bianji chuban *Zhongguo dabaike quanshu* de jianyi" 關於編輯出版《中國大百科全書》的建議 ("Recommendations for Editing and Publishing the Encyclopedia of China"). This initiative was proposed in January 1978 by Jiang Chunfang 姜椿芳, who was then the deputy director of the Central Compilation and Translation Bureau (中央編譯局). Subsequently, several related institutions, including the Chinese Academy of Sciences (中國科學院), the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (中國社會科學院), and the National Publishing Administration (國家出版事業管理局), collectively signed and presented a "Qingshi baogao"請示報告 ("Report for Instructions") to the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, proposing the compilation and publication of a *Zhongguo dabaike quanshu*. The Central Committee sanctioned the establishment of the Encyclopedia of China Publishing House (Zhognguo dabaike quanshu chubanshe 中國大百科全書出版社) on 28 May 1978, thereby marking the inception of the *Zhongguo dabaike quanshu* project (Huang 1994, pp. 264–65). Among a myriad of subjects, the compilation of the Astronomy Volume was initiated first, and other subjects sequentially followed. The Religion Volume was initiated in 1979 with an initial plan for 420 Buddhist entries, and these were to be compiled by BAC and the Institute of South Asian Studies of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (中國社會科學院南亞研究所). To accomplish this task, BAC established the "Buddhist Entries of *Zhongguo dabaike quanshu* Compilation Group" on 20 October 1980, with Juzan at the helm of its organization (*Fayin* Reporter 1981, p. 48). The entries were revealed to the world along with the publication of *Zhongguo dabaike quanshu: Zongjiao* in 1988.

3. Globality and Locality: Regional Characteristic of Buddhist Knowledge

In Chinese traditional culture, Buddhism holds a unique position as it was not indigenous, but originated from India. Consequently, Chinese Buddhism has exhibited global attributes since its inception. Buddhism began in India, expanded northwest into Central Asia, and subsequently penetrated the inland areas of China, eventually evolving into Han Buddhism. Furthermore, it spread north to the Tibetan region of China and east to Southeast Asia, resulting in Tibetan Buddhism and Theravāda Buddhism in these respective areas. These three Buddhist traditions share similarities, but also hold distinct differences. With the propagation of Buddhism in China, during the Wei, Jin, Southern, and Northern Dynasties, conflicts and confluences occurred between Chinese and Indian cultures. This was followed by an unparalleled flourishing during the Sui and Tang Dynasties, leading to the establishment of a variant of Buddhism, distinct from Indian Buddhism, known as Chinese Buddhism. Subsequent to this period, Chinese Buddhism embarked on a distinct path, with the emergence of numerous local eminent monks and temples. Chinese Buddhists exhibited considerable innovations in ideologies, beliefs, institutions, precepts, and rituals. Beginning from the Tang Dynasty, Chinese Han Buddhism progressively spread to Northeast Asia, spurring new developments in Japan and the Korean Peninsula. Although Buddhism is inherently a global religion, within the Chinese context, it displays potent local characteristics. The narration of Chinese Buddhism, regardless of the author, should invariably focus on elements that underscore its Chinese traits.

The ECB1956 was composed within the framework of the Sri Lankan *Encyclopaedia of Buddhism*. G. P. Malalasekera, the chief editor of the Sri Lankan encyclopedia, noted in the preface of volume 1 that the encyclopedia strives to provide an exhaustive account of Buddhism, inclusive of doctrines, schools and sects, rites and ceremonies, fine arts, shrines and places of pilgrimage, and biographies, among other aspects. He intended to outline the evolution and influences of these facets across diverse countries, regions, and cultural traditions, aspiring to incorporate both Mahāyāna and Theravāda information (Malalasekera [1997] 1961–1965, p. 3). However, this ambitious plan was not actualized as anticipated, as is evident even in the trial version of the encyclopedia titled, *Encyclopaedia of Buddhism—Volume of Specimen Articles*, published in 1957. This version aimed

to present the foundational aspects of the encyclopedia and gather feedback ahead of the official volumes.

The trial version garnered attention and critiques from academia. Clay Lancaster noted that "the published articles fall mostly within the scope of the Southern School of Buddhism." (Lancaster 1957, p. 216). Alexander Soper highlighted that within the Volume of Specimen Articles, under the key heading *abhaya* and its suffix compounds, we can find summaries of information about nine historic monks and nuns so named, chiefly Sinhalese; five secular contemporaries of Śākyamuni, a king, a prince and three lesser laymen; three Buddhas and a goddess; the great Anuradhapura monastery Abhayagiri and the sect based thereon; a noted Anuradhapura reservoir-lake; and several Pāli suttas. However, there was no entry for *abhaya mudrā,* a sacred hand gesture or "seal" that is very important in Mahāyāna Buddhism. He considered this as an example of "occasional irregularities or omissions on the Mahāyāna side of the ledger" (Soper 1963, p. 366). Additionally, the editorial board acknowledged that Southern and Northern Buddhism might offer different narratives or perspectives on the same topic. The initial plan for such entries was to incorporate articles from multiple authors, duly signed for completeness. However, J. W. de Jong pointed out that this practice was inconsistently applied. In several instances, topics important to both Theravāda and Mahāyāna were treated almost exclusively from the perspective of Pāli texts, e.g., Abbuda niraya, Abhijhā and Abhiññā (de Jong 1962, p. 381).

Indeed, the global and local aspects of knowledge coexist. As mentioned above, knowledge, a human construct, is not an objective, standardized, and universal entity, but is often constrained by the temporal, spatial, and societal context of its creators. An examination of the process of knowledge production reveals how the subjectivity and limitations of creators profoundly impact the final expression and representation of knowledge.

Consider the entries pertaining to Chinese Buddhism in the Sri Lankan Buddhist encyclopedia: the structural design and entry cataloging were executed by the Sri Lankan editorial board. The Chinese editorial committee supplied first-hand materials through article submissions. The Sri Lankan editorial board then processed and reproduced these materials to align with the overall requirements of the book. Therefore, the final representation of this information was determined by the Sri Lankan editorial board. Sri Lanka aligns with the Theravāda Buddhist tradition. Despite the encyclopedia's proclaimed objective to consider both Theravāda and Mahāyāna Buddhism, the cataloging of specific entries inevitably leaned towards Theravāda Buddhism from the outset. Furthermore, within Mahāyāna Buddhism, there was competition, too. Sri Lankan *Encyclopaedia of Buddhism* was an international cooperative project, with several regional committees set up in other countries, the largest one being the Japanese committee. They even depute Japanese scholars for full-time work in the Encyclopaedia office in Sri Lanka to act as liaison and also help the revision of the translations. Kyomasa Hayashima 早島鏡正, Hidetomo Kanaoka 金岡秀友, Kosuke Tamura 田村晃祐, and Sodō Mori 森祖道 were sent to Sri Lanka in different periods (Malalasekera [1997] 1961–1965, p. iv; Sodō 1968, p. 378). This inevitably affects knowledge expression. For instance, de Jong pointed out that in the preliminary version, "Quotations from Chinese Buddhist texts are made sometimes according to Nanjio's catalogue."[7] Kenneth Ch'en noted that in the encyclopedia, the Romanization of Chinese characters was inconsistent. Some contributors adhered to the Wade–Giles system, others followed the French method, while some did not follow any established system at all (Ch'en 1962, p. 369). Kenneth Ch'en might not be aware that, with regard to the Romanization of Chinese characters, there were at least two system, the Chinese and Japanese systems. The Chinese characters in Japanese were pronounced in a different way from those in Chinese, which bothered the committee and provoked debates. The Japanese worried that if all Chinese characters were Romanized according to Chinese pronunciation, the Japanese works written in ancient Chinese, which accounted for a large part of Japanese Buddhist works, would have titles that would never be pronounced even by their authors. In view of these conditions, they eventually decided that the works of Chinese authors use the pronunciation of Chinese, while the works of Japanese authors use the pronunciation

of Japanese (Sodō 1968, p. 383). The competition between China and Japan has lasted for a long time and spread to the field of encyclopedias.[8] This represents a big advancement for the Chinese comparing to the situation in a previously published Buddhist encyclopedia *Hōbōgirin*, in which all the Romanization of Chinese characters was undertaken according to Japanese pronunciation.

The Chinese editorial committee was cognizant of the complicated regional competition, and they tried to take the initiative to avoid this subordinated position in knowledge representation when they partook in the editing of the Sri Lankan Buddhist encyclopedia. A note about the progress of the ECB1956 project kept in the archives mentioned that "most of these entries Sri Lankan editorial board required are about esoteric Buddhism…if we don't provide, then they probably find some westerners to write them…therefore it is better for us to provide".[9]

In addition to the work on these details, the Chinese committee has made a greater effort to avoid a secondary and peripheral role in this knowledge production activity. The ECB1956 was initiated by Sri Lanka, and its primary purpose was to supply entries for the Sri Lankan *Encyclopaedia of Buddhism*, but the Chinese committee did not limit itself to this primary purpose. As mentioned above, by 1966, the committee had generated a total of 357 English manuscripts for the Sri Lankan Buddhist encyclopedia, only 154 of which had been sent to Sri Lanka (Fan 2018, p. 130), which reveals that they were not merely working for the Sri Lankan encyclopedia but had their own plans. In fact, they were compiling a complete encyclopedia for Chinese Buddhism. This can be seen from the categories of the manuscripts: history of Chinese Buddhism; Buddhist communication between China and neighboring countries; Buddhist sects in China, Buddhist figures in China, Buddhist rituals and regulations in China, Buddhist texts in China, Buddhism and Chinese culture; *Tripiṭaka* in China, etc.[10] The entries were organized by topics, each of which was arranged by timeline, which differed from the alphabetical order used in Sri Lankan encyclopedia. This can be further proven by the fact that the Chinese manuscripts were published later under the project of ZF1979.

The project of ZDQZ1980 was conducted entirely in Chinese, and the knowledge representation distinctly reflected Chinese local characteristics while also trying to maintain a global perspective. Yu Guangyuan 于光遠, the deputy director of the editorial committee of *Zhongguo daibaike quanshu*, emphasized while introducing the design of the encyclopedia that, "Our encyclopedia should not be regional. We should not degrade it to a regional encyclopedia… Our vision should not be limited by the region of China. The cultural knowledge of human beings, significant historical events, and scientific advancements all around the world—all things of importance—should be reflected in our encyclopedia...Science has no national boundaries."[11] Nonetheless, he also advocated that "Chinese characteristics must be underscored... Chinese history, Chinese geography, Chinese culture, and Chinese figures should all occupy more space, while less important things in foreign countries could be abridged. Only in this way can we express the 'of China' characteristics".[12] With respect to the Buddhist entries, the compilers, during the process, consciously referred to and gleaned insights from global encyclopedias, aspiring for their entries to meet the standards of world encyclopedias. For instance, the publishing house of *Zhongguo dabaike quanshu* circulated a journal, *Baike quanshu xueke cankao ziliao* 百科全書學科參考資料 (Reference for Subjects of Encyclopedia). This compiled data from various global encyclopedias and published sample entries of different subjects to serve as a guide for the authors and editors of the encyclopedia. In its special issue on religion, published in February 1980, entries such as "Buddhism", "Śākyamuni", and "Amitabha Sūtra" from *Gendai sekai hyakka daijiten* 現代世界百科大事典 (Encyclopedia of Modern World) and *Sekai daihyakka jiten* 世界大百科事典 (Grand Encyclopedia of World) of Japan, France's *Larousse Encyclopédique*, America's *Encyclopedia Americana*, and the United Kingdom's *Encyclopedia Britannica*, were selected and translated for reference by the domestic editorial board (Encyclopedia of China Publishing House 1980, pp. 1–34). On the other hand, the encyclopedia demonstrated a strong emphasis on Chinese content. For instance, within

the *Zhongguo daibaike quanshu: Zongjiao*, Buddhist entries accounted for 39.5%, Christianity 19.2%, and Islam 16.5%. Additionally, three indigenous Chinese branches were mentioned: Daoism (17%), religions of ethnic minorities in China (2.8%), and folk religions in China (0.7%) (See Figure 2). This highlights the compilers' intent to underscore Chinese information while maintaining a global viewpoint (Huang 1994, p. 247).

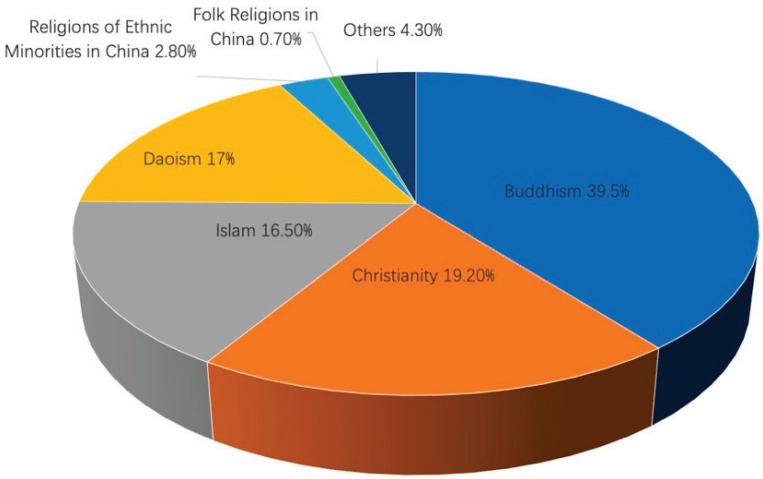

Figure 2. Entries of different religions in *Zhongguo dabaike quanshu: Zongjiao.*

Within the Buddhist entries, we can also see this balancing act between China and foreign countries, with a subtle preference for China. Taking the entries of figures as example, the *Zhongguo daibaike quanshu*: *Zongjiao* introduced 60 foreign Buddhist figures (51 ancient and 9 modern) and 84 Chinese figures (61 ancient and 23 modern) (Huang 1994, p. 249). This figure distribution reflects an evaluation of Buddhist figures from a Chinese standpoint, prioritizing those who profoundly influenced Chinese Buddhism.

In summary, when creating entries about Chinese Buddhism for the Sri Lankan Buddhist encyclopedia, the Chinese had to adapt to the local sensibilities of the Sri Lankan editorial board; when drafting entries for the *Zhongguo dabaike quanshu: Zongjiao*, the Chinese editors consciously highlighted Chinese characteristics and emphasized China's local aspects. This effectively illustrates that knowledge production is influenced by regional characteristics. It is not a wholly standardized and objective process, but fluctuates due to the variance in its place of origin. Knowledge expression is inevitably confined by the producer's capability, perspective, and standpoint.

4. Religious Knowledge in National Knowledge Systems

The formation of human knowledge systems was initially an unconscious undertaking. It was an endeavor to navigate the world more effectively, which led people to gather, systematize, and summarize information about their environment. Consequently, the first efforts to collect and organize knowledge were not undertaken by specialized scholars, but by individuals directly interacting with the world, such as farmers, herdsmen, fishermen, and explorers. Through confronting challenges and synthesizing experiences, they generated substantial first-hand knowledge for humanity. Coinciding with the evolution of human society, a specialized intellectual class gradually materialized, whose role was to elucidate the world to the masses, based on the knowledge amassed throughout history. In contemporary times, the breadth of human knowledge has become too vast, surpassing the comprehension of individuals or small groups. Therefore, large-scale knowledge organization endeavors and knowledge production projects are often state-led. Burke called this phenomenon the "nationalization of knowledge" (Burke 2012, p. 192). Helmholtz described that scholars came to be regarded as "representatives of their respective countries", recruited into "an organized army laboring on behalf of the whole nation" (von Helmholtz 1893, p. 24). For example, in ancient China, the Emperor Cheng of Ming

dynasty 明成祖 ordered Xie Jin 解縉 and Yao Guangxiao 姚廣孝 to preside over the compilation of *Yongle Dadian* 永樂大典 (Yongle Encyclopedia), a collection of ancient Chinese classics, comprising 22,937 manuscript rolls (卷) in 11,095 volumes (冊), with about 370 million words. Its ambition was to embody all the books since the beginning of Chinese civilization. Later, in the Qing dynasty, the Qianlong Emperor 乾隆帝 ordered the compilation of the *Siku Quanshu* 四庫全書 (Complete Library of the Four Treasuries), which was the largest collection of books in Chinese history, with 79,337 manuscript rolls, 36,381 volumes, 2.3 million pages and about 997 million words. With respects to the encyclopedias in this research, the Sri Lankan *Encyclopaedia of Buddhism* was championed by its Ministry of Culture Affairs, and the ECB1956 and ZF1979 were both spearheaded by the Chinese official organization BAC, while *Zhongguo dabaike quanshu* was a national-level project in China.

State involvement introduces new characteristics to knowledge production. For example, large-scale comprehensive encyclopedias have progressively become emblematic of national power and a platform for competition among nations. In the 19th century, a consensus was nearly unanimous among European countries that every civilized nation should possess its own encyclopedia as a testament to its prowess, thereby gaining respect from its neighbors and European peers (Kamusella 2009, p. 407). The compilation of *Enciclopedia italiana* is a good example for this. Italy started its encyclopedia compilation work in 1929, which is relatively late comparing to other European countries such as France, England, Germany and even Spain. The *Enciclopedia italiana* carried the mission of promoting all things Italian. The entry for "Garibaldi" takes up 17 columns, as compared to no more than 1 column for the corresponding entry in *Brockhaus* and *Larousse*. "Milan" continues for 59 columns, while there are only 7 columns in *Brockhaus* and *Larousse* (Burke 2012, p. 196). The compilation of encyclopedias in China also mirrored this sentiment. Examining the underlying motivation for compiling *Zhongguo dabaike quanshu*, the spirit of national competition was palpable: Jiang Chunfang said at the beginning of his "Recommendations for Editing and Publishing the Encyclopedia of China" that this is a "historical task and objective necessity" and that "…major countries worldwide have published extensive multi-volume encyclopedias since the mid-18th century... Presently, third-world countries are sequentially publishing encyclopedias, and even small countries like Suriname, which has not long gained independence, are also compiling and printing their own".[13] He dedicated approximately half of the article to recounting the history of encyclopedia compilation across various countries, thereby summarizing the contemporary trend of encyclopedia compilation globally.

The rationale behind states, as administrative entities, investing considerable financial and material resources in knowledge production is the intrinsic linkage between knowledge and power. The creation of knowledge systems often occurs concomitantly with the formulation of ideology. For instance, along with the compilation of the *Siku Quanshu*, the Qing Empire oversaw a catastrophe by banning and destroying books. They divided the classics into three levels: compiling, preserving the catalogue, banning and destroying. Any books considered by the rulers of the Qing Dynasty to violate Confucian ethical principles, ridicule the ancestors of the Manchus, or endanger the ruling status of the imperial family would be banned and destroyed. In 20 years, nearly 3000 kinds of books were destroyed (Li and Ju 2001, p. 48). With respect to the cases in my research, when the Sri Lankan encyclopedia was initiated, Sri Lanka had just concluded a colonial period that spanned over a century. During these extended colonial years, traditional Sri Lankan religions, including Buddhism, were persecuted, while Christianity, a representative of Western culture, was advocated. The compilation of the *Encyclopaedia of Buddhism* following the colonial era carried profound implications, such as the revitalization of local culture and the reestablishment of traditional beliefs.

In the context of compiling practices, the Sri Lankan *Encyclopaedia of Buddhism* holds significant official backing. Initially, the Buddhist Council of Sri Lanka (Laṅkā Bauddha Maṇḍalaya) was responsible for the encyclopedia's compilation, which was later handed over to the Ministry of Culture for overseeing the rest of the process. Malalasekera, the

initiator of this encyclopedic endeavor, was a multifaceted figure—a scholar, a Sri Lankan politician, and a social activist. A year after the encyclopedia's inception, he departed from the University of Sri Lanka, embarking on a diplomatic career. Subsequently, he held positions as an ambassador to the League of Nations and the High Commissioner to the UK. After a decade abroad, he returned to his homeland in late 1966. He resumed his work, serving as the chairman of the National Council for Higher Education, and was even considered for the role of the new governor-general (Sodō 1968, pp. 379–80).

In terms of expressing specific knowledge, the Sri Lankan editorial board made an earnest effort to amplify their own culture, while distancing it from Western influences. For instance, in the Sri Lankan *Encyclopaedia of Buddhism*, the Anno Domini dating system was used, but the term A.C. replaced A.D. when referring to the Common Era. This was explicitly mentioned in the book's preface: "In the text, as published in this volume, B.C. given with a date means 'Before Christ,' and A.C., 'After Christ'." (Malalasekera 1957, p. ix). This notation involved the relationship between religious influences and knowledge expression, as pointed out by Soper in his commentary on the book: "Chronology sensibly depends on the Christian era, with the small reservation implied by the use of A. C. rather than A. D." (Soper 1963, p. 366).

The compilation of the encyclopedia took place in the mid-twentieth century, during which the Anno Domini system—devised by the Christian theologian Dionysius Exiguus in the fifth century—was globally prevalent. This system uses the birth year of Jesus Christ as the inaugural year of the era, with the common abbreviations being B.C./A.D. In modern society, in an effort to maintain political correctness and religious neutrality, CE/BCE is often used instead, signifying Common Era/Before Common Era. While there are less common abbreviations such as A.A.C. (Anno ante Christum) and A.C. (Ante Christum) indicating "before Christ", the use of A.C. as "After Christ" is generally avoided in English, given that A.C. is conventionally understood to mean "before Christ" (Ante Christum).

To my knowledge, neither Malalasekera nor the editorial board provided explicit reasoning behind their preference for A.C. over A.D. Nonetheless, considering the circumstances, it may be attributed to their stance towards Christian culture. The term "Domini" in A.D. signifies God and carries strong Christian undertones, whereas the terms "Christ" in A.C. and "B.C." refer to the historical figure of Jesus Christ, bearing less religious weight.

The widespread adoption of the Anno Domini system mirrors the global expansion of Western civilization, intrinsically tied to Christianity. This propagation met varying degrees of resistance from local groups across different regions. The compilation of the encyclopedia occurred shortly after Sri Lanka emerged from its colonial period, during which it sought to diminish Western colonial influences and revitalize traditional Sinhala culture, with Buddhism at its center. Yet, in a project honoring the 2500th anniversary of Buddha's birth, it was somewhat awkward to employ the Anno Domini system that was globally accepted at the time. This episode underscores how international cultural dynamics can influence the nuanced articulation of knowledge.

As knowledge becomes nationalized, the ideology of a country profoundly influences its representation. For instance, the placement of specific types of knowledge within the overall knowledge system—as pointed out by Burke, in a knowledge map, different subjects occupy varying positions from the center to the periphery (Burke 2012, p. 198)—is intimately tied to a country's cultural backdrop and prevailing ideological trends. For example, in Sri Lanka, a country marked by its religious character, Buddhism is interwoven with the national convictions of its predominant ethnic group, the Sinhalese. As such, Buddhism occupies the central role in Sri Lanka's cultural traditions, with the *Encyclopaedia of Buddhism* serving as a critical component of the nation's core knowledge system and holding a close relationship with local traditional culture and values. China's situation, however, differs. Among the three Buddhist encyclopedia compilations mentioned earlier, the first two were curated by the BAC, with Buddhist knowledge undeniably forming the compilation's core. Yet, the assembling of Buddhist entries in the *Zhongguo dabaike quanshu: Zongjiao* diverges from these prior two compilations. Since the early 20th century,

China has been undergoing a transformation fueled by the idea of "science", resulting in religious beliefs being occasionally deemed as "superstitious", contrasting with "scientific" knowledge encompassing history, physics, and the like.

In 1981, an internal reference document titled *Zhongguo dabaike quanshu: Zongjiao* juan bianxie yaodian 《中國大百科全書·宗教》卷編寫要點 (Key Points of Compiling the *Zhongguo dabaike quanshu: Zongjiao*) stated the writing requirements as follows: "In crafting the entries for the Religion volume, we must maintain a strong focus on their scientific nature… we ought to neither propagate nor assail religion; we should strive to elucidate the content of the classics without offending religious believers or serving as propaganda to non-religious individuals. Materials must be carefully selected with a scientific mindset, and the foundational knowledge of religion should be conveyed to readers objectively, systematically, generally, and factually, portraying the true course of history."[14] With regards to the design of Buddhist entries for this encyclopedia, in "*Zhongguo dabaike quanshu: Zongjiaoxue* juan kuangjia, tiaomu caoan (Zhengqiu yijian gao)" 《中國大百科全書·宗教學》卷框架, 條目草案（徵求意見稿） (The Framework and Contents of *Zhongguo dabaike quanshu: Zongjiaoxue*—A Draft Seeking for Advices), dated to August 1979, a total of 420 Buddhist entries were proposed, subdivided into eight categories, including a general introduction; sects and organizations; buddhas, bodhisattvas, spirits and gods, heavens; doctrines and theories; scriptures and other texts; figures; monks and nuns, rituals, festivals; ruins, temples and pagodas.[15] However, the published *Zhongguo dabaike quanshu: Zongjiao* had expanded categorizations: Indian schools, sects, Chinese schools, Chinese sects, organizations, historical events, figures, scriptures, writings, miscellaneous works, foundational texts of Chinese sects, historical tales, catalogues of sūtras, category books, doctrines, terminology, institutions, rituals, the institutions about living buddhas, retreats, renowned mountains, temples and towers, culture, arts. The finalized book featured far more detailed categories, while the proposed topics tied to religious beliefs such as buddhas, bodhisattvas, spirits and gods, and heavens were omitted. As Burke puts it, "Encyclopaedias and their categories may be viewed as expressions or embodiments of a view of knowledge and indeed a view of the world." (Burke 2012, p. 94). It is obvious that throughout the *Zhongguo dabaike quanshu: Zongjiao*'s compilation, greater emphasis was placed on "objective" content such as Buddhist history, scriptures and writings, doctrines and teachings, organizations and institutions, and social influence, while "subjective" beliefs such as buddhas and bodhisattvas received less attention. This reflects how, across different countries and cultural traditions, knowledge production embodies an implicitly stated ideological background, and knowledge producers consciously or unconsciously adhere to this ideological paradigm during the knowledge creation process. In 1980s China, a prevalent perspective was to steer clear of "propagandizing" or "attacking" religion as much as possible, and underscoring the "scientific nature" of narrative in the articulation of religious knowledge.

While Buddhist knowledge formed the core in the Sri Lankan encyclopedia, as well as in ECB1956 and ZF1979 in China, it was rendered a subsidiary of the national knowledge system in ZDQZ1980. In these disparate scenarios, the structure of knowledge presentation and the narrative style underwent changes. Within this transformation, one can discern the shift and flow of knowledge power. Concurrently, it becomes evident that regardless of the position religious knowledge occupies in the entirety of the Chinese knowledge system, owing to Buddhism's unique standing in Chinese culture, Buddhist knowledge undoubtedly takes precedence in the Chinese religious knowledge system. Meanwhile, the expression of knowledge mirrors the ideological trend of their time.

5. Variability and Invariability of Buddhist Knowledge in Cultural Inheritance

In addition to the influence of region, politics, cultural customs, etc., a knowledge system develops according to its own internal orders, too. For example, knowledge production is affected by the intellectual traditions of the knowledge workers themselves. Usually, knowledge is inherited via two main mediums, namely, the texts and the people

who produce the texts. In the context of this research, the texts refers to the encyclopedia manuscripts, and the people denotes the authors of the encyclopedia entries. The three encyclopedia compilations discussed herein spanned two to three decades and involved two generations of scholars. Initial manuscripts underwent numerous revisions, with pertinent records maintained in archival repositories. Thus, we are able to observe both the variability and the invariability of Buddhist knowledge, as well as its producers, throughout the process of cultural inheritance.

The five-volume *Zhongguo Fojiao* produced in the ZF1979 project contains a total of 417 entries, distributed among 11 topics. Most of them were compiled and revised from the manuscripts that were composed in the ECB1956 project. Among the entries, topics such as the history of religion, the Buddhist relations between China and neighboring countries, sects, figures, ritual systems, and scriptures primarily adhered to those seen in the original manuscripts, with a small number of revisions.

The Buddhist entries of *Zhongguo dabaike quanshu: Zongjiao,* compiled in the ZDQZ1980 project, were not exclusively centered on Chinese Buddhism, but sought to encapsulate a comprehensive panorama of Buddhism. Hence, of the more than 400 entries, a substantial fraction focused on foreign Buddhism, most notably Indian Buddhism and Japanese Buddhism. This is a distinguishing feature compared to the preceding two compilations.

Nevertheless, a close interrelationship between the ZDQZ1980 and ZF1979 projects is discernible. For instance, they both incorporated classifications of sects, figures, *Tripiṭaka* versions, scriptures, teachings, institutions, and pagodas. Additionally, they contained entries bearing identical titles, with some even penned by the same author (see Table 2). For instance, the two entries on "Huijiao 慧皎" in *Zhongguo Fojiao* and *Zhongguo dabaike quanshu: Zongjiao* were both authored by Su Jinren 蘇晉仁. The core content and the emphasized information in the two entries were strikingly similar, with the only difference being that the entry in *Zhongguo dabaike quanshu: Zongjiao* was more succinct and compact, conforming to the writing requirements of the ZDQZ1980 project (Buddhist Association of China 1982, p. 85; Compilation Committee of Religion in the General Compilation Committee of *Zhongguo dabaike quanshu* 1988, p. 167).

The existence of an inheritance relationship between the two encyclopedias can be ascribed to two primary reasons. Initially, knowledge, as the vehicle for information, records historical facts, which remain constant; thus, knowledge archiving historical information remains invariant over time. Consequently, classics are usually unalterable. Secondly, the consistency of the authors fosters the consistency of knowledge expression: BAC participated in all three compilations, and numerous authors contributed to two or three of the aforementioned encyclopedia projects.

Comparing the authors of *Encyclopedia of Chinese Buddhism*, *Zhongguo Fojiao*, and *Zhongguo dabaike quanshu: Zongjiao*, it can be seen that:

a. Eight authors participated in three editing activities—Guo Yuanxing 郭元興, Huang Chanhua 黃懺華, Juzan 巨贊, Li An 李安, Lin Ziqing 林子青, Longlian 隆蓮, Tian Guanglie 田光烈 and You Xia 遊俠;

b. Four authors participated in the projects of ECB1956 and ZF1979—Gao Guanru 高觀如, Lü Cheng 呂澂, Yu Zhensheng 禹振聲 and Zhou Shujia 周叔迦;

c. Nine authors participated in the projects of ZF1979 and ZDQZ1980—Fang Guangchang 方廣錩, Liu Feng 劉峰, Ren Jie 任傑, Wang Sen 王森, Wang Xin 王新, Yao Changshou 姚長壽, Zhang Zhongxing 張中行, Zhou Shaoliang 周紹良 and Zhao Puchu 趙樸初[16];

d. Five authors participated in the projects of ECB1956 and ZDQZ1980—Fazun 法尊, Li Rongxi 李榮熙, Su Jinren 蘇晉仁, Yu Yu 虞愚 and Zhang Keqiang 張克強 (Zhang Jianmu 張建木).

Table 2. Some entries with the same authors in ZF1979 and ZDQZ1980.

Author	***Zhongguo Fojiao***	***Zhongguo Dabaike Quanshu-Zongjiao***
Guo Yuanxing 郭元興	Bukong 不空, Padmasambhava 蓮華生, Great Perfection 大圓滿	Bukong 不空, Padmasambhava 蓮華生, Great Perfection 大圓滿
Fazun 法尊	Bkaḥ-Gdams-Pa Sect 迦當派	Bkaḥ-Gdams-Pa Sect 噶當派
Huang Chanhua 黃懺華	Masters of the Abhidharmakośa-Śāstra 俱舍師	School of the Abhidharmakośa-Śāstra 俱舍學派
Juzan 巨贊	Dao'an 道安, Yixing 一行, Yanshou 延壽	Dao'an 道安, Yixing 一行, Yanshou 延壽
Lin Ziqing 林子青	Masters of the Satyasiddhi-Śāstra 成實師, Masters of the Parinirvāṇa-Sūtra 涅槃師, Hongyi 弘一, Jing'an 敬安, Three-Stage Teaching 三階教, Yinguang 印光	School of the Satyasiddhi-Śāstra 成實學派, Masters of the Parinirvāṇa-Sūtra 涅槃學派, Hongyi 弘一, Jing'an 敬安, Three-Stage Teaching 三階教, Yinguang 印光
Longlian 隆蓮	Kuiji 窺基	Kuiji 窺基
Su Jinren 蘇晉仁	Huijiao 慧皎	Huijiao 慧皎
Tian Guanglie田光烈	Masters of the Daśabhūmi-Vyākhyāna 地論師, Masters of the Mahāyānasaṁgraha-Śāstra 攝論師	School of the Daśabhūmi-Vyākhyāna 地論學派, Masters of the Mahāyānasaṁgraha-Śāstra 攝論學派
You Xia 遊俠	Masters of the Abhidharma 毗曇師	School of the Abhidharma 毗曇學派
Yu Yu 虞愚	Ci'en School 慈恩宗	Faxiang School 法相宗
Zhang Jianmu 張建木	Zhidun 支遁, Tsoṅ-kha-pa 宗喀巴	Zhidun 支遁, Tsoṅ-kha-pa 宗喀巴
Zhou Shaoliang 周紹良	Popular Preaching and Sūtra Preaching 俗講和講經文	Sūtra Preaching 講經文

During the 1980s, when the ZF1979 and ZDQZ1980 projects were underway, numerous scholars who had participated in the ECB1956 project in the 1950s and 1960s were approaching the later years of their lives, including Lü Cheng (1896–1989), Li An (1900–1985), and Juzan (1908–1984), while some had passed away, such as Xirao Jiacuo (1883–1968), Zhou Shujia (1899–1970), Fazun (1902–1980), and Gao Guanru (1906–1979). Meanwhile, a fresh cohort of Buddhist scholars emerged, becoming the new driving force of Buddhist academia, including individuals such as Fang Guangchang, Liu Feng, Wang Xin, and Yao Changshou. Additionally, when *Zhongguo dabaike quanshu: Zongjiao* was eventually published in 1988, entries on figures such as "Fazun", "Juzan", "Lü Cheng", "Xirao Jiacuo" and "Zhao Puchu", etc. (Compilation Committee of Religion in the General Compilation Committee of *Zhongguo dabaike quanshu* 1988, pp. 108, 218, 245, 429, 518)—the creators of the Chinese Buddhist knowledge system from the 1950s and 1960s—were all encapsulated in the new encyclopedia. In this way, those who shaped history became a part of that history. Through the continued work of two generations of scholars, the knowledge system of Buddhist encyclopedias has also been inherited and further cultivated. Using the topic of *Tripiṭaka* as an example, during the compilation of ECB1956, entries introducing China's *Tripiṭakas* were primarily authored by Lü Cheng, a widely renowned specialist in the field during that time. However, in the 1980s and 1990s, as the fifth volume of *Zhongguo Fojiao* was being compiled, due to advancements in archeological work and academic

research, new discoveries regarding *Tripiṭaka* were made in contemporary academia. As a result, the information within the earlier manuscripts appeared somewhat antiquated. Therefore, the editorial team of *Zhongguo Fojiao* invited Fang Guangchang, an expert on Buddhist scriptures, to amend the prior entry and pen a few new entries grounded on the most recent research, thereby presenting the most recent and comprehensive information concerning *Tripiṭaka*. Furthermore, entries pertaining to the grottoes included in the fifth volume of *Zhongguo Fojiao* represented the combined efforts of two generations of scholars over a span of two to three decades. Initially composed by Yan Wenru 閻文儒 in the 1960s, they were later supplemented and updated by his student Qi Qingguo 祁慶國 in the 1980s (Buddhist Association of China 2004, p. 533).

In summary, throughout the three compilations, Buddhist knowledge has been handed down both through texts and scholars. Given the consistency of historical facts and the stability of knowledge producers, the outcomes of the three compilations exhibited numerous similarities. Nevertheless, Buddhist knowledge has also evolved and undergone some modifications in the process of being transmitted from one generation to the next. The inheritance and modification of knowledge in this historical progression have left imprints in the working archives and final results of the three compilations.

6. Conclusions

The sociology of knowledge argues that knowledge is a construct, with its formation shaped by myriad social factors such as regional culture, ideological currents, international relations, and the positionality of knowledge producers. The knowledge system delineated by an encyclopedia serves to construct societal common sense, impacting the intellectual life of the populace. It is this crucial function that underscores the importance for a nation or cultural tradition of establishing its own knowledge system through the compilation of encyclopedias. This paper explores the undertaking of constructing the Chinese Buddhist knowledge system, revealing the efforts of the Chinese Buddhist community and the implicit or explicit influences of varied societal aspects through the examination of three Buddhist encyclopedia compilations, as well as the simple description of a few other encyclopedias.

Buddhism, while originating from foreign lands, has thrived in China, evolving into a pivotal component of Chinese culture, alongside the indigenous traditions of Confucianism and Daoism. Consequently, Buddhist knowledge naturally embodies both global and local attributes. The compilation process of the Sri Lankan *Encyclopaedia of Buddhism* and the Chinese *Zhongguo dabaike quanshu: Zongjiao* present a common scenario: the editorial team strived to create a globally inclusive encyclopedia, but inadvertently or consciously, the final product mirrored a local hue. This regional idiosyncrasy in knowledge is partially attributed to the constraints of the editorial board, and partially due to the ideological directions of a nation, considering that encyclopedia compilations are typically substantial national projects. The influence of national ideological tendencies on the articulation of knowledge is substantial. Across nations, religious knowledge occupies varying degrees of prominence within the broader knowledge system, and within that, different religions secure different positions. For instance, Buddhist knowledge assumes a central role in Sri Lanka, a country where Buddhism is the state religion. However, the scenario in 1980s China was quite different: historical reasons placed religious knowledge at a relatively peripheral position within the national knowledge system, yet Buddhism received emphasis due to its status as the most Sinicized among the world's three major religions. It is precisely these inherently global and local characteristics of Buddhism, and the unique and crucial position that Buddhist knowledge holds within the Chinese religious knowledge system, that prompted three official compilations of Buddhist encyclopedias within a brief timespan. Through this lens, we can trace the lineage and transformation of knowledge, as well as the enduring aspects within historical continuity.

In addition to the regional, political and cultural elements, intellectual traditions also affect the expression of knowledge. As Lemaine puts it, the institutional context of knowledge plays a very important role in knowledge history (Lemaine et al. 1976, pp. 8–9); for example, a stable institutional environment would result in stable knowledge expression. Quite a few authors participated in two or three compilations, which results in the inherited nature of these encyclopedias. It is noteworthy that Chinese Buddhism has a tradition of compiling encyclopedic works. In their history, Buddhists have compiled many books of this kind, such as *Fayuan zhulin* 法苑珠林 (The Pearl Grove of the Garden of the Dharma), *Dacheng yizhang* 大乘義章 (Dictionary of Mahāyāna Buddhism) and *Zongjing lu* 宗鏡錄 (A Record of the Mirror of the Tenet of the Chan School), all of which reveals the overall picture of Chinese Buddhism. Therefore, we can consider the three compilations of encyclopedias for Chinese Buddhism as a continuation of this tradition.

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Notes

1 BAC was responsible for the compilation of entries about Chinese Buddhism in the Sri Lankan encyclopedia.

2 They are the editors-in-chief for the Buddhist part of *Zhongguo dabaike quanshu: Zongjiao* 中國大百科全書: 宗教 (Encyclopedia of China—Religion).

3 This is the number of participants in the project, including the authors, translators and organizers.

4 21 authors engaged in the publishing project of *Zhongguo fojiao* after 1980. Therefore, with the 38 participants of ECB1956 added, 59 is the overall number for this project.

5 This is the number of authors according to the author list.

6 To my knowledge, BAC has been working for the publication of this encyclopedia since 2018. It is forthcoming in Sino-Culture Press (Huawen chubanshe 華文出版社) in China.

7 Nanjio's catalogue refers to Bunyiu (1883).

8 The library of Research Institute of Chinese Buddhist Culture, BAC preserved a recommendation letter for Youdao 由道, a translator of ECB1956, in which Zhao Puchu mentioned that the Editor-in-Chief of the Sri Lanka Encyclopedia used to tell him that, "Chinese manuscripts are far more better than Japanese ones." (Zhao 1992).

9 …錫方要求撰寫的這些文稿, 多係密教條目…我們如不供應, 則他們很可能找些西方人寫…因此仍以我們供應為宜. This document is preserved in manuscript archives of the *Encyclopedia of Chinese Buddhism*. Fragments 1—proofread notes and letters—letter 4—00002.

10 This classification was inherited by later Chinese Buddhist encyclopedias, for example, in *Zhongguo fojiaobaike quanshu* 中國佛教百科全書 (Encyclopedia of Chinese Buddhism), an eight volumed work published by Lai (2000), the 3,000,000-word manuscript was classified into the following categories: classics, doctrines, figures, history, Buddhist schools, rituals and regulations, poems and *gāthās*, calligraphies and paintings, sculptures, architectures, renowned mountains and monasteries.

11 我們這部大百科全書, 不應該是地區性的, 不能自己把這部大百科全書降到一個地區性的水平…我們的視野不要受中國這個地區的限制, 對全世界人類的文化知識, 全世界歷史上發生過的大事, 全世界科學的發展, 凡是重要的, 都應該在我們這部大百科全書中得到反映…科學是沒有國界的. See (Yu 1980, p. 19).

12 中國的特點是必需強調的…中國歷史, 中國地理, 中國的文化, 中國的人物都應該有較多的篇幅, 外國不那麼重要的東西可以簡略些. 這樣才可以寫出"中國的'"這個特點. See (Yu 1980, p. 20).

13 …世界各主要國家, 從18世紀中葉開始就出版大型的多卷本的百科全書…現在第三世界國家, 也紛紛出版百科全書, 連獨立不久的蘇里南這樣的小國, 也在編印. See (Jiang 1990, p. 1).

14 撰寫《宗教》卷條目釋文, 一方面要十分注意科學性…應堅持既不宣揚宗教, 亦不攻擊宗教; 力求釋文內容既不傷害宗教信仰者的宗教感情, 又不成為向不信仰宗教的群眾進行傳教的材料. 應以科學態度精審地選取材料, 客觀地, 系統地, 概括地, 實事求是地向讀者介紹宗教的基本知識, 還事物的歷史本來面目. This document is preserved in manuscript archives of the *Encyclopedia of Chinese Buddhism*. Refrences—*Zhongguo dabaike quanshu: Zongjiaojuan*—Key points—00002.

15 This document is preserved in the manuscript archives of the *Encyclopedia of Chinese Buddhism*. Refrences—*Dabaike quanshu: Zongjiaoxue*—A draft seeking for advice—00011.

16 Zhao Puchu engaged in the ECB1956 project as the project leader, but not as an author.

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Article

The Buddhist Concept of "Filial Piety" in the Context of Early Chinese Buddhist Scripture Translation

Jing Guo

School of Humanities, Tsinghua University, Beijing 100084, China; guojing20@mails.tsinghua.edu.cn

Abstract: Examining the early history of the Chinese translation of Buddhist scriptures, it is revealed that translators from the Eastern Han Dynasty to the Wei and Jin Dynasties, such as An Shigao, Lokakṣema, Kang Senghui and Dharmarakṣa, already paid much attention to and began translating Buddhist scriptures related to "filial piety". They even, during the translation process, altered the original meanings of some words to promote the sinicization of Buddhism or brought together the contents of several sutras to provide a more culturally attuned interpretation of the Buddhist idea of "filial piety and repayment of kindness", in accordance with Chinese culture. With their efforts, the Chinese gradually realized that Buddhism also preached filial ethics. Buddhists were not against the value of filial piety when embracing monastic life; instead, they could accumulate merits and dedicate them to their parents and relatives, rescuing them from samsara. This introduced a fresh perspective for traditional Confucian filial piety, and highlighted the importance of "filial piety" beyond the framework of "family and state as one." Confucianism and Buddhism were able to agree on the significance of filial piety, and Buddhism also affected and complemented the ethical cultivation of the Chinese medieval society.

Keywords: Chinese Buddhist translation; Chinese Buddhist Apocrypha; filial piety; Early Buddhism; renounce the family

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1. Introduction

Max Weber, in his discussion of religion in China, pointed out that in the context of the Chinese patrimonial bureaucracy, filial piety is "the absolutely primary virtue", "the virtue from which all others issue", and "the most important status obligation of bureaucratic system". (Weber 1951, pp. 157–58) As the starting point of human existence and human relations, the family is regarded by Weber as the foundation and motive of civilizations, which not only constitutes the inner mechanism of Confucian filial ethics and political, economic and social order in Chinese civilization, but also plays a fundamental and long-term role in Indian society through the establishment of the caste system.[1] In this sense, "family" and "filial piety" undoubtedly provide an important research approach for scholars to clarify the origins and characteristics of Chinese civilization. Consequently, this has attracted a group of scholars to engage in comparative studies from the perspective of the history of civilization, using Chinese Buddhist scriptures, Pali Buddhist scriptures, Indian inscriptions, and other materials to examine the "filial piety" concepts linked by Buddhism in China and India. From the research findings, there are two different views on this issue: some, represented by John Strong (Strong 1983), Gregory Schopen (Schopen 1997), Guang Xing (Guang 2005), and Zhao Xiaohuan (Zhao 2023) believe that there was already a tradition of filial piety in Indian civilization and that the filial piety in the early Chinese translations of Buddhist scriptures was not entirely a newly developed Buddhist ethical concept under the influence of the Han Chinese; and others, such as Chen Guansheng (Chen 1968), Michibata Ryoshu (Michibata 1968), and Ran Yunhua (Ran 1990) assert that the tradition of filial piety is one of the significant features of Chinese Buddhism, arguing that the status of "filial piety" in Chinese Buddhism is much more elevated compared to its role in Indian Buddhism.

It can be observed that scholars have reached a basic conclusion that expressions related to filial piety exist in both Chinese Buddhism and Indian Buddhism. However, there is still room for further research regarding the specific connotations and evolutionary development of the concept of filial piety in the contexts of Chinese and Indian civilizations. By examining early Chinese translations of Buddhist scriptures, including the four groups of Āgama sutras, and many apocryphal texts with uncertain translators and dates, it is revealed that the tradition of filial piety in Indian Buddhism gradually gained popularity around the first century CE with the rise of Mahāyāna Buddhism. Its core ideas revolve around sentient beings, gratitude, and liberation, which are fundamental Buddhist doctrines, and differ significantly from the essential content of filial piety in Chinese Buddhism, which was reinterpreted to focus on "filial piety towards parents and relatives" "loyalty to rulers" and "monastic devotion to filial piety".

This paper mainly applies the methods of Buddhist literature studies and philology, comparing the Chinese translations of Buddhist scriptures with Sanskrit scriptures. It briefly introduces the tradition of filial piety in Indian Buddhism and then explores the basic explanations and developmental processes of the "filial piety" concept in early Chinese translations. It attempts to understand the specific efforts made by Buddhism in early translation activities, from the perspective of cross-cultural exchange and mutual influence, to adapt to Chinese culture.

2. Buddhism and Filial Piety: The Tradition of Filial Piety in the Āgama Sutras

According to Guang Xing's research (Guang 2005), early Buddhist scriptures such as the Āgama sutras contain various religious expressions related to "filial piety towards parents" and "repaying parental kindness". These texts integrate the concepts of "filial piety" and "repaying kindness", explaining to the monastic community the theoretical basis of filial piety, methods of filial piety, and the implications for spiritual liberation (mukti). For instance, in the Chinese translation of the *Ekottara Āgama* (*Zengyi ahan jing* 增一阿含經), there are words like "The kindness of parents is great, their nurturing affection is profound 父母恩重，育養情甚" (CBETA, T02, no.125, p. 623b23-24) and "For this reason, parents have greatly benefited their children, their nurturing kindness is profound, from breastfeeding to embracing and carrying the child. One must repay this kindness; there is no excuse not to repay it 所以然者，父母生子多有所益，長養恩重，乳哺懷抱，要當報恩，不得不報恩"(CBETA, T02, no.125, p. 823a11-12). These contents clearly highlight the hardships faced by parents in raising their children and the principle that children should repay their parents' kindness. Regarding the specific ways of filial piety, the *Śīgalovāda Sūtra*[2] provides a detailed account of early Buddhist family ethics from the perspective of paying homage in six directions:

> What are the five things a son should do to honor his parents? The first is to make offerings so that there is no lack of them; the second is to tell parents what you are doing; the third is to be obedient to what your parents are doing; the fourth is to not disobey your parents' orders; and the fifth is not to leave your parents' legitimate business with no successor. Sujāta! When a person is a son, he should honor his parents with these five things, and the parents will honor their son with five things. What are the five? The first is to make the son not to hear evil; the second is to show him a good place; the third is to love him to the core; the fourth is to seek a good marriage for him; the fifth is to provide for his needs at all times. Sujāta! If you are obedient and respectful to your parents, you will be at peace with them and have no fear. 夫為人子，當以五事敬順父母，云何為五？一者供奉能使無乏；二者凡有所為,先白父母；三者父母所為，恭順不逆；四者父母正令，不敢違背；五者不斷父母所為正業。善生！夫為人子，當以此五事敬順父母，父母復以五事敬親其子。雲何為五？一者製子不聽為惡；二者指授示其善處；三者慈愛入骨徹髓；四者為子求善婚娶；五者隨時供給所須。善生子！於父母敬順恭奉，則彼方安隱，無有憂畏。
>
> (CBETA, T01, no. 1, p. 71c8-17)

In different Chinese translations of the *Śīgalovāda Sutra*, the Buddha preached the similar family ethics for Sujāta (*shansheng* 善生), and all of these preachings put forward the principle that sons should honor, provide for, and obey their parents and that parents should teach, love, and raise their sons. It can be seen that the early Buddhist concept of filial piety attached great importance to the mutual respect and support between parents and children, and required believers to put into practice the Buddhist ethical concept of filial piety and repayment of kindness in their daily practice. If children can always practice filial piety and repay their parents, they can continuously accumulate good karma and gain, otherwise they may suffer the corresponding evil consequences.

For example, as the *Madhyama Āgama* says:

> If there are sentient beings born into the human realm who are not filial to their parents, do not know how to respect monks and Brahmins, do not act truthfully, do not engage in virtuous deeds, do not fear the sins of future lives, then, due to these causes and conditions, their bodies will be destroyed, and at the end of their lives, they will be reborn in the realm of Yama. 若有眾生生於人間，不孝父母，不知尊敬沙門、梵志，不行如實，不作福業，不畏後世罪，彼因緣此，身壞命終，生閻王境界。 (CBETA, T01, no. 26, p. 503c22-25)

This highlights the metaphysical significance of beings practicing filial piety from the perspective of liberation and the severe consequences of not being filial to parents. It also explains why inscriptions unearthed in India frequently mention the practice of dedicating the merits of generosity to one's parents (Schopen 1997).

Around the first century CE, with the widespread dissemination of Mahāyāna Buddhism's doctrines such as *zhongsheng pingdeng* 眾生平等 (equality among all sentient beings) and *cibei lita* 慈悲利他(compassion and benefiting others), the scope of Buddhist filial piety ethics expanded further, to include all sentient beings within the cycle of samsara. Consequently, all sentient beings became objects of reverence and offerings by Buddhist monks. In Volume 2 of the *Brahmajāla Sūtra*, we read:

> If the Buddha's son, out of compassion, practices the act of saving lives, regarding all males as his fathers and all females as his mothers, being born from them life after life, then all sentient beings in the six realms are his fathers and mothers. 若佛子以慈心故，行放生業。一切男子是我父，一切女人是我母，我生生無不從之受生，故六道眾生皆是我父母。 (CBETA, T24, no. 1484, p. 1006b9-11)

Under the influence of Mahāyāna teachings, where all sentient beings are considered as parents, repaying parental kindness becomes synonymous with repaying the kindness of all sentient beings. The concept of filial piety and gratitude in Buddhism thus further developed towards the goal of benefiting all beings. In this regard, the *Mahāyāna Sūtra of Previous Lives and Contemplation of the Mind-ground* (*Dasheng bensheng xindi guan jing* 大乘本生心地觀經), based on the Buddhist doctrine of karmic rebirth, explains in more detail the reasons for expanding the object of repayment from parents to sentient beings, saying that:

> The grace of all sentient beings is that all sentient beings have been the parents of each other in many lifetimes since the beginning of time, through hundreds and thousands of kalpas; because they are the parents of each other, all men are the loving father and all women are the compassionate mother. There is no difference between the great kindnesses of past lives and the kindnesses of present parents. If you have not been able to repay such past kindnesses, or if you have been given the chance to be disobedient because of delusional karma, then you have become a grudge against them because of your attachment to them. What is the reason for this? Ignorance overrides the wisdom and understanding of the past lives, so that they do not know that they were parents in previous lives, and that all the kindnesses they can repay are mutually beneficial. For this reason, all sentient beings have great kindness at all times, which is difficult to repay. 眾生恩者，即無始來，一切眾生輪轉五道，經百千劫，於多生中互為父母；以互

> 為父母故，一切男子即是慈父，一切女人即是悲母。昔生生中有大恩故，猶如現在父母之恩等無差別。如是昔恩，猶未能報，或因妄業，生諸違順，以執著故，反為其怨。何以故？無明覆障，宿住智明，不了前生，曾為父母，所可報恩，互為饒益，無饒益者，名為不孝。以是因緣，諸眾生類，於一切時，亦有大恩，實為難報。 (CBETA, T03, no. 159, p. 297c8-18)

It is evident that Mahāyāna Buddhism encourages monks to universally respect all sentient beings in the world, viewing them as parents who have bestowed great kindness upon themselves. They are encouraged to continuously practice filial piety and repay this kindness, accumulating merits until they reach the highest state of liberation and enlightenment. This reflects the fact that the ultimate purpose of Buddhist teachings on repaying kindness is still the attainment of liberation. Whether it is repaying the kindness of one's parents or all sentient beings, Buddhism, as a religion that uses monasticism as a mode of practice, is ultimately aimed at seeking transcendence. Its ethical teachings of filial piety and supporting one's parents still serve the highest goal of attaining liberation. In other words, the concept of filial piety in Buddhism is just one subordinate concept within the broader framework of Buddhism, and it does not hold a special status that transcends other Buddhist doctrines. Therefore, if someone committed unwholesome deeds against the Buddhist precepts while practicing filial piety towards their parents, they would still be subject to the laws of karma and its consequences. As is said in Volume 6 of the *Madhyama Āgama*:

> Therefore, Venerable Śāriputra said, "I now ask you, please answer as you see fit. Dhānañjāni! What is your opinion on this matter? If someone, for the sake of their parents, commits evil deeds and, due to those evil deeds, their body is destroyed, and upon death, they are reborn in a terrible place like hell. Once born in hell, the hell wardens seize and punish them with extreme suffering. At that moment, they say to the hell wardens, 'Wardens, please know this: do not torment me. Why is that? Because I committed evil deeds for the sake of my parents.' Tell me, Dhānañjāni! Can such a person be freed from this suffering by the hell wardens?" The answer is, "No." 於是，尊者舍梨子告曰："陀然！我今問汝，隨所解答。梵志陀然！於意云何？若使有人為父母故而行作惡，因行惡故，身壞命終，趣至惡處，生地獄中。生地獄已，獄卒執捉，極苦治時，彼向獄卒而作是語：'獄卒！當知，莫苦治我。所以者何？我為父母故而行作惡。'云何？陀然！彼人可得從地獄卒脫此苦耶？"答曰："不也。" (CBETA, T01, no. 26, pp. 456c27–457a6)

This story illustrates the fact that even though Buddhism encourages people to practice filial piety towards their parents, when practicing "filial piety" one should prioritize upholding the fundamental teachings of Buddhism. In the context of Buddhism, the standards for determining whether an action is "good" (kuśala) or "evil" (akuśala) are threefold: (1) the motivation behind the action; (2) the direct consequences of the action in terms of joy or suffering it brings about; and (3) the contribution of the action to the spiritual development towards the highest goal of Nirvana (Harvey 2012). Therefore, the actions of filial piety and repaying parental kindness by sentient beings should also inherently align with Buddhist concepts of virtue, karma, and causality. The relationship between filial piety and Buddhism can be discerned, based on these principles.

3. The Chinese Interpretation of the Concept of Filial Piety in Early Buddhist Translations

After the introduction of Buddhism into China[3], influenced by the Confucian ethics centered on filial piety, the early translators of Buddhist scriptures intentionally translated into Chinese some of the classics that encompassed the Buddhist ethic of filial piety or excerpted the parts of the scriptures that dealt with filial piety into separate translations of the classics. By examining Buddhist scriptures translated during the Eastern Han to the Wei and Jin periods, it becomes apparent that many of these scriptures provided comprehensive explanations of Buddhist filial piety concepts. This includes both scriptures that were

directly translated from Indian scriptures and those where translators altered some of the original terms to better align with Chinese ethical and moral concepts. There were even instances where various relevant content from multiple Buddhist scriptures was collected and reinterpreted in Chinese Buddhist texts.

The translation of scriptures related to filial piety in Han China began during the reign of Emperor Huan of the Eastern Han Dynasty漢桓帝 (r. 146–167), with the arrival of the Buddhist monk An Shigao安世高 (fl. ca. 148–180 CE). According to the *Memoirs of Eminent Monks* (*Gaoseng zhuan* 高僧傳)[4], An Shigao translated 39 Buddhist sutras and treatises. Among all the Buddhist scriptures attributed to An Shigao, such as the *Śīgalovāda Sūtra* (*Shijialuoyue liufang li jing* 尸迦羅越六方禮經), *Sūtra on the Eightfold Correct Path* (*Ba zhengdao jing* 八正道經), *Sūtra on the Seven Points and Three Contemplations* (*Qichu sanguan jing* 七處三觀經), *Sūtra on the Difficulty in Repaying Parents' Kindness* (*Foshuo fumu en nanbao jing* 佛說父母恩難報經), *Sūtra on Ānanda's Questions About Good and Bad Fortunes* (*Foshuo anan wenshi fo jixiong jing* 佛說阿難問事佛吉凶經), and *Sūtra on Karmic Retribution, Moral Education, and Hells* (*Foshuo zuiye yingbao jiaohua diyu jing* 佛說罪業應報教化地獄經), there are discussions related to filial piety.

Among these, the *Śīgalovāda Sūtra* is a different Chinese translation of the early Buddhist scripture *Shansheng jing*, which reflects early Buddhist family ethics and filial piety traditions. It can be considered a relatively faithful transmission of the filial piety thoughts found in the Āgama scriptures. Similarly, *Sūtra on the Eightfold Correct Path* and *Sūtra on the Seven Points and Three Contemplations* should also be Buddhist scriptures translated from other languages' textual sources (Nattier 2008, pp. 175–76), and they still retain traces of early Buddhist thoughts on filial piety. For instance, *Sūtra on the Eightfold Correct Path* states, "To have faith in one's parents is to have faith in filial piety 信父母者信孝順 "(CBETA, T02, no. 112, p. 505a27). In *Sūtra on the Seven Points and Three Contemplations*, the Buddha admonishes the monks, saying:

> "There are four actions, bhikkhus, known to the wise, not known to fools, and known to the intelligent. What are these four? Giving, bhikkhus, is known to the wise, known to the virtuous, and can be done by the intelligent; not deceiving, bhikkhus, is known by all in the world as virtuous, as stated above; serving and being filial to one's parents, bhikkhus, is known as stated above; practicing as a monk, bhikkhus, is known as stated above; walking the path of the Dharma, bhikkhus, is known by the wise, known by the virtuous, not known by fools, and can be done by the intelligent." He concludes, "Knowing oneself to have engaged in giving, not deceiving, restraining one's mind, guarding oneself, and also serving and being filial to one's parents and maintaining virtuous conduct—by doing these things, one can see accomplishment and attain purity of aspiration in this world." "四行為黠所有，為賢者所知，非愚者所知，慧者可意。何等為四？布施，比丘！黠人知，賢者知，慧者可可者；不欺，比丘！一切天下所黠知，如上說；孝事父母，比丘！所黠知，如上說；作沙門，比丘！所黠知，如上說；法行道，比丘！所黠知，亦賢者知，愚人所不知，黠者可。"從後說絕："自知有布施，不欺、製意、自守，亦孝父母有守行，是事一切為黠者行，如是可見成就，便世間得淨願。" (CBETA, T02, no. 150a, pp. 882c27–883a7)

As one of the most important early Buddhist translators, An Shigao primarily adhered to the principle of literal translation, emphasizing the conveyance of the original meaning of Buddhist scriptures to the Chinese Buddhist community. Therefore, the ideas of filial piety shown to parents, which are found in these two Chinese Buddhist texts, closely align with the content in early Buddhist scriptures like the Āgama sutras. Both texts consider filial piety as one of the Buddhist traditions that monks must adhere to, believing that being filial to one's parents can lead to positive karmic results and the accomplishment of spiritual merits in this worldly existence.

Indeed, in the process of spreading Buddhist scriptures in China, it was inevitable that monks in China would expand or incorporate elements with Chinese cultural characteristics. Emphasizing the Buddhist concept of filial piety was a typical approach. Apart from

directly translating Buddhist scriptures related to filial piety, Chinese monks often used techniques like excerpting, expanding, or modifying to reinterpret Buddhist filial piety ethics. They sometimes even established connections between Buddhist and Confucian filial piety concepts. As a result, in some Chinese Buddhist scriptures, such as *Sūtra on the Difficulty in Repaying Parents' Kindness*, *Sūtra on Ānanda's Questions About Good and Bad Fortunes*, and *Sūtra on Karmic Retribution, Moral Education, and Hells*, which were attributed to An Shigao, but in fact were of uncertain dates and authorship, the "translator" thoroughly expounded the Buddhist teachings on filial piety.

Here are the main verses related to filial piety from the scriptures mentioned above:

> (1) At that time, the Venerable One told the bhikkhus, "Parents to their children bring great increase. They nourish, rear, and provide for them at every stage, allowing the four great elements to develop." 爾時世尊告諸比丘："父母於子，有大增益，乳餔長養，隨時將育，四大得成。" (CBETA, T16, no. 684, pp. 778c29–779a1)

> (2) The Buddha said, "For a disciple of the Buddha, even if there are reasons, refrain from breaking disciplines. Be sincere, cautious, and respectful towards the Three Sages. Be filial to your parents, both internally and externally. Do not think deceitfully, and let your heart and speech correspond. Use skillful means with good timing, knowing when to advance and when to withdraw. In this way, you can engage in worldly matters without possessing worldly attachments." 佛言："為佛弟子，雖有因緣，持戒勿犯，誠信畏慎，敬歸三尊，孝事二親，內外謹善，不念誑佞，心口相應，善權方便，進退知時，可得作世間事，不得為世間意。" (CBETA, T14, no. 492a, p. 753c11-15)

> (3) The Buddha said, "You should diligently be filial to your parents, respect and serve your teachers and elders, and honor the Three Sages. Practice giving, uphold disciplines, endure patiently, be diligent, cultivate meditation, and develop wisdom. Be compassionate, joyful, and generous, treating both enemies and relatives impartially, regarding them as equal to yourself. Do not deceive or exploit the orphans and the elderly; do not belittle the humble. Protect them as if they were your own. If you can practice in this way, you will have repaid the Buddha's kindness and forever be free from various sufferings." 佛言："當勤孝順父母，敬事師長，歸奉三尊；勤行布施、持戒、忍辱、精進、禪定、智慧，慈悲喜舍，怨親平等，同己無二；不欺孤老，不輕下賤，護彼如己。汝等若能如是修行，則為已得報佛之恩，永離眾苦。" (CBETA, T17, no. 724, p. 452b13-17)

It is evident that the above-mentioned scriptures, by summarizing the inherent concept of filial piety in Buddhism, convey to the Chinese people the practical need for Buddhist monks and nuns to implement filial piety in their daily lives. This indicates that filial piety and repaying kindness are aligned, to some extent, with Confucian ethical values, harmonizing the conflict and contradictions between Buddhist monastic traditions and Chinese cultural family ethics. As a result, this alleviated some of the pressure faced by Buddhism in China concerning filial piety ethics. Furthermore, the appearance of these Chinese Buddhist scriptures reflects the initial understanding and acceptance of Buddhist teachings by the Chinese people when Buddhism was first introduced to China. In this sense, they can be seen as valuable explorations conducted by Chinese Buddhist monks and nuns to promote the sinicization of Buddhist ethics.

During the reign of Emperor Ling of the Eastern Han dynasty 漢靈帝(r. 168–189), the Buddhist monk Lokakṣema (Zhi Loujiachen 支娄迦讖, fl. ca. 168–186 CE) translated the Mahāyāna Buddhist sutra *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra* (*Daoxing bore jing* 道行般若經). In this scripture, there were instances of altering the original text to specifically translate terms into Chinese words, like "*xiao*孝"(filial piety) and "*ci*慈"(compassion). This practice continued with Zhi Qian支谦 (fl. ca. 220–257 CE) following Lokakṣema's approach, until Kumārajīva鸠摩罗什*(Jiumo luoshi*, 343–413) retranslated the *Small Section Prajñāpāramitā*

Sūtra (*Xiaopin boreboluomi jing* 小品般若波羅蜜經), which essentially restored the original text of the scriptures. According to the Sanskrit original of this scripture, the Chinese terms "filial piety" and "compassion" in the translations by Lokakṣema and Zhi Qian had multiple parallel words in Sanskrit. Some were translated from Sanskrit terms like *gaurava* and *gauravatā*, which originally meant reverence or respect. Others came from Sanskrit terms like *priya*, *manāpa* and *kāma*, which originally meant love or pleasure. The typical translational variations in the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra* are now summarized in the following Table 1 (Karashima 2010, pp. 232–35):

Table 1. The translational variations of the Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra.

Sanskrit Version	Translation of Sanskrit Version	Lokakṣema's Translation(CBETA, T08, no. 224)	Zhi Qian's Translation(CBETA, T08, no. 225)
dharma-gauraveṇa	Through respecting the Buddhist teachings	諸天人適欲問法師，天神語之。用慈於法中故，其人即自了知，諸天所不解者便自解。(p. 434 c6-7)	聽經不解義者，欲問所疑，用慈於經中，即自曉了。(p. 484 c28-29)
hitaiṣitayā premato vā gauravato vā	Out of care, friendship, and respect	今佛現在，有慈心佛恩德，欲報佛恩，具足供養者。汝設有慈心於佛者，當受持般若波羅蜜，當恭敬作禮供養。(p. 468 c19-22)	若有慈心於佛者，當受此法，敬禮供養，為供養三世佛，報佛恩備矣。(p. 502 c20-21)
yadi te …… aham̐ priyo manāpo 'parityaktas tathāgatas	If you love and do not abandon me, the Tathagata	汝慈孝於佛，恭敬、思念於佛，不如恭敬於般若波羅蜜。(p. 468 c23-25)	若慈孝於佛，不如恭敬明度。(p. 502 c21-22)
dharma-kāma	The love for Buddhist teachings	是時薩陀波倫菩薩及五百女人，各自取刀處處刺身出血，持用灑地，用慈孝於經法故。(p. 474 c5-7)	時普慈及諸女各取刀，處處刺身出血灑地，用慈於法故。(p. 506a c15-16)

From Table 1, it can be seen that if the two translators, Lokakṣema and Zhi Qian, had translated the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra* according to its original Sanskrit meaning, there would not have been any content related to *xiao* or *ci*. Instead, the main focus would have been on expressing reverence and affection for the Buddha and the Buddha's teachings, which are the basic themes found in most Buddhist scriptures. Thus, the uniqueness of the Chinese translations of this sūtra lies in the fact that Lokakṣema and Zhi Qian chose not to translate these passages literally, and used Chinese terms like *xiao* and *ci*, which were commonly used in the Chinese cultural context instead, in order to convey the general concepts of Buddhism. Through this approach of translation, they brought Buddhism as a foreign civilization into the context and perspective of Chinese civilization, creatively interpreting and transforming Buddhism to form their own method of interpreting scriptures (Sheng 2021, pp. 142–43). This may be because the early translators realized the potential for communication between the Buddhist civilization and Chinese civilization, particularly in the realm of filial ethics, when they first encountered Chinese culture. Hence, they incorporated content that was more in line with the cultural characteristics of China, when translating Buddhist scriptures.

In the year 251 AD, Kang Senghui 康僧會(fl. ca. 249–280 CE) compiled an eight-volume version of the *Scripture on the Collection of the Six Perfection* (*Liudu ji jing*六度集經) at the Jianchu Monastery 建初寺. In this scripture, the term "*xiao*孝"(filial piety) appears a remarkable 54 times. As a foreign monk who was well-versed in both Buddhist Tripiṭaka and Confucian classics, Kang Senghui explained the relationship between Confucianism and Buddhism to Sun Hao 孫皓 (r. 264–280), the ruler of the Wu state 吳國, by saying "Although it is a Confucian classic, it is the same as the teachings of Buddhism 雖儒典之格言，即佛教之明訓" (CBETA, T50, no. 2059, p. 325c24), and "What Confucius and Zhou Gong spoke of only briefly hinted, whereas in Buddhist teachings, everything is

elaborated in depth 周孔所言，略示近跡，至於釋教，則備極幽微" (CBETA, T50, no. 2059, p. 325c25-26), etc. Kang Senghui believed that because Buddhist and Confucian teachings shared similar principles under different names, he could combine Buddhist concepts such as "equality of all sentient beings" and "filial piety towards parents" with Confucian ideas like "*ren*仁" (benevolence) and "*xiao*孝" (filial piety). He applied Chinese terms that were easy for people to understand and accept when conveying the Buddhist concept of "filial piety" during the translation of scriptures. For example, Volume 1 of the *Scripture on the Collection of the Six Perfection* contains the passage: "Kings and ministers collectively got ordination. Sons are filial, ministers are loyal; heavenly beings honor and protect. The country prospers, the people thrive, and everyone is obedient to the virtue. None do not praise the good. 王逮臣民，相率受戒，子孝臣忠，天神榮衛，國豐民康，四境服德，靡不稱善" (CBETA, T03, no. 152, p. 4a13-15); Volume 3 contains "Filial piety towards parents, reverence and love for the nine relatives. 孝順父母，敬愛九親" (CBETA, T03, no. 152, p. 11b16); and Volume 8 contains "By using the Buddha's teachings to illuminate the law, governing with a righteous heart, ensuring the inheritance of filial piety, and upholding high moral standards. 以佛明法，正心治國，令孝順相承，戒具行高" (CBETA, T03, no. 152, p. 49b16-17). This language style, which combines Confucian and Buddhist cultural elements and emphasizes filial piety, reflects the unique contributions made by early Buddhist translators to promoting Buddhism in China.

Subsequently, the Buddhist scriptures translated by the Buddhist monk Dharmarakṣa竺法护 (*Zhu fahu*, fl. ca. 280–308) during the Western Jin Dynasty, such as the lost *Fo sheng daolitian wei mu shuofa jing* 佛升忉利天為母說法經, the *Ullambana Sūtra* (*Foshuo yulanpen jing* 佛說盂蘭盆經) and the *Simḥapariprcchā Sūtra* (*Foshuo taizi shuahu jing* 佛說太子刷護經), introduced to Chinese monks the reasons for and practices of filial piety and gratitude observed by the Buddha and his disciples. For instance, in Volume 1 of the *Ullambana Sūtra,* there is a passage saying that:

> For the Buddha's disciples who practice filial piety, they should constantly remember their parents and provide offerings to their parents and even their parents for seven generations. Every year, on the fifteenth day of the seventh month, they should remember their parents with filial piety and gratitude, extending their offerings to their parents and ancestors for seven generations. This is done as an act of giving to the Buddha and the Sangha, in order to repay the kindness of parents who provided care and love. All Buddha's disciples should faithfully uphold this practice. 是佛弟子修孝順者，應念念中常憶父母，供養乃至七世父母。年年七月十五日，常以孝順慈憶所生父母，乃至七世父母，為作盂蘭盆施佛及僧，以報父母長養、慈愛之恩。若一切佛弟子應當奉持是法。 (CBETA, T16, no. 685, p. 779c15-20)

Also, there is a passage in the *Simḥapariprcchā Sūtra* that preaches similar teachings:

> The Prince Simḥa replied to the Buddha, saying, "Why is it that Bodhisattvas, due to what causes and conditions, study the scriptures, believe in the words of the Buddha, and do not violate the teachings? Why is it that they understand the precepts, rules, and rituals, due to what causes and conditions? Why is it that they practice filial piety in accordance with the teachings of the Buddha, due to what causes and conditions?" The Buddha said to the Prince, "Bodhisattvas, in every lifetime, do not flatter or deceive others. Due to this, they study the scriptures, listen to the Buddha's words, and remember them without forgetting. Bodhisattvas, when entering profound teachings, are not afraid or terrified. Due to this, they quickly understand the disciplines, rules, and rituals. Bodhisattvas, in every lifetime, show deep reverence to the Buddha, the scriptures, their teachers, and their parents. Due to this, they attain wisdom." 太子復白佛言："菩薩何因緣學經、聞佛語人民皆信？何因緣知經律儀法？何因緣孝順隨佛教不犯？"佛告太子："菩薩世世不諛諂，用是故學經、聞佛語悉知不忘；

> 菩薩入深經不恐不怖，用是故得經律便知儀法；菩薩世世敬佛、敬經、敬師、敬父母，用是故得智慧。” (CBETA, T12, no. 343, p. 154a17-22)

It is evident that, with the efforts of early Buddhist translators in advocating the Buddhist teachings of filial piety and repaying parental kindness, Chinese monks and followers gained an understanding of the Buddhist tradition of “honoring parents” and “repaying parental kindness”. They began to use Confucian terminology and ethical concepts to explain and propagate the Buddhist ideals of filial piety and gratitude, even creating a set of apocrypha in response to the criticism from society regarding the perceived deviation from filial piety in Buddhist monasticism. These Chinese Buddhist texts often integrated Confucian ethical thoughts, like “filial piety towards parents” and ”loyalty to the ruler”, reflecting the early translators’ and Buddhists’ keen interest in emphasizing the concept of Buddhist filial piety. For instance, in the *Foshuo xiaozi jing* 佛說孝子經 we read:

> By upholding these clear disciplines, as a ruler, you will protect the land and the people; as a minister, you will be loyal; with kindness, you will nurture the people. This is the enlightened way of a father, and it is the filial and compassionate way of a son, as well as the trustworthiness of a wife and the fidelity of a husband. Bhikṣus and Bhikṣuṇīs, practicing in this way, will encounter the Buddha from age to age, seeing the Dharma and attaining enlightenment. 奉斯明戒，為君即保四海，為臣即忠，以仁養民，即父法明子孝慈，夫信婦貞。優婆塞、優婆夷執行如是，世世逢佛，見法得道。 (CBETA, T16, no. 687, p. 781a2-4)

Also, in the *Śyāmakajātaka Sūtra* (*Foshuo pusa shanzi jing* 佛說菩薩睒子經), it states, “Now, having attained the Buddhahood, I will save the people of the country, extend the virtue of filial piety to them今得為佛，並度國人，皆由孝順之德” (CBETA, T03, no. 174, p. 438a27) and “You should widely proclaim to people that they all have their parents, thus filial piety is indispensable 汝廣為一切人民說之，人有父母，不可不孝” (CBETA, T03, no. 174, p. 438a28-29). And in the *Nāgasena Bhikṣu Sūtra* (*Naxian biqiu jing* 那先比丘經), there is a passage saying, “King asks the Bhikṣu Nāgasena: ‘Who are the filial ones? ‘ and Naxian replies, ‘All virtuous people are filial’, and it goes on to mention that there are thirty-seven volumes of scriptures, all based on filial piety. ” 王復問那先：“何等為孝順者？”那先言：“諸善者皆為孝順。”……凡三十七品經，皆是孝順為本。(CBETA, T32, no. 1670A, p. 697b22-c7), etc. These texts highlight the importance of filial piety in Buddhism and its role in guiding individuals toward virtue and enlightenment.

After examining the Chinese Buddhist texts related to the concept of Buddhist filial piety from the Eastern Han Dynasty to the Wei and Jin Dynasties, it becomes evident that the Buddhist tradition of “honoring parents and repaying parental kindness” does align with China’s inherent Confucian ethics, to some extent. From the perspective of Buddhism itself, the sinicization of Buddhism is not merely a passive adaptation, but also, to a certain extent, a process of mutual integration and enrichment with China’s native Confucian culture (Wu and Xu 2019, p. 52). In this sense, filial piety serves as a bridge for mutual communication between the two civilizations of China and India, providing possibilities for early Buddhist translators and Buddhists in China to conceptually integrate and spread Buddhism within the Chinese cultural context.

4. Monastic Life and Householder Life: The Integration of Confucianism and Buddhism Based on the Concept of Filial Piety

Guang Xing summarized the ways in which Chinese Buddhist monks responded theoretically to Confucian criticisms of Buddhist monasticism, which emphasized renunciation and leaving family behind, into three main approaches: “translating relevant Buddhist scriptures and extracting sections that discuss filial piety; writing essays to counter these criticisms, such as *Mouzi*牟子’s essay *Mouzi lihuo lun* 牟子理惑論 (*Mou-tzu on the Settling of Doubts*), *Sun Chuo*孫綽’s *Yudao lun* 喻道論 (*A metaphorical argument for the Dao*), and *Qi Song*契嵩’s *Xiao lun* 孝論 (*Treatise on Filial Piety*); reinterpreting Buddhist precepts to argue that they are aligned with Confucian filial piety”(Guang 2016, p. 20).

As mentioned earlier, through the translation and Chinese interpretation of Buddhist scriptures, the translators of the Eastern Han and the Wei and Jin dynasties demonstrated the similarity between the Buddhist concept of filial piety and the Chinese spiritual structure, thus confirming the internal factors that allowed Buddhism to adapt to the Chinese cultural context, particularly in ethical aspects. In the early stages of Buddhism's introduction to China, Buddhist scriptures did provide great help for the Chinese to understand Buddhist thought. However, as Buddhist culture became more widespread, Chinese society, with Confucianism as the orthodox ideology, struggled to understand and accept the ethical challenges posed by Buddhist monasticism. Therefore, in the early stages of interaction and integration between Confucianism and Buddhism, some Chinese intellectuals began addressing the relationship between Buddhist and Confucian notions of filial piety, as a means of resolving the fundamental contradictions between these two traditions.

As significant proponents of reconciling Confucianism and Buddhism during the Eastern Han to the Wei and Jin periods, figures like *Mouzi* (ca. second century), *Sun Chuo* (314–371), and *Huiyuan* 慧遠 (334–416) have all written relevant essays addressing external criticisms that questioned whether Buddhism contradicted the concept of filial piety. To Chinese people who had just encountered Buddhism, the practices of Buddhist monastics, including renouncing worldly life, shaving their heads, having no offsprings, leaving their wives, and renouncing material wealth, undoubtedly stood in stark contrast to the Confucian tradition of filial piety. Therefore, it seemed that the Buddhist "filial piety" ideology did not align with Chinese ethical norms, and should not gain widespread acceptance in China.

In response, *Mouzi* extensively cited examples from ancient sages to explain the transcendence of the Buddhist way, in his *Lihuo lun*:

> Confucius said, "There are some with whom we can traverse on the same path, but with whom we cannot agree on future planning." This refers to doing what is best at the time. Moreover, the Classic of Filiality says, "The early kings ruled by the ultimate virtues and the essential Way." Yet, *Tai bo* sacrificed his hair and tattooed his body, thus following the customs of Wu and Yue and violating the propriety of the body, hair, and skin. Still, Confucius praised him, saying that his behavior could be considered the epitome of ultimate virtue. Confucius did not disparage him for sacrificing his hair. From this, we can see that if someone possesses great virtue, they are not confined by the trivial. Monks give away their family wealth, forsake their wives and children, and refrain from sound and sex. One can consider this as an ultimate form of renunciation. How does it contradict the words of the sages? *Yu rang* swallowed hot coals and painted his body with lacquer, *Nie zheng* slashed his own face as self-punishment, *Bo ji* walked on fire, and *Gao xing* was disfigured by herself. Men of noble character considered them courageous and dying for righteousness, not criticizing them for self-destruction. Compared with the behaviors of those four, monks just shave off their hairs and have not gone any further. 孔子曰："可與適道，未可與權。"所謂時宜施者也。且孝經曰："先王有至德要道。"而泰伯祝髮文身，自從吳、越之俗，違於身體髮膚之義。然孔子稱之，其可謂至德矣。仲尼不以其祝髮毀之也。由是而觀，苟有大德，不拘於小。沙門捐家財，棄妻子，不聽音視色，可謂讓之至也。何違聖語，不合孝乎？豫讓吞炭漆身，聶政剉面自刑，伯姬蹈火，高行截容，君子以為勇而死義，不聞譏其自毀沒也。沙門剔除須髮，而比之於四人，不已遠乎？ (CBETA, T52, no. 2102, pp. 2c25–3a6)

Mouzi believed that although Confucian ethics regarding filial piety required people to value their physical bodies and continue their family line, fundamentally, the standards of filial piety were not absolute. When *Tai bo* 泰伯 cut his hair and marked his body to pass the throne to *Ji li* 季歷, Confucius praised his noble character. This demonstrates that those who perform great acts of virtue need not be constrained by minor details, just as those who practice filial piety should not rigidly adhere to a single method. Therefore, Buddhist practitioners who, in pursuit of loftier goals, do not strictly adhere to Confucian ethics should

be respected and understood by society. They should not suffer from misunderstandings and criticisms related to the misconception that Buddhism involves abandoning family and loved ones.

On the basis of *Mouzi*'s arguments, the renowned scholar *Sun chuo* of the Eastern Jin period also wrote an essay in response to the criticisms of Buddhism not adhering to filial piety by the general public. He refuted this from the perspective of Buddhist scriptures, as follows:

> Buddhism has twelve sets of scriptures, and four of them are dedicated to promoting filial piety with utmost sincerity and dedication. This can be considered the epitome. Yet, laymen do not investigate their origins, nor do they explore their content. Instead, they blindly utter groundless words and baseless accusations. 佛有十二部經，其四部專以勸孝為事，慇懃之旨，可謂至矣。而俗人不詳其源流，未涉其場肆，便瞽言妄說，輒生攻難。 (CBETA, T52, no. 2102, p. 17c20-22)

This indicates that Buddhist scriptures also contain extensive discussions on the concept of filial piety and repayment of kindness. Only those who are unfamiliar with the depth and breadth of Buddhist teachings would launch unfounded attacks against Buddhism. Furthermore, considering the three-dimensional perspective of Confucianism on filial piety, *Sun chuo* also affirmed the significance of Buddhist filial piety through monasticism, and stated that:

> The essence of filial piety lies in the ability to establish one's character, follow the path, and perpetually honor one's parents. 孝之為貴，貴能立身行道，永光厥親。 (CBETA, T52, no. 2102, p. 17b2-3)

Sun chuo believed that, compared to the Confucian filial piety practiced by those serving their parents within the household, the Buddhist filial piety that seeks transcendence from worldly suffering is the true epitome of filial devotion. As stated in the *Interpretation of the Book of Rites* (*Liji Zhengyi* 禮記正義), "Filial piety has three levels: small filial piety involves effort; intermediate filial piety entails labor; great filial piety knows no exhaustion." 孝有三：小孝用力；中孝用勞；大孝不匱 (*Liji Zhengyi* 2009, fascicle 48, p. 3469). Therefore, if a person can renounce worldly life, accumulate merits, and free their parents from the suffering of the samsara through their spiritual practice, they can forever honor their parents. In fact, this can even more profoundly exemplify the essence of filial piety, compared to daily service to parents while remaining in their presence. In this sense, the Buddhist concept of filial piety that places the pursuit of transcendence as the ultimate goal forms a potent complement to Confucian filial piety ideology. It enriches the content of Chinese *xiao* culture and deepens society's understanding of the Buddhist perspective on filial piety, especially in the context of "*chujia daxiao* 出家大孝" (Monastic Devotion to Filial Piety).

Furthermore, in the *Shamen bujing wangzhe lun* 沙門不敬王者論 (*Treatise Arguing that Monks Should Not Bow to Worldly Authorities*), *Huiyuan* also integrated Buddhism and Confucianism, emphasizing repeatedly the core idea of filial piety to parents and loyalty to rulers within Buddhist teachings. In the context of the interaction between Confucianism and Buddhism, *Huiyuan* pointed out that, although Buddhism "internally deviates from the heaviness of worldly matters, it does not violate filial piety; externally lacks the formality of serving rulers, it does not lose its respect 內乖天屬之重，而不違其孝；外闕奉主之恭，而不失其敬." (CBETA, T52, no. 2102, p. 30b17-19). Thus, Buddhism and Confucianism both provide virtuous methods for governing a benevolent society; that is, "while their outward manifestations may differ, their underlying influences are intertwined 發致雖殊而潛相影響，出處誠異，終期則同." (CBETA, T52, no. 2102, p. 31a19). They both converge to maintain the ethical order and transcendental pursuits of Chinese society.

It can be seen that, for the early Han intellectuals and scholars who tried to reconcile the contradictions between Confucianism and Buddhism, the concept of "filial piety" promoted in the Buddhist scriptures formed a useful supplement to the existing Chinese filial piety ethic. To some extent, it addressed the shortcomings in the transcendent aspects of

Confucian filial piety. By introducing Buddhist ideas of karma, retribution, and reincarnation, Buddhist translators and Buddhists in China tried to illustrate that "Monastic Devotion to Filial Piety" was also a form of filial piety. Moreover, it could even more brilliantly honor one's family and rescue parents from the suffering of the cycle of rebirth compared to the Confucian advocacy of the *zaijia zhi xiao* 在家之孝 (Filial Piety within the Household).

5. Conclusions

Since its inception, Buddhism has held a tradition of filial piety and repaying kindness to others. However, its perspective on filial piety remains fundamentally distinct from the Confucian ethical tradition in China, where filial piety is at the core, as Buddhism's concept of filial piety remains subordinate to the supreme spiritual goal of transcending worldly suffering and achieving spiritual liberation. Examining the early history of the Chinese translation of Buddhist scriptures, it is revealed that translators from the Eastern Han Dynasty to the Wei and Jin Dynasties, such as An Shigao, Lokakṣema, Kang Senghui, and Dharmarakṣa, already paid much attention to and began translating Buddhist scriptures related to filial piety. They even, during the translation process, altered the original meanings of some words to promote the sinicization of Buddhism or brought together the contents of several sutras to provide a more culturally attuned interpretation of the Buddhist idea of filial piety and repayment of kindness, in accordance with Chinese culture.

With the relentless efforts of those translators, the Chinese gradually realized that Buddhism, while pursuing a path of transcendence from worldly suffering, also advocated teachings related to worldly moral and ethical values, such as "repaying parents' kindness". However, this does not mean that Buddhism and Confucianism have achieved unity on the concept of filial piety, since there are still many contradictions that make Confucians constantly attack Buddhism for being unfilial. The defense of Buddhist translators, *Mouzi*, *Sun Chuo* and *Huiyuan*, just represents early Chinese understandings of Buddhism and its theories. These scholars who are reverent and tolerant to Buddhism believe that Buddhist practitioners who embraced monastic life did not contradict the fundamental spirit of filial piety and that they could even dedicate their merits to their parents and relatives, rescuing them from samsara. This introduced a fresh perspective to traditional Confucian filial piety and highlighted the importance of filial piety beyond the framework of *jiaguo tonggou* 家國同構 (family and state as one). As a result, Confucianism and Buddhism were able to agree on the significance of filial piety, and Buddhism also affected and complemented the ethical cultivation of Chinese medieval society.

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Abbreviations

CBETA: Chinese Buddhist Electronic Text Association, based on the *Taishō shinshū Daizōkyō*. Citations for CBETA are referenced and enumerated according to the text number, volume order, page number, column, and line number, e.g., CBETA, T01, no. 1, p. 71 c8-17. T: *Taishō shinshū Daizōkyō* 大正新脩大藏經. Ed. Takakusu Junjiro and Watanabe Kaigyoku, et al. Tokyo: Taisho issaikyo kankokai, 1924–1932.

Notes

1 For more on the studies of family philosophy, see: Zhang (2017); Sun (2019); Xiao (2020, pp. 41–135).

2 *Śīgalovāda Sūtra* is an early Buddhist scripture that discusses household ethics. It was translated multiple times when Buddhism was first introduced to China. Existing Chinese translations include the *Shijialuoyue liufang li jing* 尸迦羅越六方禮經, *Foshuo*

shanshengzi jing 佛說善生子經, *Shansheng jing* 善生經 of the *Madhyama Āgama* (Vol. 33), and *Shansheng jing* 善生經 of the *Dīrgha Āgama* (Vol. 11).

3 For more on the background of Buddhism spreading and adapting in early medieval China, see Eric (2007).

4 The *Gaoseng Zhuan* records An Shigao's translation work as follows: "An Shigao translated many scriptures, adapting them from the original languages into Chinese. His works include *Anbo shouyi*, *Yin chi ru*, *Shier men* in large and small versions, and *One Hundred and Sixty Verses*. Firstly, foreign Tripiṭaka master *Zhong hu* compiled important scriptures into twenty-seven chapters, but An Shigao analyzed *Zhong hu*'s compilation and translated seven chapters into Chinese, that is the *Daodi jing*. In total, he translated thirty-nine scriptures throughout his career. （安世高）宣譯眾經，改胡為漢，出《安般守意》《陰持入》、大小《十二門》及《百六十品》。初，外國三藏眾護撰述經要為二十七章，高乃剖析護所集七章，譯為漢文，即《道地經》是也。其先後所出經、論，凡三十九部" (CBETA, T50, no. 2059, p. 323b6-10).

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Article

Miracle Stories in Motion—On the Three Editions of *Guangshiyin Yingyanji*

Chon Iat Lai

Department of History, School of Humanities, Tsinghua University, Beijing 100084, China; ism4c21victor@163.com

Abstract: Previous studies have assumed that the purpose of *Yingyanji* was to produce texts that are proselytistic or evangelical. Through the analysis of *Guangshiyin Yingyanji*, we find that lay people have created *Yingyanji* for a long time. Its main purpose was not to spread religion, but to record regional memories and family beliefs, which were mainly circulated among friends and relatives. Moreover, the miracle stories contained in *Guangshiyin Yingyanji* often have different versions within the three systems of *Zhiguai*, *Yingyan*, and *Gantong*. Through an analysis of these different versions, we can better grasp the purpose of rewriting texts under different systems, and the struggle for ideas which they embody.

Keywords: *Guangshiyin Yingyanji*; miraculous stories; *Zhiguai*; faith competition; lay people

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1. Introduction

Previous research on Buddhist miracle stories or "Buddhist auxiliary texts" (釋氏輔教之書)[1] (Lu 1981, p. 54) from the pre-Tang Dynasty can generally be sorted into two approaches: the influence of Buddhism on Six Dynasties literature, and proselytizing Buddhist literature. The first approach emphasizes the influence of Buddhist sutra stories on *Zhiguai* (志怪) and Six Dynasties literature. This research examines the impact of Buddhist themes and concepts on *Zhiguai*[2] while exploring the relationship between "preaching to people and leading them to conversion" (唱導[3]) and "Buddhist auxiliary texts."[4] However, this approach tends to treat "Buddhist auxiliary texts" as indirect research subjects and does not analyze their nature and content in-depth.

The second approach originated with Lu Xun and considers "Buddhist auxiliary texts" as an independent research subject.[5] The definition and scope of "Buddhist auxiliary texts" were further refined in later research conducted by J. Li (1985, pp. 62–68), emphasizing that the authors of these texts aimed to spread Buddhist teachings and doctrines. Q. Zhang (2018, pp. 39–49) believed that the emergence of these works was related to the Buddhist suppression and anti-Buddhist debates of that time, while Q. Zhang (2018, pp. 39–49) and Cao (1992, pp. 26–36) emphasized their relationship to the disputes between body shape and spirit, as well as the disputes between native and foreign cultures, while acknowledging the political intentions shared with other *Zhiguai* works. However, these related inferences were mainly based on circumstantial evidence such as the authors' intentions or historical context, with less discussion on the direct evidence from the works, or differences in the nature of the texts.[6] To further clarify the nature of "Buddhist auxiliary texts", it is necessary to start the discussion with the earliest extant texts of this type: the three editions of *Guangshiyin Yingyanji* (觀世音應驗記).

Guangshiyin Yingyanji is a collective term for three different editions: 1. The first edition, known as the *Guangshiyin Yingyanji* (光世音應驗記), was written by Fu Liang 傅亮 (374–426) and is referred to as the *Fu* edition. 2. The second edition, called the *Xu Guangshiyin Yingyanji* 續光世音應驗記, was written by Zhang Yan 張演 in the mid-fifth century, and is referred to as the *Zhang* edition. 3. The third edition, named the *Xi Guanshiyin*

Yingyanji 繫觀世音應驗記, was compiled by Lu Gao 陸杲 (459–532) in 501, and is known as the *Lu* edition.

Although these three editions were written by different authors, the later two editions mentioned the early edition and claimed to inherit its subject and compile it. Unfortunately, these three editions were lost in China after the Tang Dynasty, but they were rediscovered at the Shōren-in Temple (青蓮院) in Kyoto during the mid-20th century.

Since the rediscovery of the three different editions of "*Guangshiyin Yingyanji*" in Kyoto, scholars from various countries have conducted research on it. In terms of textual organization, the two annotated editions by Makita Tairyō (1970) and Dong Zhiqiao (2002) are considered the best. The former excels in its historical comparison, while the latter corrects many errors in the original text and provides additional linguistic supplements. In addition, scholars such as Komina (1982, pp. 415–500), X. Zhang (2013, pp. 54–68, 405–17), and C. Sun (1998, pp. 201–28) have conducted research on the circulation and nature of the *Guangshiyin Yingyanji*,[7] or have introduced the belief in Guanyin prevalent during the Six Dynasties period (Makita Tairyo, 1970, pp. 109–56; C. Sun 1998, pp. 201–28; Gu 2015; Xu 2012). However, these studies have mainly focused on organizing the texts, and there is still much work to do regarding the generation of individual stories and their cross-textual transmission. Through an analysis of cross-textual transmission, we can address the following two questions: What is the nature of *Guangshiyin Yingyanji* and the Buddhist auxiliary texts? Also, are there genres of Buddhist auxiliary texts, and what might be their distinctions?

2. Writing Miracle Stories—Starting with the Three Editions of *Guangshiyin Yingyanji*

2.1. From "Sharing between Like-Minded Individuals"(傳諸同好) to "Extraordinary Worldly Transmission"(神奇世傳): Why There Are Three Editions of Guangshiyin Yingyanji

In previous studies, the three editions of *Guangshiyin Yingyanji* were generally treated as a homogeneous entity. Furthermore, researchers tended to analyze these texts from the standpoint of missionary activities and their function as sermon sources. However, these claims only provide indirect or relatively recent evidence, and often lack any direct evidence regarding the actual purpose of the writing found in its prefaces. While Sun Changwu and Komina Ichirō have recognized the importance of these prefaces and pointed out differences between the early *Fu* and *Zhang* editions, as well as the later Lu Gao edition, specific distinctions and reasons for these distinctions remain unexplained. To address these questions, it is necessary to analyze the three prefaces first. They are listed as follows:

> Fu Liang: Xie Qingxu once wrote a volume of *Guangshiyin Yingyanji* in one roll, consisting of over ten stories, and gave it to my father. I kept it when I resided in Huiji, I lost it while fleeing from the war. Recently, upon returning to this place, I sought it but could not find it anymore. Seven stories I remember clearly, but I cannot recall the rest. Therefore, I have written down what I remember to please like-minded believers.
>
> 傅亮：謝慶緒往撰《光世音應驗》一卷十餘事，送與先君。余昔居會土，遇兵亂失之。頃還此境，尋求其文，遂不復存。其中七條具識，餘不能復記其事。故以所憶者更為 此記，以悅同信之士云. (Dong Zhiqiao, 2002, p. 1)
>
> Zhang Yan: Since my youth, I have received teachings and followed the great Dharma, always revering to the supernatural and expressing my admiration. I have long cherished the idea of compiling these records but have not yet accomplished it. When I saw the collection by Fu, it deeply resonated with me. Thus, I decided to write down what I have heard and add it to the end of his text to share it among like-minded individuals 同好.
>
> 張演：演少因門訓，獲奉大法，每欽服靈異，用兼緬慨。竊懷記拾，久而未就。曾見 傅氏所錄，有契乃心。即撰所聞，繼其篇末，傳諸同好云. (Dong Zhiqiao, 2002, p. 28)

> Lu Gao: In the past, an esteemed scholar Xie Qingxu recorded over ten miraculous stories about Guangshiyin and presented them to the Magistrate of Ancheng, Fu Yuan, who was also known as Fu Shuyu. The Fu family resided in Kuaiji, but they lost it during the chaos caused by Sun En. Fu Yuan's son, Fu Liang, who was also known as Fu Jiyou, still remembered seven of those stories and wrote them down. My ancestral uncle, Zhang Yan, who served as an Imperial Secretary, also known as Zhang Jingxuan, separately recorded ten stories to continue Fu's compilation. These seventeen stories have been passed down to the present. Fortunately, I had the opportunity to receive the Buddha's teachings and embraced them since my youth. When I read scriptures describing Guangshiyin, I felt a deep sense of reverence. Additionally, I have seen various contemporary writings and stories that are continuously transmitted by the wise, and their accounts of miraculous events are countless. This has made me realize that the sacred spirits are extremely close, and I am filled with gratitude. I believe that every person's heart has the power to be genuinely moved, and according to the principles of sacred teachings, there must be an inherent force that can be activated. If we can be moved and seek such activation, how can it not have an impact? It is a source of encouragement for virtuous men and virtuous women. Now, in the first year of the Zhongxing reign period of the Southern Qi dynasty(AD 501), I respectfully compiled this volume consisting of sixty-nine stories to connect the works of Fu and Zhang. By arranging them together, readers can see them simultaneously. If there are future wise individuals who continue to hear and learn, they can add to what I have left behind. May this extraordinary worldly transmission widely spread the faith. The details and summaries contained herein are based on what I have heard and know. If you want a detailed examination of it, then we must wait for the insights of other knowledgeable individuals.
>
> 陸杲：昔晉高士謝字慶緒記光世音應驗事十有餘條，以與安成太守傅瑗字叔玉。傅家在會稽，經孫恩亂，失之。其子宋尚書令亮字季友猶憶其七條，更追撰為記。杲祖舅太子中舍人張演字景玄又別記十條，以續傅所撰。合十七條，今傳於世。杲幸遨釋迦遺法，幼便信受。見經中說光世音，尤生恭敬。又睹近世書牒及智識永傳，其言威神諸事，蓋不可數。益悟聖靈極近，但自感激。信人人心有能感之誠，聖理謂有必起之力。以能感而求必起，且何緣不如影響也。善男善女人，可不勗哉！今以齊中興元年，敬撰此卷六十九條，以繫傅、張之作。故連之相從，使覽者并見。若來哲續聞，亦即綴我後。神奇世傳，庶廣飡信。此中詳略，皆即所聞知。如其究定，請俟飡識。 (Dong Zhiqiao, 2002, pp. 57–58)

"Like-minded believers" (同信) certainly refers to believers who share the same faith, but "like-minded individuals" (同好) cannot simply be regarded as a friend in the general sense. Here, it specifically refers to a circle of friends with similar interests and intellectual attainment. For example, in Yang Liu Fu (楊柳賦), Kong Zang (孔臧) states: "Thus, friends with shared interests gather, sitting together in groups. Discussing the Dao and drinking wine, flowing rivers, and floating cups." (Fu Yashu, 2011, p. 449) In Zhi Gong Lun (至公論), Cao Yi (曹義) also mentions: "Those who are calm and noble, and share the same interests, are the best of friends." (Cao Yi comp., Yan Kejun ed., 1958, p. 1163) In certain personal works or accounts, they would only circulate within these social circles. For instance, when Cao Zhi (曹植) mentioned his writings in a letter, he said, "Although I have not been able to hide them on famous mountains, I will transmit them among those with those who have shared interests." (Chen Shou, 1982, p. 559) Huiyan (慧嚴) once "complained about the verbosity of the Mahaparinirvana Sutra, so he edited and condensed it into several volumes and copied two or three to share with those with shared interests."[8] Therefore, the sources of and intended audience for the Fu and Zhang editions were limited to scholars or regional communities involved in the same faith. The prefaces do not excessively emphasize their own beliefs but rather highlight the origin of the stories and the desire for recognition from specific Buddhist communities. They were not written for missionary purposes, but rather

designed as booklets for one's own personal social and religious exchanges, intended for internal circulation.[9]

> *This kind of internal communication can be fully exemplified through the interactions and kinship relations among the three editors(Figure 1). The seven stories in the Fu edition[10] had originally been given to Fu Liang's father, Fu Yuan (傅瑗), by Xie Fu (謝敷). One of the stories was imparted from his father's friend, Xi Chao (郗超), whose father had recruited Xie Fu. Thus, the Fu family, the Xi family, and the Xie family can be said to have all belonged to the same social circle.*

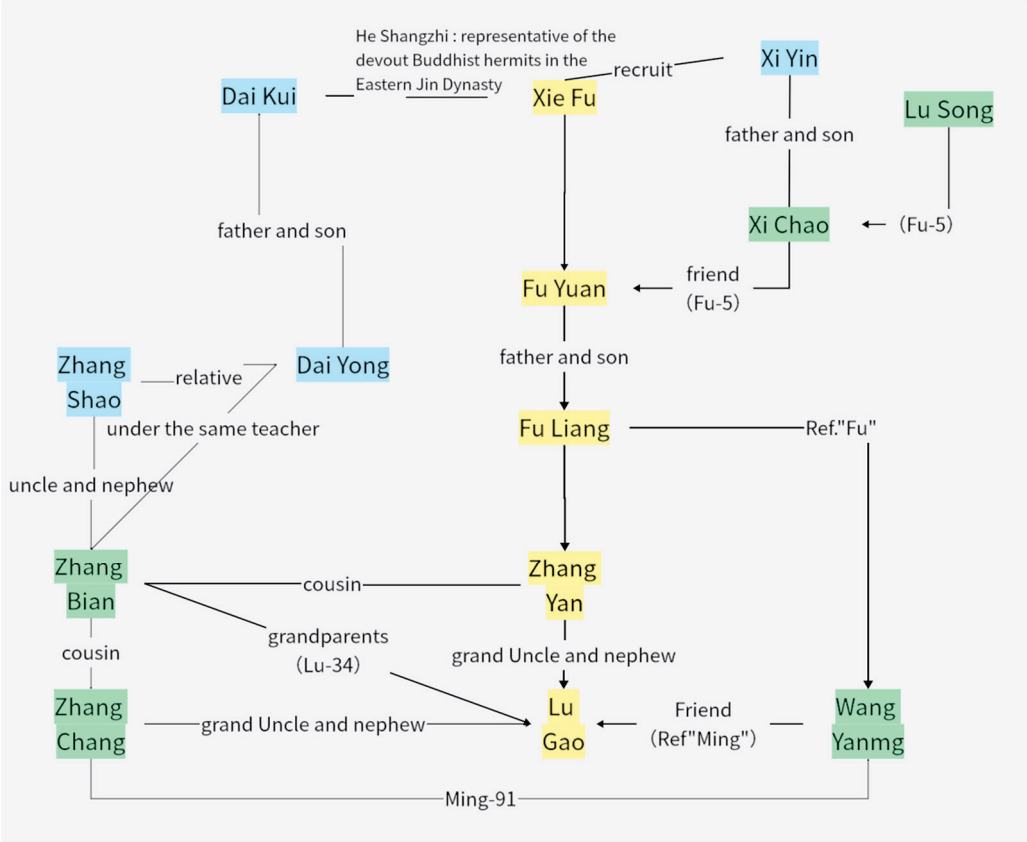

Figure 1. Internal communication of three editions of Guangshiyin Yingyanji Yellow: writer or inheritor; Green: story teller; Blue: related parties.

Although the *Zhang* edition was inspired by Fu Liang's writings, it is unclear whether there was any interaction between their families. However, it is evident that the authors of the *Zhang* and *Lu* editions shared the same circle of friends and kinship networks. In the preface, Lu Gao explicitly states that Zhang Yan is his maternal uncle, and also records the affairs of Zhang Yan cousins, who are related to Lu Gao's maternal grandfather, Zhang Chang (張暢). Lu Gao's writing also references Wang Yan's (王琰) *Mingxiangji* (冥祥記), which, in turn, draws from a biography written by Lu Gao's other maternal uncle, Zhang Bian (張辯).[11] This indicates that there is another layer of friendship and kinship between the Zhang, Lu, Dai, and Wang families. Their stories circulated within these circles, becoming shared cultural and intellectual resources among religious communities.

However, there was a change in the case of Lu Gao. In the preface, he emphasizes his family's religious beliefs which he embraced from a young age, as well as his enthusiasm for promoting miracle stories. This is reflected in the selection of sources and the way that the compilation was made. Lu Gao goes beyond the original sources and extensively references knowledge from sources outside his family, such as "recent writings and the wise". Thus, in this case, *Yingyanji* was no longer just a compilation of family memories but in-

stead became a consciously composed collection of missionary stories. The purpose of the writing shifted from an exchange of stories to the act of compiling texts, and its original social and religious roles became reversed. Emphasis was now on affirming personal beliefs. This contrast becomes more apparent when compared to the preface of Wang Yan's contemporary work, *Mingxiangji*, in which Wang provides a more detailed description of his personal journey of faith, emphasizing that the stories serve as tools for proving his beliefs and stating, "If the efficacy of the scriptures is revealed, the intent of the evidence is the same; the events are not different, so we follow the same path." However, the missionary aspect was not prominent in both works until the preface of *Mingbaoji* (冥報記), during the early Tang Dynasty, when the notion of "persuading people" first emerged.

Fu Liang mentions that he inherited the stories written by Xie Fu. Thus, *Yingyanji* had already emerged by the mid-Eastern Jin Dynasty. From Fu Liang's preface, one can see that Xie Fu followed the same approach of "pleasing believers of the same". Hence, *Yingyanji* appeared over one hundred years before Lu Gao and Wang Yan, but there is no evidence of similar practices among monks.[12] During the same period as Lu and Wang, there was a growing number of secularly authored collections of verified stories, such as *Xuanming Yan* (宣明驗) and *Buxu Mingxiangji* (補續冥祥記), as well as the initial biographies of Buddhist monks. Therefore, the nature of verified stories may have been influenced by factors such as the compilation of books in the Qi and Liang dynasties, and the development of Buddhist monastic communities, leading to the emergence of characteristics that facilitated their dissemination among believers.

2.2. Regional Memories: Sources for and Composition of the Guangshiyin Yingyanji

This difference in intention becomes more evident in the context of its sources and the writing process, where there is both continuity and discontinuity between them. Komina Ichirō has analyzed the sources of each story in the *Yingyanji* in detail, pointing out that Fu Liang's and Zhang Yan's sources mainly stem from personal accounts, acquaintances, or the narratives of monks. Lu Gao also inherited these methods to some extent (Komina 1982, pp. 418–500). However, Komina Ichirō does not answer an important question: Why do many of its sources originate with monks who intend to propagate Buddhism, while the *Yingyanji* itself does not originate from them?

To answer this question, we must first set aside any assumption of "missionary" activities and examine how the *Yingyanji* was composed. Both Fu Liang and Zhang Yan mention that, in addition to the accounts recorded by predecessors, such as Xie Fu and Fu Liang, they also included stories based on their memories and what they had heard, at times explicitly noting the sources of their information. Lu Gao also frequently mentions different editions of the same story, many of which come from his own family or extended relatives. These records and personal experiences often indicate a story's principal source and background. In Fu Liang's text, there are three stories related to the region of *Kuaiji* (會稽), and Xie Fu himself is from that region, along with Fu Liang and his father residing there; In Zhang Yan's text, there are six stories connected with the region of Jingzhou (荊州), where his father had served as a military advisor and a magistrate in his early years.[13] Lu Gao mostly recorded stories from various places in *Yangzhou* (楊州), which can be attributed to his father's position as an official in Yangzhou. Lu Gao also had extensive experience with his own long-term positions there. Therefore, regardless of whether these stories came from monastic or secular sources, their primary attribute is a form of regional knowledge.

Hence, the *Yingyanji* not only served its purpose of recording strange phenomena as a *Zhiguai*, but also served as a repository of family and regional knowledge. This is well illustrated in one of the stories found in Zhang Yan's text [*Zhang*-7][14]:

> Sengrong once joined Shi Tanyi in Jiangling to advise a married couple to uphold the precepts. Later, her husband, implicated by the thieves, escaped. The authorities could only capture his wife and send her to prison. On the way to the prison, she encountered Rong and pleaded for his help. Shi Tanyi responded, "You should engrossing focus on reciting the name of Guanyin Bodhisattva, and

there is no other method." The woman immediately began reciting without interruption. During her imprisonment, one night she dreamed of a monk standing between her shoulders and kicking her with his foot, instructing her to leave. Startled, she woke up and found herself freed from the three wooden restraints. Seeing that the gate was still closed and guarded by several gatekeepers, she thought it was impossible to leave, so she put the restraints back on herself. After a while she fell asleep again and dreamt of someone saying, "Why do not you go? The gate is open." Upon waking up, she passed the guard and walked to the gate, miraculously finding it open. She headed southeast for several miles and was about to reach a village. It was dark and obscure when suddenly she encountered someone, initially feeling alarmed and frightened. At the same time, her husband had been hiding in the grass and wandering during the day, and they asked each other about their well-being. They were indeed the husband and wife. They sought refuge with Shi Tanyi, who hid them in a separate place within the temple. Not long after that, a traveling merchant from their hometown arrived, and Shi Tanyi arranged for them to accompany him and escape successfully.

僧融又嘗與釋曇翼於江陵勸一人夫妻戒，後其人爲劫所引，因遂越走。執婦繫獄。融遇途見之，仍求哀救，對曰："惟當一心念光世音耳，更無餘術。"婦人便稱念不輟。幽閉經時，後夜夢見沙門立其頸間，以足蹴之令去。婦人驚覺，身貫三木忽自離解。見門猶閉，閽司數重守之。謂無出理，還自穿著。有頃得眠，復夢向人曰："何以不去？門自開也。"既起，乃越人向門，門開得出。東南行數里，將至民居。時天夜晦冥，忽逢一人，初甚駭懼。時其夫亦依竄草野，晝伏夜行，各相問訊，乃其夫妻也。遂共投翼，翼即藏之寺內別處。無何，其鄉人有遠商者，翼令隨去，竟得免也。 (Dong Zhiqiao, 2002, p. 48)

This story was later recorded in both the *Fayuan Zhulin* and the *Taiping Guangji* with reference to the *Mingxiangji*. The overall framework of the story is the same; however, there is some discrepancy in the details, and additional information is provided (see Table 1). The incident took place during the early Yuanjia period, and the layperson mentioned in the story is named Zhang Xing.

Table 1. The differing versions of the Sengrong story.

	Timeframe	**Laymen**	**Place**	**Receiving Ordination**	**Refuge**
Zhang-7	no	couple	Jiangling	Precepts; Sengrong, Tanyi	Tanyi
Fayuan Zhulin	early Yuanjia period	Zhang Xing couple		eight precepts; Sengrong, Tanyi	Sengyi
Taiping Guangji	early Yuanjia period	Zhang Xing couple		eight precepts; Sengrong, Tanyi	Sengyi
Xu Gaoseng Chuan	Early Liang dynasty	couple	Jiangling	five precepts: Sengrong	change to take refuge in businessmen

Among the three monks mentioned in the story, the records of Tanyi and Sengyi are the most well-documented. Both of them have biographies in the *Gaoseng Zhuan*. Tanyi was a disciple of *Daoan* (道安) and was sent to Jiangling to establish the Changsha Monastery and lead the monastic community. He passed away in the nineteenth year of the Taiyuan era (AD 394). Sengyi was a disciple of Huiyuan (慧遠) and traveled north to study in Guanzhong (關中). In the thirteenth year of the Yongxi era (AD 417), he established a monastery in Kuaiji and subsequently lived there in seclusion for thirty years. He passed away in the twenty-seventh

year of the Yuanjia era (AD 450). By comparison, very few records on Sengrong exist. Both the *Gaoseng Zhuan* (高僧傳) and the *Mingseng Zhuan* (名僧傳) only mention that he was a monk active in the Lushan area of Jiujing. The *Gaoseng Zhuan* also indicates his ability to subdue demons. According to records, he should have been a monk active during the late Eastern Jin dynasty. In summary, Tanyi was a monk active in Jiangling during the second half of the 4th century; Sengyi was a monk active in Kuaiji during the early Liu-Song dynasty; Sengrong was a monk active in Jiujing during the late Eastern Jin period. Each of them operated in different regions, and Sengyi came later than the other two, indicating no apparent connection between them.

When comparing the *Zhang* edition with *Mingxiangji*, the first issue becomes the timeframe of the story. According to *Zhang*, considering the lower limit mentioned in terms of reign titles and events, this story likely took place toward the end of the Jin dynasty. However, according to *Mingxiangji*, it occurred during the early years of the Liu-Song dynasty.[15] The deceased monk, Tanyi, could not have appeared during the early years of the Liu-Song dynasty; therefore, a contradiction exists between the two editions of the story.

If the content of the *Zhang* edition is assumed to be entirely true, then the additional timeframe and altered characters found in *Mingxiangji* would be incorrect. On the other hand, both versions of the *Fayuan Zhulin* and the *Taiping Guangji* state that Tanyi conferred the precepts, but the monk who received them had changed from Tanyi to Sengyi. Furthermore, both versions depict the layman, Zhang Xing, as the protagonist and transform Tanyi, the monk from Jiangling, into Sengyi, the monk from Kuaiji. Consequently, a story about a monk named Tanyi in Jiangling during the late Eastern Jin period saving a couple is transformed into a story about a layman in the early Liu-Song dynasty being rescued from distress.

In addition to the possibility of *Mingxiangji* being modified, one can find potential alterations to another story involving Sengrong in the *Zhang* edition (*Zhang*-6):

> The monk Shi Sengrong was devoted and compassionate. He advised a family in Jiangling to embrace Buddhism and practice it together. Initially, there were several temples dedicated to gods, which were provided for the support of the monks. Sengrong decided to demolish and remove all the pagan temples associated with the laymen's family, so he stayed there for seven days for the Buddhist assembly. After Sengrong returns to this temple, the homeowner of that family suddenly sees a ghost holding a red rope, intending to bind him. The mother became greatly worried and immediately invited a Buddhist monk to chant scriptures, causing the ghost to vanish on its own. Sengrong later returned to Mount Lushan and stayed overnight at an inn along the way. It was raining and snowing that night, and he only fell asleep in the middle of the night. Suddenly, he saw numerous ghostly soldiers, among them a particularly large one wearing armor and carrying a weapon. He sat on the big bed that someone was holding up. The great ghost suddenly exclaimed with a stern voice, "How dare you say that ghosts cannot fulfill other people's wishes!". They attempted to drag Sengrong to the ground. However, before they could act, Sengrong concentrated and chanted the name of Bodhisattva Guanyin. Before his voice faded, a figure resembling a general, over a *zhang* (seven feet) tall, emerged from behind the bed where Sengrong was staying. This figure wore yellow-dyed leather trousers and held a golden disc, confronting the ghost. The ghost was immediately frightened and scattered, and the ghost soldiers in armor were suddenly shattered into pieces.
>
> 僧人釋僧融，篤志泛愛，勸江陵一家，令合門奉佛。其先有神寺數間，以與之，充 給僧用。融便毀撤，大小悉取，因留設福七日。還寺之後，主人忽見一鬼，持赤索，欲縛之。母甚憂懅，乃便請沙門轉經，鬼怪遂自無。融後還廬山，道中獨宿逆旅。時天雨雪，中夜始眠。忽見鬼兵甚眾，其一大者帶甲挾刃，形甚壯偉，有舉胡床者，大鬼對己前據之。乃揚聲厲色曰：君何謂鬼神無靈耶？便使曳融下地。左右未及加手，融意大不憙，稱念光世音，聲未及絕，即見所住床後，有一

> 狀若將帥者，可長丈餘，著黃染皮袴褶，手提金杖以擬鬼，鬼便驚懼散走，甲胄之卒然粉碎。 (Dong Zhiqiao, 2002, p. 44)

This story can be divided into two parts: Sengrong's solicitation in Jiangling and his encounter with ghosts in Mount Lu. Sengrong had already left after preaching in Jiangling, and it was other monks who managed to exorcise the ghosts that disturb the households of believers. This appears to be unrelated to Sengrong's later encounter with ghosts. (*Zhang*-6) clearly describes that both Tanyi and Sengrong were involved in the proselyting in Jiangling, and that the woman sought help from Sengrong but ended up taking refuge in the temple where Tanyi resided. (*Zhang*-7) depicts Sengrong's involvement in the solicitation in Jiangling, yet it was the other monks who resolved the ghost encounter for the host, while Sengrong encountered ghosts during his solitary training in Mount Lu. Both stories begin with Sengrong's involvement in proselyting, but only in a certain portion of the stories. Therefore, there is a possibility of later recompilation.

When comparing the records of the three monks in the Buddhist biographies, Monk Yi does not have any miraculous incidents associated with him. The miraculous incidents attributed to Monk Tanyi are all related to relics and Buddha statues, emphasizing his sincere faith rather than his inherent supernatural abilities. Only Sengrong is described as having the ability to subdue ghosts and spirits through his austere practice. Therefore, we can suggest that Sengrong is likely to have been added as a character with supernatural abilities to the story originally centered around Tanyi, who had been the main protagonist in Jiangling. Sengrong's encounter with ghosts was an additional story placed in the background of Jiangling. Both stories involving Sengrong were combined and included in the *Xu Gaoseng Zhuan* (續高僧傳), where Sengrong was reimagined as a monk with supernatural abilities during the early Liang dynasty. Although both stories are set in Jiangling, the presence of the other monks has been removed, and the act of seeking refuge alone was altered to seeking refuge together with a merchant, making Sengrong the sole protagonist of the story. The *Xu Gaoseng Zhuan* explicitly states that he came from the Donglin Temple in Jiujian, which indicates a possible reference to another version of the story circulating in Jiujian.[16]

Apart from the story itself, the construction of regional knowledge can be observed through its narrators. This characteristic is particularly evident when comparing stories told by northern immigrants. The stories of those who migrated from the north to the south were not recorded by the author, but rather passed down by familiar monks or laymen.[17] Therefore, they were based upon certain points during the war, had relatively simple storylines, and did not record the subsequent experiences of any individuals involved, or other versions of the story. The other stories, however, were narrated by the individuals involved or their relatives and friends, because their protagonists had lived in the Southern Dynasties. Some stories even have multiple narrators, resulting in more complex narratives and multiple versions.

This characteristic of multiple narratives can be illustrated through the story of the "Pengcheng widow" (*Lu*-63).

> The Pengcheng widow came from a family devoted to Buddhism, and she was diligent in her practice. She had lost all her relatives, leaving only one son who listened to her teachings. The son was extremely filial, and the bond between the mother and son was filled with love and compassion. In the seventh year of the Yuanjia era (AD 430), her son accompanied Dao Yanzhi on a military campaign against the nomads. The elderly widow bid farewell with tears, repeatedly advising and admonishing her son to observe the precepts and have faith in Guanyin Bodhisattva. The elderly widow was extremely poor, she had nothing to offer the Buddhist assembly, so she often sat in front of the Guanyin statue, lighting a lamp to pray for blessings. Her son was captured by the Wei Kingdom army while carrying out his mission to capture prisoners. Fearing that he might escape, the Wei Kingdom army escorted him to the northernmost border. When the army returned, her son did not come back. However, she kept lighting a

lamp in front of the statue, praying for Guanyin Bodhisattva's help. During the same period, her son also prayed day and night in the north. One night, he suddenly saw a light shining brightly at a distance of a hundred paces. He tried to approach it, but the light disappeared. Then, he saw it again in front of him, as if beckoning him. He thought it was a divine phenomenon, so he followed the light. After every sunset, the light would be illuminated again. Therefore, he stopped in a village to beg for food during the day and continued his journey at night guided by the light. He traversed mountains and valleys as if they were level ground, traveling thousands of miles until he returned to his hometown. Upon his arrival, he saw his mother still kneeling in front of the lamp, her face illuminated by its light. He realized that the light he had seen before was the lamp before the statue. The news spread far and wide, and everyone rejoiced in their miraculous experience. The mother and son redoubled their efforts in their spiritual practice. After his mother's passing, the son decided to become a monk. Later, he sought a master and disappeared; no one knew where he was.

Another version tells of the widow. After she lost her son, she constantly lit a lamp in front of the Guanyin statue and recited the Guanyin Sutra day and night, hoping to have a vision of Guanyin. However, she is also afraid that her son may have already perished. She also performed seasonal ancestral rituals. The nomads treated her son as a slave and assigned him to herd the animals. Every time during the ancestral ritual, her son would dream of returning to partake in the offerings. After the widow's sincere devotion for over a year. One day, while her son was in the mountains, he suddenly saw a pillar-like light, approximately ten steps away, that quickly moved beyond his reach. He pursued it persistently and finally returned home after ten days. Upon his return home, he witnessed the light leading directly to the Guanyin statue, while his mother was prostrated in front of it.

There are two versions of this story. I copied it from the *Xuanyanji* by Gao Chao. I showed them to the provincial official He Yi of Nanyuzhou. He Yi, known as a diligent and honest scholar, said, "I have heard this story since my childhood. The widow was my maternal grandmother. I have often heard my family reiterate her tale, saying that she tore a lot for her lost son. Her tears fell on the lamp, causing it to burst. Her cheeks were scalded and burned by the lamp oil.

彭城嫗者，家世事佛，嫗唯精進。親屬並亡，唯有一子，素能教訓。兒甚有孝敬，母子慈愛，大至無倫。元嘉七年，兒隨到彥之伐虜。嫗銜弟追送，唯屬弁歸依觀世音。家本極貧，無以設福，母但常在觀世音像前然燈乞願。兒於軍中出取獲，為虜所得。慮其叛亡，遂遠送北堺。及到軍復還，而嫗子不反，唯歸心燈像，猶欲一望感淚。兒在北亦恆長在念，日夜積心。後夜，忽見一燈，顯其百步。試往觀之，至徑失去。因即更見在前，已復如向，疑是神異，為自走逐。日沒，還復見燈，遂晝停村乞食，夜乘燈去。經歷山險，怔若行平。輾轉數千里，遂還鄉。初至，正見母在像前，伏燈火下。因悟前所見燈即是像前燈也。遠近聞之，無不助為憙。其母子遭荷神力，倍精進。兒終卒供養，乃出家學道。後遂尋師遠遁，不知所終。

一說嫗既失子，恆燃燈觀世音像前，晝夜誦觀世音經，希感聖神，望一相見，又恐或已亡沒，兼四時祠之。虜以嫗子為奴，放牧草澤。母祠之日，輒夢還饗。母積誠一年，晝夜至到。後兒在山中，忽見一光如柱形，長一丈，去已十步，而疾走不及。逐之不 已，得十日至家。至家，見光直歸像前，母正稽顙在地。

有二本如此云。杲抄《宣驗記》，得此事，以示南豫州別駕何意。意，篤學厚士也。語杲：此嫗，其外氏。固從已小時數聞家中叙其事，云嫗失兒，恆沾淚，淚下燈爆， 雨頰遂爛，其苦至如此。 (Dong Zhiqiao, 2002, pp. 194–95)

In addition to He Yi's version, there are three versions of this story. The general idea of the story revolves around a mother and son from Pengcheng. The son was captured by

the enemy during the Northern Expedition in the seventh year of the Yuanjia era (AD 430), but later returned. Throughout his journey south, he was guided by a lamp, and upon reaching home, he discovered that his mother had been praying with a lamp in front of the statue all along.

Interestingly, *Xuanyanji* (宣驗記) also records another strikingly similar story, which is cited in *Bianzheng Lun* (辯正論), *Shishi Liutie* (釋氏六帖), and *Taiping Guangji*. The three citations are essentially the same. This is the version cited from *Bianzheng Lun*:

> "The story of Che's mother lighting the lamp to pray, and her son unexpectedly coming back": The story of Che's mother is about her son suffering during the "Qingni Incident" caused by the King Luling of Song, which was captured by Fofo caitiffs and imprisoned in the enemy barracks. His mother has always been a Buddhist, so she immediately started to light seven lamps in front of the Buddha statue. She wept earnestly day and night, praying for her son's liberation. This went on for years. Suddenly, her son managed to escape and return, traveling alone on foot for seven days. He lost direction due to the cloudy weather, and he saw seven segments of firelight in the distance and ran toward them. It appeared to be a village, so he intended to seek refuge, but he was unable to reach it continuously. In addition, after seven nights, he unknowingly arrived home. He saw his mother still praying in front of the Buddha and lit seven lamps. At that moment, they both realized the power of the Buddha. From then on, they devoted themselves to practicing acts of charity and endurance.
>
> 車母燃燈不期兒至。車母者，遭宋廬陵王青泥之難為佛佛虜所得，在賊營中。其母先來奉佛，即燃七燈於佛前。晝夜精心哭觀世音，願子得脫。如是經年，其子忽得叛還。七日七夜行獨自南走，值天陰不知西東。遙見有七段火光，望火而走。似村欲投，終不可至。如是七夕，不覺到家。見其母猶在佛前伏地，又見七燈，因乃發悟。母子共 談知是佛力，自後懇到專行檀忍。[18]

Here, the timeframe of the story changes to the Qingni Incident in the 14th year of the Yihe era (AD 418), referring to Liu Yizhen's (劉義真) retreat from Guanzhong (關中). Although there are differences between the two accounts in terms of the names of the individuals involved, the objects of offering, and the details about lighting the lamps,[19] the theme and structure of the story are indeed similar, in which a mother offers lamps to the Buddha and prays for her son's return. There are two possibilities here: one is that *Guangshiyin Yingyanji* recorded two highly similar stories; the other is that they draw on one another. Regardless of the outcome, it can be inferred that this particular story was widely popular when *Guangshiyin Yingyanji* was written, leading to the emergence of several versions. Whether it was rewritten, or just a selection of a particular version, *Lu* abandoned the story of a son being saved through the mother's offering to the Buddha, and instead chose (or composed) a version that emphasized the family's devotion to the Guanyin, resulting in his salvation.

If we focus solely on determining which version is true, or if there is a relationship between copying and rewriting, we may overlook the unique qualities of *Yingyanji*. Only by combining local knowledge with the establishment of familial and regional characteristics can one discover the intertextuality among different stories, as well as the complex interactive relationships between them.[20] When Liu Yizhen compiled *Xuanyanji*, only twenty years had passed since the Qingni Incident. In contrast, Lu Gao, who recorded the *Lu* edition, was separated from Dao Yanzhi's Northern Expedition by seventy years, and from the Qingni Incident by nearly a hundred. It would have been difficult for him to determine the exact timing of these events. Additionally, the story would have been spread over different regions and through different battles. In addition to the possibility that the existing version of *Xuanyanji* differs from what Lu Gao saw, it is also possible that Lu Gao supplemented the story based on other versions he had heard, or other augmented versions he had copied. Lu Gao said that "the story was widely known, and everyone enthusiastically supported it". We can imagine that a story of successful escape and return home must have

been rare and deeply impactful. Therefore, the focus is not on determining which version is true, as *Xuanyanji* provides only the earliest existing version. The significance lies in how the story of the "Pengcheng widow" carries the collective memory of repeated failure as well as the loss of family and loved ones during the Northern Expeditions in the Jin-Song transition period. In this way, this original narrative has had quite a lasting impact.[21]

Its multiple narratives make it difficult to ascertain the truth of the story, but the story itself carries specific collective memories, allowing us to glimpse into how the story was constructed, as seen in (*Lu*-32):

> Zhu Lingshi, a native of Pei, was a meritorious minister of Emperor Gaozu of the Liu-Song dynasty. In the early period of the Jin Dynasty's Yixi era, he served as the magistrate of Wuxing Wukang. At that time, there were many wicked people in the county, and Lingshi executed and killed a large number of them, exceeding the proper limit, which could have led to his death sentence. The court ordered Zhang Chongzhi to investigate the matter, and Lingshi was arrested and imprisoned, awaiting execution. The family filed a lawsuit at the time, but a final verdict has not yet been reached. Corrected: At that time, there was a monk named Shi Huinan who was an old acquaintance of Lingshi. Someone informed Shi Huinan about the news, and he went to visit Lingshi in prison. He taught Lingshi to recite the name of Guanyin and also left a statue of Guanyin for worship. Lingshi was already a believer in Buddhism, and now that he was facing adversity, he became even more devoted to his worship, continually reciting the name of Guanyin. After seven days, his shackles were miraculously unlocked. The prison guards were amazed, so they reported it to Zhang Chongzhi. Zhang suspected that Lingshi became thin during the period. They try to put the shackles back on, but they did not fit. They still believed it was just a coincidence, so they tightened the shackles again. However, after a few days, the shackles loosened again. This situation happened three times, so Zhang Chongzhi reported this miraculous incident. While detailed discussions on the matter had already refuted the accusations against Lingshi, Zhang Chongzhi's report also arrived, so they immediately released Lingshi and resumed his post. Both Lingshi and his brothers achieved great success.
>
> 朱齡石，沛人也，為宋高祖功臣。晉義熙初，作吳興武康令，時縣有兇猾，齡石誅殺過多，當死。朝廷使張崇之檢校其事，被收録，繫在獄中，當死。家人訟訴，是非未辯。時有道人釋惠難與石有舊，乃往告，入獄看之。因教其念觀世音，又留一人像與供養。齡石本事佛，並窮厄意專，遂一心係念。得七日，即鎖械自脫。獄吏驚怪，以故白崇。崇疑是愁苦形瘦，故鎖械得脫。試使還著，永不復入。猶謂偶爾，更釘著之。又經少日，已得如前。凡三過，崇即啓以為異。爾時都下前論詳其事，已破申。會崇至，還復縣，齡石亦終能至到，兄弟有功名。 (Dong Zhiqiao, 2002, p. 124)

According to the "Biography of Zhu Lingshi" in the *Songshu* (宋書), Zhu Lingshi's indiscriminate killings occurred after the Jin Dynasty invaded Shu in the tenth year of the Yixi reign (AD 414). It states, "Initially, Lingshi pacified the rebellion in the Shu region, and the number of people he executed was limited to the rebel leader's clan. However, Hou Chande rebelled and many people were implicated and executed". This shows that the incident had a significant impact at that time. However, this incident does not correspond to the account mentioned here. Nevertheless, years before the invasion of Shu, Zhu Lingshi was appointed as the magistrate of Wukang and was indeed involved in the execution of local ruffians in Wuxing. During his tenure, he lured and killed dozens of bandits, bringing peace to the county. However, there is no record of him being held accountable, and he was soon promoted.[22] Therefore, it can be inferred that the stories in *Lu* should be combined with these two incidents. Additionally, similar narratives can be found in other anecdotal stories about Zhu Lingshi.[23]

Accordingly, it can likely be concluded that the stories in *Yingyanji* may not have been recorded accurately, but instead draw upon certain real events and bear certain collective memories. Such ambiguity is not uncommon. When Baochang (寶唱) collected stories about Shanmiaoni's (善妙尼) self-immolation, which happened several decades prior, there were already three different versions circulating during the 17th Yuanjia (AD 440), Xiaojian (AD 454–456), and Daming (AD 457–464) periods.[24] Therefore, the fluid nature of legends should not be underestimated. Correspondingly, these collective memories serve as the prototypes of stories which are constantly rewritten and transmitted, allowing them to continue to be passed down.

In summary, the reason why the *Yingyanji* was not compiled by monks is precisely that it was a compilation of stories put together by an author who had either heard or experienced them, and then shared them with their regional community. Therefore, Xie Fu, who resided in Mount Kuaiji, passed on the stories to the Fu family, who in turn added on the local stories they had heard in Kuaiji. Zhang Yan, a relative of the Fu family, obtained the version from Fu Liang and added stories that were circulated in Jingzhou. Lu Gao, building upon the work of his predecessors, incorporated many local stories from Yangzhou and had interactions with Wang Yan and He Yi.[25] They continually supplemented the stories told by their relatives and friends based on the foundation of previous works, resulting in a collection of stories circulated within a specific group. It is precisely due to the nature of this internal circulation that stories often do not require an accurate time. This is particularly evident in Zhang Yan's edition, where out of ten stories, only three indicate some time of occurrence.[26] Among those seven without dates or time markers, four had dates added in later records and some details were added, too, entering into the realm of biographical records.[27]

This tendency gradually disappears in Lu Gao's version, and other works with a heavier emphasis on proselytizing, such as the *Mingxiangji*. They require explicit time markers and merits to enhance credibility and incorporate various accounts and arguments to strengthen their persuasiveness.[28] At the same time, their sources of material continued to expand. Lu Gao collected stories from various regions and various textual sources to demonstrate the universality of Guangshiyin worship. On the other hand, the *Mingxiangji* aimed to collect all miracle stories since Emperor Ming's dream of Buddha, focusing on the spread of Buddhism to the East and the development of Han Chinese Buddhism.[29] Both would gradually move away from the local, inward-facing approach to compilation, instead shifting their focus from the family to the broader society, and expanded the scope of their object of worship from specific religious figures to the entire Buddhist tradition.

Miracle stories are not independent products of a specific time and place, but are constructed through the layering of first-hand witnesses, narrators, and recorders. These stories also generate different versions in different regions. Even after being recorded, each version still contains differences based on factors such as region and perspective in different types of texts. Therefore, an analysis on the dissemination of miracle stories cannot be limited to the *Yingyanji* itself; it is necessary to examine the overall process of their dissemination. Based on different writing perspectives and factors, these versions can be classified into different textual systems. The next chapter will focus on the study of the rewriting and generation of supernatural stories within different textual systems, examining the stories within the context of their overall transmission process. By exploring the continuous compilation and rewriting of supernatural stories, as well as the writing characteristics of different textual systems, we can better understand the fluidity of supernatural stories.

3. *Zhiguai*, *Yingyan* (應驗), and *Gantong* (感通): The Compilation of Miracle Stories

Since the nature of *Yingyanji* differs from later "Buddhist auxiliary texts", discrepancies within the same story among different dissemination systems become significant. We may classify them based on the *Zhiguai* system, which has no Buddhist leanings; the *Yingyan*[30] system, which was written by Buddhist laypeople; and the *Gantong*[31] system written by Buddhist monks. Unlike the later-developed chuanqi, Yingyan, and Gantong

in Zhiguai, they still retain descriptive traits and are mostly of short length. However, they exhibit different emphases when narrating the stories, leading to their selection and the rewriting of the stories. As a result, the same story may take on various appearances and versions in the records of the three distinct narrative systems. Below, we will compare Yingyan with Zhiguai first.

3.1. Zhiguai and Yingyan: Analysis of Stories with Parallel Non-Religious Literature

Of the six stories with parallel texts in nonreligious literature, five of them have pre-Tang texts. Here, detailed discussions will be conducted on four of them.[32]

Fu-7: Monk Zhu Fayi
Direct source: Fayi told Fu Liang's father when they traveled together
Parallel texts: *Mingseng Zhuan, Gaoseng Zhuan, Fayuan Zhulin quoted Mingxiangji, Fayuan Zhulin quoted Shuyiji* (述異記), *Taiping Guangji* quoted *Shuyiji, Bei Shan Lu* (北山録)

This story does not originate from Xie Fu, but from Fu Liang, who inherited it from his father. Therefore, it should be considered the original version of the story. The story's essence is that the monk Zhu Fuyi became ill and turned to Guanyin for salvation. Later, he dreamed of a monk cleansing his intestines, and upon waking up, he miraculously recovered. The story later appeared in *Shuyiji*,[33] *Mingxiangji*, and *Mingseng Zhuan* during the Qi and Liang dynasties. It continued to be disseminated in the religious literature, such as the *Gaoseng Zhuan* and the *Fayuan Zhulin*.

Makita Tairyō argues that two similar stories found in the *Fayuan Zhulin* come from *Mingxiangji* and the *Fu* edition. He considers the attribution of the story to *Shuyiji* a mistake, which was subsequently inherited by the *Taiping Guangji* [Makita Tairyō, 1970, p. 82]. However, this is a simple deduction that simplifies the transmission of the story. Since the *Fu* edition was heard by the author's father and is likely the original record of the story, it serves as a common source for both *Shuyiji* and *Mingxiangji*, with the two being over one hundred years apart in their respective narrations. Therefore, it is rather reasonable for *Fayuan Zhulin* to have adopted the later *Shuyiji* and this hypothesis can be supported by comparing the two versions of *Mingxiangji* and *Shuyiji*.

The two versions recorded in *Fayuan Zhulin* are as follows. *Fayuan Zhulin* quoted *Mingxiangji*:

> During the Jin Dynasty, there was a monk named Zhu Fuyi in Shining Mountain. He was very knowledgeable and particularly adept at Lotus Sutra. He had more than a hundred disciples. In the second year of the Xian'an era (AD 372), he suddenly fell ill and felt strong discomfort in his heart. He always kept praying to Guanyin. One night, he dreamed of a person opening his abdomen and washing his intestines. When he woke up, his illness miraculously disappeared. Fu Liang often said that his father and Zhu Fuyi had a close relationship; every time he mentioned the miracles of Guanyin, he would show great respect.
>
> 晉始寧山有竺法義。晉興寧中沙門，游刃眾典尤善法華，受業弟子常有百餘。至咸安二年，忽感心氣疾病，常存念觀世音。乃夢見一人破腹洗腸，寤便病愈。傅亮每云：吾先君與義公游處無間，說觀世音神異，莫不大小肅然。[34]

The narrative of *Mingxiangji*[35] and the *Fu* edition is generally the same, but the former adds the lively detail of "during the Xingning period." This account aligns with the record in *Shamen Tanzongsiji* (沙門曇宗寺記) from *Gaoseng Zhuan*,[36] mentioning that Zhu Fuyi "first resided in Baoshan during the Xingning period." *Fayuan Zhulin* cites *Shuyiji* as follows:

> During the Jin dynasty, the Śramana Zhu Fuyi resided in the mountains and was a diligent scholar. He lived in Baoshan in Xingning. Later, he fell ill for a long time, and despite extensive medical treatment, his condition did not improve. He became bedridden and gave up treatment, relying solely on devotion to Guanyin. This continued for several days until one day, while he was sleeping during the

day, he dreamt of a divine being who came to attend to his illness. The divine underwent a surgical procedure, removing and cleansing his intestines and stomach, discovering numerous impurities and cleansing them before putting them back inside. The divine being said, "Your illness has been eliminated." Upon waking up, all his ailments disappeared, and he returned to his normal state of health. According to the scripture (*Lotus Sutra*), Guanyin may manifest as a monk or a Brahmin, which Zhu Fuyi interpreted as the divine being in his dream. Zhu Fuyi passed away in the seventh year of the Taiyuan era (372). Correct: Of the six incidents involving Zhu Zhangshu to Zhu Faye, all were written by Fu Liang, the Prime Minister of the Liu-Song dynasty. Fu Liang stated that his father had interacted with Zhu Fuyi. Whenever Zhu Fuyi recounted these events, his father would feel more respect.

晉沙門竺法義，山居好學，住在始寧保山。後得病積時。攻治備至而了不損。日就綿篤，遂不復自治，唯歸誠觀世音。如此數日，晝眠夢見一道人來候其病。因為治之，刳出腸胃，湔洗腑藏。見有結聚不淨物甚多，洗濯畢還內之，語義曰：「汝病已除。」眠覺眾患豁然，尋得復常。案其經云，或現沙門梵志之像，意者義公所夢其是乎。義以太元七年亡。自竺長舒至義六事，並宋尚書令傅亮所撰。亮自云：其先君與義游處。義每說其事，輒懍然增肅焉。[37]

From the concluding sections of both texts, it can be seen that *Shuyiji* and *Mingxiangji* share a common source. Therefore, it is not possible to affirm *Mingxiangji* while negating *Shuyiji*. It cannot be ruled out that one version was copied by *Fayuan Zhulin* from *Shuyiji*. For example, the mention of the year of death in *Shuyiji* is not found in other texts.[38] Correspondingly, *Shamen Tanzongsiji* does not mix the accounts of *Zhu Fuyi's* studies and the construction of the Jianxin Pavilion Temple into this system. Moreover, from its table of contents, it can be inferred that these two versions have different emphases. Based on this, we can outline the context of the story's evolution:

1. *Fu* edition --> *Mingxiangji* + *Shamen Tanzongsiji* --> *Mingseng Zhuan, Gaoseng Zhuan* (+ unknown text), *Fayuan Zhulin*
2. *Fu* edition --> *Shuyiji* --> *Fayuan Zhulin*, *Taiping Guangji*

Lu-15: Gao Xun

Direct sources: *Shuzhengji* (述征記) and *Zhenyiji* (甄異記)[39]
Parallel texts: *Guanyin Yishu* (觀音義疏) quoting *Yingyanji*, *Bianzheng Lun* quoting *Xuanyanji* and *Xu Soushenji* (續搜神記), *Fahua jing Wenju Fuzheng Ji* (法華經文句輔正記), *Taiping Guangji* quoting *Xuanyanji*, *Sanbao Ganying Yao Luelu* (三寶感應要略錄) quoting *Xuanyanji*

At the end of the text, Lu Gao quotes *Shuzhengji* and *Zhenyiji*, but it is only for reference and not a direct copy. The main body of the story still comes from *Yingyanji*. Both *Xuanyanji* and Lu Gao deliberately omit the variant of selling one's wife, indicating their conscious removal of this detail. Interestingly, in later works such as *Guanyin Yishu* and *Fahua jing Wenju Fuzheng Ji*, there is no avoidance of such detail.

Furthermore, in the version of *Xuanyanji* quoted in *Bianzheng Lun*, the object of the protagonist's prayers is the "Buddha deity", and the divine power of the Buddha deity is emphasized repeatedly, but Guanyin did not appear. However, in the later versions of *Xuanyanji* quoted in *Taiping Guangji* and *Sanbao Ganying Yao Luelu*, both the Buddha deity and Guanyin interchangeably appear in the story, forming the concepts of "reciting Guanyin together" and "devoting oneself wholeheartedly to Guanyin", but also seeking mercy and assistance from Buddha. These reflect the influence of *Yingyanji* on later versions.

Lu-34: *Zhang Huoji Shijun*

Direct source: Zhang Chang, the maternal grandfather of Lu Gao
Parallel texts: *Guanyin Yishu* quoting *Yingyanji, Taiping Guangji* quoting Yang Jie's *Tansou* (談藪)

Since this story originates from the personal record of Lu Gao's maternal grandfather, Zhang Chang, the events in the story are particularly detailed, including his official

career experience. The story can be divided into two parts: Qiao Wang intends to kill Zhang Chang due to his admonishments, but whenever he has ill intentions, he dreams of Guanyin at night and refrains from inflicting harm. Zhang Chang is later imprisoned for his involvement in Qiao Wang's affairs, so he recites scriptures a thousand times, causing his shackles to break, and is eventually released.

Compared with Lu Gao's account, *Tansou* removes many details such as the religious background and Zhang Chang's admonishment of Qiao Wang, retaining only the records of Guanyin's manifestation twice. Furthermore, the phrase "whenever he has ill intentions and dreams of Guanyin at night" is changed to "when he intends to harm and dreams of Guanyin at night", simplifying the narrative of consistent manifestations to a dream of a divine being.

Lu-35: Zhang Da
Direct source: *Zhang Shi Bie Zhuan* (張氏別傳)
Parallel texts: *Bianzheng Lun* quoting *Zhang Shi Bie Zhuan*, *Taiping Guangji* quoting *Zhang Shi Zhuan* (張氏傳), *Shishi Liutie*

This story consists of only about thirty words, describing Zhang Da's imprisonment and subsequent salvation through reciting scriptures, followed by his becoming a monk. However, *Bianzheng Lun* and *Taiping Guangji* only mention that Zhang Da observed a lifelong vegetarian diet and abstained from worldly desires, but do not mention him becoming a monk. Furthermore, both sources describe him devoting himself wholeheartedly to meditation,[40] rather than reciting scriptures.

Looking at the differences observed in the versions above, several characteristics can be summarized. First, any overlap between *Yingyanji* and its nonreligious counterpart gradually decreases. There are three instances in Fu Liang's work, one in Zhang's, and two in Lu Gao's. Considering the proportional factor, the later *Yingyanji* and nonreligious literature have less overlap, reflecting a differentiation between *Zhiguai* and *Yingyan* narratives. Second, there is mutual rewriting among the *Zhiguai* and *Yingyan* narrative systems. The *Yingyan* system, influenced by popular religious evangelism, removes descriptions that go against societal ethics, such as "selling wives and children", while such descriptions are preserved in the *Zhiguai* and monk-oriented *Gantong* stories.[41]

Last, the *Zhiguai* narratives are solely concerned with extraordinary phenomena and are not interested in the details of Buddhist beliefs. Therefore, they tend to reduce vivid and intricate stories of spiritual experience into dreams of the divine beings. In response, the *Yingyan* narratives also make modifications to conform them with their own religious beliefs. For example, Chan meditation is changed to scripture recitation, and Buddhist deities are replaced with Guanyin Bodhisattva. Additionally, *Guanghiyin Yingyanji* places more emphasis on the power of Guanyin Bodhisattva compared with other *Yingyan* narratives which are closer to supernatural tales. Apart from changing the object of supplication, stories that cannot demonstrate the power of the spiritual are also removed. Lu Gao selectively removed certain stories several times because "this matter does not reach the level". Traces of these stories can still be found in three other texts:

> In the *Bianzheng Lun*, the *Xuanyanji* is cited, stating that Yu Wen braved the raging waves without fear. When Yu Wen carried salt in Nanhai and encountered strong winds, he silently recited Guanyin's name, and the wind subsided and the waves calmed down. Finally, he got safe.
>
> (This account is also mentioned in *Shishi Liutie*.)
>
> 《辯正論》引《宣驗記》：俞文汎海不畏洪波。俞文載鹽於南海值風。默念觀音，風停浪靜。於是獲安。
>
> (《義楚六帖》亦載)[42]
>
> In the *Fayuan Zhulin*, the *Mingxiangji* is cited, recounting the story of Gu Mai, a resident of Wu County. He was a devout practitioner of Buddhism and served as a military official. In the nineteenth year of the Yuanjia era (AD 443), he re-

> turned to Guangling from the capital. When the boat set sail from Shi Tou Cheng, it encountered a headwind, which was an unusual occurrence of strong winds. Despite the ongoing strong winds, the boatmen were eager to move forward. As they reached the middle of the river, the wind and waves grew even stronger, making the situation extremely helpless. He recited the Guanyin Sutra repeatedly, the wind subsided, and the waves diminished. Moreover, a mysterious fragrance permeated the area. Gu Mai was filled with joy and continued to recite the sutra, and thus he reached safety.
>
> 《法苑珠林》引《冥祥記》：宋顧邁，吳郡人也，奉法甚謹。為衛府行參軍。元嘉十九年。亦自都還廣陵。發石頭城便逆湖朔，風至橫決。風勢未弭，而舟人務進。既至中江波浪方壯。邁單船孤征憂危無計。誦觀世音經得十許遍。風勢漸歇浪亦稍小。既而中流屢聞奇香芬馥不歇。邁心獨嘉。故歸誦不輟。遂以安濟。[43]
>
> In another account from the *Fayuan Zhulin*, the *Mingxiangji* is cited, narrating the story of Bian Yuezhi 卞悅之, a layman from Jiyin. He resided in Chaogou and was in his fifties without any children. To seek an heir, his wife took a concubine, but she still could not conceive. Desperate for an offspring, Bian Yuezhi recited the Guanyin Sutra a thousand times. Miraculously, after completing the recitation, his concubine became pregnant and gave birth to a son. This incident was recorded in the eighteenth year of the Yuanjia era (AD 442), and the child was already five years old.
>
> (This account is also mentioned in *Taiping Guangji*, but it states it was recorded in the fourteenth year (AD 438) of the Yuanjia era.)
>
> 《法苑珠林》引《冥祥記》：宋居士卞悅之。濟陰人也。作朝請居在潮溝。行年五十未有子息。婦為取妾。復積載不孕。將祈求繼嗣。千遍轉觀世音經。其數垂竟妾便有娠。遂生一男。元嘉十八年已五歲 (《太平廣記》亦載，但作元嘉十四年)[44]

Indeed, these stories are rather simple and focused on factual records. Their religious elements are relatively mild and do not emphasize the miraculous nature of the outcomes. Therefore, Lu Gao deemed them to be unfit, as they were not extraordinary, and they were not included.[45] Though *Yingyanji* is often portrayed as being disregarded, it demonstrates Lu Gao's deliberate selection and modification of stories. This indicates a reciprocal relationship between the *Zhiguai* and *Yingyan* genres of mutual rewriting.

3.2. The Systems of Xuanyanji and Mingxiangji

Xuanyanji is often regarded as one of the earliest "Buddhist auxiliary texts", and this perception is mainly derived from Liu Yiqing's accounts of his conversion to Buddhism during his later years. However, recent studies have pointed out that *Xuanyanji*, along with Liu Yiqing's other works such as *Shishuo Xinyu* (世說新語) and *Youminglu* (幽明録), were mostly compiled by his subordinates and assistants (Fan 1995; Ning 2000; S. Liu 2008; Zhao 2020). Furthermore, both *Youminglu* and *Xuanyanji* were completed in his later years. Therefore, the extent of Liu Yiqing's personal religious beliefs and the degree to which Buddhism influenced the nature of Xuanyanji remain mysterious.

According to Sano Seiko's research, *Xuanyanji* does not focus on matters related to the underworld like *Youminglu* does. Instead, it includes more content related to Buddhist concepts, such as cause and effect, and karmic retribution. Yet, its approach differs from *Guangshiyin Yingyanji*, which focuses solely on the topic of Guanyin responding to people's prayers, as well as *Mingxiangji*, which includes stories of the underworld as well as the supernatural (Sano 2020, pp. 228–38).

As discussed earlier, the stories found in Xuanyanji and the *MingxiangjI* (See: Robert Ford Campany 2012, pp. 7–17; G. Wang 1999, pp. 2–4) can often emphasize different aspects within the context of their transmission. Among the notable differences, two main variations can be identified:

Lu-3: The Official of Wuxing (吳興) Commandery
Direct Source: Possibly Wang Shaozhi (王韶之)
Parallel Texts: *Guanyin Yishu* citing *Guangshiyin Yingyanji*, *Bianzhenglun* citing *Xuanyanji*, *Taiping Guangji* citing *Xuanyanji*, *Fayuan Zhulin* citing *Mingxiangji*, and *Shishi Liutie* citing *Youminglu*.

The general outline of this story is that, during the middle of the Yuanjia era (AD 424–AD 453), the magistrate of Wuxing, Wang Shaozhi, witnessed a large fire engulfing the homes of the people. However, he noticed that the grass hut where a local official lived remained unscathed by the fire. The official had no previous association with Buddhism but had frequently heard Wang Shaozhi talk about Guanshiyin Bodhisattva. During the fire, the official sincerely chanted the name Guanshiyin Bodhisattva and was thus saved. Since this story is narrated by Wang Shaozhi and emphasizes his role in urging the official to have faith, the origin of this story can likely be traced back to Wang Shaozhi.

Various parallel versions of this story highlight the miraculous preservation of the house (see Table 2).

Table 2. The differing versions of the Wuxing Official's story.

Source	Existing Literature	Time	Place	Nonburning Place	Belief
	Lu	Yuanjia Period (AD 424–AD 453)	Wuxing City	county official's home	recite Guanyin's name
Lu-3	*Guanyin Yishu*		Wuxing City	county official's home	
Xuanyanji	*Bianzhenglun*	Yuanjia Period (AD 424–AD 453)	Wuxing City	Scripture Hall and Monastic Quarters	scriptures
Mingxiangji	*Fayuan Zhulin*	8th Yuanjia (AD 431)	Hetong Puban City	temple, scriptures, and statue	temple, scriptures, and statue
Xuanyanji (mistaken title)	*Taiping Guangji*	8th Yuanjia (AD 431)	Hetong Puban City	temple, scriptures, and statue	temple, scriptures, and statue
Youminglu (mistaken title)	*Shishi Liutie*	8th Yuanjia (AD 431)	Hetong Puban City	temple, scriptures, and statue	temple, scriptures, and statue

In terms of time, location, and details of belief, the references to *Taiping Guangji* and *Shishi Liutie* may be erroneous, as both of them overlap too closely with the description in *Mingxiangji*, while *Youminglu* does not record any stories of Buddha or Bodhisattva responded to the prayers. In terms of writing style, the version in *Guangshiyin Yingyanji* is undoubtedly the most realistic and detailed. However, Xuanyanji predates the *Lu* edition, and both mention the same period, suggesting that they may be different versions of the same story that share the same source.

These textual systems also differ significantly in terms of belief: *Xuanyanji* describes the worship of sacred objects and tells stories about visiting the underworld, the *Lu* edition describes the Bodhisattva faith in Buddhism, while the objects of fulfillment in *Mingxiangji* encompass all Buddhist elements. Overall, the *Lu* edition serves as a compromise between the other two. Although the *Lu* edition is the youngest of the three, and its composition references both *Xuanyanji* and *Mingxiangji*, it is challenging to determine whether or not it directly draws from the others due to its intricate storytelling. It is worth noting that the *Lu* edition records the version from the Wuxing region, which aligns with the point on regional memory discussed earlier.

Lu-24: Guo Xuan
Direct source: Possibly Guo Xuan's testament

Parallel texts: *Bianzheng Lun* quoting Xuanyanji, *Fayuan Zhulin* quoting *Mingxiangji*, *Shishi Liutie*, *Taiping Guangji* quoting *Bianzheng Lun*, *Shishi Tongjian*（釋氏通鑒） quoting *Seng Shi* (僧史).

The essence of this story is that, in the 11th year of the Yixi era (AD 415), Guo Xuan and Wen Chumao were imprisoned due to being implicated in the indiscriminate killings committed by the Liangzhou magistrate. In prison, they both made vows that, if they were released, they would engage in meritorious deeds in a temple, and later they were saved. The *Lu* edition specifically mentions at the end that Guo Xuan left behind a "testament", which is likely one of the sources for this story.

Among the various versions of the story (see Table 3), the account in *Mingxiangji* is particularly unique. Not only does it not mention Wen Chumao, as seen in other texts, but it is also the only narrative where the vow is made after witnessing auspicious signs. Additionally, the details about the signs and their fulfillment are entirely different. It can be concluded that *Mingxiangji* represents an independent textual system with a unique format.

Table 3. The differing versions of the Guo Xuan's story.

Source	Existing Literature	Governor of Liangzhou	Does Wen Chumao Appear?	He Violates His Oath and Is Struck by Arrow	Ceremony Location	Religious Practices	Supernatural Phenomena
	Lu-24	Yang Zijing	yes	no	Upper Mingxi Temple	reciting Avalokitesvara	Dream illumination of Guanyin
	Lu-24						eight "chi" monk
Xuanyanji	Bianzheng Lun	Yang Shoujing	yes	yes	Upper Mingxi Temple	reciting Avalokitesvara	Dream of Bodhisattva
Xuanyanji	*Taiping Guangji*	Yang Shoujing	yes	yes	Upper Mingxi Temple	reciting Avalokitesvara	Dream of Bodhisattva
Mingxiangji	*Fayuan Zhulin*	Yang Siping	no	no	(build a temple) *	reciting Avalokitesvara	Guanyin emitting light
	Shishi Liutie	Yang Mujing	yes (Wen ChuFa)	yes	West Mingxi Temple	reciting Avalokitesvara	Dream of Bodhisattva
Seng Shi	Shishi tongjian	Yang Mujing	Yes (Wen ChuFa)	yes	West Mingxi Temple	reciting Avalokitesvara	Dream of Bodhisattva

* Taking an oath only after witnessing supernatural phenomena.

Although the story is primarily associated with the Xuanyanji system, there are still differences in details among different versions. For example, although Wen Chumao appears as a co-vower in the *Lu* edition, the breaking of vows portion is omitted. This omission is consistent with the Xuanyanji system and one other.[46] While all versions feature the devotion to Guanyin as a form of belief, the auspicious signs obtained vary. On the other hand, the original *Yingyan* system suggests that the Bodhisattva seen in the dream is not Guanyin, while the *Lu* edition contains a version that involves a belief in the divine monk Ba Chi Dao Ren.[47]

Interestingly, this story is either forged or partially fictional. According to the *Book of Jin*: *Annals of Emperor An*, Liang Zhi Jing, the governor of Liangzhou, was executed as early as July in the second year of the Yi Xi era (AD 406), ten years before the story took

place. Moreover, both individuals who were officials in Liangzhou were imprisoned in Jingzhou instead of being imprisoned locally or at the capital. This suggests that this story was circulating in the context of Jingzhou. This is further supported by their performance of religious ceremonies at Shangmingxi Temple in Jingzhou after their release.

Through recipients of these two stories, it is evident that *Xuanyanji* and *Mingxiangji* not only differ in their dissemination systems but also in the details of the stories and their implied meanings. The *Yingyanji*, which emphasizes specific objects of belief and regional memory, often inherits from the former. This is different from *Xuanyanji*, which mainly recorded *Zhiguai* occurrences centered around the Jingzhou region. *Mingxiangji* not only confirms its devout belief in its preface, but also aims to propagate Buddhism externally. Therefore, its miraculous objects are not limited to specific bodhisattvas or sacred objects, but encompass various Buddhist elements such as pagodas, statues, and scriptures, not to mention that the regions and themes it includes are broader. To a large extent, this breaks the pattern of narrative-style verification and develops into an evangelistic-style record of verification, eventually inherited by the likes of *Mingbaoji*, etc.

3.3. Categories of Zhiguai, Yingyan, and Gantong Dissemination Systems

Komina Ichirō once classified Six Dynasties literature into two categories: *Zhiguai* and proselytization (Komina 1982, pp. 415–500). However, this classification did not include forms of dissemination found in Buddhist texts such as biographies of monks, making it incomplete. Furthermore, he did not discuss differences in the dissemination of stories between different types of texts. Therefore, the following section will re-examine the relationship between the classification of texts and the transmission of stories in different systems.

Previous research has focused on the evolutionary relationship between *Zhiguai* (annals of the bizarre) and *chuanqi* (miracle) literature. However, few scholars have noted that these supernatural stories also use different systems of writing depending on the authors' perspective. Due to these different perspectives, we can associate *Zhigui* writings with non-Buddhist believers, *Yingyan* writings with lay practitioners who have Buddhist beliefs, and *Gantong* writings with Buddhist monks (see Table 4).

Table 4. The different systems of miracle stories.

Non Buddhists	**Laymen**	**Laymen**	**Monk**	**Monk, Laymen**
Zhiguai	Descriptive style *Yingyan*	Propagative style *Yingyan*	*Gantong*	Compilation
Xu Gaoseng Zhuan *Shuyiji* *Zhenyiji*	*Xuanyanji* *Fu* edition *Zheng* edition	*Mingxiangji* *Lu* edition	*Fahua Yishu* *Guanyin Yishu* *Fahua jing Wenju* *Fuzheng Ji* (Biographies of monk or nuns)	*Fayuan Zhulin* *Taiping Guangji*

If the purpose of the *Zhiguai* system is to preserve extraordinary and unusual events, then the purpose of the *Yingyan* system is to facilitate the exchange of faith-based stories among fellow Buddhist believers. Based on their objectives and source of information, *Yingyan* writings can be further divided into two types: the descriptive style of *Yingyan* that emphasizes regional memories and bears resemblance to *Zhiguai*-style writings, and the propagative style *Yingyan* writings which have a broader range of source materials and stronger emphasis on spreading Buddhism. Additionally, there are also *Gantong* writings, which include biographies of monks, exegesis of scriptures, and *Yingyan* narratives composed by monks.[48]

The elements selected and discarded among different systems are illustrated through the stories of Zhu Changshu (*Guang*-1) and Gao Xun (*Xi*-15):

Fu-1: Zhu Changshu
Parallel Texts: *Guanyin Yishu*, *Fahua Yishu* citing *Fu* edition, *Bianzheng Lun* citing *Jinlu* (晉録), *Mingxiangji*, *Fayuan Zhulin* citing *Mingxiangji*, *Fahua jing Wenju Fuzheng Ji*, *Shishi Liutie* citing *Jinlu*, *Mingxiangji*, *Fahua Zhuanji* citing *Fayuan Zhulin*, *Taiping Guangji* citing *Bianzheng Lun*.

Transmission Systems:

1. *Fu* edition --> *Jinlu*, *Mingxiangji* --> *Bianzheng Lun*, *Shishi Liutie* --> *Taiping Guangji*.
2. *Fu* edition --> *Mingxiangji* --> Treasury of the Dharma, *Fahua Zhuanji*.
3. *Fu* edition --> *Guanyin Yishu*, *Fahua Yishu*, Lotus Sutra *Fuzhengji*.

The *Zhiguai* system originated from *Jinlu* and *Mingxiangji*. Compared to the *Yingyan* system, the content in *Zhiguai* represents a localized version of the Wu region, likely based on the narrative in *Jinlu*.[49] This system was first recorded in *Bianzheng Lun* and was later included in *Shishi Liutie* and *Taiping Guangji*. The characteristic of this system is that the texts are mostly compiled works, often directly copied with little modification (see Table 5).

Table 5. The differing versions of the Zhu Changshu's story.

	Source	**Religious Practices**	**Come From**	**Place**	**Chanting the Guanyin Sutra with Reverence**	**Order Family Do Not Bring Anything**
	Fu edition	chanting scripture	Xiyu	Luoyang	yes	yes
Zhiguai	*Bianzheng Lun*	recite	India	Wuzhong City	yes	no
	Shishi Liutie	recite	India	Wuzhong City	yes	no
	Taiping Guangji	recite	India	Wuzhong City	yes	no
Yingyan	*Fayuan Zhulin*	chanting scripture	ancestor come from Xiyu	Luoyang	yes	yes
	Fahua Zhuanji	chanting scripture	ancestor come from Xiyu	Luoyang	yes	yes
Gantong	*Guanyin Yishu*	recite		Luoyang	no	no
	Fahua Yishu	recite	Xiyu		no	no
	Fahua jing Wenju Fuzheng Ji	recite		Luoyang	no	no

The *Yingyan* system is based on the *Fu* edition and is included in *Mingxiangji*, as well as *Fayuan Zhulin* and *Fahua Zhuanji*. This system has the largest overlap with the *Fu* edition. Both *Mingxiangji* and *Fayuan Zhulin* are texts with strong missionary undertones, but due to the way they were compiled, they have not undergone significant modification.

These systems were mostly authored by laypeople or heavily influenced by lay authors and emphasize religious practices such as reciting scriptures. They focus on the manifestation of religious behaviors and demonstrate the repetitive nature of these actions. The *Gantong* system, on the other hand, within the context of religion, emphasizes the mystery of things themselves and focuses on explaining the immediacy of fulfillment and the sanctity of the object of belief. Therefore, it tends to modify actions to better reflect the names of the objects of belief. At the same time, the *Gantong* system tends to simplify and dehistoricize narratives, either by omitting time references or changing the historical timeline to match that of the event, making it the most extensively modified textual system (see Table 6).

Lu-15: Gao Xun
Direct sources: *Shuzhengji* and *Zhenyiji*

Parallel texts: *Guanyin Yishu* citing *Fu* edition, *Bianzheng Lun* citing *Xuanyanji* and *Xusou Shenji*, *Fahua jing Wenju Fuzheng Ji*, *Taiping Guangji* citing *Xuanyanji*, *Sanbao Ganying Yao Luelu* citing *Xuanyanji*.

Table 6. The timeline of varying versions of Guo Xuan's story.

	Source	Time of Entering China	Time that the Story Happened
	Fu edition	Yuankang reign period (291–99)	
Zhiguai	*Bianzheng Lun*		Jin dynasty
	Shishi Liutie		Jin dynasty
	Taiping Guangji		Jin dynasty
Yingyan	*Fayuan Zhulin*	Yuankang reign period (291–99)	
	Fahua Zhuanji	Yuankang reign period (291–99)	
Gantong	*Guanyin Yishu*		Yuankang reign period (291–99)
	Fahua Yishu		
	Fahua jing Wenju Fuzheng Ji		Yuankang reign period (291–99)

This particular system has already been analyzed above. The two systems differ not only in names used for the main characters, but also in their recorded year of death. The *Xuanyanji* system states the fifth year of the Taiyuan Era (AD 370), while the *Guangshiyin Yingyanji* and subsequent *Gantong* systems state the seventh year of the Taiyuann Era (AD 372). The transmission context is as follows(Figure 2):

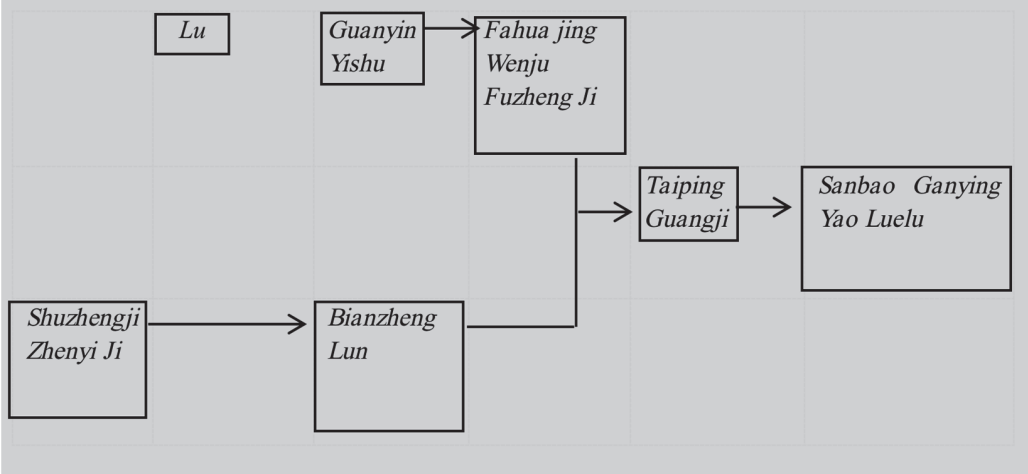

Figure 2. The transmission of the Gao Xun's story.

The *Zhiguai* system presents "Buddhist deities" (佛神), which are more realistic and imbued with local elements, while also emphasizing their divine power. In contrast, the *Yingyan* system in the *Lu* edition highlights the compassionate power of Guanyin Bodhisattva in the Western Pure Land, who can save people. The *Gantong* system, on the other hand, presents a brief narrative, emphasizing beheading and the shattering of a sword, as well as the act of selling oneself and one's wife to support the monks.

The practice of removing or altering specific timeframes is also commonly seen in *Gantong* writings, particularly in stories involving miraculous monks such as Shi Daojun (*Xuan*-6),[50] Shi Senghong (*Xuan*-22),[51] and Guo Xuan (*Xuan*-24). Among various records, only the *Shishi Yaolan* (釋氏要覽) does not include any temporal references.[52] However, this practice is mainly observed in the narration of miraculous monks. In the "Yi Jie" chapter in *Zhu Fa Yi*, though there are fantastical accounts of miracles, his biographical content,

copied mainly from *Shamen Tanzongsiji*, includes records of studying under the famous monk Shengong, delivering sermons, and having the emperor build a temple and burial site for him. Therefore, this biographical style prioritizes realism and the preservation of time and place, while the accounts of miracles become secondary and supporting narratives.

Differences in miracle stories among different systems are not uncommon. When Sun Shangyong studied the legend of "Fish Mountain and the Brahman Chant" (魚山梵唄), he pointed out that this story was first recorded in *Yiyuan* (異苑), which included two different versions: one about the Brahman chant and the other about Taoist illusionary footsteps. However, only the version of the Brahman chant survived and developed into various interpretations, such as transferring merits through chanting scripture, or performing the Brahman chant (S. Sun 2008, pp. 144–48).

Due to the long history of dissemination, many accounts of miraculous stories from different systems have been lost. The existing versions are primarily preserved in texts with a Buddhist perspective, giving one the impression of coherence and consistent views. Working to clarify the different dissemination contexts of miracle stories helps one grasp the nature of different texts and their underlying historical background. This, in turn, helps one break away from the traditional narrative of Buddhist history, allowing the stories to be examined within their original temporal and spatial contexts. Stories are disseminated by multiple actors in the process of being transmitted, and the stories themselves are constructed by participants such as eyewitnesses, storytellers, transmitters, recorders, as well as local memories. Hence, it becomes apparent that multiple actors with diverse perspectives are involved in disseminating, rewriting, and piecing together these stories. By analyzing and dissecting these various elements, these stories can be better placed within their original historical contexts and more accurately understood.

4. Conclusions

From this analysis, it may be observed that the original intention of *Yingyanji* was not to propagate Buddhism, but rather to serve as a collection of religious stories circulated among the scholarly elite. It bears the dual characteristic of familial and regional memory. Different *Yingyan* writings demonstrate variation in their perspective, have different purposes, and use different sources. They may not necessarily have been written with a clear intention for use in propagation. Thus, the generalization of *Shishi Fojiao zhi shu* (Books for Assisting Buddhist Teaching) ought to be reconsidered. This concept should be examined under the spectrum of *Zhiguai* and *Gantong*, while the influential relationship between stories intended "to preach to people and lead them to conversion" and *Yingyan* writings ought to be inverted.[53]

Different texts demonstrate variation in their attitude toward and handling of supernatural stories. To substantiate their claims, both *Zhiguai* and *Yingyan* writings often adopt a biographical style of narration while including descriptions of the scenes. *Guangshiyin Yingyanji* contains many stories related to the author's personal acquaintances, including many details and sources unrelated to the main story. The *Gantong* system, however, abandons this realistic narrative technique. The narratives of the monk biographies rely primarily on documentary sources such as scripture or temple records. Supernatural narratives are imposed as separate story blocks, with less focus on time, place, and source.

Due to the limited availability of visual images and documentary materials from the Six Dynasties period, our understanding of Buddhist beliefs during that time has often been limited to a few objects of worship, such as Guanyin and Amitabha. However, through different versions of miracle stories and the stratification of their dissemination, we can see a more diverse religious landscape. Just because certain objects of worship or scriptures are less frequently mentioned or recorded does not mean their value is lesser. The fact that a story or piece of scripture has been altered or deleted only goes to demonstrate its significance during that period. Only by continuously excavating obscured narratives can we better reconstruct religious landscapes in their historical contexts.

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Abbreviations

T Taishō shinshū daizōkyō 大正新脩大藏經 (Taishō edition of the Buddhist canon). Ed. Takakusu Junjirō 高楠順次郎 et al. 100 vols. Tokyo: Taishō Issaikyō Kankōkai, 1924–1935. X Manji Shinsan Dainihon Zokuzōkyō新纂卍續藏 (New Compilation of Buddhist canon) Ed. Kawamura Kōshō 河村孝照 et al. 90 vols. Kyoto: Zōkyō shoin, 1975–1989. B Supplement to the Dazangjing大藏經補編 et al. 36 vols. Taipei: Lan Jifu 1985.

Notes

1 The term "Buddhist auxiliary texts" was proposed by Lu Xun (1881–1936) in the early 20th century. Lu Xun is considered the founder of modern research on ancient Chinese novels and one of the most important researchers in ancient Chinese literature. "Buddhist auxiliary texts" was the earlier definition for Buddhist miracle stories. It emphasizes the difference from normal Chinese novels and the purpose of Buddhist proselytizing. This concept was widely accepted by later researchers.

More broadly, Lu Xun defined "Buddhist auxiliary texts" as a kind of *Zhiguai*. Reconsidering the definition of "Buddhist auxiliary texts" in this approach helps us understand the complexity of *Zhiguai* and the development of medieval novels.

2 The main research can refer to the work of Liu Huiqing, Leng Yan, and others. In addition, there are some influences on the thought of reincarnation and other genres of Buddhism, which have also been discussed by scholars. (X. Li 2015; H. Liu 2013, 2019; Jin 2016, pp. 118–21; Leng 2019; Huang 2013, pp. 119–20; Peng and Zhou 2019, pp. 145–51).

3 *Changdao* refers to a preaching procedure in Buddhist rituals, where the speaker uses plain language and Vipāka, or fateful stories, to explain the principles and teachings found within Buddhist scriptures to the audience.

4 Research on the relationship between "preach[ing] to people [to] lead them to conversion" and "Buddhist auxiliary texts" primarily relies on evidence from later Tang Dynasty commentaries, variant texts, and sermon texts to make inferences. This may be related to the perspective of considering the Jin and Tang Dynasties as a unified entity in relevant studies. Among them, the discussion by Li Xiaorong is the most comprehensive. He believes that oral chanting, accounts of miraculous experiences by laypeople, and extensive records of knowledge are the three creative sources of these stories, which broadly summarize the various motives for the creation of the "Books of Buddhist Auxiliary Teaching". However, he still does not explain why accounts of miraculous experiences by laypeople predate those by monks. Related studies can be referred to: (Hu and Zhou 2013, pp. 64–70; G. Zhang 1995, p. 10; E. Zhang 2007, pp. 43–46; X. Li 2015, pp. 48–57).

5 Traditional studies on *Zhiguai* generally adopt a genre-based approach and identify a category of works within the supernatural "tale" genre that serves the purpose of propagating Buddhism. These works are often referred to as "Books of Buddhist Auxiliary Teaching" or "Buddhist Propagation Fiction". They are considered an exception or supplement within the classification of supernatural tales and are sometimes even regarded as the lowest form of supernatural tales. From Lu Xun's classification of *zhi ren* (lit. "people of ambition") and *zhiguai* (lit. "strange and extraordinary"), to Liu Yeqiu's later establishment of the tripartite division of "geographical knowledge and natural history", "narratives of gods and spirits", and "miscellaneous histories and records", the "Books of Buddhist Auxiliary Teaching" have not obtained an independent status but rather serve as an extension or supplement to the "strange tale" genre. (Y. Liu 1987, p. 83).

6 The study of pre-Tang supernatural tales has been extensively conducted in academic circles. Early scholars such as Lu Xun and Yu Jiaxi laid the foundation for research methods centered around the typology of stories, characters, and historical sources. In Wang Guoliang's article "A Hundred Years of Research on *Zhiguai*: Tracing the Shift in Literary, Historical, and Cultural Studies", he points out that early research primarily focused on the compilation of catalogs, versions, and authentication of documents. During this period, the emphasis was on the compilation of supernatural stories and the definition of the genre. However, in the 1980s and 1990s, the judgments regarding the relationship between legend and *Zhiguai*, and whether *Zhiguai* should be considered literary creations, began to be questioned. Scholars started to reflect on the ambiguity of the definition of *Zhiguai*, and the research direction shifted toward areas such as genre studies and cultural history. Emphasis was placed on literary imagery, linguistic analysis of terms and expressions, the origins and development of fictional narratives, and the process of story transmission and the social environment in which they were received. The first two aspects are not directly related to this discussion and will not be elaborated upon here. Regarding the issue of origins, Zhang Qingwen believes that *Zhiguai* is a transformative inheritance of disaster stories that served as political warnings, stripping away their original political and ethical functions and focusing on highlighting the supernatural and entertainment aspects of the stories. Wang Yao, on the

other hand, argues that the origins of *Zhiguai* lie in the "exaggerated language" of *Fangshi* (magicians and alchemists). Scholars such as Li Jianguo and Wang Xin emphasize that *Zhiguai* is a product of the intellectual trend of natural history during the Wei and Jin periods, which incorporates the techniques and experiential knowledge of *Fangshu* (divination and magic). They emphasize its technical and knowledge functions. Scholars like Yao Xiaoyou and He Jin focus on discussing the origins of *Zhiguai* in unearthed documents. Regarding the discussion of story transmission and cultural history, the most representative research is by Komina Ichirō. He discusses stories within the context of storytellers, providing detailed discussions on the transmission of different *Zhiguai* texts. Wang Xin, on the other hand, pays attention to the intertextuality between geographical works and *Zhiguai*, pointing out that the caves described in Six Dynasties regional records are not objective records of natural geography, but rather supernatural sacred sites and memorials packaged in various miraculous events. Wei Bin discusses the existing supernatural narratives of An Shigao, which mix various descriptions from different sources and demonstrate the complexity of the narrative purposes of supernatural stories. Looking at previous research, recent studies continue the genre-based discussions, analyzing the origins of the novels and focusing on the nature of *Zhiguai* works. On the other hand, there is a growing interest in exploring the contextual aspects of story generation and transmission, paying more attention to individual themes or stories that span across different texts. However, if the latter approach is divorced from genre discussions, it neglects the intention behind the compilation of *Zhiguai* texts. If the former approach does not consider the themes and narrative qualities, it may fall into the misconception of viewing *Zhiguai* works as closed entities. Therefore, there is a need for organic integration between the two approaches. (Xie 2011; Ning 2017, pp. 37–41; Q. Zhang 2000, pp. 11–13; Jiang 1996; Y. Wang 1998, p. 134; X. Wang 2018b, pp. 128–40; 2017, pp. 137–45; Wei 2012, pp. 39–48)

7 Regarding the research overview of three *Guangshiyin Yingyanji*, you can refer to the compilations by Dong Zhiqiao and Yu Junfang. Please see: (Dong Zhiqiao, 2002, pp. 4–9; Yu 2000, pp. 152–53). Other relevant sources include: (Sano 2020, pp. 238–67; Yu 2000, pp. 167–82; Gu 2015; Wu 2007, pp. 123–27).

8 T 2122, 53. p. 418c6-7.

9 The internal transmission mentioned here is different from Taoism, which emphasizes secretive transmission and emphasizes the passing down of teachings from master to disciple, often accompanied by rituals. This can be compared to the sharing of personal religious experiences in Christianity, where worshippers share their personal experiences during worship gatherings or collective prayers. The main purpose is to validate and share their revelations, thus strengthening their religious beliefs. As for examples from the literature, one can refer to the *Guixin pian* chapter in *Yanshi jiaxun*顏氏家訓, where Yan Tui recorded several stories related to killing and its consequences. The purpose here is undoubtedly different from that of the *Yuanhun Zhi*, also authored by Yan Tui. The former serves as a warning to the family about karmic retribution, consolidating and inheriting the family's beliefs, while the latter has a slight missionary implication. This serves a function similar to the one described by Huiyuan when discussing the spread of stories about miraculous manifestations of the Buddha, where he said, "Every thought of strange phenomena is to strengthen their sincerity" and "to verify the myriad paths of gods". Furthermore, Yu Junfang repeatedly emphasizes the similarity between *Yingyanji* and stories of filial piety from the Han dynasty, even suggesting that some stories may have been adapted from filial piety stories. Therefore, *Yingyanji* also has certain local elements. Nankai's research on the transmission of filial piety stories also illustrates the characteristics of the internal transmission of such miraculous stories. Please refer to: (Yu 2000, pp. 167–79; Knapp 2005).

10 The three editions of *Yingyanji* are referred to as the *Guanshiyin Yingyanji* (*Fu* edition), Xu Guangshiyin *Yingyanji* (*Zhang* edition), and *Xi Guanshiyin Yingyanji* (*Lu* edition) by the author. The number following the edition refers to the number rank of the edition. For instance, *Fu*-5 refers to the fifth story in the *Xi Guanshiyin Yingyanji (Fu* edition*)*.

11 This biography is also mentioned in Wang Manying's (王曼穎) reply to Huihuan (慧皎). The further research of Zheng family, see (S. Li 2018).

12 According to Li Jianguo, the earliest Buddhist monk-authored "Buddhist auxiliary texts" is Tan Yong's *Soushen Lun*, written during the Northern Wei dynasty. However, the content of this book was not detailed. It was not until the Sui dynasty that similar works began to appear, which was much later than the flourishing layman works of the Qi and Liang dynasties.

13 Both positions were held during the end of the Jin dynasty. Since Zhang Yan was active during the Yuanjia元嘉 era, he likely grew up in Jingzhou during his childhood.

14 The explanation for this citation style is mentioned in Note 16. (*Zhang*-7) refers to the seventh story in Zhang Yan's *Xu Guangshiyin Yingyanji*.

15 Zhang Yan mentioned the latest reign title as Yi Xi義熙 and the latest event as the rebellion of Sun En孫恩之亂.

16 *Lu*-3 is another example of regional memory transfer. It was originally recorded in a story that took place in Wuxing during the Yuanjia period, but in *Xuanyanji* it was set in Hedong (河東), Puban (蒲阪), during the eighth year of the Yuanjia era (AD 430). A later and more representative example of regional memory construction is a series of legends related to Liu Sahhe in Bingzhou. For example, his propagation of Buddhism in Hexi (河西) led to the attribution of his origin to Danyang (丹陽) in Danzhou (定陽) after the Western Wei period. In the early Tang period, legends emerged in Dunhuang about Liu Sahhe (劉薩訶) bestowing scriptures in the Mogao Caves (莫高窟). For more information, refer to (Shang 2007, pp. 65–74). I intend to discuss this phenomenon further in another article.

17 For example, Xu Yi (*Zhang*-1) shared his personal experience with Huiyan, who then relayed the story to Zhang Yan. The story of a certain individual during the Yi Xi era (*Zhang*-9) was told to Faxiong by Mao Dezhu (毛德祖) and later conveyed to Zhang Yan. The incident in North Pengcheng (*Zhang*-13) was directly heard by De Cangni and later conveyed to Zhang Yan by Shi Huiqi, a disciple of Lu Gao. This may be due to the convenience of travel for monks during that time, allowing for an easier exchange of stories between the North and South.

18 T 2110, 52. p. 539b.

19 Although the practice of offering lamps to the Buddha (施燈供佛) is inherent to Buddhism, the combination of seven lamps may have been influenced by local beliefs. The earliest mention of the seven lamps in Buddhist scriptures can be found in the mid-Southern Liu-Song dynasty apocryphal sutra *Foshuo Guanding Jing* (佛說灌頂經), specifically in the seventh and twelfth volumes. In the seventh volume, the "seven lamps" correspond to the summoning of seven divine kings and are unrelated to the practice discussed here. However, in the twelfth volume, "seven lamps" are part of the method of the Banner of Prolonging Life, emphasizing the use of a five-colored divine banner and seven-tiered lamps (with one lamp per tier). Scholar Wu Xiaoshao has discussed the Banner of Prolonging Life and pointed out its influence on local beliefs related to karmic retribution and blessings. He also mentions a record in the *Chu Sanzang Ji Ji* (出三藏記集) titled "Record of the Seven-Tiered Lamp Dispelling Suffering", which references the *Foshuo Guanding Jing*, indicating that the practice described in *Xuanyanji* is derived from the practice in the *Foshuo Guanding Jing* and later became a specific practice within the Medicine Buddha cult. On the other hand, in Taoism, although the practice of lighting lamps is borrowed from Buddhism, the concept of seven lamps predates it. During the Jin and Song dynasties, the *Shangyuan Jinlu Jianwen* (上元金箓簡文) had already mentioned the practice of lighting seven lamps, which corresponds to the seven souls or the seven sets of parents in human life. The function of the seven souls was to "pacify the spirit and eliminate calamities, control the souls and remove evil", which is remarkably similar to the concepts in the "Sutra of Empowerment and Elimination of Transgressions for Attaining Salvation from Life and Death". Therefore, the practice of lighting seven lamps may have originated from Taoism. Refer to: (Wu 2010, pp. 128–31, 201–17; Lü 2007, pp. 10–12). Special thanks to fellow student Yuhang Chen for pointing out that the *Shangyuan Jinlu Jianwen* is the earliest reference to the practice of lighting lamps in Taoism.

20 As Natalie Zemon Davis discussed in her analysis of pardon letters, these supposedly factual accounts often contain elements of *Zhiguai*. Despite being expected to provide an accurate description of the case, various parties including the petitioner, their representatives, royal notaries, and secretaries were involved in the creation and embellishment of these narratives. See: (Davis 1987, pp. 4–5). On the other hand, some scholars have begun to reflect on the position of "fictional writing". For instance, when analyzing geographical records and tales of the strange, Wang Xin points out the intertextuality of these two types of texts and considers them as a form of describing the extraordinary rather than being entirely original. See: (X. Wang 2017, pp. 137–45; 2018a, pp. 119–28).

21 For example, in *Xì*-46, Shi Kaida encounters a tiger; in *Xì*-47, Pei Anqi encounters a wolf and is rescued; in *Xì*-59, Shi Senglang encounters a tiger, and there is also a record in *Songshu* where Wang Yinan escapes. All of these stories share a similar narrative structure, with the protagonists encountering and being saved or guided by fierce animals while fleeing to the South. This repetition of similar narratives suggests their recurrent usage.

22 According to the records in the *Songshu*, there was indeed a magistrate of Wuxing named Zhang Chong. The same story is also mentioned in *Fayuan Zhulin*. See: (Shen Yue, Songshu, 1974, pp. 2247–48; T 2122, 53. p. 659).

23 Both *Fayuan Zhulin* and *Ji Shenzhou Sanbao Gantonglu* include the story of Zhu Lingshi being rescued in Liaodong, with the appearance of a divine cup at the end. The historical records do not mention the incident of Zhu Lingshi in Liaodong. *Fayuan Zhulin* attributes this story to *Gaoseng Zhuan*, but neither of the biographies of the monks in question mentions it. This story is likely a combination of legends involving sitting on a cup and crossing water.

24 T2063, p. 939.

25 According to the details mentioned in the letter from Wang Manying to Huijian and the preface of *Gaoseng Zhuan*, Cao Daoheng even suggests that Wang Manying is the son of Wang Yan. If this theory is correct, then *Mingxiangji* and *Buxu Mingxiangji* can be seen to some extent as collections of internally transmitted stories. See: (Cao 1992, p. 27).

26 The *Fu* edition also only provides two indications of the time of occurrence, but the sources mentioned or other time points indirectly determine the timeframe of the stories.

27 One remaining story is very short, while the other two are related to the renowned general Mao Dezhu in the period between the Jin and Song dynasties.

28 For example, the story of "Pengcheng Widows" in the *Lu* edition includes three different versions, the story of "Gao Xun" cites three different sources, and *Guangshiyin Yingyanji* draws inspiration from both Xuanyanji and Mingxiangji.

29 Regarding the compilation policy of *Mingxiangji*, please refer to Sano Seiko's work: "Recording the Strange: The Birth and Development of Six Dynasties Zhiguai", pp. 233–38. As for the classification of the contents of Mingxiangji, Wang Guoliang categorized the stories into eleven thematic categories, while Hou Xudong divided them into seven categories, encompassing various aspects of Buddhist beliefs. See: (G. Wang 1999, pp. 27–45; Hou 2018, pp. 44–45).

30 The term *Yingyan* originates from the *Guangshiyin Yingyanji*. Although the concept of *Yingyan* is not exclusive to lay practitioners, the concept of *Yingyan* refers to the purposefulness of their prayers and the immediacy of the response from the object of their faith. Therefore, choosing *Yingyan* represents the perspective of lay practitioners.

31 The term *Gantong*, derived from the *Gantong* chapter in *Xu Gaoseng Zhuan*, is intended to distinguish itself from the system of supernatural and strange phenomena outside of Buddhist teachings. The reason why I prefer *Gantong* over *Ganying* (感應) is that *Ganying* is a term used in Buddhist and non-Buddhist contexts, representing miraculous replies from any deity or god. On the other hand, *Gantong* is usually used to describe miraculous replies related to filial piety and the Buddha. Therefore, *Gantong* is a more suitable term to represent the stories written by monks, reaffirming the close relationship between filial piety stories and Buddhist stories.

32 The analysis of another story can be found in Sections 2 and 3.

33 Although Lu Xun, Li Jianguo, and Hirata Masashi did not include this entry in their compilation of *Shuyiji*, they did not explain it and simply attributed it to *Mingxiangji*. However, based on the analysis in this article, the narrative of *Zhiguai* represented by *Shuyiji* differs from the texts recorded in other systems. Therefore, it is likely to be reliable.

34 T 2122, 53. p. 409.

35 According to Makita Tairyō, he suggests that the references in *Fayuan Zhulin* are an abridged version of *Mingxiangji,* but does not provide evidence to support this claim. See: (Makita Tairyō, 1970, p. 82).

36 In the first half of the entry on *Mingseng Zhuan,* Chao quotes from Shamen Tanzongsiji, describing Zhufa Yi's early years of studying under Shengong, his preaching, and socializing in the capital, as well as the establishment of Xinting Temple by Emperor Xiaowu of Jin in his honor after his death. The second half of the entry on Zhufa Yi overlaps with the content of *Guangshiyin Yingyanji*.

37 T 2122, 53. p. 988.

38 *Taiping Guangji* also supports the claim of the seventh year of Taiyuan (AD 372). However, *Mingseng Zhuan* and *Gaoseng Zhuan* adopt the account of the fifth year of Taiyuan (AD 370), as mentioned in *Shamen Tanzongsiji*.

39 According to the record in the "Treatise on Literature" chapter in *Sui Shu* (隋書經籍志), Dai Zuo wrote the works *Zhen Yi Zhuan* and *Xi Zheng Ji*. This incident occurred in Rongyang (滎陽) and is unrelated to the Western Expedition; thus, it should be the account mentioned in *Zhen Yi Zhuan*.

40 This refers to the chanting or meditation practice of "Mahayana Pure Land Belief", which is primarily found in contemplative scriptures such as *Banzhou Sanmei Jing* (般舟三昧經) or *Guan Wuliang Shou Jing* (觀無量壽經). For instance, in *Banzhou Sanmei Jing*, it states: "The Buddha said, 'Bodhisattvas in this land should contemplate the name of Amitabha Buddha exclusively, and through exclusive contemplation, they will be able to see him'". The Lotus Sutra also contains similar expressions: "If you wish to attain the five kinds of clairvoyance, you should abide in a quiet place, concentrate your thoughts, and contemplate the Way. By doing so, you will be able to understand it". T417, 13. p. 899a; T 263, 9. p. 86a-b.

41 The *Fayuan Zhulin* records the story of Zhu Changshu possessing a family heirloom relic, which is also mentioned in the *Ji Shenzhou Sanbao Gantonglu*. Therefore, it is likely that this account had already appeared before the Tang Dynasty. In the story, Zhu Changshu's son is also a Buddhist monk who frequently desires to return to secular life but repeatedly gives up due to the miraculous powers of the relic itself. Such stories of monks having children and desiring to return to secular life, which deviate from the ideal, are naturally not accepted or adopted.

42 T 2110, 52. p. 539a.

43 T2122, 53. p. 484b.

44 T2122, 53. p. 678b.

45 Special thanks to Dr. Qiye Xie for his reminder regarding the writing style of *Xuanyanji*.

46 The available sources for monastic history texts are primarily Wang Jin's *Seng Shi* from the Liang dynasty and the *Da Song Seng Shi Lüe* (大宋僧史略) from the Southern Liu-Song dynasty. This system identifies the Upper Mingxi Temple (上明西寺), established during the Eastern Jin Dynasty, as the West Mingxi Temple (西明寺), established during the Tang Dynasty, indicating that it is unlikely to have originated from Wang Jin's *Seng Shi*. Moreover, the *Da Song Seng Shi Lüe* was written later than the two texts from this system.

47 Even if we convert to the shortest measurement of the Southern Dynasty, which is approximately 24.7 cm, this monk would still be nearly two meters tall, much taller than the average height, not to mention that measurement units during the Northern, Sui, and Tang Dynasties were approximately 30 cm. Therefore, the term "eight *chi*" (approximately 2.4 m) in historical records, biographies of monks, and novels, are often accompanied by adjectives praising someone's extraordinary temperament. The legend of the tall monk, "Eight *Chi* Dao Ren", seems to have been popular at that time. Both the *Ji Shenzhou Sanbao Gantong lu* and *Fayuan Zhulin* contain stories about Di Shichang (抵世常) and mention the appearance of a monk with supernatural powers who would manifest in an eight-*chi* form during such occasions. See: Qiu Guangming, "A Study of Chinese Weights and Measures throughout History", Science Press, 1992, p. 520; T2106, 52. p. 432a; T2122, 53. p. 492b.

48 During the compilation of monastic biographies, miscellaneous records, and accounts of supernatural phenomena by Buddhist monks, it can be observed that a significant number of details are being altered. This issue is being addressed in a separate article

by the author. Please refer to: "Historical Sources and Compilation of Medieval Monk Biographies: Focusing on Supernatural Stories" (to be published).

[49] There were three kinds of records titled *Jin Lu*, which were written by Yu Yu, He Fasheng, and Zhu Fazu, all of which are now lost. *Bianzheng Lun* quotes *Jin Lu* three times, including instances of Xie Hui breaking a pagoda and receiving retribution, as well as Wang Ning's wife encountering her deceased child and being persuaded to convert. Therefore, it cannot be the work of Yu Yu, which recorded events during the Western Jin Dynasty. Furthermore, Zhu Fazu's records as a Buddhist scripture generally does not contain precedents for recording secular stories of spiritual responses, and these individuals are also unrelated to Buddhist translation. Therefore, this book is likely the *Jin Lu* by He Fasheng, written during the Liu-Song dynasty. In this context, its records should be slightly later than *Guangshiyin Yingyanji*.

[50] Regarding the narrative technique of removing a temporal context from *Gaoseng Zhuan*, Shinohara Koichi specifically discusses the case of Shi Daojiong. See: (Shinohara 1988, pp. 119–28).

[51] Among various records, only the *Gaoseng Zhuan* simplifies the year Yi Xi 11th (338 CE) to the end of the Jin Dynasty.

[52] Among various records, only the *Shishi Yaolan* does not include any temporal references.

[53] In previous studies, one was more inclined to consider anecdotal texts as secularized versions of stories originally preaching or leading the chants by monks. For example, Zhang Eping straightforwardly states that the transformation of "books on ghosts, gods, and strange phenomena" and the rise of "books assisting Buddhist teachings" were directly influenced by the *Changdao* practices of monks since the Eastern Jin Dynasty. This assertion is mainly supported by two pieces of evidence. First, it is believed that certain stories can trace their origins to Indian and Central Asian parables, as pointed out in the studies of Lu Xun and Li Jianguo. However, these stories are often not the main contents of these anecdotal texts. More importantly, works such as *Xianyu Jing* (賢愚經; Sutra on the Wise and Foolish) and *Baiyu Jing* (百喻經; Sutra on a Hundred Parables) do not primarily consist of foreign stories, but instead rely on "recent events" that occurred locally. When "good and evil, calamities and blessings, and signs and portents" (古今善惡禍福徵祥) are listed in *Fayuan Zhulin*, there is no mention of *Xianyu Jing* or *Baiyu Jing*. Hence, the content of *Changdao* primarily consists of local stories or personal accounts heard by the monks, rather than preexisting Buddhist parables. Yet, on the other hand, from the records found in current accounts of *Zhiguai* or anecdotal texts, it is mentioned that some stories were acquired during the process of preaching or leading chants. Clearly, this inference lacks direct evidence. Whether in biographies of monks, commentaries on Guanyin, accounts from Qingliang, or scriptures such as the Lotus Sutra, these chant texts predominantly adopt supernatural stories with local settings recorded by laypeople, which can even be traced back to *Zhiguai*. Furthermore, there are examples of instructors initially being laypeople, and the rise of anecdotal text and chant practices occurred roughly simultaneously with the sources of those anecdotal stories being provided by laypeople. All of these factors indicate that the creation of anecdotal stories from a layperson's perspective was likely parallel to the proselyting practices of monks, and the latter may have drawn more from the former. For references to monks' use of "recent events" in their propagation of the Dharma, please refer to: (Hou 2018, p. 48).

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Article

Monastics and the Medieval Chinese Buddhist Mythos: A Study of Narrative Elements in Daoxuan's *Ji shenzhou sanbao gantong lu* (Collected Record of Miracles Relating to the Three Jewels in China)

Nelson Elliott Landry

Faculty of Asian & Middle Eastern Studies, University of Oxford, Pusey Ln, Oxford OX1 2LE, UK; nelson.landry@ox.ac.uk

Abstract: Miracle tales are didactic stories related to Buddhist figures, objects, and places that describe supernormal occurrences brought about by acts of great piety and fervent devotion. They present the audience with concrete examples of the workings of karma, while simultaneously setting verifiable historical precedents in a bid to prove the religious efficacy of Buddhism in China. These were also historiographical works, providing a wealth of detail regarding not only religious life and belief in China, but also local lore, politics, architectural trends, and much more. This paper will focus on a text called the *Ji shenzhou sanbao gantong lu* 集神州三寶感通錄 (T2106), a collection of miracle tales compiled by the seventh-century scholar-monk, Daoxuan 道宣 (596–667 CE). This text is a collection of narratives drawn from literary and epigraphy sources, as well as orally transmitted stories. As a Buddhist figurehead and as the author of many seminal historiographical works, Daoxuan played a central role in the overall localization of this tradition in China. Bearing this in mind, this paper seeks to interpret the "collective images" presented in Daoxuan's collection of miracle tales, those representations of the miraculous and the supernormal.

Keywords: miracle tales; Daoxuan 道宣 (596–667 CE); *Ji shenzhou sanbao gantong lu* 集神州三寶感通錄 (T2106); medieval Chinese Buddhism; miracles

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1. Introduction

This article centres around the life and works of the Tang dynasty scholar-monk, Daoxuan 道宣 (596–667 CE). Daoxuan was a master of great renown among his fellow monastics and an influential figure among members of the imperial court in the early Tang dynasty, playing a central role in debates surrounding the role of the monastic community in relation to secular society. He is best known for his historical works and his exegetical treatises on the monastic codes, primarily through his seminal commentaries on the Four-part monastic regulations (Skt. *Dharmaguptaka Vinaya*; Ch. *Sifen lü* 四分律). Daoxuan is to this day recognized for his commentaries and work within the monastic community as the de facto founder of the Four-part Vinaya School in China, also known as the South Mountain School (*Nanshan zong* 南山宗).

He was a prolific thinker and writer, producing works that went far afield from the proscriptive codes of conduct in the *Vinayas*, composing and compiling texts throughout his religious career that ranged from the exegetical to the apologetic and from the historical to the supernormal. Daoxuan was a dedicated apologist, a scrupulous cataloguer, and an assiduous compiler of biographies as well as miracle tales. Similar to many of his pious Buddhist contemporaries, Daoxuan had an interest in the manifest power of the buddhas, bodhisattvas, divine beings, and cult objects of China. Indeed, drawing on Daoxuan's writings and from writings about him, we can gather that he was no stranger to supernormal phenomena associated with sacred places and objects, having visited many important sites

and sometimes even bearing witness to the miraculous phenomena about which he wrote. As a well-read and well-travelled cosmopolitan monk, he visited as well as studied the origins of China's sacred Buddhist sites and the cult objects preserved therein. Many of these places and objects were believed to have supernormal qualities, either by their connection to past—or enduring—manifest miracles, by their recognized therapeutic efficacy, by their established apotropaic qualities, or by a variety of other supernormal associations. In his role as a Buddhist historian, Daoxuan sought out and committed himself to writing accounts of those places and objects, as well as individuals, that were officially and popularly associated with Buddhist miracles.

Bearing this in mind, the current study intends to paint a portrait of this Tang dynasty scholar-monk in relation to his oeuvre and to the literary traditions of his time. The sources of choice in this article are miracle tales, those recorded stories of monks, lay believers, and patrons, and the accounts of sacred places as well as cult objects, structures, and scriptures. Specifically, this study will analyze a late work completed in 664 CE by Daoxuan, called the *Ji shenzhou sanbao gantong lu* 集神州三寶感通錄 (*Collected Record of Miracles Relating to the Three Treasures in China*; *T* no. 2106; hereafter known as the Record of Miracles). The *Record of Miracles* was a collection of stories edited and organized by Daoxuan. The sources of this compilation varied from stele inscriptions to local lore, and from texts kept in the capital's monastic libraries to the author's own personal experiences. Although the *Record of Miracles* was primarily a collection of secondary sources, Daoxuan consistently inserted himself into these narratives, including anecdotes when relevant that were related to his first-hand experiences of miracles, sacred places, and cult objects.

It is worth noting that the *Record of Miracles* is not the first reference to which one might look when studying this monk's experiences of the supernormal. Indeed, many before have looked to Daoxuan's late revealed texts, for it was in the years before his death that he had—and recorded—his encounters with celestial beings who passed on revealed truths regarding various points of Buddhist doctrine, discipline, and history. There are two extant versions of his interviews with supernormal beings that are included in the *Taishō* canon: the *Daoxuan lüshi gantong lu* 道宣律師感通錄 [Vinaya Master Daoxuan's Record of Miraculous [Experiences]] and the *Lüxiang gantong zhuan* 律相感通傳 [Record of Vinaya [Master Daoxuan's] Miraculous Encounters]—both of which are presumed to be first-hand accounts recorded in 667 CE, the year of his death.[1] His close colleague, Daoshi 道世 (d. 683 CE), also included in his own Buddhist encyclopedia some of Daoxuan's revealed texts. Perhaps most significant in this regard was the preface to a revealed version of the Buddha's final sermon, which was copied in fascicle 98 of the encyclopedia under the title *Yifa zhuchi ganying ji* 遺法主持感應集 [Record of Miracles on the Preservation of the Teaching Bequeathed by the Buddha].[2] It is not, however, within the purview of this particular article to expound on Daoxuan's revelatory texts.[3]

This paper presents the *Record of Miracles* as a representative example of seventh-century Chinese Buddhist narrative literature, extrapolating from it general information regarding the content, tropes, motivations, and authorship. Buddhist miracle tales have a complex literary history that developed alongside more doctrinal and exegetical genres. The compilers and composers of miracle tales were steeped in the rich literary histories of both China and India, traditions that informed the style and composition of these texts. These compilers simultaneously established a new tradition, one with its own stylistic formulations and narrative tropes. They were not only influenced by literary history but were also producing their own tradition, projecting through their miracle tales the narrative of a distinctly Buddhist East. That is not to say that authors such as Daoxuan had the intention of casting, say, the capital of Chang'an as a Buddhist "Jerusalem", only that they conceived of miracle tales as histories placing Buddhism in the past, present, and future of China, vindicating their faith in a cultural environment that was not always amenable to foreign creeds.

This article offers at the outset a preliminary description of Daoxuan's *Ji shenzhou sanbao gantong lu* 集神州三寶感通錄 [Collected Record of Miracles Relating to the Three Jewels

in China]. The following subsections cover the basic structure and content of the *Record of Miracles.* First, some cursory notes are presented on the historical circumstances and the literary traditions that influenced this compilation of miracle tales. These will be followed by a thematic breakdown of the text, as well as a survey of the sources and motivations behind such a compilation project. Finally, there is a look at the *Record of Miracles* in relation to the Chinese Buddhist canon and, more generally, to historiography and ideas of historicity.

2. Cultural and Historical Background

To begin, the *Record of Miracles* is neither a work on doctrine nor exegesis but is instead a work of Buddhist narrative literature. More specifically, it represents one of the three main Buddhist narrative "genres": the miracle tale.[4] The *Record of Miracles* and other miracle tale collections were compiled by individuals, both monastics and lay practitioners, who were part of a literary tradition, and this section examines this particular tradition in order to shed some light on the influences as well as the motivations behind the composition of the *Record of Miracles.*

2.1. The Record of Miracles' Place within the Chinese Literary Tradition

The miracle tale genre (*lingyan* 靈驗; *yingyan* 應驗; or *ganying* 感應) developed from an earlier literary tradition called the tales of anomalies (*zhiguai* 志怪).[5] These tales of anomalies were collections of short pieces related by a common theme, namely, supernormal phenomena associated with "anomalous" (*guai* 怪) people, objects, places, and events. Although rooted in the literary traditions of the Warring States period (475–221 BCE) and the Han dynasty (206 BCE–220 CE), the anomaly account genre truly came into its own during the Six Dynasties period (220–589 CE).[6] The Han attitude towards literature was predominantly conservative, determining poetics according to patterns in line with ancient literary models. According to these standards, history was meant to remain unbiased, while interest in supernormal phenomena was considered "vulgar" (*su* 俗) and unworthy of note (Gjertson 1989, p. 2 f.; Campany 1996, pp. 162, 170). The anomaly account, however, recorded such so-called vulgar details, be they fantastic scenes of encounters with celestial beings, stories of spirit possession, or accounts of dream voyages to the unseen realms. The rising popularity of anomaly accounts emerged in the wake of the political and moral unease following the fall of the Han dynasty. The ideological hegemony of Han Confucianism dissolved during the chaotic "period of division" as members of the elite were suddenly confronted with a less secure sense of their world. This gave rise to political dissatisfaction and intellectual ferment, which, in turn, promoted ingenuity and innovation as exemplified by the speculative philosophy of so-called Dark Learning (*xuanxue* 玄學) and the breakaway among the literati from ancient literary forms.[7] Most importantly for our purposes, there was a growing interest among the elite in discussing and writing about the supernormal and the role that humans—as well as other beings—played in both the seen and unseen realms of existence. This intellectual curiosity in the strange rapidly developed into the more formalized anomaly accounts genre, as authors sought—sometimes for pleasure and sometimes out of academic interest—to record, compile, and speculate on the origins of extraordinary happenings that were brought about by supernormal agents or objects.

Miracle tales, on the other hand, were didactic stories related to Buddhist figures and objects that described miraculous occurrences brought about by acts of great piety and fervent devotion. The typical miracle tale recounts seemingly normal stories, only to then shatter the reader's sense of normality, presenting evidence of awe-inspiring occurrences related to Buddhist persons, objects, and places. In this way, the stories present the audience with concrete examples of the workings of karma, while simultaneously setting verifiable historical precedents in a bid to prove the religious efficacy of Buddhism in China. The first extant miracle tale collection was a compilation of stories relating the salvific powers of the Bodhisattva Guanshiyin 觀世音.[8] In time, many different miracle tale collections would be compiled, describing a great variety of miraculous occurrences, such as the manifest apotropaic qualities of certain scriptures, the auspicious signs produced

by religious objects, or the supernormal rainmaking powers of Buddhist monks, to name only three examples.

Although the true origins of the miracle tale genre are difficult to determine, there is no doubt that its literary foundation—that which determines style and content—can be traced back to anomaly accounts and, by association, to court histories.[9] In terms of influence, the narrative form of the miracle tale was very close to the biographical accounts included in court histories, a genre that was already part and parcel of the literary culture of the medieval Chinese elite.[10] Moreover, miracle tales were, stylistically, almost indistinguishable from the prosaic anomaly accounts, a genre that also had its literary roots in court historiography. As Kenneth DeWoskin put it with regard to the contrast between anomaly accounts and court histories, aside from the novel interest in the supernormal, the anomaly account writers were, in a sense, putting new wine into old wineskins so that "new topics were explored and expressed within the old formats" (DeWoskin 1977, p. 25). This was true of miracle tales as well, though they did diverge quite radically from histories and anomaly accounts in their emphasis on Buddhist themes. Miracle tales also showed some stylistic similarities to Indian Buddhist narrative literary forms such as birth stories (Skt. *jātakas*; Ch. *bensheng* 本生) and parables (Skt. *avadānas*; Ch. *yinyuan* 因缘), two literary genres made up of didactic tales recounting the meritorious—and often heroic—deeds of the Buddha and his past incarnations.[11] However, birth stories and parables were translated relatively late, only reaching Chinese-speaking audiences in the third century (Gjertson 1989, p. 8). While miracle tales were certainly informed by Indian narrative traditions, there are too many stylistic differences to really speak of a profound influence.

The thematic contours of the miracle tale genre are relatively well-defined and may be gleaned from the story of Liu Sahe 劉薩何 (c. 252–c. 436) (Campany 2012b, p. 150 f.). According to the *Mingxiang ji* 冥祥記, Liu Sahe was a foreigner in China who made a living hunting game. At thirty years old, he died and had a visionary experience wherein he descended into the Buddhist hell realms. He first encountered the denizens of hell while travelling from one hell realm to another, describing the differences between each one as he went along. He then encountered his great-uncle, who was imprisoned and wished to repent for having failed to serve the Buddha while he lived. Finally, Sahe encountered Guanshiyin Bodhisattva, who expounded on Buddhist teachings and told him of the inherent merit attached to the *Prajñāpāramitā Sutra* and other related scriptures.[12] In the hell realms, he was reprimanded for having taken the lives of animals during his time as a hunter, and, as a penance, was given the task of seeking out holy relics and pagodas. He came back to life seven days later and took on the Buddhist name Huida 慧達, thereafter setting forth on his ordained mission to discover relics, images, and pagodas throughout China. The Buddhist themes mentioned in this story represent literary tropes that are central to the miracle tale genre. Some of these narrative elements, such as the return from death or accounts of travels to the hell realms, are also found in anomaly accounts. However, the elements specific to miracle tales are: Buddhist conversion stories, didactic stories describing karmic retribution, accounts of voyages to the Buddhist hell realms (*diyu* 地獄), mention of the merit and protective powers of scriptures, as well as records relating to the auspicious discovery of sacred objects, such as Buddhist relics, images, and pagodas.[13]

In conclusion, central to the popular composition as well as the reception of miracle tales during the fourth century was the growing acceptance more generally in Chinese society of Mahāyāna Buddhism. Miracle tales give many insights into the Sinification process of Buddhism because they depict how Buddhist concepts were translated for Chinese consumption and also how self-identifying Buddhists conceived of themselves and their world (Campany 2012b, p. 12). The tales had broad appeal because they did more than address intellectual issues or repeat the doctrinal tenets of Buddhism. They offered more attainable representations of Buddhist salvation: liberation that could be obtained not only through ascetic rigour and doctrinal understanding but through faith-based practices as well (Gjertson 1989, p. 13).

2.2. Collections and Collectors

Miracle tale collections were not cut from whole cloth. They drew on various sources, such as official and private archives, stele and pagoda inscriptions, and witness accounts; quite often, they also included the recorded experiences of the compilers. Having collected these stories from previously circulating material, compilers would then stitch them together to form a broader narrative. Of the many miracle tales and miracle tale collections mentioned in catalogues, relatively few are still extant today, so that most survive as excerpts or quotations in collectanea such as the *Bian zhenglun* 辯正論 (c. 626 CE), the *Record of Miracles*, the *Fayuan zhulin* 法苑珠林 [The Grove of Pearls from the Garden of Dharma; 668], or later works such as the *Youyang zazu* 酉陽雜俎 (c. 803–863) and the *Taiping guang ji* 太平廣記 (978), to name only a few. Although the earliest texts were often collected by lay devotees, it was the monks and literati that preserved them by copying and citing them in their own works. The most complete early effort to collate, edit, and cite miracle tales was Daoshi's Buddhist encyclopedia, the *Fayuan zhulin* mentioned above. The *Record of Miracles* represents a similar effort. However, while it predates Daoshi's work by four years and draws upon many of the same sources, Daoxuan's collection is not as comprehensive. It was more limited in scope and its sources were rarely indicated (Gjertson 1989, p. 36; Lagerwey and Martin 2009, p. 906). The *Record of Miracles* is more of a selection of miracle tales, while the *Fayuan zhulin* is far more inclusive and the editing is far more rigorous.

As mentioned above, this new Buddhist genre emphasizing the miraculous was stylistically based on the Chinese historiographical tradition. Similar to court histories, Buddhist history was also the responsibility of an elite, both religious and secular. Traditionally, the state-sponsored court history as well as privately written history was the exclusive purview of those select members of the gentry (*shi* 士) commissioned to collect historical sources into single and cohesive volumes.[14] This also held true with the compilers of anomaly accounts, who were all members of the medieval Chinese elite. They collected tales of the anomalous so as to share them with fellow members of the literati out of literary, scholarly, and genuine curiosity towards all things "strange".[15] On the other hand, miracle tales were always compiled for reasons of faith by both monastic as well as lay members of the Buddhist community, many of whom would have come from the same gentry families as the court history authors and that of the anomaly account authors.

Looking over the list of authors cited in Daoxuan's *Record of Miracles*, the list reads like a *Who's Who* of court life from the Six Dynasties to that of the Tang. For example, Tao Qian 陶潛 (365–427 CE), the author of the *Soushen houji* 搜神後記, was the great-grandson of the Jin Commander-in-Chief, Tao Kan 陶侃, and was himself under the employ of Huan Xuan 桓玄 (369–404), the Regional Inspector of Jingzhou and Jiangzhou. Liu Yiqing 劉義慶 (403–444), the author of the *Xuanyan ji* 宣驗記 and the *Youming lu* 幽明錄, was related to the founder of the Liu Song dynasty, Liu Yu 劉裕 (363–422), and was himself Prince of Linchuan 臨川. During the Southern Qi 南齊 (480–502), many of those authors whose works were central to Daoxuan's own collection attended and participated in the literary salons of Xiao Ziliang, Prince of Jingling 竟陵 and a renowned patron of Buddhism.[16] Among the eight companions of Jingling (*jingling ba you* 竟陵八友)—a literary group that included the likes of Shen Yue 沈約 (441–513) and the future founder of the Liang dynasty, Xiao Yan 蕭衍—was Ren Fang 任昉 (460–508), Xiao Ziliang's secretary at the Ministry of Education and the author of the *Shuyi ji* 述異記.[17] Additionally, it was during one of these literary gatherings that Xiao Ziliang asked had the scholar-official Wang Yan 王琰 (b. 454), the author of the *Mingxiang ji* 冥祥記, to remonstrate with Fan Zhen 范縝 (c. 450–c. 510), whose arguments against Buddhism as presented in the *Shenmie lun* 神滅論 represented a strong opposing position in the debate regarding the acceptability of Buddhist doctrine and metaphysics in China (Campany 2012b, pp. 9–12). Daoxuan also mentions more contemporary compilers, such as Tang Lin 唐臨 (d. c. 660), the author of the *Mingbao ji* 冥報記 (c. 653), who was born of two prominent aristocratic families and would, throughout his life, occupy many different high-ranking bureaucratic positions concerned with the legal and investigatory aspects of government.[18]

Monastic compilers were similarly high in rank, both inside and outside their monastic institutions. For example, although very little is known about the personal life of the author of the *Gaoseng zhuan* 高僧傳 [Biographies of Eminent Monks], Huijiao 慧皎 (497–554), taking into account his writing style and mastery of the form, he would have come from a wealthy background where they could afford to cultivate such qualities. He resided in Jiaxiang Monastery 嘉祥寺, a wealthy monastic community originally patronized by the Prefect of Kuaiji, for many years; there, he would have come into contact with many different members of the southern intelligentsia.[19] The same is true of Daoxuan, who, according to his biographies, was of excellent stock: the son of the Director of the Ministry of Rites during the Chen dynasty and a descendant of Qian Rang 錢讓 (89–151), a governor of Guangling 廣陵 during the Han dynasty.[20] Daoxuan was a prominent figure in his religious community and among the elite, serving as abbot at Ximing Monastery in the capital, participating in the imperial cult under Gaozong, and playing a pivotal role in the ongoing debate in the capital with regard to whether monks ought to bow before the emperor and their parents.[21] These are only a few cases among monastics, though other examples abound.[22]

3. Structure and Content of the Text

The *Record of Miracles* is a collection of 150 itemized miracle tales in three fascicles. Daoxuan began to collect and edit his sources into a single text in earnest while he was an abbot in the capital at Ximing Monastery 西明寺. We know from the colophon that the *Record of Miracles* was not completed in the capital but at Qinggong Sanctuary 清宮精舍, probably at Jingye Monastery, located in the Zhongnan mountain range 終南山 south-east of Chang'an.[23] Daoxuan states that he was aged and unwell at the time, compelling him to hastily complete this work. Although he states that the text was put together quickly, in reality, it was the culmination of decades of collection work, bringing together sources and observations that he had been recording since his early days as a novice. It was completed in a timely fashion by 664 CE, only three years before his death in 667.[24]

Today, the *Record of Miracles* is best known by the title *Ji shenzhou sanbao gantong lu* 集神州三寶感通錄 (*Collected Record of Miracles Relating to the Three Jewels in China*). It is also often referred to by its abbreviated titles, *Sanbao gantong lu* 三寶感通錄 or *Sanbao gantong zhuan* 三寶感通傳,[25] as well as alternative titles such as *Dongxia sanbao gantong ji* 東夏三寶感通記[26] and *Dongxia sanbao gantong lu* 東夏三寶感通錄.[27] The differences between these titles are (a) the composites used to designate "China" (i.e., *Shenzhou* and *Dongxia*), (b) the presence of the prefix *ji* 集 (absent in alternative titles), used adverbially to mean "collected", as well as (c) the presence of different generic suffixes for "record" (i.e., *lu* 錄, *ji* 記, and *zhuan* 傳). The meaning behind these titles remains the same.

Before moving forward, a brief explanation follows of the title's English translation: *Collected Record of Miracles relating to the Three Jewels in China.* First, the term *Shenzhou* 神州 (lit. "divine continent") has many different meanings, though it is here used to designate the Sinitic world.[28] Interestingly, in the alternative—perhaps even the original—title, *Dongxia sanbao gantong lu,* Daoxuan drops the *ji* character and uses the term *Dongxia* instead of *Shenzhou.* From the Qin dynasty (221 BCE) onward, the term *Dongxia* 東夏 (lit. Eastern Xia) usually designated the eastern part of China. However, Daoxuan does not here take the Sinitic world as the implied central point of reference, replacing China with the land of Buddhism's origin, India. As he states in the preface with regard to the appearance of Buddhist religious objects in China:

> This land [China] is the eastern part of the continent [which also includes the land where the Buddha attained enlightenment, India],[29] so there is no reason to doubt the appearance of *stūpas* here.
>
> 此土即洲之東境, 故塔現不足以疑.[30]

In this case, *Dongxia* would perhaps be better rendered in English as the "[Country of Hua]xia in the East", therefore placing China (*xia*) to the east (*dong*) of the Buddha's

homeland (Kieschnick 2004, s.v. Miracle; Teiser and Stone 2009, p. 34; Campany 2012b, 15 n.58).[31]

The title also mentions the "Three Jewels" (Skt. *triratna*, Ch. *sanbao* 三寶), which are three elements central to Buddhist religious life: the buddhas (*fo* 佛), the teachings (Skt. *Dharma*, Ch. *fa* 法) and the monastic community (Skt. *samgha*, Ch. *sengjia* 僧伽). In accordance with these three themes, the *Record of Miracles* contains stories of buddhas, bodhisattvas, eminent monks, monasteries, pagodas, religious objects, and scriptures in East Asia. It also touches on various themes such as the Buddhist faith, religious conversion, supernormal encounters, and the cult of religious objects, as well as karmic retribution.

Finally, in this work, the term *gantong* 感通 (lit. "penetration into stimuli") is translated as "miracles".[32] This article uses the term "miracle" because it speaks to the dimension of *gantong* that is central to miracle tales, namely, that the narratives described awe-inspiring occurrences. These accounts were, in part, meant to shatter the false sense of comfort and normality in the everyday lives of the audience by presenting events related to Buddhist persons and objects that seemed totally out of the ordinary. That is to say, "miracle" here means those supernormal events and powers that draw the witness's attention away from day-to-day experience towards a supernormal reality that would otherwise be hidden from view. This translation of *gantong*, however, does not do justice to the myriad meanings and cultural connotations it holds. The term *gantong*, alongside *ganying* 感應 ("stimulus response") and other such terms, represents indigenous Chinese modes of correlative thought that speak to the relationship between natural phenomena and events in the human realm, as well as a view of causality that is founded in ideas of sympathetic resonance between agents—be they persons, spirits or objects—according to their respective cosmic categories.[33] Therefore, for lack of a better equivalent in English, and wishing to avoid using more awkward or clunky language, the term "miracle" will be used herein.

Thematic Breakdown of the Record of Miracles

The *Record of Miracles* is divided into five thematic sections, distributed over three fascicles. These sections are (1) the miracles relating to Buddhist relics (Skt. *śarīra*) and the pagodas that mark their location (*sheli biaota* 舍利表塔) in the first fascicle; (2) the miracles relating to the discovery of numinous Buddhist images (*lingxiang chuijiang* 靈像垂降) in the second fascicle; finally, (3) the miracles relating to holy monasteries (*shengsi* 聖寺), (4) numinous teachings (*lingjiao* 靈教), and (5) extraordinary monks (*shenseng* 神僧) in the third fascicle. As mentioned before, the overarching themes of this text revolve around the tripartite classification of Buddhist religious life into different "Jewels", with separate sections of the text corresponding to separate aspects of the Three Jewels. Following this thematic schema: (1) the sections on relics, pagodas and images correspond to the buddhas; (2) the section on auspicious scriptures corresponds to the teachings; (3) the sections on holy monasteries and extraordinary monks correspond to the monastic community.

The first fascicle recounts the histories of more than twenty relics and pagodas discovered in East Asia—that is to say, China, Korea, and Japan. The text begins with a preface offering a broad history of Buddhism and the Buddhist faith in China, followed by a "table of contents", ordered chronologically, indicating the dynasty and the general geographical location, as well as specific pagoda locations for each item.[34] The selected histories date back to the Western Jin period and onward, although many narratives claim that the hallowed status of these objects and locations go as far back as the Zhou dynasty (510–314 BCE). Proof of antiquity bestowed status on these religious objects, and miracle tale narratives were meant to persuade the readers of the object's prestige and authenticity. For this reason, just about every item in the first and second fascicles were, in some way, associated not only with ancient China but also with the western regions, the land of Buddhism's origins, as well as with the land once ruled by King Aśoka (r. c. 268–c. 232 BCE), a Mauryan king famous for his meritorious deeds as well as for his promotion of Buddhism. In the *Record of Miracles*, Aśoka is present at the periphery of almost every miracle tale. The preface fittingly gives brief renderings of well-known stories regarding the Mauryan

king, such as how he met the Buddha in a past life and how he ordered the distribution of 84,000 relics and pagodas throughout the world. For the believers who were composing, recording or collating these tales, the association of these objects with the Mauryan king served to authenticate the objects' hallowed status, as well as to legitimize Buddhism's place on Chinese soil.

Additionally, following the first collection in the first fascicle, there is a related collection bearing its own title. This separate collection, titled *Zhendan shenzhou fo sheli gantong* 振旦神州佛舍利感通 ('Records of Buddha relic miracles in China'), has its own preface, a list with short descriptions of miraculous occurrences that took place during the Yuanjia period (424–453) of the Liu Song dynasty and the Renshou period (601–604) of the Sui, as well as offering its own concluding remarks.[35] Similar to the collection before it, this section addresses the discovery of Aśokan relics and pagodas in East Asia.

The second fascicle contains accounts of miraculous images related to the buddhas and to King Aśoka. There is a preface and a "table of contents" itemizing fifty stories, followed by the stories themselves and some concluding remarks. The second fascicle generally follows the same themes as the rest of the text, although the miracles that occur are qualitatively different from those recorded in the other section. Holy images might emit a dazzling light that fills the monastic complex, produce a heavenly fragrance, move from one place to another, move over the surface of water, or steal away in the night. The recording of such miracles occurring in the case of other religious objects was relatively common. However, given that images are anthropomorphic representations, they manifest miraculous signs that are characteristically human and that are not attested to in the case of other religious objects—or persons, for that matter. For example, an image may cry when distraught or sweat when anxious, or it may refuse to wear certain articles of clothing. Images, in particular, held an exalted status among the ruling classes, and the authors of miracle tales usually noted the signs produced by images as auguries of either good or bad fortune for rulers and their dynasties.[36] Regarding the sources used in the second fascicle, twenty-seven of the fifty items were selected and edited by Daoxuan from the *Gaoseng zhuan* 高僧傳, while the rest came from other histories and pagoda inscriptions, as well as from oral communications given to him.[37]

The third fascicle contains miraculous narratives relating to monasteries and scriptures, as well as to extraordinary monks (Shinohara 1990, p. 203). It contains three sections, comprising eighty items in all, with each section containing its own preface and concluding remarks. The preface to the first section is followed by a "table of contents" and the corresponding stories of the twelve monasteries. This section tells marvellous stories related to monasteries in China. The sources of this section are not obvious, though Daoxuan likely gathered much information from past miracle tale collections, as well as inscriptions.[38]

The section on monasteries is followed by two titled collections: the *Ruijing lu* 瑞經錄 ('Record of Auspicious Scriptures') and the *Shenseng gantonglu* 神僧感通錄 ('Record of Miracles Related to Extraordinary Monks'). The former corresponds to the theme of the numinous teachings (*lingjiao*) mentioned above. This section constitutes thirty-eight items and, although each item is named after an individual, the emphasis is not placed on people but on scriptures. Therefore, it relates miraculous occurrences brought about by the recitation, copying, or discovery of scriptures. As for the sources of the *Ruijing lu* section, it draws upon earlier biographical texts, such as the *Gaoseng zhuan*, as well as contemporary miracle tale collections, such as Tang Lin's *Mingbao ji* 冥報記 [Records of Miraculous Retribution; c. 653].[39] Daoxuan supplemented these older collections with contemporary stories that he most likely gathered from oral sources.[40] This collection was also preserved in his *Da Tang neidian lu* 大唐內典錄 (*Great Tang Record of Buddhist Scriptures)*, from where he copied it—almost verbatim—into a section titled *Lidai zhongjing yinggan xingjing lu* 歷代眾經應感興敬錄 ('Records of Awe-inspiring Miracles About Scriptures that Occurred During Various Dynasties in the Past').[41]

The section on extraordinary monks (*shenseng* 神僧) is made up of thirty items and contains the stories of those monks who manifested numinous powers (*lingxiang* 靈相).[42]

Although the monks that figure in the *Record of Miracles* have had varied careers as translators, exegetes, and masters of monastic discipline or meditation, they are all related insofar as they can also manifest supernormal powers (i.e., rainmaking, healing, flying, etc.). The selected biographies for this last collection come mostly from what was perhaps at that time a complete version of Wang Yan's (520–604) *Mingxiang ji* 冥祥記 (*Record of Signs From the Unseen Realm*),[43] and was supplemented with biographies from Huijiao's *Gaoseng zhuan*.[44] This section has parallels scattered throughout the *Fayuan zhulin*, and was either compiled while referring to a draft of this encyclopedia or, more likely, by using sources that he shared with Daoshi (Shinohara 1990, p. 378). Interestingly, unlike the first two fascicles, the third fascicle, as a whole, does not pay as much attention to King Aśoka. The emphasis is on supernormal occurrences and how they attest to the sacredness of these religious objects and persons.

4. Sources, Composition, and Motivation

The *Record of Miracles* is essentially a collection of other biography and miracle tale collections. It draws upon prior works, such as official histories, stele inscriptions, and miracle tale and anomaly account collections. It also includes other ancient Chinese narrative prose works and local legends, as well as recorded oral accounts regarding monks, religious objects, and Buddhist religious structures.[45] For these reasons, the text encompasses a wide variety of topics, from ancient myths to contemporary politics, from astrology to topography, from didactic historical anecdotes to contemporary religious polemical discourses, and from philosophy to Buddhist doctrine. The result is that while the text does, in principle, hold to a central theme, it reads as a hotchpotch of different works and narrative styles. The disjointed effect that is sometimes found in the text is, for the most part, a result of the collating and editing process, which, by Daoxuan's own admission, was performed with some haste.

4.1. Daoxuan's Own Works and Experiences

Although Daoxuan states that he completed the *Record of Miracles* in a hurry, the collecting together of primary materials and stories was a long and drawn-out process. According to Koichi Shinohara, Daoxuan had been making lists of Buddhist tales over many years; it was these lists and their corresponding sources that developed into the *Record of Miracles*. Indeed, Daoxuan worked on multiple projects throughout his life, and it is almost certain that he had been progressively accumulating lists and sources that he later brought together to form the *Record of Miracles*. The *Record of Miracles* often borrows or expands upon Daoxuan's own works—or at least draws upon similar sources—especially the *Xu gaoseng zhuan* 續高僧傳 (645 CE), the *Shijia fangzhi* 釋迦方志 (650), the *Da Tang neidian lu* 大唐內典錄 (664) and the *Guang hongming ji* 廣弘明集 (664).[46] It is even possible that at some point in the 660's or earlier, Daoxuan would already have prepared a draft of the *Record of Miracles*.

Daoxuan did not compose his Buddhist history according to the Confucian standards of historical writing, which required that the historian remain unbiased—according to the norms of the time—and that sources be gathered from equally unbiased works. Daoxuan was, first and foremost, a Buddhist monastic. Therefore, he drew upon many Buddhist sources, works that spoke so favourably of Buddhism that it would have made a Confucian scholar cringe. Moreover, Daoxuan brought much of his own personal research and experience into the narratives.[47] As did the miracle tale compilers before him, Daoxuan travelled extensively and gathered much supplementary information from his own personal visits to sacred places. The miracle tale narratives are often punctuated by his own comments, drawing on personal pilgrimages to hallowed grounds or his viewings of images and relics. Daoxuan's personal accounts read like observations meant to complement—and sometimes correct—past histories. His accounts were perhaps meant to fill in the gaps of information omitted in prior works, or they might simply have been intended to con-

firm, with an eye-witness account, the veracity of a record or question the hallowed status of a cult object.

In his first-person accounts, as they appear in the *Record of Miracles*, one can glean four literary means by which he verifies his objects of study. The first of these means is the author's witness accounts, wherein he recounts his own experiences. The second means of verification is what will here be called ethnographic accounts, wherein Daoxuan visits a locality and studies religious life as it is experienced there. The second means is qualitatively similar to the first, though the contents of these narratives are different enough to warrant their own category. The third means of verification is the visionary experience accounts, which, though they do not appear in the *Record of Miracles*, give us insight into how he confirmed the veracity of his own stories. The fourth means is the scholarly correctives inserted into the narrative, wherein he questions the theories of other monastics as well as secular writers. This final point will not be elaborated here because these scholarly correctives are instances where Daoxuan included himself in the text and are thus not accounts of his own lived experiences.

First, there are his own witness accounts of miraculous objects and sacred places. Daoxuan recorded many accounts of his visits to different religious sites as he was especially interested in the origins of cult objects as well as their original locations. The histories of monasteries often went back centuries. Over time, monasteries changed their names or fell into disrepair, or their pagodas and relics were transferred to new locations. To give one example, when Daoxuan travelled south of the capital, he visited the ruins of the original Famen pagoda in Fufeng, southeast of Chang'an. He inserted this account into his history of Famen Monastery, noting that "people in the area [of the original ruined pagoda] are altogether scarce, the hazelnut thickets are overgrown, and the pagoda is on the verge of collapse".[48] Daoxuan could not have visited all the places mentioned in his text, though such accounts do much to tie narratives about the past to his lived present.

Second, Daoxuan's writings show a comfortable familiarity with regional cultures, and it is acknowledged in his writings that he did, indeed, sometimes add his own personal "ethnographic" observations. In this way, he recorded many locally specific histories and customs, information that would otherwise only have been saved in the memories of the members of those communities. Once again speaking of Famen, a monastery that Daoxuan knew very well, he describes the geography of the Qishan mountain range and speaks of a place called Phoenix Spring 鳳泉, which was located twenty *li* north of the original pagoda. Interestingly, here, he gives an account of how, according to local tradition, during the Zhou dynasty a phoenix drank from this spring and that this was the reason for calling the place "Phoenix Spring". Another example is his study of Liu Sahe in the *Record of Miracles*. Daoxuan had a particular interest in Liu Sahe, and his *Shijia fangzhi, Xu gaoseng zhuan*, and the *Record of Miracles* all provide new insights into this Buddhist figure. In 627, Daoxuan went to visit the temple dedicated to Liu Sahe in Cizhou 慈州 (present-day Linfen in Shanxi) to study the cult that had formed around this figure since his death.[49] Daoxuan was particularly interested in the cult of Liu Sahe, whose temple name was changed to "Revived Sage He" (*Su He sheng* 蘇何聖), as well as in the ritual and history surrounding Sahe's image, which the locals called the "Barbarian Master Buddha" (*Hushi fo* 胡師佛).[50] In one account, Daoxuan pays particular attention to the annual procession of Sahe's image and the religious ritual around this procession, which he claims he witnessed twice:

> I myself have heard [these facts], and myself travelled there twice to the procession, studied the [miraculous] traces, [covering everything] from first to last until [the facts about the cult of Liu Sahe] were exhausted.
>
> 余素聞之. 親往二年, 周遊訪迹, 始末斯盡.[51]

In the account that ensues, Daoxuan gives a thorough—and quite anthropological—explanation for the origins of the distinct practices surrounding the cult of Liu Sahe, his objects, and his attributed writings. This information is originally found in the *Record of*

Miracles, showing that Daoxuan was there, giving a personal account and adding to a growing tradition around the figure of Liu Sahe (Shinohara 1988, p. 174).

Third, although it is never stated explicitly in the *Record of Miracles*, Daoxuan would also have confirmed the veracity of the miracle tale narratives found in the *Record of Miracles* through visions and interviews with celestial beings. For example, in his recorded visions, Daoxuan asks a spirit about the origins of the Changgan pagoda in Jiankang, as well as the Maoxian pagoda in Kuaiji. The spirit then goes into detail about their origins. He first confirms that the Changgan pagoda is an Aśokan structure and that, as the modern records indicate, when in Yangzhou, Liu Sahe felt an extraordinary aura that led to the discovery of a votive pagoda in Changgan. The spirit then speaks of the Maoxian pagoda and its Aśokan origins, as well as the hallowed status of its relics.[52] These visions, recorded around the same time as the *Record of Miracles*, show that Daoxuan himself must have harboured some doubts about the authenticity of some of these stories. With no higher authority on which to rely, visions would have served him as well as the Buddhist community as a seal of authenticity, drawing on the knowledge of beings that are privy to information to which the inhabitants of the seen realm did not have access.

Fourthly, these first-person accounts were usually used to complement and legitimize the given story's claims. Although Daoxuan did not necessarily rely on sources that would have appealed to a Confucian audience, his arguments were coherent within a community that believed in the validity of miraculous occurrences and in the authority of visionary experience. For this reason, these personal accounts, as prominent factors in Daoxuan's own life and in Chinese Buddhist social history, present important information by which the modern reader can try and trace an outline of the medieval Chinese *imaginaire* with regard to miracles and the supernormal.

4.2. Other Works

For all Daoxuan's voyages outside of his monastic residence, he remained a monk with monkish habits, dedicating most of his time to the cultivation of Buddhist practice, reading and scouring the manuscripts preserved in the monastic libraries. Consequently, most of his research was drawn from manuscripts containing biography and miracle tale collections. Regrettably, his sources are not always easy to trace. He was a learned monk, often quoting from memory and seldom referring to his sources by name. At that time, there was consistent borrowing between biographical and miracle tale texts and the communities that read these texts all referred to the same sources, most likely not even needing a direct reference for readers to know whence they came. When citations do appear, they usually name only one or two sources, referring to the rest as "other records" (*biezhuan* 別傳) or "et cetera" (*deng* 等).

Daoxuan did sometimes explicitly mention his sources, as was the case in the section on extraordinary monks, where he mentioned at least fourteen sources by other authors and one of his own works, the *Xu gaoseng zhuan*.[53] A quick glance at the sources used in the *Record of Miracles* reveals that the two primary outside sources used were the *Mingxiang ji* 冥祥記 (*Records of Signs From the Unseen Realm*; c. 490]) by Wang Yan 王琰 and the *Gaoseng zhuan* 高僧傳 (*Biographies of Eminent Monks*; c. 530) by Huijiao 慧皎—[54] two foundational texts in the biography and miracle tale tradition (Shinohara 1988, p. 212). Additionally, Daoxuan was an assiduous recorder of Buddhist history who did not fail to read official sources, especially court histories such as the *Wei shu* 魏書 (*History of the Wei*), the *Liang shu* 梁書 (*History of the Liang*), and the *Zhou shu* 周書 (*History of the* [*Northern*] *Zhou*).[55] He also drew upon sources concerned with local history, often referring to geographical works and gazetteers, as well as local records.[56]

Daoxuan did not, however, limit himself to official sources, often citing historical narratives that in his time would have been considered historically unsound. One such source is found in his description of an island near Kuaiji (in present-day Zhejiang) where Lord Yan of the Xu kingdom (fl. 944 BCE)[57] escaped when chased by Lord Mu of the Zhou dynasty (c. 976–c. 922 BCE). Daoxuan supplements this fact with a tale about how

Lord Mu travelled to the mythical Kunlun Mountain, a story widely attested to in Buddhist apologias, though it was considered an apocryphal tale by Confucian scholars.[58] The *Record of Miracles* is, thus, the finished product of Daoxuan's attempt to join this patchwork of sources seamlessly together and to present a complete—and altogether sympathetic—picture of Sinitic Buddhist history.

Regarding the composition of this text, the colophon states that it was completed at the Qinggong *jingshe* 清宮精舍, though most of the work was probably conducted at Ximing Monastery in Chang'an at the same time as Daoshi (d. 668) was completing his Buddhist encyclopedia, the *Fayuan zhulin*, in one hundred fascicles.[59] The *Record of Miracles* was a long-term project that would have taken many years to complete—maybe even decades—and much of the actual collating work would have been performed collaboratively with Daoshi. As a matter of fact, in the colophon to the *Record of Miracles,* Daoxuan even refers the reader to Daoshi's own encyclopedia for more extensive information on the miracle tale records.[60] Shinohara has convincingly argued that Daoxuan's collection was prepared first and that Daoshi would then have used selections from the *Record of Miracles* in his encyclopedia (Shinohara 1990, p. 354; 1991a, p. 74 f.). These two scholar-monks knew each other from Ximing Monastery in Chang'an and a side-by-side reading of different selections from the two works reveals extensive text reuse.[61] Almost every story told in the *Record of Miracles* is found in some way, shape, or form in the much larger and more comprehensive *Fayuan zhulin*. However, the matching selections found in the encyclopedia were not merely reproduced verbatim but were instead polished renderings of passages taken from the *Record of Miracles*, which sometimes contained mistakes or needed clarification.

4.3. Motivations

Daoxuan undertook the long and arduous task of compiling these miracle tales from a variety of motives. Indeed, the process of compiling material from so many sources to create a coherent whole is inevitably an edifying process of account selection and discretionary emphasis. Some of these motivations are explicit in his prefatory writings and some are interlaced into the narrative, while other motivations can be inferred from his biographies. What were monks such as Daoxuan hoping to achieve by composing Buddhist narrative literature? What were Daoxuan's own motivations for composing the *Record of Miracles*? Who was his intended audience? Karl Kao, when writing about the motivations behind anomaly account compilations, said that they could be (a) "explicitly tendentious", (b) "implicitly tendentious", or (c) "disinterested" (Kao 1985, p. 20).[62] The question does not arise in the case of miracle tales because the author's Buddhist faith was always explicitly stated, making all miracle tale compilations "explicitly tendentious". Although Buddhist writers might claim that their texts were based on historical fact, by no means were these authors objective observers recording facts about the development of their faith. In this way, each miracle tale represents a delicate interplay between the personal motivations and historical forces that shaped the tradition. The following looks at five related motivations behind the composition of the *Record of Miracles*: (1) persuasion, (2) proselytization, (3) appealing to an audience, (4) continuity, and (5) personal experience.

Miracle tales were written with the explicit purpose of persuading readers that the contents of the stories were true so that every story, at some point, provides evidence (*yan* 驗) of the miraculous efficacy of Buddhist piety and devotional acts. To give an example from the world of anomaly accounts, the biography of Gan Bao 干寶 states that he compiled his seminal compilation, the *Soushen ji* 搜神記, to bring to light the veracity of the miraculous and its associated "path of the spirits" (*shendao* 神道).[63] Wang Yan states in the *Mingxiang ji* that he "collected enough examples to serve as a basis for persuading [the reader] to take refuge [in the Buddha's teaching] of his own accord".[64] Huijiao echoes this statement in his *Biographies*, claiming that: "for spreading the way and explaining the Teaching, nothing surpasses [the exemplary lives of] eminent monks".[65] Tang Lin states that because he read texts that "verified and made clear the recompense of good and evil",

he, in turn, was inspired to compile the *Mingbao ji*.[66] Daoxuan says something similar, stating that:

> [To appeal to those that harbour doubts,] I have looked through all the ancient accounts, as well as [recorded] those manifest auspicious signs [that I have seen myself] and have thus continued this preface so that those that read it (lit. "unroll [this scroll]") can know the basis of the Śākyamuni school, such that even in 10,000 years, it will be difficult for [these lessons] to disappear in the dust.
>
> 所以討尋往傳, 及以現祥, 故依纘序. 庶有披者, 識釋門之骨鯁. 萬載之後, 難可塵沒矣.[67]

In the *Daoxuan lüxiang gantong lu*, Daoxuan also asserted that:

> [Miracle tales and anomaly accounts] are not to be doubted. How much more so the [recorded] sayings of buddhas and extraordinary people, texts that drive the mind forward, [making us] strong and brave!
>
> 故非疑慮, 況佛, 希人之說, 心進勇銳之文.[68]

By offering the evidence provided by miracle tales, Daoxuan was attempting to persuade as well as justify the beliefs of the faithful, confirming their validity through concrete examples.

Additionally, these tales were written for proselytizing as well as for apologetic purposes. It is important to remember that the faithful were not indifferent observers but instead held some very strong faith-based biases, as exemplified by Huijiao's statement that:

> Compared to [Buddhism], other religions are like flowing water returning to the great gorge. Similar to celestial bodies encircling the Northern Star, [other religions] long for [that which] surpasses them.
>
> 餘教方之, 猶群流之歸巨壑, 眾星之[拱] 北辰, 悠哉邈矣.[69]

A prevalent motivation was belief and piety, for it was, after all, the role of believers to disseminate Buddhist teachings.[70] Tang Lin hoped that the evidence of miraculous retribution presented in his collection would persuade non-believers of the universality of karmic causality (see Note 66). Daoxuan also expresses a similarly profound commitment to "spreading the way" of Buddhism (Shi 1992; Kieschnick 1997, p. 7). He attests to this in the preface to his *Record of Miracles*:

> [Miracles] appeared in the past [and more] will manifest in the future. They display themselves luminously to practitioners and laypeople; they arouse faith in the deluded as well as the enlightened. Therefore, I have gathered the essential facts [about these miracles] and completed this text in three fascicles.
>
> 或見於既往, 或顯於將來. 昭彰於道俗, 生信於迷悟. 故撮舉其要. 三卷成部云.[71]

The rest of the preface states in no uncertain terms that Daoxuan wishes to impress on his readers the awe-inspiring power of Buddhism and its proponents. We see in the excerpt above that the *Record of Miracles* is a tribute to Buddhists of the past and is also an attempt to inscribe their stories to create a new Buddhist history, thus bolstering the faith of future believers and perhaps even convincing some non-believers to convert.[72]

A third important motivating factor was the audience. While these texts would first have addressed an audience that was sympathetic to Buddhism, they were also composed with the intention of currying favour among potential patrons. The fates of the different religious denominations in China ebbed and flowed according to the support they received from the gentry. While information about who would read texts such as the *Record of Miracles* is scarce, it is safe to assume that monastics certainly read them and that they were also received and read by members of the gentry, some of whom would have occupied government posts (Kieschnick 1997, p. 7). The index of lay believers mentioned in Huijiao's *Gaoseng zhuan* is a virtual list of important cultural and political figures, with many names

also appearing in works such as the *Shishuo xinyu* 世說新語 (*A New Account of Tales of the World*), a collection of anecdotes filled with the witty repartee of the fifth-century southern elite. Arthur Wright took this as proof of Huijiao's intention to naturalize Buddhism in a top-down fashion by having it trickle down into the general culture via the gentry (A. Wright 1954, p. 77). In the fourth century, Dao'an 道安 famously addressed his disciples during a time of crisis, stating that:

> This has been an inauspicious year. If we do not rely on the heads of state, then it will be difficult to carry on with our religious affairs.
>
> 今遭凶年, 不依國主, 則法事難立.[73]

Zanning, a monk much in favour at the Song court, wrote in a memorial to the emperor:

> Knowing that the Teaching is without support, [Buddhists] depend on the might of the emperors.
>
> 知教法之無依, 委帝王之有力.[74]

Although Buddhist monks usually steered clear of official government posts, they had no illusions about the useful role that the state played in the dissemination of Buddhism. Daoxuan was certainly no stranger to life at court and, on multiple occasions, he petitioned the state in the name of his faith. He was a prominent monastic figure who was present among the higher strata of Chinese society, serving as abbot at Ximing Monastery in the capital, participating in different facets of the imperial cult under Gaozong (r. 649–683), and even playing a pivotal role in the ongoing debate at court regarding whether monks ought to bow before the emperor and their parents.[75] As we see in the *Record of Miracles*, dynastic rulers are often mentioned, with the text recounting the pious deeds of past emperors, such as Emperor Wu of the Liang and Wen of the Sui dynasties, as well as Emperor Gaozong 高宗, the emperor in power at the time of compilation. The clearest indication of this text's association with royal patronage is the constant mentions of King Aśoka throughout the work. Aśoka was presented not only as a great promoter of Buddhism but also as a universal monarch meant to rule over all continents. The repeated mention of Aśoka, often associated with China's emperors, was a reference that the ruling classes would not have missed. Indeed, in both rhetoric and practice, many emperors projected themselves in the likeness of the Mauryan king and Emperor Gaozong even used his own likeness and his measurements to produce a statue of Aśoka in his image.[76]

Fourth, these biography and miracle tale compilers were partaking in a tradition. While these collections sought a certain degree of historical rigour and topical comprehensiveness, authors would never claim that their works were original. On the contrary, the justification—indeed the warrant—for compiling such collections was that they were participating in a larger project, one that resonated with a historical tradition rooted in an "exemplary past" (Campany 1996, p. 101 f.). This sense of continuity is reflected in all Buddhist narrative literature, which justifies its existence by mentioning past histories while simultaneously drawing on other works within the Buddhist narrative literary tradition. Daoxuan was steeped in the tradition of the court histories and anomaly literature. In the *Record of Miracles*, Daoxuan either directly quotes or gives short summaries of these texts, claiming that he "will not relate them in detail" 不備載, referring the readers to other collections. In the colophon, Daoxuan even claims that his own collection is lacking certain details and that what he leaves out may be found in Daoshi's *Fayuan zhulin*.

This sense of continuity was also expressed in terms of lineage. In the *Song gaoseng zhuan*, Zanning claimed that Daoxuan was the reincarnation of Sengyou 僧右 (445–518) who was similar to Daoxuan not only because he was a master of monastic discipline, but also because, having composed both the *Chu sanzang ji ji* 出三藏記集 (*Collected Records About the Translation of the Tripitaka*; c. 516) and the *Shijia pu* 釋迦普 (*The Life of Śakyamuni*), he was a renowned Buddhist cataloguer and historian.[77] The invocation of such a karmic link between these two figures would not have been lost on its audience, further

bolstering Daoxuan's role both as a Vinaya master and as a historian of the sacred. Such self-referential acts, which simultaneously create and support a "tradition", went hand-in-glove with the edifying purpose of collecting miracle tales. This edifying intent was among the motivations behind Huijiao's compilation of the *Gaoseng zhuan*, which he claimed was put together to remedy the deficiencies of past religious and secular histories.[78] This same claim would be repeated in all the main Buddhist biographies composed thereafter by Daoxuan, Zanning, and Ruxing 如惺 (Kieschnick 1997, p. 6). Daoxuan was critical and scrupulous in his choice of sources as he sought to sort out the facts from varied narratives, as well as to set down a coherent chronology. In the colophon to his *Record of Miracles*, he pointed out the flaws inherent in the biographical genre, with which he was quite familiar, having compiled his own biographical collection in 645. He claimed that biographies were limited by their emphasis on the deeds of outstanding monastic figures:

> During the [Northern] Qi (550–557), the [Northern] Zhou (557–581), the Sui (581–618) and the Tang, there were many divine anomalies. The task [of recording these events] halted for one hundred years, [though] those that saw and heard of [them] were numerous. [These miracles] were included in the biographies of monks, so I did not record them in full. I briefly collected miracles [therein] so that it was known that there are outstanding figures within the monastic community.
>
> 齊, 周, 隋, 唐代有神異. 事止百年, 見聞不少. 備之僧傳, 故闕而不載. 略述感通之會, 知僧中之有人焉.[79]

By its emphasis on eminent monks and outstanding figures, the Buddhist biographical medium subordinated the miracles themselves. However, for the purposes of Daoxuan's collection of miracle tales, this dearth of detail was amended in his compilation because he could properly extract and expand on such supernormal accounts.

Finally, not only were authors motivated by precedent, but many were also influenced by personal experience. Often, the compilers of anomaly accounts and miracle tales were not inspired by the intrinsic value of stories surrounding the supernormal but by their own experience of its presence. The *Jin shu* 晉書 states that Gan Bao was inspired to collect anomaly accounts because of two events in his life: first, his family found a maid still alive after being entombed in his father's grave for ten years; second, his brother was revived after being dead for several days.[80] In his preface, Wang Yan tells of an image he always held dear and which he had, often by miraculous means, been able to keep, through many trials and tribulations, into old age. He said of the image that:

> I have always made offerings to this image, and it will always be the ferry [that carries me across the ocean of *saṃsāra*]. Based on the repeated [miraculous] occurrences [this image has produced, it] has left a deep impression on me. [Therefore], following [the impetus caused by my] encounter with such omens, [I] stitch together [the miracle tales] in this record.
>
> 像今常自供養, 庶必永作津梁. 循復其事, 有感深懷; 沿此徵覿, 綴成斯記。[81]

As we have seen, Daoxuan himself also had many experiences of the miraculous. Although Daoxuan does not, like Wang Yan, explicitly state that these are the reasons why he has collected the *Record of Miracles*, this paper claims that Daoxuan's experience of the miraculous would have been one of the important motivations for why he compiled so many histories near the end of his life. Unlike some authors who recount their own experiences as grounds for compiling tales of the miraculous, Daoxuan did not mention his own experiences in any of the prefaces in the *Record of Miracles* as the basis for his collecting texts. However, the biography of Daoxuan in the *Song gaoseng zhuan* is full of stories of his encounters with the miraculous. Additionally, around the same time that he was compiling the *Record of Miracles*, he would have conducted interviews with celestial beings, which were recorded in the *Daoxuan lüshi gantong lu* 道宣律師感通錄 (667) and the *Lüxiang gantong zhuan* 律相感通傳 (667). Daoshi says as much in his partial biography of

Daoxuan (Ang 2019, pp. 24–33). That these experiences influenced the writing of this text, and indeed all texts during his latter years, is difficult to deny. Therefore, personal experience was almost certainly an implicit motivating factor for compiling these stories—a motivation shared by many of his fellow compilers.

5. The *Record of Miracles* in the Buddhist Tradition

As a piece of Buddhist narrative literature, the *Record of Miracles* represents the converging point of many different interests, be they cultural, historical, religious, or personal. Daoxuan has no reservations regarding his motivations for compiling these miracle tales: he considers it his responsibility to record evidence of Buddhism's miraculous efficacy in China. To record these proofs, he relies on both secular and religious works, poring over texts of all kinds and drawing from different literary traditions. This text is also the product of his own experiences, which he records and uses to further complement his arguments. In this regard, the *Record of Miracles* is an important work as it speaks to Buddhism's place in China and especially to the integration process of Buddhist thought as well as its followers into Chinese society. The following sections will close this paper by addressing questions related to the value and meaning attached to the *Record of Miracles* in its own cultural context. The first section will address its place in the Chinese Buddhist canon, followed by a last section that will look at the relationship between miracle tales and "history".

5.1. Canon and Canonicity

First, the *Record of Miracles* is today included in the Sinitic Buddhist canon, one of the largest collections of religious texts ever compiled in the history of world religions.[82] This canon is, in fact, so large, both in terms of the sheer number of scriptures and also the variety and breadth of its content, that it is difficult to understand it as a "canon" in terms familiar to a Western audience that is more used to the relatively static and closed canons of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.[83] The *Taishō* canon (Jp. *Taishō Shinshū Daizōkyō* 大正新修大藏經; 1924–1935), the most recent iteration of the East Asian Buddhist canon, contains 2920 individual works distributed across twenty-six categories. This constitutes a variety of texts classified according to certain categories, spanning from sacred works (Skt. *Āgama*; Pal. *Nikāya*; Ch. *Ahan bu* 阿含部; Jp. *Agon-bu*) to apocrypha (Ch. *Yishi* 疑似; Jp. *Giji*), from the doctrine and exegesis on the *Lotus Sutra* to esoteric scriptures and commentaries, and from the doctrine and exegesis on the *Nirvana Sutra* to the monastic codes (Skt. *Vinaya*; Ch. *Lü bu* 律部; Jp. *Ritsu-bu*) and their commentaries.

The *Record of Miracles* and other Buddhist narrative works occupy a special place in this canon. A modern reader seeing the miraculous elements so prevalent in the *Record of Miracles* would be inclined to classify the work as a collection of legends or myths. This would have strongly disagreed with the views of medieval Chinese readers and cataloguers. As a collection of collections, the *Record of Miracles* might have been listed in the section dedicated to Buddhist collectanea (Ch. *Shihui bu* 事彙部; Jp. *Jii-bu*), where, incidentally, one can find the *Fayuan zhulin*. However, this was not the case. It was instead categorized—alongside travelogues, apologues, and biographies—as a work of Buddhist history (Ch. *Shichuan bu* 史傳部; Jp. *Fumito tsutō bu*).

The *Taishō* classification did not stray far from its bibliographical predecessors. The Buddhist catalogues of the Tang also classified the *Record of Miracles* among other history-related works. In Daoxuan's own catalogue, the *Da Tang neidian lu* (664), the *Record of Miracles* appeared in an itemized list under the title *Dongxia sanbao gantong ji* 東夏三寶感通記 as a "record", alongside "annotations, explanations, eulogies and records".[84] In arguably the most important medieval catalogue, the *Kaiyuan shijiao lu* 開元釋教錄 (730), the *Record of Miracles* was formally included in the Chinese Buddhist canon (*ruzang* 入藏) alongside apologue treatises as well as other Buddhist histories that were considered instrumental in spreading the Buddhist faith.[85] Seventy years later, in the *Zhenyuan xinding shijiao mulu* 貞元新定釋教目錄 (800), Yuanzhao's 圓照 (c. 718–c. 805) revision of the *Kaiyuan* catalogue,

the *Record of Miracles* was catalogued among the "biographies, annals, compilations and records" (*chuan* 傳, *ji* 記, *ji* 集, *lu* 錄).[86]

This was the case in other catalogues, as well as in the print versions of the canon, wherein the *Record of Miracles* was praised as a work that helped to spread as well as protect the Buddhist teachings.[87] Although the *Record of Miracles* would certainly have been read as a piece of apologia or for proselytizing purposes, this did not imply that it was not considered a piece of historical literature. As we can see from the catalogues, believers, and probably some non-believers as well, consistently agreed that the *Record of Miracles* belonged in the category of Buddhist history.[88]

5.2. History and Historicity

The attitude towards miracle tales essentially revolved around the question of their facticity. Today, we may ask if miracle tales, with all their miraculous elements and supernormal plot twists, constitute a form of "history".[89] What does the reception of these texts, as well as the cataloguing norms, tell us about medieval Chinese conceptions of history? And what, more broadly speaking, do we mean by "history"?

The traditional Confucian view was, to put it simply, that the historian ought to describe facts and never fabricate them (*shu er buzuo* 述而不作). The *Wenxin diaolong* 文心雕龍 says that the historian ought "to be able to give a rational account of a matter and keep rigidly to what is true; one has to have an unbiased mind".[90] That being said, the medieval Chinese worldview was one wherein the supernormal nature of a thing or event did not necessarily rule out its "reality". Many official histories not only recorded relevant miracles and auguries but also included the histories of mythic founders and legendary sage kings, as well as cultural heroes.[91] However, the Confucian stance regarding the miraculous was, in general, a skeptical one and we could say that those who claimed to uphold such historical standards would have taken issue with the style as well as the prevalence of supernormal content found in the miracle tale genre.

The tension seen here between "fact" and "fabrication" resonates with the longstanding split in Western academia between "history" and "myth". This split is clearly illustrated in the long-since updated second edition of Endymion P. Wilkinson's (2000) *Chinese History*, where the chapter on "Historical Genres" is succeeded by "Other Primary Sources", the first item being "Myth and Religion". Wilkinson said of Chinese myth (*shenhua* 神話) that it constituted the foundations for understanding all cultures, insofar as: (1) myths spoke to the values and beliefs of a people; (2) they helped in decoding symbols and art motifs; (3) "the relationship of myth and history, of fiction and fact, [were] at the heart of our understanding the credibility of the earliest written records".[92] Traditionally, the academic conversation around history has been one of fact versus fiction, wherein historiography was the act of recording the "Truth" or "ordered discourse" (*logos*), while mythology was the record of a community's self-aggrandizing truths and stories (*mythos*).[93] According to this way of thinking, although parts of a miracle tale, such as dates and certain recorded events, may be historically true, any and all marvellous elements are to be judged as mythological and spurious. However, as is exemplified in Buddhist catalogues, this neat divide between *logos* and *mythos* does not translate very well into the lived—and, in this case, catalogued—medieval Chinese reality.[94]

It is essential to remember that miracle tales were not an early form of fantasy fiction. Miracle tales were, as Glen Dudbridge said regarding accounts of anomalies, a "literature of record, not of fantasy and creative fiction" (Dudbridge 1995, p. 16 f.).[95] In fact, during the early Tang period, the concept of "fiction" did not yet exist and the act of writing was, to a certain extent, always performed for the purpose of recording facts, be they historical, ethical, philosophical or lyrical.[96] Miracle tales were not the mere products of the author's imagination and they were accordingly not read as fabricated tales (Lagerwey and Martin 2009, p. 908; Campany 2009, p. 11; 2012b, p. 17). Unlike the anomaly account, which was secular in its outlook, miracle tales were genuinely believed by practitioners to be "records

of confirming evidence, proofs, or signs, or else of responses" validating their beliefs.[97] This is hinted at by the use of certain terms in the many miracle tale collection titles, which often included terms such as "evidence" (*yan* 驗), combined with "numinous" (*ling* 靈), as well as "stimulus" (*gan* 感) and "response" (*ying* 應), speaking to how these stories were meant to record evidential miracles or manifestations of Buddhism's efficacy in China.

Moreover, miracle tales were read as historical evidence in other genres as well, such as Buddhist exegetical texts. In Jizang's 吉藏 (549–623) commentaries on the *Lotus Sutra*, he mentions the power of invoking the Buddha's name (*chengming* 稱名) when facing calamity and fire. Here, Jizang cites multiple compilations such as the Avalokiteśvara miracle tale collections, Liu Yiqing's *Xuanyan ji* 宣驗記, and Wang Yan's *Mingxiang ji* 冥祥記, pushing the burden of evidence away from scriptures and onto miracle tales.[98] In turn, miracle tale authors often carefully noted the origins of their narratives as proof that their collections were not make-believe but were instead based on verifiable sources. That being said, miracle tales occupy a nebulous place between myth and history. While they were not necessarily referred to in official histories or other secular texts, miracle tales had factual authority within the Buddhist community, as well as a limited authority outside it. People certainly read the *Record of Miracles* for the sake of enjoyment, yet their reading would have had a more detached quality, as is the case today when one is reading a work of non-fiction.[99]

6. Concluding Remarks

In conclusion, for the purpose of studying social and cultural history, this genre of literature is a crucial source. For the reader today, these tales shed much light on religious life, popular Buddhist practices, and the general medieval Chinese *zeitgeist*. As we have seen above, the *Record of Miracles* not only grants us insight into the lives and beliefs of early Buddhists, but it may also serve as a rich historical source. Although the *Record of Miracles* sometimes reads like an unedited volume, it is still a text of particular note because it is an early extant gathering of scattered collections of miracle tales and other sources related to miraculous events. Of particular interest to this paper, Daoxuan often inserted his experiences and opinions into his miracle tale collection, this, in turn, shedding light on the author's life. For these reasons, the *Record of Miracles* is an important text for the study of miracle tales as well as of Daoxuan. Insofar as these stories at once reflect and project Buddhist self-representations, they also come to constitute the *imaginaire*, or the "collective memory", of these communally shaped traditions.[100] It is moot to argue about the historical likelihood of certain events that are recorded in narrative literature such as apologues, hagiographies, miracle tales, or travelogues. Indeed, it was implied in such texts that the needs of preaching came before historical concerns. However, it is safe to say that the truth-value of the content in a text such as the *Record of Miracles* does not detract from the insights it may provide us regarding Daoxuan's thoughts and opinions, as well as the broader worldview of people at that time.

The *Record of Miracles*, as well as other miracle tales, were written by individuals that partook of a worldview informed both by ideas of karma and indigenous conceptions of resonance within nature. It was, indeed, the seamless merging of both Buddhist and Chinese elements that distinguished miracle tales from other types of indigenous literature, such as anomaly accounts or court histories. They were also written with the purpose of persuading believers and non-believers by defining the religious community's place in China, producing a singularly Buddhist historical narrative—a mythos or an *imaginaire*—that could bring the audience closer, both spatially and emotionally, to the truths revealed in worlds distinct from their own. These worlds included the Western Regions (*xiyu* 西域) and India, where the Buddha attained enlightenment, as well as the unseen realm where helpful spirits and *devas* resided (Campany 2018, p. 28 f.). By the seventh century, however, China—its history, geography, and culture—came to occupy a place of primacy in new transcontinental representations of the Buddhist faith. The conception of India and the Western Regions as centers of religious authority was not as important to Tang dynasty Buddhists as it had been in earlier dynasties. Reading the *Record of Miracles*, we can

indeed note that medieval Chinese Buddhists were negotiating what Antonino Forte called a "borderland complex"—anxiety vis-à-vis the spatiotemporal divide between China and the land of Buddhism's origins (Forte 1985, p. 125). The contents of these miracle tales reveal that by the Tang period, the Buddhist epicentre of sanctity and authority had shifted from the West to the East, the "divine continent" (*shenzhou* 神州) of China. Accounts related to King Aśoka, for instance, were still central to many miracle tales, though their Indian origin was no longer the narrative touchstone of authority that it had once been. Accounts of local sacred objects and places, as well as of homegrown saints such as Liu Sahe, held just as much sway in the discourse on authenticity as was once held by evidence of foreign provenance. Daoxuan dedicated his later years to recording and compiling Buddhist miracles, a collection project that confirmed not only Buddhism's relevance in China but also its antiquity and its primacy.[101] He explored these miraculous manifestations of the past while simultaneously validating his faith's place in the present and future of the East. The *Record of Miracles* was, indeed, an ode to the fact that Buddhism had effectively been sinicized and that this religion, as well as its proponents, was here to stay.

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Abbreviations

OED	*Oxford English Dictionary*, See (Weiner and Simpson 2004)
T	*Taishō shinshū daizōkyō* 大正新脩大藏經. See (Takakusu and Kaigyoku 1924–1932)

Notes

1 The *Daoxuan lüshi gantong lu* 道宣律師感通錄 was dated 664 CE, though it was most likely composed in 667. The content is essentially the same as the *Lüxiang gantong zhuan* 律相感通傳. Fujiyoshi argues that the difference in dating was caused by confusion between the *Daoxuan lüshi gantong lu* and the *Record of Miracles*, which also contains the characters *gantong lu* 感通錄 and was written in 664 (Fujiyoshi 1992, p. 200 ff.; 2002, p. 372 ff.). Whether or not Daoxuan authored this text is difficult to gauge. As Campany states, if it is written by an author other than Daoxuan, then he must have been very knowledgeable of the monasteries and monastic communities at that time (Campany 1993, p. 15 n. 46). Zürcher noted that this text was listed as having been carried to Japan in the early ninth century (Zürcher [1959] 2007, p. 421 n. 148).

2 Daoshi lists the *Yifa zhuchi ganying ji* 遺法住持感應集 in seven fascicles among Daoxuan's works (*Fayuan zhulin*, *T* no. 2122, 53: 100.1023c12). Analyzed briefly in (Barrett 2012, p. 14f).

3 For more on this subject, see (Tan 2002; McRae 2005).

4 The miracle tale is closely associated with the Buddhist biography. For more, see (Welter 1988; Kieschnick 1997). The other two genres are (a) parables and apologues, as well as (b) travel records (Lagerwey and Martin 2009, p. 900; Mair and Berezkin 2015). For some differences between the miracle tale genre and Buddhist biography, see (Kieschnick 2011, pp. 538, 543 f.).

5 At the time, these genres were not defined very clearly and probably would not have used these terms self-referentially. Although the use of such terms is anachronistic, they do, for the purposes of this paper, allow us to define these different traditions in contrast to one another. For a parallel in Western traditions, see the discussion of "aretology" in (Hengel 1974, vol. 1, pp. 58–61; Smith 1975; Heffernan 1988, p. 31).

6 Campany uses the word "anomaly" as an English term to express *guai* 怪, which also encompasses the realm of the strange, the extraordinary, and, for the purposes of this project, the miraculous (Campany 1996, pp. 99, 162). Some claim that the *zhiguai* genre heralded the birth of Chinese fiction (Lu 1926; DeWoskin 1977). However, Campany argues against such claims on the grounds that these tales were not conscious fictionalizations, but were, in large part, believed to be factually true (Campany 1996, p. 156 f.; 157 n.133).

7 See (Balazs 1964b; Knechtges 2020, p. 201 ff.; DeWoskin 1977, p.21 f.). For more on the rise of historical writing during the Six Dynasties period, see (Dien 2011, p.532).

8 The first miracle tale collection was the *Guangshiyin yingyan ji* 光世音應驗記 [Responsive manifestation of Avalokiteśvara] in seven fascicles, first written in the fourth century by Xie Fu and later reconstructed from memory by Fu Liang. It was the first of three similar collections on the theme of Guangshiyin. For more on the earliest miracle tales, see (Gjertson 1981, p. 292; Campany 2012b, p. 3 ff.).

9 In time, Buddhist miracle tales would also come to influence anomaly accounts and the like, as argued by (Zhang 2014).

10 For more on Chinese biography, see (Beasley et al. 1961).

11 The first *avadānas* and *jātakas* were translated into Chinese between 223 and 253 by the Indo-Scythian Buddhist layman, Zhi Qian 支謙 (fl. c. 240) (Gjertson 1981, p. 290; Nattier 2008, p. 133 ff.; Harbsmeier 2012). Campany states that stylistically, the closest Indian equivalent to miracle tales were "ghost stories" (Pal. *Petavatthu*) (Campany 2012b, p. 2). For a discussion and examples of these kinds of *avadāna* and *jātaka* narratives, see (Chavannes 1910; Pathak 1966; Warder 1972; Winternitz [1933] 1977, vol. 2, pp. 277–94; Tambiah 1984, pp. 21–24; 113 f.; 364; Tatelman 2004; Appleton 2010, p. 3).

12 For more, see (Hureau 2020b; Shinohara 1988, pp. 148–77). Liu Sahe's story was first recorded in the *Mingxiang ji*: Lu [1911] 1997, pp. 301–4; translated to English as item 45 in (Campany 2012b, pp. 148–52).

13 For more on the narrative elements found in the tales of the strange, see (A. C. Yu 1987; Y. Yu 1987; Campany 1990, 1991; Poo 1997).

14 Regarding the authorship of histories from the Han period through to the Six Dynasties, see (Balazs 1964a, p. 135; Dien 2011, p. 510).

15 These men—for in medieval China, the recording of history was considered to be the exclusive purview of men—were not all cut from the same cloth, varying in status from the wealthy to the relatively poor, and from the politically successful to the political failures (*hanmen* 寒門). They might occupy different governmental posts, while some were historians, bibliographers, or academics (Campany 1996, pp. 171–79).

16 Xiao Ziliang would also have compiled the *Sanbao ji* 三寶記, a text cited in the *Record of Miracles*. For a major contribution to this topic written in German, see the article by (Jansen 2000).

17 Ren Fang in turn was related to another author cited in Daoxuan's *Record of Miracles*: Pei Ziye 裴子野 (469–c.531), the compiler of a collection of monastic biographies, no longer extant. For more on the eight companions of Jingling, see (Knechtges 2010, vol. 1, p. 456 f.)

18 (Gjertson 1989, p. 86); For more examples of anomaly account and miracle tale compilers and gentry status, see (Kao 1985, p. 16 ff.).

19 He was in the same literary circles as the lay Buddhist, Wang Manying 王曼穎, and Sengguo 僧果, whose memoirs leave details about Huijiao's latter days (A. Wright 1954).

20 *Song gaoseng zhuan*, *T* no. 2061, 50: 14.790b8-10.

21 For more on Daoxuan and the debate regarding whether monks should pay reverence to their parents and to the throne, see (S. Weinstein 1987, p. 32 f.).

22 This is, of course, not always true. For example, Baochang 寶唱 (c. 456–c. 555), the compiler of the *Mingseng zhuan*, hailed from a poor family. He started off as a copyist. Although he would eventually be favoured by Emperor Wu of the Liang dynasty and presided as abbot at a Xinan Monastery 新安寺 in the capital, he later fell ill and lost the emperor's good graces, something he would not regain until the completion of the *Mingseng zhuan* in 519 (De Rauw 2005; Hureau 2020a, p. 44 ff.). Most famous, perhaps, is the example of Dao'an 道安, who lost everything when young so that while still a novice, he had to work in the fields for years before finally gaining limited access to scriptures (*Gaoseng zhuan*, *T* no. 2059, 50: 5.351c3-14).

23 "This [*Record of Miracles*] was presented in the first year of the Linde reign period (664), in the sixth month on the twentieth day. It was compiled [and completed] north of Fengyin at the Qinggong Monastery in the Zhongnan mountain range [to the south-west of Chang'an]." (*Ji shenzhou sanbao gantong lu*, *T* no. 2106, 52: 2.435a13-14). This colophon mentions an unnamed monastery (Skt. *vihāra* Ch. *jingshe* 精舍) in Qinggong 清宮—also written Qingguan 清官 in other texts. In the *Fayuan zhulin*, Daoshi mentions how in 667, Daoxuan sought quietude in a place called "Qinggong, [the place] formerly known as Jingye Monastery 淨業寺" (*T* no. 2122, 53: 13.393b17-18). In Zanning's biography of Daoxuan, he mentions that in the last years of the Sui dynasty (613–618), when Daoxuan was staying in Fengde Monastery 豐德寺, he sat in meditation and received a visit from a *Dharma*-protecting *deva*. The *deva* stated that "There is a place in Qingguan village 清官村 which was formerly known as Jingye Monastery. The grounds there possess precious [and favourable] conditions. [There] your practice may be completed" (*Song gaoseng zhuan*, *T* no. 2061, 50: 14.790b26-28). In the *Guanzhong chuangli jietan tujing* 關中創立戒壇圖經, Daoxuan recorded how he set up an ordination platform in Qingguan when he and other monks "dared to go to the [village at the] southern banks of the two rivers by Lifu in the southernmost outskirts of Chang'an. This village was called Qingguan and the neighbourhood was called Zunshan 遵善" (*T* no. 1892, 45: 1.817b17-20). In the same text, he mentions Jingye in Qingguan county (*T* no. 1892, 45: 1.818b15-16). It is, therefore, likely that Daoxuan used Qinggong (Qingguan) to designate what is better known as Jingye Monastery, which was south-east

of Chang'an in Qingguan village 清官村. For a synthesis of the problems presented by the place name Qinggong (or Qingguan), see (Ang 2019, 23 n.35).

24 *Ji shenzhou sanbao gantong lu*, *T* no. 2106, 52: 2.435a13-18.

25 As seen in Huilin's 慧琳 *Yiqie jing yinyi*, *T* no. 2128, 54: 81.830a21.

26 *Datang neidian lu*, *T* no. 2149, 55: 10.333a20; *Fayuan zhulin*: *T* no. 2122, 53: 100.1023c8; In Zhipan's 志磐 (1220–1275) *Fozu tongji* 佛祖統紀 (1269), the biographical segment on Daoxuan mentions the *Sanbao Gantong ji* 三寶感通記 as having two fascicles, instead of three (*T* no. 2035, 49: 29.297b12).

27 *Dongxia sanbao gantong lu* is the only version of the title found in an official history (*Xin Tang shu* 1975: 59.1516). The *Xin Tang shu* probably drew on the *Kaiyuan shijiao lu* 開元釋教錄 by Zhisheng 智昇, which also used the title *Dongxia sanbao gantong lu* (*T* no. 2154, 55: 8.562a3-4). Huilin 慧琳 (737–820), in his *Yiqie jing yinyi* 一切經音義 (807), also listed the *Dongxia sanbao gantong lu*. He stated that the older version was in three fascicles, but that by the ninth century, it was split into four fascicles (*T* no. 2128, 54: 80.829b19-832a16).

28 The terms *Shenzhou*, as well as *Shentu* 神土, are used in other texts to designate China as the "divine continent". See, for example, Yijing's *Da Tang Xiyu qiufa gaoseng zhuan*, *T* no. 2066, 51: 1.1a8. *Shenzhou* was also used to designate China in certain Daoist scriptures, such as the Shangqing 上清 text, *Shenzhou qizhuan qibian wutian jing* 神州七轉七變舞天經 [Scripture of the Divine Continent on the Dance in Heaven in Seven Revolutions and Seven Transformations]. The term *shenzhou*, or *shenzhou guo* 神州國, was also used by Daoxuan and other Buddhist authors to translate the Middle Indic form of Vaiṭhadvīpa, a historic city inhabited by the Malla clan, though this was certainly not its intended purpose in Daoxuan's miracle tale collection. Other common names given to China are "Huaxia" 華夏, "Zhongxia" 中夏, "Jiuzhou" 九州, "Chixian" 赤縣, etc. For more on *Shenzhou* and the different names given to China in the Chinese context, see (Wang [1977] 1995, pp. 447–86; Nicol 2016, p. 177; Wilkinson 2018, p. 199 ff.). For more on the history of the exonym "China" and its Sanskrit origin as *Cīna*, see the *OED* 2004: s.v. China; (Laufer 1912; Sen 2003, p. 182 f.; Wade 2009). For more on the early European exonym "Seres", see (Malinowski 2012).

29 The character *zhou* 洲 most likely alludes to Jambudvīpa (Ch. *Yanfuti* 閻浮提). In Buddhist cosmology, the realm of desire is split into four island continents (Sk. *catur-dvīpa*; Ch. *sizhou* 四洲). The continent of Jambu is inhabited by terrestrial beings and was so named because the Jambu tree (rose-apple tree; Lat. *Syzyygium jambos*) was its most distinctive tree (Basham [1954] 1959, vol. 1, p. 488 f.; Sadakata 1997, p. 35).

30 *Ji shenzhou sanbao gantong lu*, *T* no. 2106, 52: 1.404a17-404a27.

31 The term *Dongxia* is used six times in the *Record of Miracles* to designate China. The *Shuowen jiezi* 說文解字 states that "*xia*" means the people from the central realm, namely, China. For more on Daoxuan's use of the term *Dongxia* as a designation for China, see (Nicol 2016, p. 183 f.).

32 Other translations, such as "spiritual response" (Campany 1993, p. 15) also come to mind, though they read too much like "translation-ese" and do not seem as suitable here.

33 (Henderson 1984, pp. 1–54; Hengel 1974; Sharf 2002, pp. 77–133; Shaughnessy 2007, pp. 503–6; Jia 2016).

34 For example: *Xijing Kuaiji Maota yuanyi* 西晉會稽鄮塔緣一 (Number 1. The Mao[xian] pagoda in Kuaiji of the Western Jin).

35 Shinohara argues that the separate title, preface and concluding remarks indicate that Daoxuan would have "mechanically attached" another collection of miracle tales wholesale into this work (Shinohara 1991b, p. 205). The segment on Renshou (601–604) miracles is a very brief summary of a similar section in the *Guang hongming ji*, *T* no. 2103, 53: 17.217b2-220a21.

36 For more on the political role of images, see (Lippiello 2001, pp. 197–203; Yang and Anderl 2020).

37 For more on the sources and structure of this section, as well as the role of Buddha images in the *Record of Miracles*, see (Shinohara 1988, 1998, p. 143). For a list of all the items in the second fascicle, with parallel texts, as well as English translations (up until 1998), see (Shinohara 1998, pp. 176–88). Many of the stories were drawn from the *Xu gaoseng zhuan*, composed in 645, and the *Shijia fangzhi*, composed in 650. The *Guang hongming ji* had a preliminary list containing about nineteen items that corresponded to those in the *Record of Miracles* (*T* no. 2103, 52: 15.202a27-203c1. The Guang hongming ji list may have come from an early list drawn up by Daoxuan for the Record of Miracles (Shinohara 1991b, p. 207 f.).

38 The *Shijia fangzhi* (*T* no. 2088, 51: 2.972c16-973a13) contained a section with references to holy monasteries in Tiantai and Gushan that might, according to Shinohara, have been predecessors to the parallel excerpts in the *Record of Miracles* (Shinohara 1991a, p. 210 f.).

39 Tang Lin (c. 600–659), a Tang dynasty high official and devout lay Buddhist, compiled many orally transmitted miracle tales related to karmic retribution in his lifetime (Gjertson 1989; Shinohara 1991b, p. 104).

40 Please see the reference: (Shinohara 1991b, p. 115).

41 *Guang hongming ji*, *T* no. 2149, 55: 10.338a28-b18; For more, see (Shinohara 1991b, p. 77).

42 This "extraordinary monk" category was similar to the categories found in Huijiao's *Gaoseng zhuan* and Daoxuan's *Xu gaoseng zhuan*, which, respectively, used the categories "exceptional spirituality" (*shenyi* 神異) and "spiritual response" (*gantong* 感通).

43 This is a text that today survives mostly as excerpts taken from the *Fayuan zhulin*. It was only in the twentieth century that it was made whole once more by Lu Xun (Lu [1911] 1997, pp. 276–343 reprinted edition; translated by Campany 2012b).

44 (Shinohara 1990, p. 320); Many of the "extraordinary monk" textual parallels in the *Fayuan zhulin* are found in fascicles nineteen, twenty-eight, thirty-one and forty-two. For more elaboration on the relationship between the *Record of Miracles* and the *Fayuan zhulin*, see the concluding remarks in (Shinohara 1990, p. 351).

45 For an in-depth survey of the different sources that make up Buddhist biographical sources, as well as their relation to miracle tales, see (Shinohara 1988).

46 The *Guang hongming ji* (*T* no. 2103, 52: 15.201b24) has a subsection bearing the title *Luelie datang yuwang guta li* 略列大唐育王古塔歷并佛像經法神瑞迹 [Summary history of the ancient Aśokan pagodas of the Tang dynasty, together with the records of the traces of divine portents left by images and scriptures]. This subsection provides short histories of seventeen pagodas. These were all expanded in the *Record of Miracles.*

47 In time, his works were both praised and criticized for their historical value. For example, the Qing bibliophile Yang Shoujing 楊守敬 (1839–1915) praised the *Xu gaoseng zhuan* for its elegance, ranking Daoxuan among the court historians of the past. However, the Song monk Huihong 慧洪 (1071–1128) noted that all the histories of monks, including the *Xu gaoseng zhuan*, were "confused and repetitive" (Kieschnick 1997, p. 12 f.). This phenomenon is not unusual. For example, a modern academic study of Xuanzang's travels notes his "love of the miraculous", only to then take his eyewitness accounts as historical fact (Wriggins 1987; first noted in R. L. Brown 1998, p. 27).

48 *Ji shenzhou sanbao gantong lu*, *T* no. 2106, 52: 1.406b16.

49 *Shijia fangzhi*, *T* no. 2088, 51: 2.972b15-16.

50 Liu Sahe's temple name also appears as *Liushi fo* 劉師佛 (*T* no. 2088, 51: 2.972b18). See also (Shinohara 1988, p. 173 f.).

51 *Ji shenzhou sanbao gantong lu*, *T* no. 2106, 52: 3.434c27-28.

52 *Daoxuan lüshi gantong lu*, *T* no. 2107, 52: 1.439a1-12; *Lüxiang gantong lu*, *T* no. 1898, 45: 1.878c10-22; *Fayuan zhulin*, *T* no. 2122, 53: 38.590b22-c6; see also (Shinohara 1988, p. 167).

53 *Ji shenzhou sanbao gantong lu*, *T* no. 2106, 52: 3.431a21-25. See also (Chen 1992, p. 1300).

54 Daoxuan often refers to the *Gaoseng zhuan*. He also refers generally to a *Seng zhuan* 僧專, which, it is assumed, usually refers to either the *Gaoseng zhuan* or the *Xu gaoseng zhuang*—this, in turn, was also heavily based on the *Gaoseng zhuan*. There were also other biographies that Daoxuan referred to, usually as *biezhuan* 別傳. In the third fascicle, Daoxuan refers directly to another *Gaoseng zhuan* by Pei Ziye (469–c. 531), no longer extant. For a study of the relationship between the *Gaoseng zhuan* and the *Mingxiang ji*, see (Shinohara 1988, pp. 131–46).

55 For more on court histories during the Tang, see (Twitchett 1992, pp. 3–190).

56 For example, in the first item he cites the *Yudi zhi* 輿地誌 [Memoirs on Geography] (*T* no. 2106, 52: 1.404c10; 404c23; 404c25), *Di ji* 地記 [Notes on Geography] (*T* no. 2106, 52: 1.404c5-6; 404c19), and *Kuaiji ji* 會稽記 [Notes on Kuaiji] (*T* no. 2106, 52: 1.405a2), which include stories such as the Qin emperor's attempted voyage to the mythical Penglai.

57 The Xu 徐 kingdom (Shandong-Jiangsu), or the Xurong 徐戎 (Xu barbarians), were supposedly subdued by the Zhou in 1039 BCE.

58 *Ji shenzhou sanbao gantong lu*, *T* no. 2106, 52: 1.405a9-13. For more on the *Mu tianzi zhuan*, see (Cheng 1933, 1934; Mathieu 1978; Knechtges and Shih 2010; Shaughnessy 2014). For more on the *Mu tianzi zhuan* and Buddhist apologetics, see (Jülch 2010).

59 For more on the *Fayuan zhulin* as a Buddhist encyclopedia, see (Teiser 1985).

60 *Ji shenzhou sanbao gantong lu*, *T* no. 2106, 52: 3.435a17-18.

61 *Fayuan zhulin*, *T* no 2122, 53: 10.354b16-19.

62 DeWoskin says these compilers were both "believers" and "objective ethnographers" (DeWoskin 1977, p. 38).

63 The preface to the *Soushen ji* is found in Gan Bao's biography, preserved in the *Jin shu*, 1974: j. 82, 2151.

64 (Lu [1911] 1997, p. 277); translated by (Campany 2012b, p. 66 f.). The brackets are mine.

65 *Gaoseng zhuan*, *T* no. 2059, 50: 14.422c; (A. Wright 1954, p. 75; Kieschnick 1997, p. 7).

66 *Mingbao ji*, *T* no. 2082, 51: 1.788a25-28; see (Gjertson 1989, p. 118).

67 *Jishenzhou sanbao gantong lu*, *T* no. 2106, 52: 1.410b3-5.

68 *Daoxuan lüshi gantong lu*, *T* no. 2107, 52: 1.436a4-8; *Lüxiang gantong zhuan*, *T* no. 1898, 45: 1.875a23-28; cf. also translated to English in (Campany 1993, p. 17).

69 *Gaoseng zhuan*, *T* no. 2059, 50: 14.418b14-15; the correction in brackets is taken from the version found in the Song dynasty canon; cf. English translation in (A. Wright 1954, p. 75).

70 *Gaoseng zhuan*, *T* no. 2059, 50: 14.422c; (A. Wright 1954, p. 75).

71 *Ji shenzhou sanbao gantong lu*, *T* no. 2106, 52: 2.404a14-16; a similar rhetorical statement appears in fascicle 3.423a. For more on such apologetic rhetoric in the *Record of Miracles*, see (Shinohara 1991b, p. 213).

72 For an interesting analysis of Buddhist pre-Tang prefaces and the explicit evangelical intention of simplifying the vast and complicated Chinese Buddhist corpus, see (Hsu 2018, pp. 67–127).

73 *Gaoseng zhuan*, *T* no. 2059, 50: 5.352a11-12.

74 *Song gaoseng zhuan*, *T* no. 2061, 50: 1.709a14-15; English translation taken from (Kieschnick 1997, p. 8).

75 Interestingly, during the debate regarding whether monks ought to bow before the emperor, Daoxuan issued three pleas to members at court. This debate took place around the same time he was compiling his *Record of Miracles.* Incidentally, the third plea he sent contained many miraculous accounts related to Buddhism, revealing that these accounts were used to curry favour with patrons (*Guang hongming ji*, *T* no. 2103, 52: 30.455c-457c; Shinohara 1991b, p. 213). For more on Daoxuan and the debate regarding whether monks should offer obeisance to their parents and to the throne, see (S. Weinstein 1987, p. 32 f.).

76 *Ji shenzhou sanbao gantong lu*, *T* no. 2106, 52: 1.407a18-19.

77 On the different means for manufacturing authority and continuity, such as lineage affiliation, in Early Chinese Buddhism, see (Adamek 2006, pp. 17–55).

78 *Gaoseng zhuan*, *T* no. 2059, 50: 14.418b; (A. Wright 1954, p. 74 f.; Kieschnick 1997, p. 6).

79 *Ji shenzhou sanbao gantong lu*, *T* no. 2106, 52: 3.435a10-18.

80 *Jin shu* 1974: 82.2150. For more information, see (Kao 1985, 20 n. 32).

81 (Lu [1911] 1997, p. 277); cf. translated in (Campany 2012b, p. 65). This same preface, as well as a brief account of Wang Yan's life, is given in the *Record of Miracles* (*T* no. 2106, 52: 2.419a15-b6).

82 This was first included in Daoxuan's own *Datang neidian lu* (664) and would be officially included in the canon (*ruzang* 入藏) in the *Kaiyuan shijiao lu* in the year 730. For more on the Buddhist canon, see (De la Vallée Poussin 1905; Przyluski 1926; Collins 1990; Freiberger 2004); for more on Buddhist conceptions of canonicity, see (Davidson 1990; Silk 2015; Zacchetti 2016); for more on orality and the Buddhist canon, see (Drewes 2015); for a history of the Chinese Buddhist canon, see (Mizuno 1982; Fang 2006); translated to English in (Fang 2015); see also (Lancaster 2012, pp. 232–38; Storch 2015; Wu and Chia 2016; Zhanru 2017).

83 For more on the Chinese Buddhist canon, see (Smith 1998, p. 307); see also (Fang 2006, p. 10); translated to English in (Fang 2015; Silk 2015, p. 6; Zacchetti 2016, p. 83).

84 *Zhuzhu* 諸注, *jieyi* 解儀, *zan* 贊, *chuanji* 傳記 (Datang neidian lu, *T* no. 2149, 55: 5.282b4); The *Record of Miracles* is also included in a larger list of notable works from both the court and the religious historiographical tradition (*T* no. 2149, 55: 10.330a3-333a27). The same title was included in the list of Daoxuan's collected works in the *Fayuan zhulin* (*T* no. 2122, 53: 100.1023c8).

85 *Kaiyuan shijiao lu*, *T* no. 2154, 55: 13.625b9-10.

86 *Da tangzhenyuan xinding shijiao mulu*, *T* no. 2157, 55: 27.1014b18-1015b22.

87 Such is the case with the Japanese monk Enchin's 円珍 (814–891) *Chishōdaishi shōraimokuroku* 智証大師請来目録 (*T* no. 2173, 55: 1.1103a6-9). Considering the fact that early canon catalogues were based on the contents of the KSL, we can assume that the *Record of Miracles* was listed in a similar way.

88 There is an interesting parallel to be made with anomaly accounts, of which some, until the Song dynasty, were included in the *Jin shu* among the histories (*shibu* 史部). It was only later that they were assigned to the fictionist section (*xiaoshuo jia* 小說家) of catalogues. That being said, the historical assignation of anomaly accounts was quickly criticized by historians such as Liu Zhiji 劉知几 of the Tang period and Zhao Yi 趙翼 of the Qing period (Campany 1996, p. 13).

89 Some works that argue for the use of such sources in the study of cultural history are (Dudbridge 1995; Campany 1996).

90 *Wenxin diaolong* 1962: 4.287; the translation is taken from (Dien 2011, p. 531); cf. (Liu 1959, p. 93). For more on the *Wenxin diaolong* and Buddhism, see (Mair 2002).

91 The *Han shu* 漢書, for example, lists mythical periods going back 2.5 million years before Confucius, back to the creator-founder Pangu 盤古 who created heaven and earth. In his *Shi ji* 史記, Sima Qian was more cautious, it would seem, only going as far back as the first of the Five Thearchs, Huangdi 皇帝 (Wilkinson 2018, p. 747; Yang 2010). There is an interesting parallel here with the Greeks, who adopted Clio ("the proclaimer") as the muse for both historians and epic poets. According to Edgar Forsdyke, the Greeks "rejected fiction in principle but in practice accepted much fiction as historical fact" (Forsdyke 1956, p. 160).

92 See section 49 in (Wilkinson 2000, p. 567); he has changed the format of the book and, although the section on myth remains, it is no longer compared directly to history, instead acting as an introduction of section 56.4 on "Sage Kings and Cultural Heroes" (Wilkinson 2018, p. 747).

93 This kind of thinking was in vogue in China at the beginning of the twentieth century with academic movements such as the *Yigu pai* 疑古派 (doubting antiquity school), which sought to strip the Chinese past of its mythological elements (Wilkinson 2000, pp. 567–70; 2018, p. 751 f.). For a short summary of the Western academic study of history and myth, see (Mcneill 1986); for examples in Western academia where mythology stands over history because it speaks to the shared "deep meanings" across various cosmologies, see (Jung and Kerényi 1941; Campbell 1949; Eliade [1954] 1971). For an interesting, though perhaps misguided, comparison of Western and Eastern mythical folk themes, see (Crump and DeWoskin 1996, p. xxx ff.). For more on mythology and its relation to Chinese history and society, see (Allan 1991; Birrell 1993; Mair and Birrell 2001).

94 This was true of court histories such as the *Jin shu*, as well as other secular anthologies, where, until the Song period, texts such as the *Soushen ji* 搜神記 and the *Mingxiang ji* 冥祥記 were categorized according to the four-category system (*sibu* 四部) among the Histories (*shibu* 史部). During the Song period, however, miracle tales were catalogued among the works of fictionists (*xiaoshuo jia* 小說家) and among the records of Masters (*zibu* 子部) (Campany 2012b, p. 13).

[95] For relevant examples of literary criticism on fantasy in the West, see (Rabkin [1976] 2015; Todorov 1973). DeWoskin wrote about anomaly accounts and how they "virtually excluded plausible historical materials from their contents", an opinion held by many, especially Chinese academics writing after Lu Xun. This opinion no longer holds true today (DeWoskin 1977, p. 22).

[96] (Mair 1981, p. 22 f.); for more on the history of fiction as a genre in China, see (Lu 1926). For information on the influence of the Buddhist transformation texts (*bianwen* 變文), see (Mair 2014).

[97] (Campany 1996, p. 322); for Daoist examples, see the article by (Verellen 1992). Andrew Jones argues that even the language used in anomaly accounts, language similar to that used in miracle tales, implies that the contents of the narrative are true (Jones 1987).

[98] *Fahua yishu*, *T* no. 1721, 34: 12.626b5-13; (Gjertson 1989, p. 41).

[99] Tang Yongtong comes to a similar conclusion about the veracity of the story of Han Emperor Ming's dream of a golden man (Tang 2006, p. 23). For a study of the *imaginaire* of Chang'an, see (Li 2009).

[100] For recent studies in classical and medieval Europe that also apply this kind of thinking to hagiography and narrative literature, see (P. Brown 1981, 1983; D. Weinstein and Bell 1982; Castelli 2004, p. 4 f.). For similar works in the Chinese context, see (Dudbridge 1995; Kieschnick 1997; Campany 2009, p. 14 ff.; 2012a; Campany and Swartz 2018).

[101] For more on the transposition of Buddhism's *axis mundi* from India to China, see (Sen 2003, p. 101; Young 2015, p. 151).

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Article

From the Imagination to the Reality: Historical Aspects of Rewriting Six Dynasties Buddhist Avadāna Stories

Wei Li

College of Chinese Language and Literature, Henan University, Kaifeng 475001, China; lwhdbd@163.com

Abstract: In at least two aspects, Buddhist Avadāna literature shares a strong affinity with Chinese literature. One type of stories can be seen as parallel tales that bear striking resemblances to Chinese tales, while the other type has been assimilated by Chinese writers and transformed into Chinese tales. Regarding the first kind, there are many parallels between Buddhist and Chinese stories throughout the Six Dynasties (222–589), and it was only later that these stories were somehow compiled into collections that brought these parallels to light. As an example of the second type, in *linggui zhi* 靈鬼志 (*The Record of Magical Ghosts*) of the Jin Dynasty (265–402), the story of *waiguo daoren* 外國道人 ("the Foreign Master") adapts the magical plot in which a man throws up a jug from the story of *fanzhi tuhu* 梵志吐壺 ("a Brahmin Spits a jug") in the Buddhist text, yet it changes certain objects of the story to items with Chinese characteristics and develops new meaning. In *Xu qixiezhi* 續齊諧志 (*Further Records of Qixie [Supernatural tales]*), the famous *e'long shusheng* 鵝籠書生 ("the Goose Cage Scholar", also known as the *yangxian shusheng* 陽羨書生" (the Scholar from Yangxian)"), takes the same story to another level. The structure of the story is changed, and a number of literati aesthetic interests are added, improving the literary color, smoothing down the language, and making substitutions in the text's specifics, thus, bolstering the sense of realism and history. Meanwhile, in Liu Yiqing's 劉義慶 (403–444) *Xuanyan ji* 宣驗記 (*Records Manifest Records of Manifest Miracles*), the Avadāna tale *yingwu jiuhuo* 鸚鵡救火 ("the Parrot Putting Out the Fire") that he collected is not only associated with Buddhism but can also be seen as a commentary on the turbulent times and a hint of literati optimism if we view it in the context of Liu Yiqing's *Youminglu* 幽明錄 (*Record of the Hidden and Visible Worlds*). The literary elites of the Six Dynasties drew inspiration from Buddhist Avadāna sources and imaginatively mixed them with historical circumstances to create Chinese fiction with new intentions. The rich resources of Avadāna literature from India and the fable tradition in Chinese literature create cultural conditions for these two sources to combine and mutually develop, forming a world of literature with colorful and meaningful stories.

Keywords: Avadāna literature; a brahmin throwing up a jug; the Foreign Master; the scholar from Yangxian; parrot putting out a fire

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1. Introduction

In Sarvāstivāda School of Sectarian Buddhism, Buddhist masters who specialized in telling Avadāna stories were called Avadāna-master (*piyu shi* 譬喻師 *dārṣṭāntika*).[1] Furthermore, later storytelling also played an important role in the process of Ashoka's practice of the secularization of Buddhism. In Six Dynasties, Avadāna as a literary form caught people's eye as these stories were translated into China and titled *piyu* 譬喻 (Ding 1996, pp. 6–10; Yinshun 2011, pp. 486–500; Sharma 1985, pp. 3–12).[2] The term Avadāna has a strong link with Apadana and Jataka, see Sharma (1985, pp. 3–12). For the convenience of discussion, this article uses Avadāna Literature or the English term fable (story and tale) to discuss the stories cited. Of course, although Avadāna stories can also be found in other sections in Tripitaka, these sutras are mainly found in the category of Jātaka (*benyuan* 本緣, *bensheng* 本生 (life stories of Buddha or Bodhisattvas) and *yuanqi* 緣起 (fables or Avadāna)) in Tripitaka. This refers to various types of rebirth and karma stories of the Buddha, Maitreya,

Bodhisattvas, or disciples of the Buddha in their past and present lives. These stories are divided into five sections: sutras of the Buddha's original life (*bensheng* 本生), the Buddha's biography (*fozhuan* 佛傳), sutras of the Buddha and his disciples' stories (*fo ji dizi yinyuan* 佛及弟子因緣), the Dhammapada (*fajujing* 法句經), and the Avadāna sutras (*piyu* 譬喻). Sharmistha Sharma argues that Jātaka sutras are the predecessors of the Avadāna sutras and that the two are closely related, the difference being that in the Jātaka sutras, the Buddha himself is the hero, whereas in the Avadāna sutras, the Bodhisattva or Buddha's disciples are the protagonists of the heroic deeds (Sharma 1985, pp. 9–10).

Among these Avadāna sutras translated in the Six Dynasties, six of them are the most important ones, which are *Za piyu jing* 雜譬喻經 (*The Sutra of Miscellaneous Avadāna Stories*, one *juan*, T. 204, translated by Lokakṣema (Zhilou jiachen 支婁迦讖, d.u.) of Yuezhi 月氏 (a tribe in Central Asia around 200 B.C) in between the 1st year of Jianhe 建和 and the 3rd year of Zhongping 中平 (CE 147–186.), Later(East) Han dynasty 後漢 in Luoyang 洛陽); *Za piyu jing* 雜譬喻經 (*The Sutra of Miscellaneous Avadāna Stories*, two *juan*, T.205, author unknown, attached to the list of sutras from Later Han Dynasty); *Jiu za piyu jing* 舊雜譬喻經 (*The Sutra of Ancient Miscellaneous Avadāna Stories*, one *juan*, T. 206, translated by Indian (*tianzhu* 天竺) Monk Kang Senghui 康僧會of Wu (229–280) from Three Kingdom Period (220–280)); *Za piyu jing* 雜譬喻經 (*The Sutra of Miscellaneous Avadāna Stories*, one *juan*, T. 207, collected by Bhikkhu Daolüe 道略 (d.u.)); *Zhongjing zhuanza piyu* 眾經撰雜譬喻 (*Avadāna Stories from Various Scriptures*, one *juan*, collected by Bhikkhu Daolüe 道略, translated by Kumārajīva (344–413)); and *Baiyu jing* 百喻經 (One Hundred Fables, four *juan*, T.209, translated by Qiunapidi 求那毗地 (Guṇavṛddhi, ?–502)).

These Avadāna texts, which serve as the foundation of the Avadāna scriptures, contain numerous significant Buddhist fables. However, in a broader sense, we should study the narratives of these stories in order to appreciate the intricacy of their storytelling and the message conveyed. This includes both the Jatāka and Avadāna stories, as well as other fable-like stories in other portions of the Tripitaka collections.

Buddhist Avadāna literature included several Chinese folktales that influenced stories that were forerunners of a corpus of tales that spread to Korea and Japan. Research has identified 52 different categories of Chinese folktales that are specific to the Chinese region and that are remarkably similar to narratives found in Buddhist scriptures. Some Chinese folktales, including "The cat dressed as a saint" (*maozhuang shengren* 貓裝聖人), "The geese carrying a tortoise" (*yanxiangui* 雁銜龜), "Killing each other in turn" (*zhanzhuan xiangsha* 輾轉相殺), "The villagers staring in the mirror" (*xiangmin zhaojing* 鄉民照鏡), and "The couple bet on not talking" (*fuqi dadu buyu* 夫妻打賭不語), have been influenced by several of the well-known stories from the *One Hundred Fables* (*Baiyu jing* 百喻經 T. 209).[3] These stories serve to highlight traditional characteristics of Avadāna literature, which are "a linking of things to each other, a transfer of evidence, and a mutual understanding of the retribution of good and evil", and they also "improved the philosophical and social edifying functions of oral storytelling, resulting in the transmission of many exquisite works of elaborate ideas and profound connotations, which had a positive and powerful influence on the development of the literary genre of fable in China"(S. Liu 2010, pp. 91–101).

Buddhist Avadāna stories, including the folktales they influence, are so strongly linked to Chinese literature that they can be roughly split into two types. The first can be viewed as a parallel narrative that bears a striking resemblance to Chinese fables, such as the one found in the *Xianyu jing* 賢愚經 (*The Sutra of the Wise and the Foolish*): "Then I observed a ploughman using a plough to prepare the ground. A shrimp ate a worm that had erupted from the ground. After that, a snake arrived and ate the toad. The peacock flew in and pecked at the snake".[4] The story is strikingly similar in structure and meaning to the one in *Zhuangzi*: "Zhuangzi spied a cicada. When it just found a fine shade of the tree (leaves), it forgot (the danger of showing) its body; a praying mantis caught the cicada with its claws. When it got the cicada, it forgot its (the danger of showing) its body; another bird came and profited in the end. (This suggests that people) would forget about the truth when they see the benefits."(Guo 2012, p. 695; Zhuang 2013, pp. 164–65)[5] This is one of Zhuangzi's

most famous fables, which was cited in many texts in later times (X. Liu 1987, pp. 212–13; Han 1980, p. 359).[6]

This is not the only case. For instance, there is a fable in *Bintoulutuluoshe wei youtuoyan-wang shuofa jing* 賓頭盧突羅闍為優陀延王說法經 (*The Sutra of Venerable Pindola-Bharadvaja Teaching Dharma to King Udayana*) that reads, "It is likewise like a wild animal that sees a tree called Kiṁśuka (*zhenshujia* 甄叔迦, Butea Frondosa), whose fruit resembles flesh. Knowing it was not meat when he watched it fall to the ground, he went to devour it. When he saw that it wasn't flesh, he reasoned that another one falling off the tree must be flesh. So it guarded the tree which also trapped him".[7] The meaning and structure of this tale are similar to that of the Chinese idiom *shouzhu daitu* 守株待兔 (Guarded the Tree, Waiting for the Rabbit) in *Hanfeizi* 韓非子 (280–233 B.C.) (Hanfeizi 2016, p. 484; Hanfeizi 1964, p. 98).[8]

However, there is not necessarily a direct connection between this story and the ones that already exist in China, so it is irresponsible to draw any conclusions based solely on similarities. Buddhist Avadāna tales that were assimilated into the Chinese setting and transformed into Chinese tales fall into the second category. This is also the fundamental aim of this essay, to see how Buddhist Avadāna stories were accepted into literary fiction in the Six Dynasties.

These stories not only fulfilled a "missionary" function, delivering Buddhist doctrines, but also demonstrated their legitimacy by establishing a sense of history so they could be seen as Chinese tales. The Avadāna stories were able to change from being "imaginational" to "real" as a result, and they now had real importance in regard to the common people of that chaotic time. Then, the long decline of Chinese literature commenced, which began to develop an independent and complete classical language, influenced by the topics, narratives, and meaning of Avadāna tales, especially after the Tang and Song dynasties, when the fables created by Liu Zongyuan 柳宗元 (773–819), Su Dongpo 蘇東坡 (1037–1101), Liu Ji 劉基 (1311–1375), and Yuan Mei 袁枚 (1716–1798) were deeply connected to the fables collected in the *Baiyu jing*. Numerous Chinese monks used Buddhist *piyu* to convey Buddhist philosophy in their sutras, and many of their songs and rhymes also contained implied *piyu* of various kinds (X. Li 2010, pp. 344–64).

Studies on Avadāna stories have mostly concentrated on the collection of sutras,[9] either on a single metaphorical classic or on metaphors in a single classic, from different perspectives such as lexical grammar, version transmission, tale type, linguistic style, or genre. However, there is a great need for improvement in both the case-by-case assessment of these metaphors and their comparative literary analyses, particularly when it comes to literary renditions of Buddhist narratives. The historicity of fables is finally thoroughly described, emphasizing that it was not just a product of literary inquiry but also a result of the writers' own curiosity and in-depth understanding of their time. The cultural attitude and symbolism inherent therein are mainly illustrated by the tale of *yingwu jiuhuo* 鸚鵡救火 (a parrot extinguishing a fire).

2. The Collection of Parable Fables: A Parallel Comparison of Buddhist Avadāna Literature and Chinese Tales

2.1. The Practice in the Country of the Sea (Haizhongguo Xiuxing Yu 海中国修行喻*)*

2.1.1. The Buddhist Text in *Za piyu jing*

The fifth tale in the *Za piyu jing* describes a small country inside the ocean that offers everything but *shimi* 石蜜 (toffee, *phāṇita*, Daniels 1995, pp. 279, 374; Meng 2007, p. 68).[10] Then, a merchant brings more than 500 carts of *shimi* to the king, trying to make more money. He then places the *shimi* in front of the palace gate, but it takes a while before anyone inquires about it. Therefore, he thinks it would look more virtuous if he offered the *shimi* as gifts to the Three Treasures so the king would follow his advice. Here, it is implied that worshiping the Three Treasures is extremely widespread in the nation where the narrative takes place. The basic topic of this story is that giving to the Three Treasures might earn favorable benefits. Furthermore, this can be seen as the main point of the outlayer of the storytelling. However, for the inter-layer of the story, the narrative emphasizes

the significance of persistently practicing Buddhism. The two themes are distinct in terms of storytelling, despite the fact that both might be viewed as devotional acts of the Buddhist faith.

Then, he finds a peaceful location to practice (Buddhism) and finally achieves the fruition of arhat. His accomplishments are so tremendous that they cause the earth to tremble, and the Indra (Śakra) and all the gods of all heavens come to congratulate him. Afterward, the bhikkhu questions Indra regarding the nature of the heavenly kingdom. Indra informs him that there are four enormous paradises in heaven. The bhikkhu then asks who these men are, and the emperor tells him the story of these three masters in detail:

> Indra says, "There was a man in the kingdom of Vārānasī who was a monk and vowed to himself, 'I will walk and wander around, never rest until I have achieved the fruition of *arhat* (*yingzhen* 應真)'. So, he walked around day and night, and his feet were broken and bled, and hundreds of birds chased and pecked at him. And beings of all heavens observed him, and all praised him. And there was a man in the kingdom of Rājagṛha, who was also a monk, and sat on a mat made of straw, and vowed to himself, saying, 'I shall not rest until I have attained the Way [*dedao* 得道, obtain enlightenment]'. In his slesep, he asked someone to make an eight *cun* 寸 long (1 *cun* is around 3.33 cm) awl, and in his sleep, he stabbed his thighs with it, so that the pain would keep him awake. He achieved the fruition of arhat within one year. There was another man who was also a monk in the land of Kauśāmbī (the capital of Vatsá). He lived in a rocky chamber in a mountain which was dangerously steep, where no one could come or go. When the Māra-pāpīyān saw his exertion, he took the form of a water buffalo and came before the bhikkhu, snorting his nose and goring his eyes, in order to gore him down (*chu* 觸). The bhikkhu was terrified and thought, 'This is no place where a buffalo can come and go. Why is it here? This must be the act of the devil?' Then he said to king Māra-pāpīyān, 'What do you want and why do you scare me?' Māra-pāpīyān responded, 'I saw you working hard, and I was afraid that you will get out my realm, that is why I came to scare you. ' The bhikkhu said, 'The reason I become a monk to get out from the world. The Buddha has amazing appearance which I would love to see. Yet since the Buddha has passed away, that I could not be able to witness his appearance. I've heard that demons can transform into the form of the Buddha. I would like you to show that to me, then I won't keep on practicing Buddhism. ' Immediately, the demon transformed into the Buddha standing before the bhikkhu, and then the bhikkhu meditate and achieved the fruition of arhat. And the deities of all heavenly realms praised his virtue endlessly. The demon regrated and felt sorrow, then he disappeared immediately".
>
> Indra said to the bhikkhu, "The deities never stop admiring these three people". The bhikkhu said to Indra, "These three men know the truth on suffering and emptiness which can age and destroy the body. I had no intention of being despised by others, but I have sought the Way, and have come out of the three realms. This is also wonderful, and I can also achieve the fruition of *arhat*". The deities replied, "Now we will return to heaven and inform everyone that there is no one better than you". Then the deities saluted and departed. When the king heard that the owner of the *shimi* had diligently practiced the Way, he went and bowed down and thanked him, and he became the teacher of the kingdom. And the Three Treasures flourish, the country is at peace, the blessings (merits) and the saved people are uncountable".[11]

First of all, the parable's structure is extremely intricate. It highlights the idea of suffering, emptiness, and disintegration of the flesh while illuminating two layers of truth through a "mise en abyme" or "play within a play" structure (Mi 1970, pp. 10–17; H. Wu 2004, pp. 418–19; Ahn 2004, pp. 125–31).[12] On a superficial level, the narration of the tale is

cursory. The plot is about honoring the Buddha and gaining benefits and merits. It focuses on the dialogue between the man who gained the fruition of an arhat and Indra on the wonders of the heavenly realm in order to emphasize the importance of practicing Buddhism assiduously in order to obtain a great result. Indra's response is specifically about three cases on practicing Buddhism diligently. The narrative is then concluded, producing two congruent interwoven layers from story to doctrine. The inner tale that Indra narrates is three stories that all emphasize the value of persistence and success in spiritual practice. It is the same message that the Buddha wanted to deliver in the text.

2.1.2. *Xuantou Cigu* 懸頭刺股 (Hang the Head, Stab the Thigh)

The second of these three tales is remarkable in that it is similar to the ancient Chinese narrative of the *zhui cigu* 錐刺股 "stabbing of the thigh with an awl". Su Qin 蘇秦 (–284 B.C.) put a lot of effort into his studies despite failing ten times in his attempts to persuade King Huiwen of Qin 秦惠文王 (337–311B.C). Moreover, he was detested by both his wife and sister-in-law. Then, he worked hard on reading and finally succeeded. If ever he dozed while studying, he drew forth a gimlet and stabbed his thigh till the blood ran off at his heel and asked, "Where stands the man who persuades a ruler and will not put forth whatever wealth he has for honor and ministry?" When a year had transpired and his study was complete, he said, "here are persuasions meet for the rulers of our time" (Crump 1970, p. 57; He 1990, p. 75).[13]

Both stories highlight the importance of having a strong desire to achieve and persistence in the process. The difference is that in the Buddhist story, drowsiness in a practitioner is attributed to an assault from the five aggregates "*wuyin*" 五陰 (the five Skandhas) that is like a cover to one's mind. So ordinary mortals are readily blinded and unable to achieve enlightenment. The story also makes it crystal clear that the practitioner had the awl made and that it was eight *cun* long. The *Fayuan zhulin* 法苑珠林 (*Grove of Jewels in the Garden of the Dharman,* completed 668) by Daoshi 道世 (?–683) collected this tale with few modifications: "*Baiyujing* says, 'A sage from the Vārānasī sat down and made the vow to himself, "I shall never raise the heart for sleep until I have accomplished the Way". He punctured his two thighs with an awl he made that was eight *cun* long, which left him unable to sleep for a year. And he achieved enlightenment in one year'".[14] This text emphasizes the one year it takes to achieve the Way (Enlightenment) while keeping the information that the awl is eight *cun* long and does not mention who must make the awl.

It is worth noting that clearly the *Zhanguoce* was written before the translation of the *Piyu jing*, and the two stories are parallel. However, Chinese monks noticed the similarities between the two stories and collected them together in the Buddhist encyclopedia of a later dynasty. For monks, of course, the thrusting of the thigh with an awl was not only a Buddhist Avadāna story written in the sutras but also a way of attaining liberation by disabling one's own body, as was performed by the monk Zhi Shun 智舜 (533–604) in the Sui Dynasty (581–618). He was known as the one who stabbed his thigh with an awl.[15]

2.1.3. The Collections of These Stories in Song Dynasty

In Chinese culture, *zhuicigu* 錐刺股 (using the awl to stab the thigh) comes in parallel with the story *touxuanliang* 頭懸梁 (hanging one's head on the beam), which tells the two stories of working hard. Mu'an Shanqing 睦庵善卿 edited the book *Zutingshiyuan* 祖庭事苑 (*Tales and Affairs of Ancestral Courtyard (of Chan School)*), in which he put stories of Su Qin, Sun Jing, and Zhi Shun together under the title "*Xuantou cigu*" 懸頭刺股 (hang the head, stab the thigh). Sun Jing 孫敬 (d.u.) was a scholar with the literary name of Wenbao 文寶. He spent all his time studying in his house. When he felt sleepy, he would tie a rope around his head and hang it from a beam. When he went to the city, people in the city called him a scholar who never left the house. Moreover, he declaimed the offer when the emperor asked him to be an officer. This story can be found in the book the *Xianxian zhuan* 先賢傳 (*Biography of the Former Sages*). Su Qin was a native of Luoyang. He and Zhangyi 張儀 (?–309 B.C.) both studied from Master Guigu 鬼谷 (d.u.). He had the practice of reading

until he was sleepy, then, using an awl and stabbing himself in the thigh, bleeding down to his ankles. This story can be found in *Zhanguoce*. Zhi Shun, an eminent monk of the Sui Dynasty, studied exclusively with all his attention inside temples without any other business. When his mind became delusional and could not be stopped, he would stab himself in the femur and bleed, or he would hug a stone or walk around the stupas, in order to forget about his troubles. Therefore, the scars on his thighs are mottled like colorful clothes. This story can be found in *The Biography*[16] by Huijiao 慧皎 (497–554).[17] The tale of the man who was stabbed in the thigh or hung his head on a beam is well-known in China, it is the symbol of working hard.

Mu'an Shanqing collected these three biographies in the same category. Putting three people together instead of the traditional two Chinese literati might be an echo of the three stories told in *haizhong guo xiuxing yu*. On the one hand, he acknowledges the similarity of the three tales in terms of their spiritual essence and provides a common framework for discussion. On the other hand, it also makes use of the legends of Sun Jing and Su Qin's immense fame to highlight the Buddhist monk Zhi Shun's spirit in practicing Buddhism without any indolence.

In the biographies of Buddhist monks, there are numerous cases of utilizing physical harm as a practice-motivating tool.[18] (Shi 2022, pp. 542–61; Jan 1965, pp. 243–68; Benn 2007, pp. 19–53) Zhi Shun was probably moved by the Buddhist Scriptures on devotion,[19] but it is also possible that he was inspired by the tales of Su Qin and Sun Jing so that he chose the awl to stab himself. It is impossible to pinpoint one single reason why he used an awl to stab his thigh. However, it is sure that in later monks' eyes, the emphasis of these stories is on a solid inner spiritual motivation and persistent faith, whether the story is about a man stabbing himself to fulfill the teachings of the Buddha or a man stabbing himself to read a book for success.

2.2. Chengchuan Shiyu 乘船失釬 *(Taking the Boat, Lost the Bowl) and Kezhou Qiujian* 刻舟求劍 *(Mark the Boat for the Sword)*

2.2.1. *Chengchuan Shiyu*

Chengchuan shiyu, the 19th Fable collected in *Baiyu jing,* is another story that shares similarities with the Chinese tale *Kezhou qiujian*. The Buddhist story goes as follows:

> Once upon a time, there was a man who dropped a silver bowl into the sea while crossing it. He pondered, "I'm going to make a mark on the water. I'll continue on my journey for now. But I'll come back for it later". He returned after two months of travel during which he visited Ceylon and many other countries. On seeing a river, he jumped into the water looking for the bowl he had lost before". What are you doing there?" people asked. He replied, "I have lost my bowl. Now I would like to get it back". People went on, "When did you lose it?" He answered, "I lost it crossing the sea". Again people asked, "How long ago did you lose it?" He answered, "I lost it two months ago". People asked, "Since you lost it two months ago in the sea, why are you looking for it here in the river?" He answered, "I made a mark on the water where I lost the bowl. This water looks the same as the other. There seems no difference. That's why I'm doing this". People went on, "Though all waters are identical, the place that you have lost it is there. How can you find it here?" Everybody jeered at him. The heretics, who do not practice the right religious belief, but a fallacious one, suffer from their useless mortification in seeking deliverance. Those men are just like the stupid man who has lost his bowl in the sea and looked for it in the river.[20]

This story is about a foolish man who, having lost a bowl, makes a note on a boat and tries to recover the lost object when he arrives in another place. Foolish men are a common theme in Buddhism, and their stories can be found in many places such as the *One Hundred Fables*. In Buddhism, people take foolish actions due to the Three Poisons (*sandu* 三毒). These three primary afflictions are desire (*tanyu* 貪欲, craving, *rāga*); anger,

(*chenhui* 瞋恚, aversion, *dveṣa*); and nescience (*yuchi* 愚癡, folly, *moha*). Furthermore, in the concept of *shi'er yinyuan* 十二因緣 (Twelve Links of Dependent Arising, *dvādaśa-astanga pratītyasamutpādais*), the first one is *wuming* 無明 (nescience, *avidyā*), which also refers to ignorance and unenlightenment. One of Buddhism's basic goals is to dispel ignorance by seeking out Perfect Wisdom. The greatest position among the three Buddhist disciplines of precepts, meditation, and wisdom is known as wisdom. In order to spread the Dharma, Buddhists have used a significant number of old Indian folktales about the wise and the foolish. In the story of *chengchuan shiyu*, apparently, the main character misunderstood the situation because he is foolish and lacking wisdom.

2.2.2. *Kezhou Qiujian*

The story is similar to the story of the *kezhouqiujian* in *Chajin* 察今 (On Examining the Current Situation) from *Lüshi Chunqiu* 呂氏春秋 (*The Spring and Autumn of Lü Buwei*)" "Once a man from the state of Chu 楚 was crossing the Yangtze River. His sword fell into the water from his boat, therefore he quickly marked his boat and said: 'This is where my sword fell from. When the boat stopped, he went into the water to seek his sword following the mark he made. The boat had already moved, yet the sword stayed in the water without moving. If one seeks the sword like this, is it confusing?"[21] Originally, this fable focused on how to manage the country, then, the term was used to describe foolish people who do not change according to verified and changeable situations in the real world. The two stories are very similar, the difference being that in *Baiyu jing*, the man loses a silver bowl, while in the *Lüshi Chunqiu,* it is a precious sword. This type of fable can be found in folklore all over the world, including China.[22] (Tang 2001, pp. 49–51)

In China, fables on the fool often contained profound philosophies in their intriguing stories in the pre-Qin Dynasty (before 221 B.C). They gradually became a conscious creation as an important means for pre-Qin philosophers and political strategists, using lobbying methods, to argue and reason. Zhuangzi and Hanfeizi are famous for their fables, among which they also collect stories on the foolish actions taken by silly people.[23]

Shishi liutie 釋氏六帖 (*Buddhist Encyclopedia*) of the Five Dynasties (907–979)[24] (Du 1999, p. 356) simplified this story into the phrase *yushihuashui* 盂失畫水 (mark the water when the bowl is lost):

> The *One Hundred Parables Sutra* saysthat a man went into the sea and lost a silver bowl. He marked (painted, drew) on the water and then left. Someone asked, "why did you draw on the water when you lost your bowl". He said, "After two months of marking the water, I came to look for my bowl in the water as this water is similar to the water earlier." This is like someone who holds the belief of none-Buddhism, seeing all the delusions.[25]

This complex story has been abbreviated, only showing the most representative act, using this act to emphasize its Buddhist meaning. As it is a Buddhist encyclopedia, it maintains the Buddhist meaning of this story in its original context.

A complicated fable's essence must be distilled, with details fading away and only its "meaning" remaining and being highlighted, in order to be effectively summarized. Of course, there are many other fables that have been transmitted in China. Some are just well-known Chinese tales or fables. Some have influenced Chinese writers' creations. On the one hand, this shows that there are many similarities between Buddhist Avadāna literature and Chinese literature, and some even influence Chinese stories. On the other hand, these stories work as bridges to cross the gap between Chinese and Indian cultures.

3. Focusing on Historical Truth: The Internal Logic of the *e'long shusheng* 鹅笼书生"Goose Cage Scholar"

3.1. Fanzhi Tuhu 梵志吐壺 *(A Brahmin Spits Out a Jug)*

3.1.1. The Original Text

Fanzhi tuhu 梵志吐壺 (A brahmin spits out a jug) was the eighteenth story collected in *Jiuza piyujing* 舊雜譬喻經. The story is complicated, yet the main part of the story focuses on a prince's magical experience when he witnesses a brahmin's superpower (magical trick):

> Once upon a time, a King severely oppressed women, and the Queen (his rightful wife) said to the prince, "I am thy mother, who has never seen the kingdom since I was born. I wish to go out and see it once. Please pass this request on to the king". Three times she asked for the same thing. Finally, after the third time, the prince spoke to the king, and the king took his advice. The prince rode the royal chariot by himself and went out on the road with his courtiers to welcome the Queen. She opened her tent by herself so that she might be seen. When the prince saw her misbehave so blatantly, the lady said, "I am so ashamed". The prince thought to himself, "Even my own mother acts as such, not to mention others?" At night he left the capital and wandered into the mountains. There was a tree by the road and a fine spring under it. The prince climbed up to the tree and saw a Brahmin walking into the water by himself. He brought food to eat after he took a bath. He used magic (a trick, *shu* 術) to pour a jug out of his mouth. Inside the jug, there was a woman and then they performed the conjugal act by a screen. Then the brahmin lay down to sleep, yet the woman then repeated the trick and spat out a jug, in which there was a young man. Then they slept together, and she swallowed the jug. Soon the brahmin got up, and he put the woman inside the jug and swallowed it. Then he left on his crutch after he swallow the jug. The prince returned and said to the king, "I will invite a master in front of all the courtiers. He will put his stick aside and show the magic of three people eating together". When the brahmin arrived he said, "There is no one else but me". The prince said, "You should take out the men and eat together". After three iterations of requests, the master know he couldn't stop it, so he took out the man to eat with him. The king asked the prince, "How do you know this?" He answered, "Let the man eat with her". The prince said to the woman, "Come out to the man and eat with him". He did not stop but went out to the man and ate with him. The king asked the prince, "How do you know this?" He said, "My mother wanted to see places in the kingdom, and when I was riding the chariot for her, she uncovered her hands to be seen. I realized that women are capable of much desire, so I faked a pain in my abdomen and returned home. I went to the mountain and saw a master hiding a woman in his stomach. This is adultery, and there is no way to stop such women from committing adultery, so I would like you to proclaim a law allowing people to come and go freely inside the palace". The king announced the rule in the palace that those who wish to do so can do as they wish. The Master (the Buddha?) said, "Women cannot be trusted anywhere in the world".[26]

Because of the story's complexity and wealth of analytically valuable aspects, Chinese writers are likely to have taken notice of it and included it in their works for intricate adaptations.

3.1.2. The Narratives

First of all, this story uses the play-within-a-play narrative structure, with the outer layer telling the story of the king, the queen, and the prince and the inner layer nested in the story of the "brahmin spitting out the jug", which is intertwined with the story of the queen's moral failings and the woman's deceitful words to illustrate the truth that "women cannot be trusted in the world". To demonstrate the fact that women cannot be trusted, the

tale of the queen's virtue and the woman's dishonest words and actions are highlighted. As in a Russian nesting doll, the inner narrative of "a brahmin spitting out the jug" has these layers with the man and the women, then another man as the main characters.

In the tale, both the brahmin and the woman use deception to entice their loved ones, but only the woman is singled out for criticism. Although it is not mentioned as such in the text explicitly, the textual details appear to imply the reason for this value judgment. The main purpose of the brahmin spitting out the bottle to draw out the woman. However, the main point of the woman's magic is to introduce a young man. Furthermore, the detail of the lady sleeping with both her husband and her lover is a clear indication of the erotic nature of the woman's magic. The fact is that the woman receives more criticism, despite the fact that the brahmin (*daoren* 道人, the man of the Way) is the one who started the whole thing in the beginning. This seems to reflect a propensity towards the subjugation of women in India, where the tale is said to have originated. In addition, from the point of view of the "dharma of the world", the story itself shares the Buddhist doctrine that the "jug" might be the equivalent of the mundane world, in which people spend their entire lives tormented by lust and unable to end their lives, thus, becoming confused and comatose without ever escaping from the power of dharma.

3.1.3. The Magic Tricks from the Western Region

For Chinese monks and writers, the magic trick, "spitting out a jug", the focal point of the tale, possesses features of an external culture. In China, the writer's interpretation and rewriting of the tale were most likely affected by their experience of reading about such magic that originated in *xiyu* 西域 (the Western Region). If they lived or stayed in big cities such as Chang'an 長安 or Luoyang 洛陽, they might even personally see the tricks performed by monks or magic masters. Magic and illusional tricks gained popularity in China after Emperor Wu of the Han Dynasty (Han wudi 漢武帝, Liuche 劉徹, 156–87 B.C.) opened the road to Western territories, according to the Yinyue zhi 音樂志 (The Records of Music) in *Houhanshu* 後漢書 (*The History of the Eastern Han Dynasty*): "illusional magic arrived from the Western regions, especially from Tianzhu (India). When the road to the Western Regions was opened by Emperor Wu of the Han Dynasty, conjurers (*māyā-puruṣa*) started to come to China. At the time of Emperor An 安帝 (Liu Gu 劉祜, 94–125), the people from India (*tianzhu* 天竺) showed the emperor tricks that permitted them to amputate their own hands and feet, cut out their own bowels and bones. These tricks became popular since then". (Fan 1975, p. 1074) After the spread of Buddhism, foreign monks, particularly monks from the Western Regions in Central Asia, utilized a variety of deceptive methods to win over disciples while conducting missionary work in China. It is possible that methods like "spitting out a jug" had a basis in truth rather than being made up as literary fiction in Chinese people's eyes at that time. This indicates that the magic the fable tells is not only a literary description or imagination but something related to the real world.

3.1.4. *Hu* 壺 in Taoist Story

The "*hu*" 壺 plays an essential part when it comes to interpreting the story, as this element is also tied to the Chinese Taoist tradition, which has its own story of the *hugong* 壺公 "Sire Gourd".[27] (Ge 2010, p. 304; Company 2002, pp. 164–67; Mair 1996, pp. 185–228; Zeng 2014, pp. 137–56) Both tales are supernatural renderings of the *huzhong tian* 壺中天"heaven (another realm) in a *hu*", which is a common depiction of an imaginary realm outside the real world in Sixth Dynasty narratives. (Senbō 1999, pp. 52–55) *Fanzhituhu* and *hugong* stories might be parables, and it is in the Sixth Dynasty that they connect with other and become the main body of the story in *waiguo daoren* 外國道人 (Foreign Master) in *Lingguizhi* 靈鬼志 (*The Records of Magical Ghosts*) by Xunshi 荀氏 (someone with the family name Xun), which influences the story of *e'long shusheng*.

3.2. Waiguodaoren in Lingguizhi

3.2.1. The Similar Plots in *Waiguo daoren* and *Fanzhi tuhu*

Linggui zhi is attributed to a writer whose family name was Xun 荀氏 in the Jin Dynasty (266–420). In this book, the cultural traces of the "men in the jug" illusional magic can be found; it was used to replace the beginning of the original Buddhist story. It puts the story in an actual historical year, that is, in the twelfth year of the Taiyuan Period 太元十二年 (388). The story starts with a magician, a master (man of the Way) with his superpower claiming he is from a foreign country and is able to swallow (*tundao* 吞刀) swords and spit out fire (*tuhuo* 吐火), pearls, jade and gold, and silver. The interesting part is that it notes that this magician receives the magic from a man with white clothes who was not a Buddhist monk (*shamen* 沙門 Sramana). This might indicate that the writer tries to hide the Buddhist track of this story and convince readers that this is a story with adventures and unbelievable events like other *zhiguai* stories in China. However, this might also be an explanation that *fei shanmen* 非沙門 (not a Buddhist monk) is used to describe the concept of *fanzhi* (a brahman) in the original text. *Houhanshu* records that conjurers (*māyā-puruṣa*) from the Western Region can make all kinds of transformations; they can spit fire, disintegrate themselves, and exchange the heads of cattle with horses, etc. (Fan 1975, p. 1684) When the *Hu* 胡 monks came to China to spread their teachings, they often used magic and tricks. There are many famous monks among them, such as Zhu Fahui 竺法護, An Huize 安慧則, Shi Tanhuo 釋曇霍, An Shigao 安世高, and Kang Senghui 康僧會, who were known to have attracted followers with their strange magic. (J. Zhang 1998, pp. 329–76)

Then the story continues, and the master saw a man carrying a shoulder pole (*dan* 擔) with a small cage the size of one pint (*shengyu* 升餘). He said to him, "I am very tired from walking and would like to get on your shoulder pole". This dan is an item with Chinese characteristics as it only mentions *zhang* 杖 (a walking stick, or crutch) in the original Buddhist fable. Meanwhile, the concept or image of *zhang* might trigger readers to associate it with the Buddhist abbot's staff. However, *dan* is more like something a Chinese farmer or gutter man would use on a daily basis. The bearer is very surprised and thinks he is a madman, so he says to him, "I can do it myself, but what do you want to do?" The man replied, "With your permission, I would like to enter your cage". Then, the man says, "If you can enter the cage, you are a god (*shenren* 神人)". Dialogues are crucial to the story's adaptation since they enhance character development and credibility while also providing more information and improving the flow of the narrative. As evidenced by these exchanges, it appears that the carrier does not think the master can enter the cage, making it seem like a challenge or a wager on the master's part. Moreover, because the master can do magical feats, the word "*shenren*" 神人 (amazing, godlike man, man with supernatural powers) functions as a keyword for him. Once more, this detail demonstrates the story's *zhiguai* 志怪 (recording amazing event) nature.

Then the man drops his shoulder pole, and the magician enters the cage. An interesting detail is addressed here. The cage is no bigger, nor is the man any smaller. The bearer does not feel it is heavier than before (*long bugeng da, qiren yi bu geng xiao, danzhi yi bujue zhong yu xian* 籠不更大，其人亦不更小，擔之亦不覺重於先). This understanding or description of the space might be influenced by both Chinese tradition and Buddhist culture. As was shown earlier, in the Taoist story, Hugong lives inside his Gourd. This indicates that the space inside the gourd is much bigger than it seems.

This magical space that is distinct from the real world can also be found in Buddhist texts. The famous Buddhis metaphor *xumi jiezi* 須彌芥子 states that something as enormous as Sumeru can be put in something extremely tiny and numerous such as a mustard seed (*sarṣapa*). This idea is vividly described in Weimojie jing 維摩詰經 (Vimalakīrtinirdeśa Sutra), in which the layman Vimalakīrti pretends to be sick and Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī comes to visit him. Then, they have an intriguing debate on what nonduality (*bu'er* 不二) means. However, it is not only these two in the room, Vimalakīrti uses his supranormal faculties (*shentong li* 神通力, *abhijñā*) so that all the Buddhas, Bodhisattva, disciples of the Buddha, and all heavenly beings, demons, and ghosts can fit into his small room. The

Śāriputra said, "Noble sir, it is astonishing that these thousands of thrones, so big and so high, should fit into such a small house and that the great city of Vaisali, the villages, cities, kingdoms, capitals of Jambudvipa, the other three continents, the abodes of the gods, the nagas, the yakshas, the gandharvas, the asuras, the garudas, the kimnaras, and the mahoragas—that all of these should appear without any obstacle, just as they were before! 居士！未曾有也！如是小室，乃容受此高廣之座，於毘耶離城無所妨礙，又於閻浮提聚落、城邑，及四天下諸天、龍王、鬼神宮殿，亦不迫迮". Then the Licchavi Vimalakirti responded with the Sumeru mustard seed metaphor: "The bodhisattva who lives in the inconceivable liberation can put the king of mountains, Sumeru, which is so high, so great, so noble, and so vast, into a mustard seed. He can perform this feat without enlarging the mustard seed and without shrinking Mount Sumeru. Mount Sumeru's primary (fundamental) mark (sva-lakṣaṇa) as it was before 若菩薩住是解脫者，以須彌之高廣內芥子中無所增減，須彌山王本相如故".[28] (Thurman 1976, p. 52).

The expression of *wusuo zengjian* 無所增減 (without increase or decrease) is very helpful to our understanding of the phrase, "the cage is no bigger, nor is the man any smaller in the text 籠不更大，其人亦不更小". One can presume that *wusuo zengjian* indicates that Mount Sumeru does not become smaller while the mustard seed does not grow larger. There is a little discrepancy between the two lines. In the sutra, it put weight on Mount Sumeru's primary (fundamental) mark, which might indicate the *wusuo zengjian* mainly focuses on the unchangeable size of Mount Sumeru. However, the emphasis on the relative spatial relationships between the cage and the man is considerably more apparent in the narratives of *waiguo daoren*.

After walking for dozens of *li*s 里 (one *li* is around 500 m), the man relaxes under a tree to eat; the bearer orders food and says, "I have my own food". He refuses to come out. Then, the magician just stays in the cage, bringing out all his food and tableware. This is the same plot of spitting out the jug with a woman in it, with colorful details.

Then the master repeatedly spits out a woman, about twenty years old, with extremely beautiful clothes and appearance, and they eat together. When they finish eating, her husband lays down. The woman says to the bearer, "I have another husband outside my family (*waifu* 外夫) who wants to come and eat with me; but when my husband wakes up, you must not tell him". The woman then pours a young husband from her mouth and then they eat together in a cage. This woman's lover is described as a younger husband (*nianshao zhangfu* 年少丈夫). The original Buddhist literature made mention of the fact that the lover was younger than the husband and that he was treated as a husband because he shared meals and beds with the woman. The woman's age and appearance, however, were not stated in the original Buddhist text.

When her husband moves and is about to get up, the woman puts her lover in her mouth. The husband gets up and says to the bearer, "We can leave now". Then, he takes the woman into his mouth, and other things he spits out.

3.2.2. New Plot in *Waiguo daoren*

The narrative then takes a fresh turn and gains new significance. Then, the man arrived in the country (*guozhong* 國中). He does not specify which country it is; however, the word *guozhong* may indicate it is inside China. At least, the reader might assume it is inside China or the capital of the state he is in. There is a wealthy family in the area when the man first arrives, but they are cruel and crafty. The master tells the bearer that he will show how to prevent the wealthy family from being stingy. Therefore, the last part of the story shifts into a narrative on being generous.

The master then makes his way to the wealthy man's home, where he finds a horse that the rich man adores, and it is chained to a pillar. The horse then gets lost, and the wealthy man is unable to locate it. The following day, he discovers it in an unbreakable jar (*wudou ying* 五斗罌 a clay jar with the capacity of *wudou,* around 37.5 kg), but he does not know how to get it out of the jar. This detail is reminiscent of a cage that does not expand but holds people or objects that are larger than it appears.

The master then suggests that he prepare food for 100 people nearby to keep them from becoming hungry. When the wealthy man follows the master's advice, his horse is discovered in its original location. The next day, his parents disappear from their bed. After the wealthy man feeds 1000 people as the master recommends, his parents find their way home.[29] (Lu 1973a, vol. 8, pp. 316–17; Kao 1985, pp. 121–23).

Filial piety plays a significant importance in traditional Chinese moral systems. One of the most crucial values is respecting and honoring one's parents. Following the spreading of Buddhism to China, some tales and aspects of Buddhist culture pertaining to filial piety for parents were amplified and developed into significant cultural riches. For instance, the Great Maudgalyayana entering hell to rescue his mother is intimately tied to the popularity of the *Yulanpen* Festival in China (Karashima 2013, pp. 288–305; Mair 1983, pp. 87–122).[30]

In *waiguo daoren*, the stingy rich man's parents disappear and show up due to the master's magic or superpower. This plot is placed after the loss and recovery of his treasures, implying that parents are naturally more important. This shifts the theme of the story one step closer to the theme of filial respect for parents, making it another major theme, second only to generosity. The first part of *waiguo daoren* focuses on magic tricks or supernatural powers, which can be seen as one of the themes or main messages the author wants to send, yet it is kind of obscure. So the main theme of this story seems to be generosity. As far as the reader's reading experience is concerned, the story of the parents, which caps off the entire work, also seems to have a deeper meaning because filial piety develops into an amazing plot line.

The story concludes with a scenario involving the parents that is absent from the original narrative and conveys a new lesson about showing generosity to common people and filial piety to one's parents. Given that generosity is one of the six perfections in Buddhist practice and that there are numerous works in which the Buddha, a Bodhisattva, or a good man donates food and drinks to the needy, the idea of generosity is not difficult to comprehend.[31] It is challenging to pinpoint the source of Xunshi's inspiration; nevertheless, the plot involves two instances of telekinetic tricks.

However, Xunshi does not demonstrate in *waiguo daoren* how the master could make the wealthy man's horse and parents appear and disappear overnight. Chinese fiction sometimes involves taking something out of thin air or relocating anything thousands of kilometers away without anybody noticing. Zuo Ci 左慈 (d.u.), who performed this type of magic in front of Cao Cao 曹操 (155–220), may be one of the most well-known examples of that time.[32] (Gan 1996, pp. 8–10) As magic is one of the many intriguing topics in *zhiguai* stories,[33] (Yin 2017, pp. 156–64) this may imply that the focus on magics becomes an essential theme in *waiguo daoren*.

3.3. E'long Shusheng 鵝籠書生

3.3.1. The Story Line

The famous tale *e'long shusheng* 鵝籠書生 "The Scholar with a Goose Cage" (also known as "The Scholar of Yangxian"), which tells the tale of Xu Yan 許彥 (顏), a scholar from Yangxian (currently Yixing City, Jiangsu Province) who travels with a goose cage on his back, was created from a tale by Wu Jun 吳均 (469–520), a writer of the Liang Dynasty (502–557) (Yao 1973, p. 698).[34]

At the very beginning of Wu Jun's adaption, he gave the main character the typical Chinese name of Xu Yan, noting that he is a scholar from Yangxian 陽羨. When Xu Yan was meandering in the Mountains of Sui'an 綏安 (Fujian Province), he met a scholar, aged seventeen or eighteen, who was lying on the side of the road and asked to be put in a goose cage, saying that his feet hurt. It can be assumed that the husband in the first two of the stories is older than the wife and her lover, but in this story, the main character's age is changed, suggesting that age is no longer a significant factor in adultery. Instead, the story focuses on the trickster's (magician) behavior and execution rather than the adultery itself.

The scholar then enters the cage, but the cage is no wider and the scholar no smaller. He sits with the two geese and is not surprised. The geese are not frightened. When the scholar comes out of the cage, he tells Xu Yan he will prepare food for him. The key distinction is that while communal feeding and spitting out of the jug occur inside the cage in *waiguo daoren*, they occur outside the cage in *yangxian shusheng*. Nevertheless, when the scholar spits out a plate of food, the jug vanishes in the narration. Furthermore, there is no jug present when he spits out his wife, which almost suggests Wu Jun left out it on purpose to hide its traces back to the story of *waiguo daoren,* which links the Buddhist text originally. Then comes the part of the story where the man is asleep and the woman summons her lover, revealing a fresh conversational detail in which she apologizes to Xu Yan.

After the husband and wife fall asleep, the wife's lover has a female lover, according to the myth, adding another twist. The noticeable detail is that in *waiguo daoren*, the act of spitting out the jug and people eating together happens inside the cage, but in *yangxian shusheng*, it is outside the cage. Furthermore, Hu disappears in the storytelling as the scholar spits out the plate with food. When he spits out his wife, there is no jug in the middle of the process. Then there is the plot with the man sleeping, and the lady invites her lover, with the new detail of a conversation where she explains and says sorry to Xu Yan.

After the husband and wife fall asleep, the wife's lover spits out another woman, adding another layer to the idea that she has a female lover. The male lover then puts his lover in his mouth when the husband wakes up, and the wife then puts her lover in her mouth before the husband finally puts his wife in his mouth. The scholar leaves Xu Yan a plate with a date on it and states Xu Yan's formal title (J. Wu 1934, pp. 3–4; Kao 1985, pp. 161–63), but the account does not describe generosity as *waiguo daoren* did.

3.3.2. Significant Shifts in Wu Jun's Story

In addition to these adjustments, there are four more crucial shifts.

First, there is a considerable shift in the narrative structure. The first narrator now tells a story about the adventure rather than continuing with the Buddha's primary metaphorical teaching of Buddhist theory. The bucolic tales of the barnyard officials have replaced the fundamental principles of Buddhist doctrine. There is less of an edifying feeling. The narrative returns to the world of fiction in the tradition of "none official records from low-rank officials" (*baiguan yeshi* 稗官野史), which is full of fantastical elements. Rather, it has a historical undertone that refers to looking for the weird and recalling the strange. As it was demonstrated in *yiwen zhi* 藝文志 (Records of Books) of *Hanshu* 漢書 (*The History of the Han Dynasty*), "The stream of novelists emerged from street talkers, low-ranking officials, and people who listened to scribblings" (Ban 1962, p. 1745).

Second, the plot develops more logically, and the literary effects are improved. The narration is also more sparkling, and the language is more fluid. The woman is "fifteen or sixteen years old, her clothes were gorgeous, and her look was wonderful", for instance, which clarifies the woman's age, attire, and appearance. Additionally enhanced is the characters' interactional conversation. The character interactions become more complicated, and the tale progresses more naturally and fluidly. The reasons behind the actions of the characters are more apparent. For instance, the story does not begin with some fictional country with a king's family but with someone who meets a scholar on the road. Then, the master asks Xu Yan for a favor as his feet hurt from walking, which seems natural as it might really happen in daily life. After the lady hosts a banquet for Xu Yan, he collapses intoxicated, and it is at this time the lady tells him that although she and the scholar are a couple, they are not happy together. That is why she keeps the young man in her mouth and asks Xu Yan to keep the secrets for her. This explains why she shows the trick of taking out the man in front of Xu Yan.

In the earlier story in *Zapiyujing*, *Fanzhi* is the key player in the tale as the brahmin lies at the center of all the narratives, yet he is observed by the prince. As opposed to being the main character in "The Scholar in the Goose Cage", Xu Yan serves as an observer and a recorder with a strong sense of self. That is to say, it is as if he gains an independent identity.

The ethical drama between the scholar and the woman and her boyfriend is placed in center stage. This shift in identity also alludes to the cultural setting in which the Buddhist tales were first shared with Chinese writers. At the time, the Chinese literary elite were not Buddhist adherents or practitioners, but rather, out of wonder and curiosity, they soberly discovered the fantasy or literary appeal of the Buddhist tales. That is why in the story of *Yangxian shusheng*, it seems Xu Yan has a more independent identity compared to the earlier versions of this story.

Third, the message or the meaning of the fable is delivered differently. The premise of the original tale is the cultural devaluation of women in the setting of their poor position in India, a cultural thread that undoubtedly had echoes in China. In *Shishi liutie*, this story was under the title *nüzi nanzhi* 女子難制 (Women are difficult to control), which states that, "*Piyujing* says, once a prince of the monarch was on a voyage after the sun had set. In order to escape from wolves and tigers, he climbed a tree. Then a brahmin comes to the tree and spits a jug out of his mouth. Then the lady comes out of the jug. The brahmin lies down to sleep after they have sex. The lady also spits a jug out of her mouth. A man comes out of the jug and they have sex. The next day, the prince goes to the palace and commands the brahmin to prepare meals for three people, it is then that people learn that women are difficult to control".[35]

However, in Wu Jun's story, to construct a text about an odd interaction amongst literati, Qi *Xu qixiezhi* relies more on the narrative's framework. This technique focuses on a tale with a particular Buddhist allegory as a literati anecdote while being far less preachy. The moralizing substance of the stories about women steadily diminishes from The Foreign Master to The Yangxian Scholar, and the narrative paradigm shifts from a straightforward condemnation of women to a more intricate narrative motivation, becoming a showcase for the author's talent.

Culturally speaking, the logic behind the changing attitude towards women is more complicated. It is hard to tell if it is a more friendly approach to women or just a narrative trick. As Carrie Wiebe has argued, unlike similar tales in the Indian and Arab traditions, the Scholar from Yangxian directly depicts female desire and the vulnerability of men to this desire, even though the apparent moralizing of women does give way to a complex, interlocking, mise en abyme structure. However, if the story no longer focuses on the wife's infidelity, the tale of the magician who regains his ability argues that "They make it clear that in public, women have no place and no power, even if they do complicate the heart of the matter. Just like the goose cage that becomes no bigger when a man gets into it, neither the world nor a man is really changed by the machinations of a woman" (Wiebe 2017, p. 94). However, no matter how this shift of the story is interpreted, from a Brahmin Spitting a Jug to The Goose Cage Scholar, it becomes more complex in its purpose and different in the messages it delivers.

Fourth, a significant number of textual features have been exchanged with new ones that emphasize their "actual" rather than "fictional" details, giving the text a stronger sense of history and realism. For instance, the fictitious reference to the brahmin becomes a Chinese scholar, and the entire incident is witnessed by a governmental officer, Xu Yan, the *Lantai lingshi* 蘭臺令史 (Orchid Pavilion, Hucker 1985, p. 13; Fan 1975, p. 3600)[36] diluting the original meaning of the Buddhists' metaphorical instruction to the world). Although the time and place of the story are not particularly highlighted in the original literature, the adaptation unmistakably places it in Yongping's third year (60). While the power of the original tale to admonish the reader comes from the authority of the king of the tale (typically fables in Buddhism are told by the Buddha and the Bodhisattva. Although sometimes the Buddha and the Bodhisattva do not appear, we can tacitly assume that the power of the tale still partially comes from the Buddha's and the Bodhisattva's pronouncements). The bronze mirror (*tongjing* 銅鏡) plays a significant part at the end of this story, which serves as a historical proof that the tale is accurate because it is a physical reminder of the past with a date on it (DeWoskin 1977, pp. 21–52; Gan 1996, pp. xxv–xxviii).[37]

Lu Xun emphasizes that "*Linggui zhi* 靈鬼志 by Xunshi also records the story of a foreign master getting into a cage, it is mentioned that the master comes from foreign country. Yet in Wujun's writings, the master becomes a scholar in China", and he also suggests that this process of Sinicization of Indian stories is very common in the Wei and Jin Periods (220–420). Since the Wei and Jin Dynasties, the Buddhist canon has gradually been translated, and the Tianzhu stories have also spread throughout the world. They evolved into a national possession because the literati enjoyed their novelty and utilized them, whether consciously or unwittingly. (Lu 1973b, vol. 9, p. 192) Of course, in Wu Jun's case, his adaption of this story was not an accident; rather, it was made with the explicit and definite goal of transforming it into a Chinese story. Yet his deliberate cover-up of the trace back to Buddhist text can be easily seen through by well-read people such as Duan Chengshi 段成式 (803–863) in the Tang Dynasty (Duan 2015, p. 1673).[38]

3.3.3. Taking Avadāna Stories into Historical Records

China places a high value on history and has a tradition of *shilu* 實錄 "actual recordings" (Ban 1962, p. 2378).[39] Stories of mystery and fiction must appear to have a reason and a vivid history when they enter fiction, in contrast to Indian tradition, which tends to turn history into legend and myth. This fixation on "true" history is actually a significant aspect of Chinese culture. The Indian culture has a propensity for turning historical events into folklore and myth. One of the strands of adapting Buddhist stories into Chinese culture is the enhancing of the historical dimension. In the Indian tradition, there is a propensity to transform history into legend and mythology. For instance, the famous story *Cao Chong chengxiang* 曹沖稱象 (Cao Chong [196–208] weigh the elephant) in *Sanguo zhi* 三國志 (*The Historical Records of the Three Kingdoms*) originally comes from *Za baozang jing* 雜寶藏經 (*Samyukta-ratna-piṭaka*).[40] (Chen 1980, pp. 157–62) It is possible that the tale of the long-haired woman who gave up her hair to support the Buddha had an impact on Tao Kan's 陶侃 (259–334) mother's decision to shave her head in order to treat a visitor. (Wang 2006, pp. 121–22)

Since it is a characteristic of Chinese culture to attach importance to history, some Buddhist stories, once they entered the Han region, needed to draw on the authority of history to shape their own legitimacy rather than the sacredness of the Buddha himself, and this was the internal mechanism that constituted the change from "Brahmin spits out a jug" to "Goose Cage Scholar". The important factor is its historicity. The narrative shifts from fiction to reality, and this reality is literary reality. A stage of understanding where "dream becomes reality" is symbolized by the Goose Cage Scribe and includes the fictitious works of the Six Dynasties.[41] (Gu 2014, p. 110) However, because of its Buddhist Avadāna Literary nature, the story is both fantastical and real. It is only by placing the fictional story in a realistic context that we can understand more deeply the intention and meaning of the metaphorical stories chosen by the literati.

4. Fable of the Time: The Cultural Significance of *Yingwu Jiuhuo* 鸚鵡救火 "Parrot Putting Out Fire"

4.1. Yingwu Jiuhuo 鸚鵡救火

4.1.1. The Story in *Jiu Zapiyu Jing*

Selecting certain Avadāna stories with few modifications into a new collection is an intentional choice by authors, which allows the Buddhist stories to adapt new forms of life and meanings in the new cultural environment. The story of *Yingwu jiuhuo* 鸚鵡救火 (the parrot putting out the fire) of *Zapiyu jing* by Kang Senghui is a typical example of this kind of story. The story is quite simple, it goes as follows:

> Once upon a time, a parrot flew to a mountain, where all the animals and birds lived in harmony and love for one another, not harming each other. The parrot mused to itself, "Even though this is nice, I cannot stay longer and I shall return. He then left. Yet a few months later, the mountain became engulfed in fire. When

> the parrot noticed it from a distance, it dove into the water, scooped it up with its wings, and flew up into the air, dousing the flames with water from its feathers. And it went on like this. The deities of the sky said, "What a silly parrot! Why are you so stupid? Would you rather have a thousand miles of fire extinguished by the water of your two wings?" The parrot said to them, "How can I not put out the fire when I know about it. I have been a guest in the mountain, and all the birds and animals there are kind and good, and I cannot bear to see them (suffering)". The deities of the heavens felt his kindness and extinguished the fire with rain.[42]

Although this fable is not told by the Buddha himself, and the relationship between causes in the past and effects of today does not appear in the story to illustrate certain Buddhist truths, it is not difficult to see that the parrot portrays a Bodhisattva's spirit of uncompromising devotion.

When the fire is burning on the mountain, the parrot tries to extinguish it with its feeble strength, knowing that it cannot, but still tirelessly, because it was once a member of the mountain community and "all the birds, animals and beasts in the mountain are kind and good, and all are brothers", so it "could not bear" (*buren* 不忍) to stand by and do nothing. The choice of this word connotes "benevolent" and "intolerant", which might guide the viewers to both Buddhist and Confucian cultural connotations. Of course, from a Buddhist perspective, every sentient being cycles through life and death in the Six Destinies without seeing the end to it; meanwhile, the three realms are like a burning house. [43] The Bodhisattva, the Buddha, came forward to save all sentient beings from the fire. From the perspective of Confucianism, because birds and animals are "benevolent and good", a gentleman is "tolerant", and this is what Mencius called "compassion", so he stepped forward to help the world. The two are united in "virtue goodness".

From the narrative point of view, this story shares some similarities to Chinese tales, especially with *jingwei tianhai* 精衛填海 (The *Jingwei* Bird Fulfill the Sea)[44] and *yugong yishan* 愚公移山 (The Unwise Old Man Moves the Mountains).[45] In *Jingwei tianhai*, *jingwei* never stops putting stones into the ocean, even if it is as little as a bird, which is like the little parrot trying to stop the mountain fire with its small wings. Moreover, in *yugong yishan* 愚公移山 (the unwise old man moves the mountains), *Yugong* believes every effect counts when it comes to big ambitions to do good, and at the end of the story, the mountains that block his way out are carried away by gods touched by his devotion, which shares some similarities to the deities helping the parrot.

4.1.2. The Story Collected by Liu Yiqing

The story is reproduced almost in its original form in the *Xuanyan ji* 宣驗記 (*Records of Manifest Miracles*) by Liu Yiqing 劉義慶 (403–444) of the Liu Song Dynasty (420–479). As Lu Xun collected these stories into his *Gu Xiaoshuo Gouchen* 古小說鉤沉 (*Selected Collection of Chinese Classical Fiction*), we may view 35 of these stories in the book even though the whole form of this book is no longer available. Moreover, the *yingwujiuhuo* is as follows:

> A parrot flew to another mountain, and the animals in the mountain continually cher ished it. A few days later, a fire broke out in the mountain. When the parrot saw it from afar, it dove into the water to moisten its feathers and then flew to the mountain to sprinkle water on the flames. The deities of heaven said, "Though you have a will, how can your intention be enough?" The parrot replies, "Although I know I cannot (save it), I have lived on this mountain as a guest and the animals were good to me and they all are my brothers, so I cannot bear to see them (suffering). "The deity of heaven was so impressed that he extinguished the fire. (Lu 1973a, vol. 8, p. 553)

There is little difference between the two tales, and formally, the *Xuanyanji* is simply a streamlining of the original tale, making the sentences neater and the message more fo-

cused. As for the significance of this anonymous Buddhist story, what is the significance of including this story in its entirety here?

Among all the members of his royal family, Liu Yiqing was the most cultured and talented in the literature, and his *Shishuo xinyu* 世說新語 (*Account of Tales of the World*) stood out among the *zhiren* (records of people) books of the Six Dynasties, while *Xuanyan ji* 宣驗記 (*Records of Manifest Miracles*) was known as one of the most influential *zhiguai* novels that promoted Buddhism. At that time, there were numerous other works telling the stories related to Buddhism and legends about people with Buddhist beliefs, which Lu Xun calls *fufo xiaoshuo* 輔佛小說 (the fiction supporting Buddhism). They include Liu Yiqing's *Xuancianji* of the Liu Song Dynasty (420–479), Wang Yan's 王琰 (d.u.) *Mingxiang ji* 冥祥記 (*Mysterious Records of the Unseen World*) in the Qi Dynasty (479–502), Yan Zhitui's 顏之推 (531–597) *Jilingji* 集靈記 (*A Collection of Mysterious Records*) of the Sui Dynasty, and Hou Bai's 侯白 (d.u.) *Jingyi ji* 旌異記 (*The Records of the Unbelievable*). These texts were generally written to document the apparent effects of sutras and images and to clarify the veracity of the testimonies. Later generations might dismiss them as fiction, but they were intended to shock the world and make it believe in them (Lu 1973b, vol. 9, p. 194).

The author of the Book of *Xuanyanji*'s, Liu Yiqing, was a well-known author during the Liu Song era. (Shen 1974, p. 1477) At that time, Buddhism was thriving, scripture translation and construction of images were commonplace, and everyone from the aristocracy to the literati to the poor were becoming more and more devoted to the religion. Liu Yiqing was one of the most prominent practitioners of Buddhism in his aristocratic family.

The sympathetic nature of the parrot putting out the fire is all the more priceless in the context of present-day times of forest fires. The parrot itself is charged with rescuing creatures in the mountains and forests as an embodiment of Buddha and a Bodhisattva, but more importantly, the tale also communicates the idea that faith in Buddhism can result in salvation. Only the sutra halls and cabins survive the fire that destroys hundreds of homes. It is considered to be the work of a deity.

4.2. Fighting against the Demon in Youminglu

The stories written in the Six Dynasties period adapted the motif and plots of the Six Dynasties. In Liu Yiqing's *Youminglu* 幽明錄 (*Records of the Hidden and the Visible Worlds*),[46] (Z. Zhang 2009, pp.87–101; Y. Liu 2018) the tale "chanting of the Buddha to combat the ghosts" is taken from *juan* 4 of the *Zhuanji baiyuan jing* 撰集百緣經 (*Avadānaśataka*).[47] The story that Liu Yiqing cites is shorter than the original Buddhist story, and it goes as follows:

> Next to the place of Song, there was a state that was close to *rākṣasas*.[48] The *rākṣasas* entered its territory several times, eating countless people. The king made an agreement with the *rākṣasas* that said, "From today each of the families in this state will have a special day of duty. On that day, the family on duty should send [a boy] to you. Please do not kill people randomly anymore". A family of Buddha devotees had an only son aged ten who was the next boy to be sent [to the *rākṣasas*]. At the time of his departure, his parents wailed bitterly, and then chanted the name of Buddha wholeheartedly. Because Buddha's power was great, the *rākṣasa* could not get close to the boy. The next morning, the parents found that their son was still alive and they went back home together happily. From then on, the calamity of the *rākṣasas* ceased completely. [Lives of] people in the state had indeed depended on this family. (Y. Liu 2018, p. 62)

Compared with the original story, Liu cuts out the beginning of the fable in which the Buddha is telling the story and changes the end of this story by dropping the lines on the relationship between the characters and the Buddha and people related to him. In this Buddhist story, the three main characters, the king, the queen, and the prince in the past represent the Buddha, Yaśodharā (wife of Śākyamuni), and Ānanda. Moreover, it also cuts out many details of the conversations between the king and rākṣasas. More importantly, it leaves out the significant part where both the queen and the prince are willing to sac-

rifice their bodies to the *rākṣasa*. These changes may indicate that Liu's collecting of this tale changes from the significance of donating one's body to the belief of Buddhism, even though the latter theme already exists in the original Buddhist text but is not the story's primary point. Even though Liu leaves out the part of Buddha teaching the story, we can still note that it is Buddha or the belief in Buddhism that saves the prince. This is a new theme in the Six Dynasties when it comes to stories to save people in danger, as in earlier times. Most likely, it is deities or Taoist immortals who save people (the belief system of *tian* 天 Heaven), as it was discussed earlier in the story of *yugong yishan*. The Buddha, Bodhisattvas, or sutras related to them saving people becomes a common theme in novels in the Six Dynasties.[49] In the same chapter as the *rākṣasa* story of *Youminglu*, there is one of the most famous and well-discussed stories of Zhaotai 趙泰, Travels in Hell, in which the character travels to hell and comes back to life because of the teachings of the Buddha. After this, Zhao Tai's family are all devoted to serving the Buddha. These are the earliest stories of the Buddha as the savior in early medieval Chinese literature.[50] (Y. Liu 2018, pp. 132–37; Shi 2022, pp. 112–49; Company 1990)

4.3. Parrot as the Self-Image of the Writer

4.3.1. Parrot as a Boddhisattva

The Buddhist parables frequently feature parrots, who are typically portrayed as wise beings who are wonderful singers and are the epitome of wisdom. For example, in the twenty-ninth story of the *Liudu ji jing* by Kang Senghui, the Parrot King, one form of the Boddhisattva in one of his many lifetimes, is captured by a king, thus, illustrating that greed is like a net and desire is like a blade.[51] The king of parrots is the embodiment of wisdom and the Boddhisattva. The 56th story in the 6th *juan* of *Zhuanji baiyuan jing* tells a story in which a parrot gives birth to a king. The king was born as the son of a parrot because he had broken the precepts in the past.[52] This suggests that being in the destiny of the animal (as a parrot in this story) is a punishment. However, this does not mean that parrots are bad creatures., Another example of the parrot being an intellectual bird can be found in the fifty-eighth story from *juan* 12 of *Xianyu jing* in which the parrot hears the Four Noble Truths from the Buddha.[53] This story shows how birds such as parrots can hear the Buddha's teachings and benefit from them. It both emphasizes the profundity of the Buddha's teachings and demonstrates that even parrots have the intelligence to pay attention to his teachings. *Jinglü yixiang* 經律異相 (*Diverse Details of the Sutras and Vinayas*)[54] quotes a parrot-related story from *Zhangzhe yinyue jing* 長者音悅經 (*Sutra of Elder with Delight-sound*). In the story, a parrot is cherished by the king as it is good at singing. A vulture becomes jealous and imitates the parrot. However, it sings when the king is sleeping, which results in it being repulsed by the king and having its feathers clipped.[55] The parrot, who serves as the equivalent of the elder with beautiful voice in this fable, is undoubtedly portrayed favorably as well.

4.3.2. Parrot as the Buddha

Furthermore, as shown in the case of the *Liudu jijing*, the parrot (or the Parrot King) could also be seen as an incarnation of the Buddha in a past life and could, therefore, correspond to the image of the Buddha.

The second *juan* of *Zabaozang jing* also contains the story of *yingwu jiuhuo*.[56] More importantly, the story contains two parts. The second half of the story of the parrot putting out the fire is almost the same as the story collected in *Zhuanji baiyuan jing* and Liu Yiqing's *Xuanyan ji*. However, the first half of the story in *Zabaozang jing* completes the story of the Buddha at the present time, telling the story of the Buddha on his way to the Southern Mountain Kingdom (*nanfang shan* 南方山), passing through a village where the people had been drinking and started a fire and, therefore, asked the Buddha for help. The Buddha said, "All sentient beings have three fires (*sanhuo* 三火): the fires of greed, anger and ignorance. With the wisdom-water (*zhishui* 智水), I can extinguish these three fires. If this

is true, the fire will be extinguished". When these words were spoken, the fire was instantly extinguished. The Buddha taught Dharma to them, and they attained the path of the Srotāpanna.[57]

Zabaozang jing, along with other four sutras, was translated by Kekaya 吉迦夜 in the time of Emperor Ming 宋明帝 (Liu Yu 劉彧, 439–472) of (Liu) Song Dynasty. Furthermore, it was re-translated (edited, chongyi 重譯) by Tanyao 曇曜 in the 2nd year of Yanxing 延興, Northern Wei dynasty 北魏 (CE 472) in Beitai 北臺. Kekaya was an important sutra translator during the reign of Emperor Wencheng of Northern Wei Dynasty 文成帝 (Tuoba Rui 拓跋濬, 440–465). He translated many Buddhist texts, some of which were written down (*bishou* 筆受) by the famous literary figure Liu Xiaobiao 劉孝標 (462–521).[58]

The story of a parrot putting out a fire is also included in *juan* 11 of *Jinglü yixiang* in Liang Dynasty (502–557), compiled by Baochang. Here, it was titled as *wei yingwu xianshen jiu shanhuo yi shen bao'en* 為鸚鵡現身救山火以申報恩 (For a parrot to show itself to put out a mountain fire in return for the kindness). Bao Chang states that this story was collected from the first *juan* (*shangjuan* 上卷) of the *Sengqieluocha jing* 僧伽羅刹經 (*The Sutra of Saṁgharakṣa*). The phrase *shangjuan* indicates the sutra Baochang quoted was in two *juan*. Moreover, this one was translated by Dharmanandi 曇摩難提 (also known as Faxi 法喜, a Tokharian scholar-monk 兜佉勒), who came to Chang'an at the beginning of the Jianyuan Period 建元 (365–385).[59] However, this translation could not be found. Another version of the same sutra exists with the title *Sengqieluocha suoji jing* 僧伽羅刹所集經 (*The Sutra Collected by Saṁgharakṣa*). This version of three *juan* was translated into Chinese by Samghabhadra (Sengqiebacheng 僧伽跋澄) and others of The early Qin Dynasty 苻秦 (351–394). This sutra is an account of the Buddha's practice in his previous life and his deeds in this life as a monk. The story of the parrot is contained in *juan* 1 of this version of the translation.[60]

In conclusion, there are two systems of the story of *yingwu jiuhuo* in Buddhist texts. The most popular one is related to the story of the bodhisattva, which is based on *Zhuanji piyu jing*, concentrating on the devotion of the bodhisattva. The other is the story of the Buddha's lifetime story, represented by the *Zabaozang jing*, which focuses on the Buddha's use of the fire of wisdom to extinguish the three poisons of greed, anger, and obscenity. Although there is no major difference in the main plot of the story, the emphasis and connotation of the two metaphors are different.

4.3.3. Parrot as the Writer

As for the source of Liu Yiqing, one can assume that since *Zabaozang jing* was finished in the second year of its completion (472), and it is probable that Liu Yiqing (402–444) in the south did not see a version of the story that focused on the Buddha putting out a fire, he, therefore, relied on a version of the Bodhisattva's story based on the *Zhuanji baiyuan jing*, which was translated by Zhiqian (active from 223 to 253) of Wu (229–280) in the south.

Jinglü yixiang was finished in the fifteenth year of the Tianjian Period 天監十五年 (516),[61] which is later than the time of Liu Yiqing's writing. The source it quoted from, *sengqie luocha jing*,[62] is also about a fable of the Bodhisattva, so it is likely that the story of the Buddha putting out the fire was not spreading in the south in the time of Liu Yiqing.[63] As we have seen in the case of *e'long shusheng*, the intentional addition of detailed information is essential to the presentation of the text. Even though the book is about Buddhism, it is likely that Liu Yiqing purposefully conceals the fact that the parrot represents a Bodhisattva or the Buddha in his book *Xuanyan ji*.

Of course, we are not denying that the parrot represents the Buddha or the Bodhisattva. However, we must consider what this purposeful absence signifies for the text and what kind of cultural attitude Liu Yiqing has behind it. More importantly, we need to understand the image of the parrot in relation to the bigger context

In a chaotic time, holding a belief that one can chase away ghosts and fight demons (putting out the fire, saving people from war) is much more important than practicing the sacrifice of one's body as an act of that belief, at least in the fictional narratives and

stories created by writers in the Six Dynasties Period. These kinds of stories are somehow different from the self-immolation narratives in monastic biographies mentioned earlier, as the implied reader is different. For literati such as Liu Yiqing, even though he admired or had a strong connection with Buddhism, his main point might be bringing peace to his readers in a chaotic time by relating miracle stories and wonders from Buddhist texts. With the central message on how to survive a terrible time, there arose miracle writings related to Buddhism.

The sympathetic nature of the parrot putting out the fire is all the more priceless in light of the time with burning fires, both realistic and metaphorically speaking. The parrot itself is tasked with rescuing creatures in the mountains and forests as an embodiment of Buddha and a Bodhisattva, but more crucially, the story also expresses the idea that faith in Buddhism can result in salvation. As was recorded by Liu Yiqing in many places, "Only the sutra halls and cottages survived the fire that destroyed hundreds of homes. It was considered to be an act of a god."(Lu 1973a, p. 551) This was another account of a fire that destroyed hundreds of houses in Wuxing County 吳興郡 (from Lin'an in Zhejiang province to Yixing in Jiangsu province) during the Yuanjia Period 元嘉 (424–435), but only the *jingtang* 經堂 cottage remained unburned, and people regarded it as a miracle. Another account is similar: "In the eighth year of the Yuanjia Period, the city of Puban 蒲阪 in the eastern part of the Yellow River was on fire and could not be saved. The only thing that remained unscathed was a large cottage and the statue of the Houses of the White Cloth (*baiyijia* 白衣家, temples). The people were so amazed that they were all inspired."(Lu 1973a, p. 558)

This is a well-known allusion to the fact that the disaster did not harm the Buddhist temple or its statues, strengthening the populace's confidence in Buddhism and bestowing blessings on them. The literati frequently added cultural and content metaphors of their time to their choice of material, and the "parrot putting out the fire" depicts such an image of someone coming forward in a world in turmoil. Buddhist fables are excellent "missionary" material. Societal expectation and underlying predisposition are no longer only Buddhist but also a larger product of the times and a particular expectation of the literati. That is to say, in the fable *yingwu jiuhuo*, the parrot represents not only the Buddha and the Bodhisattva but also reveals a responsible author with a grateful intention who uses literature to protect people from the perils they face on a daily basis. The fire that the parrot extinguishes is both a metaphor for real-life flames and a literal one at the same time.

5. Conclusions

Overall, Buddhist Avadāna stories have been incorporated into Chinese literature; nevertheless, the link between the two goes beyond simple parallelism or influence and involves complicated flux, intermingling, and the creation of an unrecognizable cultural river. In particular, when writing their novels, the literati took inspiration from Buddhist metaphorical stories' basic form, major themes, and key story plots. Most crucially, they actively attempted to deflect cultural meaning by adapting the whimsical Buddhist tales into allegorical tales with grounded concerns based on the characteristics and historical developments of Chinese fiction. In addition to the text's finer details, the significance of history and the care for the time period also stand out, elevating the metaphorical tales from works of fiction to ones with realistic meaning and social concerns.

Buddhist Avadāna literature, as a whole, acts as a parallel cultural resource for comprehending and applying tales of related themes across cultures. More importantly, they offer a first-hand source of material for the creation of literary fiction, serving as a significant source of inspiration for fictional texts in China. The novels of the Wei, Jin, and Northern Dynasties, in contrast, did not limit themselves to the religious significance of metaphorical tales but, instead, added more writing techniques and literary and aesthetic interests, especially enhancing their historical and cultural significance, turning the metaphorical tales from Buddhist fable-like texts into fiction with historical details. The narrative is changed from a Buddhist "story" to one that is a realistic text with a sense of historical authenticity.

In short, the transposition of Buddhist Avadāna stories into Chinese cultural contexts is a complex process. It requires not only that monks and writers become aware of the similarities between the stories in question and bring them into a unified system, as in the case of xuanliang cigu, which places the original Chinese stories (characters) together with Buddhist stories under the same theme. It was even more necessary, as in the case of Wu Jun and others, to take the initiative in adapting Buddhist Avadāna tales to their own interests. Xunshi focuses on magic tricks and concentrates on a new theme of filial piety to command the Chinese audience's attention. Moreover, Wu Jun, by virtue of his climactic narrative art, added a great deal of detail to make the story more Chinese, showing the close relationship between fiction and history that characterizes the Chinese fiction. Even direct quotations from Buddhist scriptures, such as Liu Yiqing's, not only demonstrate the rapid spread of Buddhism but also the literati's love of Buddhist Avadāna stories, which provided sustenance for the literati. At the same time, if a story like yingwu jiuhuo is examined in the larger context of the chaotic time, the contemporary connotations and cultural significance of Buddhist Avadāna can be better understood, thus, providing more room for interpretation in our understanding of the Chinese literati's use of Buddhist Avadāna stories.

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Notes

1 For more introduction on this term, see the second *juan* of Master Kuiji's 窺基 (632–682) *Chengweishi lun shuji* 成唯識論述記(*Collection Commentary on Discourse on the Theory of Consciousness-Only*), T.1830:43. 274a8–13. For all sutras cited from Tripitaka (T) in the article, see (Takakusu and Watanbe [1924] 1932).

2 Avadāna is translated as Abodana 阿波陀那 in Chinese, yet the more common term was *Piyu* 譬喻, which can refer to upamā (metaphor), dṛṣṭānta (teaching by example), udāharaṇa (principle and examples), and avadāna(fable). The Chinese term *Piyu* is more complicated. A detailed discussion of these terms can be found in Ding Min's 丁敏 work, see Ding (1996, pp. 6–10). Her research develops from Master Yinshun 印順法師 (1906–2005), see Yinshun (2011, p. 460). Another important book on the narratives in Avadāna literature and its acceptance in China can be found in Fan Jingjing 范晶晶, *Yuanqi: fojiao piyu wenxue de liubian*, 2020.

3 *Baiyu jing* might be one of the most important and influential Avadāna texts in China. It was collected by Sengqiesina 僧伽斯那 (ayusmat Samghasena, d.u.), a Mahayana master who lived around the 5th century. This book was translated into Chinese by Qiunapidi 求那毗地 (Guṇavṛddhi, ?–502) in Qi Dynasty (479–502). For notable English translations of this book, see (R. Liao 1981; Saṅghasena 1997; Levitt 2004). For the French translation, see Chavannes, *Cinq cents contes et apologues extraits du tripitaka chinois et traduits en francais*, Paris: Adrien-Maisonneuve, [1910] 1962. vol. 2, pp. 147–230. For the German translation, see Wagner (2012).

4 *Xianyu jing* (*The Sutra of the Wise and the Foolish*), *juan* 8, translated by Huijue 慧覺 of Liangzhou 涼州, and this sutra was translated in Gaochang 高昌 in the Northern Wei Dynasty (386–534), see T. 202: 4. 405b25–27.

5 Guo (2012, p. 695). One English version can be found in Zhuang (2013, pp. 164–65). The English term fable is often translated as *yuyan* 寓言 in Chinese, and Zhuangzi is one of the most important writers in writing fables. *Yuyan* can be taken as fables, yet in Zhuangzi's term, it is one of the *sanyan* 三言 (three [types of] words), with which he used "goblet words" to pour out endless changes, "repeated words" to give a ring of truth, and "imputed words" to impart greater breadth 以卮言為曼衍，以重言為真，以寓言為廣. See Guo (2012, p. 1099). *Yuyan* is more like imputed words or supposed words, which refer to words or tales told by others. He states that metaphors are effective nine times out of ten and quotations seven times out of ten, but impromptu words come forth every day and harmonize within the framework of nature. Metaphors are effective nine times out of ten because they borrow externals to discuss something. 寓言十九，重言十七，卮言日出，和以天倪。寓言十九，藉外論之. See Guo (2012, p. 947). For this English translation, see Mair (1994, p. 278).This sentence is ambiguous and might be interpreted in another way. Burton Watson translates this part as, "Imputed words make up nine tenths of it; repeated words make up seven tenths of it; goblet words come forth day after day, harmonizing things in the Heavenly Equality. These imputed words which make up nine tenths of it are like persons brought in from outside for the purpose of exposition". See Burton Watson, *The Complete Work of Zhuangzi*, 234.However, it is still safe to understand *yuyan* as fables, parables, or just metaphors as Zhuangzi are full of these kinds of stories with deeper meanings. Furthermore, Victor H. Miror translates *yuyan* as metaphor. For more discussion on this topic, see Mair (1994, pp. 278–83).Sima Qian's 司馬遷 (145 or 135B.C.–?) *Shiji* 史記 (*The Historical Records*) comments

that "Zhuangzi writes works over 100,000 words (*shiyu wan* 十餘萬), generally all *yuyan*", see Sima Qian, *Shiji*, 2143. *Zhuangzi* contains more than 200 fables. *Hanfeizi* 韓非子 also contains lots of fables. The middle and late Warring States Period (476–221 B.C) saw a flourishing of fables. Other books, such as Mengzi 孟子 (*Mencius*), *Mozi* 墨子, *Lüshi chunqiu* 呂氏春秋 (*Lü Buwei's Spring and Autumn*), *Yanzi chunqiu* 晏子春秋 *Yanzi 's Spring and Autumn*, and *Zhanguoce* 戰國策, also contain many fables. Many fables that have been passed down from the pre-Qin era can be found in later volumes such as *Huainanzi* 淮南子, *Shuoyuan* 說苑 (*The Garden of Tales*), *Xinxu* 新序 (*New Records*), and *Hanshi waizhuan* 韓詩外傳 (*Hanying's Commentary on the Book of Poetry*) in the Han Dynasty.

6 Such as in Liu Xiang's 劉向 (BC 77–BC 6) *Shuoyuan* 說苑 (*The Garden of Tales*) (see X. Liu (1987, pp. 212–13)) and *Hanshi wai zhuan* 韓詩外傳 (*Hanying' s Commentary on the Book of Poetry*), see Han (1980, p. 359).

7 *Bintoulutuluoshe wei youtuoyanwang shuofa jing* 賓頭盧突羅闍為優陀延王說法經 (*The Sutra of Venerable Pindola-Bharadvaja Teaching Dharma to King Udayana*), translated by Qiunabatuoluo 求那跋陀羅 (Guṇabhadra, 394–468) of Yuanjia Period 元嘉 (425–453), see T.1690:32.786b14–17.

8 This idiom refers to someone who waits for gains without pains, which is a famous fable in Wudu 五蠹 (the Five Vermin) in *Hanfeizi.* See Hanfeizi (2016, p. 484). Burton Watson translates this fable as follows "There was a farmer of Song who tilled the land, and in his field was a stump. One day a rabbit, racing across the field, bumped into the stump, broke its neck, and died. There upon the farmer laid aside his plow and took up watch beside the stump, hoping that he would obtain another rabbit in the same way. But he got no more rabbits, and instead became the laughingstock of Song. Those who think they can take the ways of the ancient kings and use them to govern the people of today all belong in the category of stump-watchers!" See Hanfeizi (1964, p. 98). For the complete English translation of *Hanfeizi*, see W. K. Liao (1959).

9 For example, Jing Sanlong 荊三隆 edited five Avadāna books with modern Chinese translations, commentaries, and studies, which are *Yueyu liujing* 月喻六經 (*The Collection of Six Avadāna Stories (Including the One About the Moon)*), *Jiuza piyu jing* in 2 *juan*, *Zhongjing zhuanza piyu* and *Yiyu jiujing* 醫喻九經 (*The Collection of Nine Avadāna Stories (Including the One on Medicine)*) and *Za baozangjing* 雜寶藏經 (*The Miscellaneous Treasure Sutra*, *Samyukta-ratna-piṭaka,* T 203).

10 *Shimi*, which encompasses a variety of sugar cane products, from syrup to sugar crystals, is one of the seven medicines 七藥 in Buddhist medicine cultures. See Daniels (1995, pp. 279, 374). Meng Shen 孟詵 (621–713), a famous doctor of the Tang Dynasty, notes that the best *shimi* is from Persia 波斯 and the *shimi* from Shuchuan 蜀川 (Sichuan Province). In Meng Shen's time (*jin* 今, nowadays), it can also be found in the Dong Wu Region 東吳 (Wu of the Three Kingdoms is the east side of the Yangzi River, so Wu is also called Dong Wu to describe the area around Lake Taihu 太湖 and Suzhou 蘇州, Jiangsu Province), which is not as good as the ones in Persia. People produce *shimi* by boiling sugar cane juice and milk, and boiling makes them thin and white 此皆是煎甘蔗汁及牛乳汁, 煎則細白耳. A few *shimi* can be used to treat eye disease while taking the *shimi* product as big as a small ball; a medicine mix *shimi* with Chinese date and sesame is good for the five internal organs, especially the lung. See Meng (2007, p. 68).

11 Lokakṣema, *Zapiyujing*, T.204:4.500a9–b24.

12 This structure of Buddhist tales can also be called the grapevine structure(*putao teng* 葡萄藤), see Mi (1970, pp. 10–17). This two-layer structure was not common in novels or writings before Six Dynasties in China. However, it is very common in India and middle-east literature, such as in *The Pancatantra* (see Visnu Sarma, The Pancatantra, Penguin Classics, 2006) and *The Kathāsaritsāgara* (see Somadeva Bhatta, The Ocean of Story, Vol. 5, London: Privately. 1924–1928) of India tradition and in *Thousand and One Nights* in Arabic tradition. The sutra narrative style's multi-level narrative is the most distinguishing feature of Buddhist sutras. The first narrator, who is identified as "I" in the sutra's opening words, describes all that comes after "Thus I've heard", which makes up the sutra's first narrative level. The first narrative layer typically starts with an account of the Buddha's presence in a certain location at a specific time, followed by information about how the speech came to be and, finally, a thorough description of the Buddha's discourse. The Buddha's account rises to the second level of narrative, where the story may be referred to as the meta-story and serves, typically, as an explanation of the sutra's genesis events. The Buddha is obviously also the author of the meta-story and the second narrator in the sutra, see H. Wu (2004, pp. 418–19). This results in the shift in Chinese narratives, which progressed from simple linear storytelling to sophisticated characterization, subtle cause-and-effect relationships, and a gripping plot in *zhiguai* 志怪 (chronicles of the strange) literature (see Ahn 2004, pp. 125–31).

13 Crump (1970, p. 57). For the original Chinese text, see He (1990, p. 75).

14 T.2122:53. 898a13–15. A parable text that is almost the same can be found in *Zhujing yaoji* 諸經要集 (*Essential Teachings*), T.2123, *juan* 10, see Daoshi, *Zhujing yaoji*, T. 2123:54. 99a24–26.

15 Zhishun was a Chan Master in Sui Dynasty, the pupil of Sengchou 僧稠 (470–560) of Yunmen 雲門; the biography of Zhishun can be found in Daoxuan's 道宣 (596–667) *Xu gaoseng zhuan* 續高僧傳 (Further Biographies of Eminent Monks), see Daoxuan, *Xugaosengzhuan*, T.2060:50.569c20–570b14.

16 Here Mu'an'shanqing made a mistake, as Zhishun's biography can be found in *Xugaoseng zhuan* by Daoxuan in Tang Dynasty as mentioned earlier, not *Gaoseng zhuan* by Huijiao.

17 *Zutingshiyuan* 祖庭事苑 (*Tales and Affairs of Ancestral Courtyard (of Chan School)*), edited by Mu'anshanqing, *juan* 6, see X. 1261: 64. 397c12–19.

18 Self-immolation is an important action in the Buddhist tradition; Huijiao's *Gaoseng zhuan* collects 11 eminent monks on this topic. For the English translation, see Shi (2022, pp. 542–61). Suicide and self-harm can be traced back to different sutras, and the reason behind it varies. It might echo with the text from the Lotus Sutra or just an imitation of the Boddhisattvas in Jataka or Avadāna stories. It is also the highest devotion to the Buddha or just an act of dislike of the body and life. It can also serve as a tool to fulfill specific promises, as was shown in Zhishun's case. see Jan (Jan 1965, pp. 243–68). Committing suicide is the most extreme form of this self-immolation, and burning the body is one of these acts. Moreover, in the Buddhist biographies written by Huijiao and Baochang, miracles play a significant part; for more information on this topic, see Benn (2007, pp. 19–53). The story of Zhishun is an example of hard work and devotion towards Buddhism; his act itself also represents some heroic and miraculous sides of Buddhist monks.

19 Self-immolation can be regarded as one kind of donating (*bushi* 布施, *dāna-pāramitā*), which is one of the six perfections. Boddasattvas donate all kinds of things, including their own body parts and life; these stories are collected in *juan* 1–3 in *Liudujijing* 六度集經 [*Six Pāramitā-sūtra*], translated by Kang Senghui. For the French version, see Chavannes, *Cinq cents contes et apologues extraits du tripitaka chinois et traduits en francais*. Vol. 1, [1910] 1960, pp. 1–346.

20 T. 209: 04.545c7–19.

21 Lü (2009, p. 384). For the English translation, see Lü (2005, p. 619).

22 This is a typical story in folktales all over the world, see (Thompson 1933), Motifs J1922.1.

23 Their nationality or place of birth is a fascinating question to these stupid people. After Song 宋 (a state around Shangqiu, Henan Province, from whom over half of these fools originated) and Zheng 鄭 (a state around Zhengzhou, Henan Province), Chu has the third-highest concentration of idiots. See Tang (2001, pp. 49–51).

24 In the Tang Dynasty, *tiejing* 貼經 (cover characters of the text in Confucian Classics) is a common method used to test the students in the first round of the national exam. One should at least pass six times (*tie*) out of ten times, which is called *liutie* or *zhongliutie* 中六帖 (pass the six *tie*) if one wanted to pass as *jinshi* 進士 (a successful candidate in the highest imperial examinations), see Du (1999, p. 356).In order to pass the exam, the students would make songs and rhymes of the classics to memorize the long passages. In this cultural background, Bai Juyi 白居易 (772–846) edited an encyclopedia under the title of *Baishiliutie* 白氏六帖 (*Bai Juyi's Encyclopedia on Literature*). This book collected idioms, phrases, and knowledge on poetry writing and the literature in general. Writing poetry is one of the subjects in the national exam in Tang Dynasty; maybe this book was used as a textbook as well as a simple dictionary of the literature. Under the influence of Bai Juyi, Yichu 義楚 (907–979) compiled the encyclopedia for Buddhist studies and monks in the name of *Shishi liutie* 釋氏六帖(*Buddhist Encyclopedia*), presenting it in 954 to the court of Emperor Shizong 世宗 (921–959) of the Latter Zhou Dynasty 後周 (951–960).

25 B.79: 13. 462a5–6.

26 T.206:04.514a6–28. For the French translation of this fable, see Edouard, *Cinq cents contes et apologues extraits du Tripitaka chinois*, vol. 1, 37.

27 *Hu* 壺 is made from *hulu* 葫 (壺) 蘆 (gourd). The story of *hugong* was originally found in the biography of Fei Zhangfang 費長房 (d.u.) in *houhanshu* 後漢書 (*The History of Eastern Han Dynasty*), in which Fei learned Taoist magic from *hugong*, a doctor who lived in a *hu* or *hulu* with supernatural powers. Moreover, this story was collected and carried forward in *Shenxianzhuan* 神仙傳 (Traditions *of Divine Transcendents*) by Ge Hong 葛洪. For the original Chinese text, see Ge (2010, p. 304). For the English translation, see Company (2002, pp. 164–67). For further discussion, see (Mair 1996, pp. 185–228; Zeng 2014, pp. 137–58).

28 T14: 475. 546b20–27. For the English translation, see Thurman (1976, p. 52). However, this translation somehow left out the sentence "Mount Sumeru 's primary (fundamental) mark (*sva-lakṣaṇa*) as it was before 須彌山王本相如故".

29 This story can be found in Xunshi 荀氏, *Linggui zhi* 靈鬼志 (*Records of Magical Ghosts*), in *Guxiaoshuo gouchen* 古小說鉤沉 (*Selected Collection of Chinese Classical Fiction*), see Lu (1973a, vol. 8, pp. 316–17). For the English translation see Kao (1985, pp. 121–23).

30 *Mulian jiumu* 目連救母 (Mulian Rescues His Mother or Mulian Saves His Mother From Hell), a well-known Chinese Buddhist narrative, was first recorded in a Dunhuang document from the early 9th century CE. It is an expansion of the traditional *Yulanpen jing* 盂蘭盆經 (*The Ullambanapâtra Sūtra*), which was translated by Dharmarakṣa (Zhu Fahu 竺法護) between the 2nd year of Taishi 泰始 and the 1st year of Jianxing 建興, Western Jin dynasty (CE 266–313). See Karashima (2013, pp. 288–305). Much research has been written on this topic; for more information, see Mair (1983, pp. 87–122).

31 In *Dazhidu lun* 大智度論 (*Great Perfection of Wisdom, Mahāpāramitôpadeśa*), Mahākāśyapa selected 1000 people, and they all obtained the fruition of arhat later. The reason the number is 1000 is that in the past when Bimbisāra (?–493) achieved Enlightenment, he worshiped and fed 1000 monks, see T. 1509:25. 67c12–68a3.

32 Zuo Ci has the ability to execute a variety of magic tricks, such as fishing with a bamboo pole and obtaining magnificent fish from an empty basket, as well as traveling to Shu 蜀 (Sichuan Province) and obtaining fresh ginger there in a flash. Moreover, he could become invisible or turn into an animal(sheep) when he was hunted by Cao Cao. These stories were originally recorded in *Houhan shu* and later collected in books of the Six Dynasties such as *Shenxian zhuan* 神仙傳 (*Traditions of Divine Transcendents*) and *Soushen ji* 搜神記 (*In Search of The Supernature*). For one English version of these stories, see Gan (1996, pp. 8–10).

33 In China, baixi 百戲 (various plays) included illusional arts, which had their origins overseas and flourished during the Han Dynasty. They were performed in regal courts. Later, the immortals and Taosit monks learned them and used them to create the raw materials for assembling supernatural stories, and these medieval Chinese supernatural novels served as the key to

understanding these tricks. These magic and illusional arts include moving quickly, being invisible, transforming, dislocating body parts, puppet performances, rainmaking, and other feats. Of course, in the fiction of the Six Dynasties, some of these feats are carried out by foreign monks or magicians from middle Asia, as in the case of the tale *waiguo daoren*, while others are carried out by Taoist monks or Chinese individuals endowed with superhuman abilities. For more information, see Yin (2017, pp. 156–64).

34 The biography of Wu Jun can be found in *juan* 49 of *Liangshu* 梁書 (*The History of Liang Dynasty*), which speaks highly of his writing style, saying that Wu Jun's writing is clear with a classical style (*guqi* 古氣); some people learn it and call it "Wu Jun's style". See Yao (1973, p. 698).

35 B.79:13.336a14–15. See (Lan 1986).

36 For the English translation of this official title, see Introduction in (Hucker 1985, p. 13). *Lantai lingshi* 蘭台令史 was established in the Eastern Han Dynasty, it was attached to the Imperial Censorate (*Yushitai* 御史臺). This position was responsible for writing reports to the emperor, composing, and distributing documents to others with a salary of six hundred *dan*s 石 (one *dan* is around 60 kg) of rice, see Fan (1975, p. 3600). This position only ranks sixth of nine in the ranking system, so it is not a very high-ranked position. As for the traditional understanding of the authorship of fiction in China, as recorded in *Hanshu*, people tend to hold the idea that *xiaoshuo* 小說 (fiction) comes from low-rank officials.

37 DeWoskin, Kenneth noted that the techniques by which they were created seem to be those of the historian in the main, the systematic collection and arrangement of material from a variety of sources. Excepting Kan Pao 干寶, Wu Chun 吳均 (469–519, Hsu Ch'i-hsieh-chi 續齊諧記),and Hou Pai 侯白 (Sui Dynasty, Ching'i-chi 旌異記), the writers of chih-kuai from Liu Hsiang's time on tended to be more philosophically than historically oriented in their other writings. see DeWoskin (1977, pp. 21–52). The fact that some of those collections, such as Wu Jun's work covered in this article, are more philological does not negate the reality that authors in the Six Dynasties had a shared interest in historical records or that they try to make their fiction more like historical records. The distinction between literature and history is not as obvious as we experience nowadays. A typical example of that time is Gan Bao. According to *Jinshu* 晉書 and the preface of *Soushen ji*, Gan Bao is mainly known as a historian. He compiled the book of *Soushenji* to record different records of history; at the same time, Gan Bao's father had a maid returned to life after she was put into the tomb for a long time. So, Gan Bao tried to demonstrate that "the spirit world is not a lie" (*ming shendao zhi* buwu 明神道之不誣), and the nature of the narrative of *Soushen ji*, historical or none-historical is complicated. See Gan (1996, pp. xxv–xxviii). However, it is still notable that the strong connection with history is one of the most significant signatures within Chinese literature; therefore, the historical details added in *yangxian shusheng* separates the story from the original Buddhist text. The historian components of *yangxian shusheng* were a new adaptation that serve as the backdrop for the tale as it evolves to discuss women and magic tricks, even if the story eventually becomes more intricate and has many themes and meanings.

38 His deliberate cover-up of the trace back to Buddhist text can be easily seen through by well-read people such as Duan Chengshi 段成式 (803–863) in the Tang Dynasty. Duan recorded Wu Jun's story in his work *Youyangzazu* 酉陽雜俎 (*Miscellaneous Morsels from the South Slope of You Mount*), in which he pointed out this story came from *Zapiyujing* and commented that Wu Jun must have read about this story, being surprised by the narratives, thinking it to be extremely strange (*guai* 怪), see Duan (2015, p. 1673).

39 In the biography of Sima Qian in *Hanshu*, Ban Gu speaks highly of Sima Qian's writings. He states that well-read Liuxiang and Yang Xiong 揚雄 (53–18 B.C.) all praise Sima Qian for the talent of being a great historian. Sima Qian is great at narrating things and the reason behind them, with clear and simple, real yet refined words. His writings are straightforward with authentic records. He never wrongly praised nor hid the wrongdoings (of historical people, especially the people of the ruling class). This is called *shilu*, see Ban (1962, p. 2378).

40 For the development of this story, see Chen (1980, pp. 157–62).

41 The story had a great influence on later generations. In addition to *Youyang zazu,* which was mentioned earlier, writers and critics in the Ming and Qing Dynasty also like to quote or learn from this story, such as Pu Songling 蒲松齡 (1640–1715) and Ji Yun 紀昀 (1724–1805). They learn from this story and even use it as a literary term to describe the magical narrative effect that goes beyond the boundary of real and imagination. The artistic charm of the novels was greatly enhanced. See Gu (2014, p. 110).

42 T. 206: 4. 515a1–10.

43 T.262:9.13a25.

44 *Jingwei* 精衛 bird was originally the youngest daughter of Emperor Yandi 炎帝. After she was drowned when swimming in the East Sea, she transformed into a bird and often carried twigs and stones from the west mountain to fill up the East Sea. For the English translation of this tale, see Wang and Zheng (2010, p. 97).

45 Yugong tried everything he could and brought his family together to move the Wangwu 王屋 Mountain and Taihang 太行 mountain. When he was teased and laughed at by the so-called *zhisou* 智叟 (the wise old nab), he announced that even if he could not do it within his lifetime, he had endless later generations who could carry out this mission. Then, the gods were moved by his ambition and persistence and moved away the mountains for him, see Yang (2016, pp. 167–69). Here, the use of Chinese words *yu* 愚 (silly) and *zhi* 智 (wise) is seen in a Taoist way. Laozi states that, "*daqiao ruozhuo* 大巧若拙 (A man of great skill behaves like an idiot. The most sophisticated appears to be simple)". See Chen Guying, *Laozi yizhu ji pingjia*, 236. For people, one good characteristic is *dazhiruoyu* 大智若愚, which refers to someone of great wisdom who behaves like a fool.

46 *Youminglu* is one of the most famous *zhiguai* 志怪 (accounts of anomalies, tales of supernatural) novels in the Six Dynasties and is also one of the first collections of stories influenced by Buddhism. For the textual history of this book, see Z. Zhang (2009, pp. 87–101). For the English version of *Youminglu*, see Liu Yiqing, edited and translated by Y. Liu (2018).

47 *Zhuanji baiyuan jing* 撰集百緣經 (Avadānaśataka), translated by Zhiqian 支謙, *juan* 4, see T. 200.4.218c16–219b17.

48 The Nation or Place of Song indicates that this story came from China instead of a metaphorical place in Buddhist texts. Moreover, *luocha* 羅刹 (*rākṣasa*s) is one of the most famous demons in Buddhist literature. *Fanyimingyiji* 翻譯名義集 (*The Dictionary on the Translation of Buddhist Terms and Concepts*), *juan* 2, says that *luocha* refers to a fast (*suji* 速疾), horrifying, violent, and evil ghost. See T. 2131:54.1078c25.

49 For more information on this topic, see (Shi 2022, pp. 112–49; Company 1990).

50 For the English translation of this story, see Y. Liu (2018, pp. 132–37). For more discussion on this topic, see (Shi 2022, pp. 112–49; Company 1990).

51 T.03: 152. 17c1–22.

52 This story is titled as *yingwuziwang qingfo yuan* 鸚鵡子王請佛緣 (The Avadāna story of the king, son of the parrot, inquires for the Buddha). See T.04: 200. 231a17–b27.

53 T.04: 202. 436c8–437a29.

54 *Jinglü yixiang* 經律異相 is an important Buddhist encyclopedia attributed to Baochang 寶唱. Baochang is a Chinese monk active during the Liang Dynasty 梁 (502–557), and he is one of the pupils of Sengyou 僧祐 (445–518).

55 T.53:2121. 195b7–196a18.

56 T.04:203. 455a4–b7.

57 T.04:203. 455a8–12.

58 T.55:2149.268c4.

59 T.49:2034. 75c25–26.

60 T.53: 2121. 60b27–c5.

61 T.49:2034. 99b5.

62 Even though it was a sutra translated in the north, it was written much earlier so that there was enough time for the translation to travel to the south.

63 It is slightly possible; however, we have no evidence for this, Liu Yiqing may have seen a parable of the Buddha with two parts. He deliberately omitted the reference to the Buddha putting out the fire.

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Article

The Dharma Bums: A (Fictional) Pseudo-Buddhist Hagiography, or a Pseudo-*ojoden*

Ovidiu Matiu

Department of Anglo-American and German Studies, Faculty of Letters and Arts, Lucian Blaga University of Sibiu, 550024 Sibiu, Romania; ovidiu.matiu@ulbsibiu.ro

Abstract: This paper analyses Jack Kerouac's brief but intense conversion to American pseudo-Buddhism and the artistic effect of this biographical development, arguing that his conversion was total from a spiritual point of view and that its almost immediate effect was the production of a literary piece which should be read as a (fictional) pseudo-Buddhist hagiography, or a pseudo-*ojoden*. The article investigates Jack Kerouac's life as the life of a modern American Buddha, as a person engaged in a constant quest for spiritual enlightenment, who imbued his work with a spiritual feeling derived from his personal, direct, albeit limited experience with spirituality. His novel, *The Dharma Bums*, is a (fictional) pseudo-Buddhist hagiography because it is (auto)biographical, and the central characters are portrayed as enlightened, "holy" beings.

Keywords: hagiography; Buddhism; Jack Kerouac; Buddhist novel; *ojoden*

1. Introduction

Born in the *annus mirabilis* of literary modernism and baptized on the feast of St. Joseph (as Jean Louis Kirouac/Keroack), Jack Kerouac (whose full name was, allegedly, Jean-Louis Lebris de Kérouac) started his journey in Lowell, Massachusetts, on 12 March 1922, as the son of the poor (but probably with noble ancestry) French-Canadians Leo and Gabrielle Keroack (née Levesque). Almost seven decades after Jack Kerouac's birth, Colette Bachand Wood, one of his distant relatives, found the old family's castle in Britanny, France: Chateau de Kerouartz and the second half of the family motto, "Tout en l'honneur de Dieu"; the first half of the Kerouacs' motto was, "Aimer, Travailler, et Souffrir." According to some of Jack Kerouac's biographers, this combined motto not only perfectly described his family's fate but also outlined his own life, without, of course, being able to envision the influence his life was about to exert on the world: "taken together, the two inscriptions sum up Kerouac's brief but fascinating life, which was passionate, productive, painful, and pious. But neither begins to suggest the transformative effect that Kerouac had on modern society" (Amburn 1999, p. 7).

Jack Kerouac's life passed through three stages of development: his boyhood, his adulthood, and his later years. He spent his boyhood as the third child of a French-Canadian married couple. As an adult, he was a student at Columbia University (where he played football and met Ginsberg and Burroughs), a sailor, then a marine (diagnosed with schizoid personality and discharged from active duty), a writer (a member of the Beat Generation), a husband (he was married three times), and a traveler (he took long road trips across the US and he visited Burroughs in Mexico). During his later years, he was haunted by spiritual turmoil and dreams of returning to his (alleged) Native American origins and his Roman Catholicism. From a spiritual point of view, these three stages were dominated either by (a shadow of) his family's religious belief (his mother was a fervent Roman Catholic), by a temporary shift (his brief encounter with American pseudo-Buddhism), or marked by a "return" to his origins (both ethically and ethnically, none of these origins being straightforwardly acknowledged and documented).

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On a more personal level, the first stage, his childhood, was consumed under the sign of Roman Catholicism, with the blessings of Saint Joseph, St. Anthony of Padua, or Ste. Thérèse de Lisieux, and partly in the atmosphere of Christmas and that of the Good Friday (especially after the death of his brother, Gerard). His encounter with American pseudo-Buddhism, the second stage, following the penance of the first, was accepted at first as a breakthrough, as the ultimate salvation; though it had seemed profound and absolute, it ended abruptly (in brief, because of his inability to give up alcohol and sex) for reasons related to an ethical conflict between the "localized" version of Buddhism and the precepts of the "original" Pure Land. The last stage, the return to his origins, or the recovery of what was still intact after the two previous experiences in his life, materialized like an ending, like the conclusion of the life of a fighter for personal and creative freedom, free from all material and, especially, spiritual constraints and ready to continue the journey by entering the following and last stage, Nirvana and, hence, eternal life and happiness.

Seen through the blurred lens of some of his friends (such as Carolyn Cassady, for example), Jack Kerouac's life might be interpreted as the life of an exceptional ("holy") being, an all-American Buddha, promoter of a basic, Western version of Buddhism stripped from all its tradition and adapted to the modern world, a supporter of an unnatural, syncretic belief dominated by the principle of "*sola* Dharma", a "protestant" Buddhism, who experienced different stages of development or suffering, who was not a prince, but "The Wizard of the Ozone Park", as Allen Ginsberg dubbed him. As the perfect manifestation of American exceptionalism, he started his own quest for "awakening" when he thought he was ready, and he ended it when he realized that the purpose of his enlightenment was not to escape from the world but to become aware of his own humanity, in other words, to continue his journey on the path of the ordinary and access the extraordinary through deliberate (as opposed to forced) conversion. Kerouac's conversions followed the natural progression of maturity, the result of which was the secular "Nirvana" to which the artist, the creator, aspires. This state applies only to the artist, but his work and legacy live on and "reincarnate" in other artifacts of the material and spiritual world. Nevertheless, Jack Kerouac's influence on the decades to come was impossible to estimate during his short (according to the usual standards) life, but the impact of his life and work has expanded beyond the boundaries of his own earthly existence.

2. Kerouac's Conversion to Buddhism

Jack Kerouac's conversion to American pseudo-Buddhism did never imply the rejection of his Christian background. Moreover, if we were to believe Tom Clark, one of his biographers, he had never left his Christian life behind, but, on the contrary, he kept it close to his soul in all his spiritual journeys through the philosophy of the East: "When, at the age of thirty-four, after much study of Eastern philosophy, he sat down like a Chinese monk in a Marin County hillside garden finally to compose his own Buddhist sutras—'The Scripture of Golden Eternity'—he wound up writing about the Little Way" (Clark 1997, p. 8). Gabrielle Kerouac, his mother, a fervent Catholic, venerated St. Thérèse of Lisieux (a Carmelite nun, born Marie Françoise-Thérèse Martin and canonized in 1925 by Pope Pius XI) and admired her "Little Way", her simplicity, her vocation, namely her love of God and the world (St. Thérèse of Lisieux 1978, p. 312). Of course, her veneration of St. Thérèse was transferred to her children, and Jack found in the saint's "Little Way" valuable material and inspiration for his own "scripture . . ." since his own vocation was love, as well: "'Love is all in all', said Saint Thérèse, choosing love for her vocation and pouring out her happiness, from her garden by the gate, with a gentle smile, pouring roses on the earth . . ." (qtd. in Clark 1997, p. 8).

Carolyn Cassady, Neal Cassady's wife and Jack's friend, saw Jack Kerouac's Christian background in more definitive terms, as downright "indoctrination" combined with a sense of "unworthiness and guilt", which he was never able to repudiate. Moreover, his feelings of inferiority, fed both by his relationship with his family and by his interactions with the outer world, augmented his desire to evade the mundane and find refuge in a more

welcoming world, one that was not totally different from the one he knew and experienced, but located in a liminal space that he could constantly negotiate and improve; he imagined this liminal space as being located—spatially—at the intersection between the West and the East, and—spiritually—between Roman Catholicism and Buddhism: "In both of his religions he chose to revere the bits that offered comfort, beauty, serenity, peace and love, and the acceptance of suffering. The instilled Catholic obsession with 'death' created a growing cancer of fear within him, and he looked at life often as just a shortcut to this horrible ending of all that he so warmly celebrated" (Cassady 1997, pp. xiv–xv).

Carolyn Cassady observed Kerouac's intense struggle with the real world for decades and saw his "conversion" to American pseudo-Buddhism as an attempt to bring order in his life: "Chaos was the rule until Buddhism came along and supplied the answers he sought—or so he believed. The tenets of Buddhism became a balm to his emotional and spiritual aspirations and fit his own psyche, but they related very little to the demands of daily life nor did they provide practical help" (Cassady 1997, p. xvi). He found temporary, topical help in alcohol, marijuana, and Benzedrine, aware that they were incompatible even with his personal understanding of Christianity or Buddhism but were able to produce certain effects in what his writing was concerned (Cassady 1997, p. xviii).

Even though Carolyn Cassady noticed that "the tenets of Buddhism" acted like a cure for Kerouac's spiritual distress, she also admitted to the fact that they were inefficient in adding the order he was craving to the chaos of his everyday life. It was just a textbook example of *malpraxis*: wrong medication combined with a totally inadequate and insufficiently researched treatment plan. The "medication" he used was based on alcohol and drugs (unacceptable in any of the religions he explored), while his pseudo-Buddhist belief (just as his Roman Catholicism was based on his childhood memories, on his nostalgia, rather than on personal choice and commitment) was derived from a shallow understanding of Pure Land Buddhism and was tributary to an all-American understanding of the Eastern religion.

This variant of Buddhism is, according to James Najarian, just one of the several "Western manifestations of Buddhism [which] manipulate, select, remake, and appropriate Buddhist beliefs and practices to accommodate and unconsciously incorporate Western thinking" (Najarian 2016, p. 310). The "Western thinking" which combined with Buddhist beliefs to give birth to this variant of this all-American, pseudo-Buddhism is identified by David McMahan with "the dominant discourses of Western modernity, specially those rooted in Enlightenment rationalism, Romanticism, and Protestant Christianity" (Najarian 2016, p. 310). In Jack Kerouac's case, a few Roman Catholic ingredients are also added to the melting pot, such as the Christian virtue of *agape* (charity) he incorporates into the more complex concept of *karuna* (compassion) (see Kerouac 1995, p. 446). Eighteenth-century Protestant theologians, such as Thomas Astley, found the striking similarities between the "*Romanish* Religion" and "*Fo*'s Religion" guilty of the former's failure in the East (see Lopez 2018, pp. 29–30); obviously, these similarities may be responsible for the latter's success in the West.

This variant of Buddhism, successful in the West, is modernist, intertwined with Romanticism, not a religion, but a "spirituality", focused on values that match the aspirations of Western modernist society (such as freedom of thought, democracy, creativity, etc.) and, ultimately, deprived of all Eastern traditions and practices which might have made it less consumer-oriented and thus less marketable. In brief, this pseudo-Buddhism was a basic, distilled form of Buddhism, "freed" from all the constraints of its tradition and practices and thus acceptable for the Western, modern society: "Probably in its most distasteful form, it involves Europeans or European-Americans 'purifying' Buddhism of its 'Asian' traditions, a movement that has its roots in the brief nineteenth-century vogue for emphasizing the Buddha's 'Aryan' heritage. At its most extreme, of course, Buddhist modernism reduces Buddhism to a form of self-help or a mere style of life" (Najarian 2016, p. 311).

The new modernist forms of Buddhism, this "Neo-Buddhist modernism", or "Neo-Buddhism", to use Faure's terminology, were also used by Asian Buddhist teachers as a political weapon against Western colonialism. James Najarian's analysis shows how, for example, Zen Buddhism was prepared for export to America by authors such as Soen Shaku and Daisetz Teitaro Suzuki, the latter even employing a strategy meant to transform it into a universal spirituality, which supported Japanese nationalism and Japanese cultural hegemony (see Najarian 2016, p. 312). Twentieth-century Western Buddhism sold to the Americans was a paradoxical, both universal and unique, construct, a hybrid organism born of ("old") Buddhist traditions and ("new") Western ideas, namely an "idealized and purely 'spiritual' form of Buddhism", a "Neo-Buddhism", which "has tended to become a sort of impersonal flavorless and odorless spirituality, a kind of Buddhism à la carte" (Faure 2009, p. 139).

In his essay on "The Roots of Buddhist Romanticism", Ṭhānissaro Bhikkhu (Geoffrey DeGraff, an American Buddhist monk of the Kammatthana Tradition) identifies the real source of the Westerners' interest in Buddhism, which is their own tradition of German Romanticism, re-interpreted within the framework of the new, modern world. To a certain extent, this interest is legit, for "Romanticism and the Dharma view spiritual life in a similar light. Both regard religion as a product of human activity rather than divine intervention. Both regard the essence of religion as experiential and pragmatic; and its role as therapeutic, aimed at curing the diseases of the human mind" (Ṭhānissaro 2006).

However, a more focused examination of the two, on three coordinates: "the nature of religious experience", "the basic spiritual illness", and "the successful spiritual cure", will expose Western "Buddhist Romanticism", defined by Ṭhānissaro as "the Dharma seen through the Romantic gate", as a blurred, confusing, image of true Buddhism, one which acts like a "door shut in their faces", rather than a gate to the Dharma. Ṭhānissaro observes that since the very existence of "Buddhist Romanticism" in American society is not jeopardized, the next necessary step would be for researchers to shed more light on those aspects of "Buddhist Romanticism" that have not been yet sufficiently investigated. If finding all the answers at once seems rather impractical today, after so many years of silence on crucial topics, a good starting point in this respect would be, at least, to start asking relevant questions.

3. *The Dharma Bums*: A (Fictional) Pseudo-Buddhist Hagiography

Some of those relevant questions may be asked in relation to the literary productions of the Beat Generation, especially those of Jack Kerouac, usually interpreted as examples of Buddhist influence on twentieth-century American literature. As shown above, at its best, the Buddhism that was imported into the West, in North America, was nothing else but its re-interpreted, updated, and localized version, which focuses on the individual, leaving aside what it cannot adapt to the American society (Najarian 2016, p. 313). This perspective integrates perfectly with the ideas of American exceptionalism, with the ambitions of American individualism, and with the quest for a recognizable, all-American spirituality. Unfortunately, what is lost in this process of adaptation, as James Najarian observes, is the right of Buddhism to remain "recognizable" even in its Western version.

Jack Kerouac wrote *The Dharma Bums* in 1957 (the year when his *On the Road* was eventually published after having been rejected several times) and published it in 1958 when his brief but intense encounter with the form of spirituality that can be safely labeled "pseudo-Buddhism" was almost over. The novel follows the path of a sacred text recounting significant, "inspired" events of the past, which prove influential in the present by bridging the gap between the mundane and the extramundane. *The Dharma Bums*, usually referred to as an autobiographical novel, reads like a pseudo-(Christian)-Buddhist hagiography itself or, in other words, an account of the lives of two heretic (both) Christian desert fathers and pseudo-Buddhist monks embarked on journeys of becoming in the wilderness bordering a North American metropolis, climbing peaks in their struggle to reach the heights of personal enlightenment. Soon after its publication, Jack Kerouac published *Visions of Gerard*

in 1963 (which he had written back in 1956) in loving memory of his "better" brother as an attempt to preserve the spiritual connection with his dead doppelganger. Taken together, *The Dharma Bums* and *Visions of Gerard* are "free-form acts of modern hagiography and prayer" (Douglas 2018, pp. xv–xvi).

The term "hagiography" used with reference to a Buddhist context might sound inappropriate, but considering the etymology of the word (derived from the Ancient Greek ἅγιος, holy, and γραφία, writing) it describes, at least partly, the result of Jack Kerouac's "inspired", "spontaneous" writing. It even meets the two requirements set by Christoph Kleine for a work to be considered a "hagiography"; first, it must be "at least technically or superficially somehow biographical [in its] literary form", and second, "regarding its contents, the protagonist of the life of the account is conceived as a saint or holy person" (Kleine 1998, pp. 325–26).

Nevertheless, as Jinhua Chen argues in his *Philosopher, Practitioner, Politician: The Many Lives of Fazang (643–712)*, discussing the life of Fazang, "one of the greatest Buddhist metaphysicians in medieval Asia", and "a scholastic monk who composed a variety of technical and philosophical texts" (Chen 2007, p. 1), the biographical data in such a writing is not to be considered or used as historically accurate and reliable information, and that a clear-cut distinction must be made between biographical and hagiographical information in a "hagio-biography" (Chen 2007, p. 339).

This apparently simplistic model contains a set of variables which, in a strictly religious context, acquire a relevance that is not fully compatible with a fictional, literary model such as Jack Kerouac's novel, even if it is read as a pseudo-Buddhist narrative or, to particularize Professor Chen's term, a fictional "hagio-biography". The first variable is the biographical feature, which requires reliable information related to the birth, life, and death of the protagonist. In the case of *The Dharma Bums*, such data are only partially relevant since the characters, though based on real persons, are essentially fictional, and thus, any resemblance between them is of secondary importance in the analysis.

The other variable is the "sanctity" of the protagonist, which in both Christianity and Buddhism is a rather "subjective" feature related more to how a person is perceived by one religious group or the other than to the "objective" dimension of that person's life. If in Christianity, saints are canonized following the recognition of their extraordinary lives and deeds (which include miracles, martyrdom, virtue, etc.), the

> original prototype of the Mahayana Buddhist saint is the Bodhisattva, a being that was, however, from an early stage on elevated to a level far beyond ordinary human beings. [. . .] The existence of the Bodhisattvas and their cults makes a cult of lower, more human saints unnecessary. [. . .] Christianity did away with all the former deities or divine beings thus leaving a gap which had to be filled by the saints who had to be human enough not to question the monotheistic nature of the Christian religion. (Kleine 1998, p. 331)

Kleine's argument that the existence of the Bodhisattvas renders that of "more humane" saints irrelevant and that Christian saints occupy the void left by the disappearance of other deities is based on his analysis of Buddhist hagiographic literature as a genre and its subgenre, *ojoden*, or "accounts of those born in the Pure Land" (Stone 2007, p. 135). Kleine starts from the *jataka* (tales of the good deeds of the Buddha in his previous lives) and the *apadana* or the *avadana* (tales in verse about the deeds of Buddhist monks and nuns) and describes the evolution of the genre in the East Asian tradition, emphasizing that, in China, Korea, or Japan, this type of narrative would "deal with only one incarnation of the protagonist", and that the "working of moral causality manifests itself in the present life or immediately after death" (Kleine 1998, pp. 327–28). Most such accounts subscribe to a certain stylistic and formal pattern (they contain information about the background, the birthplace, and death of the protagonist, about his/her character, about his/her miracles, prophecies, visions, etc.), which makes it easier for them to be classified as "hagiographies", than to define their protagonists as saints (Kleine 1998, p. 330).

Therefore, Kerouac's *The Dharma Bums* can be read like an American pseudo-Buddhist *ojoden*, a "hagio-biography", a pseudo-Buddhist hagiography, or in more simple, non-technical terms, a hagiography of a few (aspiring, or pseudo-) Buddhist "monks" struggling to preserve their "sanctity" in and around the metropolis. If one of the "monks", Japhy Ryder (Gary Snyder), looks more like an Eastern sage practicing his variant of Buddhism in America, Ray Smith (the narrator and Kerouac's alter ego) is an American Boddhisatva, a Buddha, or "St. Raymond of the Dogs". Jack Kerouac started his work of non-fiction titled *Some of the Dharma*, which contains a vast array of pieces ranging from reading notes, meditations, prayers, letters, and stories to poems and haikus in December 1953. He finished it in the spring of 1956 (on 15 March, to be more precise), the year before he wrote *The Dharma Bums* (published in 1958), but it was published only posthumously in 1997.

Some of the Dharma, Kerouac's reading notes on Buddhism, contains a list of sources that he consulted over time and which somehow seem to explain his definition of "religions": "Religions appear to be schismatic technical haranguish corruptions of some original pure Vision. . ." (Theado 2009, pp. 152–53). In search of this capitalized "pure Vision", according to his own notes, he had read nine books, such as *Texts from the Buddhist Canon Known as Dhammapada* (1878), *Life of Buddha, or Buddha Charita* by Asvaghosha (translated by Samuel Beal), *The Gospel of Buddha* (1894) by Paul Carus, *Buddhism in Translations* (1896) by Henry Clarke Warren, or *The Buddhist Bible* (1938) by Dwight Goddard. He also listed the sources in his 1954 letter to Allen Ginsberg, whom he instructed to start with *Life of Buddha* by Asvaghosha and continue with Surangama Sutra in *The Buddhist Bible* (Kerouac 1995, pp. 415–16). The texts in his bibliography are neither exclusively Buddhist (as James Najarian observes) nor an exhaustive list of sources for research into Buddhism, but they are obviously the starting point of the spread of Buddhism in American literature via the agency of the Beats. Of all the members of the Beat Generation, Jack Kerouac played the most prominent role in the promotion of American Buddhism.

The Dharma Bums, an American pseudo-*ojoden*, was written in less than a month by a reincarnation of Buddha in America, aware of his role in the world: "I am Buddha come back in the form of Shakespeare for the sake of poor Jesus Christ and Nietzsche. . . I'll become an Intuitional farmer. . ." (Kerouac 1997, p. 41). The American bard wrote *The Dharma Bums* "with the swiftness of *On the Road*, *Tristessa* and *The Subterraneans*" and "in the way that *On the Road* itself was composed, with a specific reader in mind. [. . .] *The Dharma Bums* is written with an air of patient explanation, as though addressed to a book editor" (Gifford and Lee 2012, pp. 240–41). If we were to believe Gifford and Lee, *The Dharma Bums* is indeed addressed to someone who might be interested in reading it, such as, for example, a book editor, for it emerged from Kerouac's superficial study of Buddhism, it was derived from his notes gathered in *Some of the Dharma* and in line with his own, sometimes obviously biased, interpretation of ancient Buddhism. Its first and most devoted reader was the American writer, literary critic, social historian, and Kerouac's editor, Malcolm Cowley, who, according to Kerouac's own testimony in the interview he granted to Ted Berrigan, "made endless revisions and inserted thousands of needless commas" (Berrigan 1968). This book, according to John Clellon Holmes, the author of the first Beat novel, *Go* (1952), and Kerouac's friend, "wasn't impelled by the stuff that made the good books good. It was impelled by an understanding that he had, a perception that he had and experiences that he'd had, and it's valuable and it's fine. But the prose is lax" (qtd. in Gifford and Lee 2012, p. 241).

The "lax", "spontaneous" prose flows like a *vitae sanctorum*, springing from a special, personal understanding of an adaptation of ancient Buddhism to the realities of Kerouac's contemporary world, a direct perception of its effects on humanity and a first-hand experience of its teachings in the real-life interaction with or separation from the world, which, just like a hagiography, has inspired generations of "Dharma bums". The "spontaneity" of Kerouac's prose is based on his epiphanies and visions, constantly recurring and generating new transcendental experiences, which keep the author alive and his text going. According to Erik Mortenson, "[f]or Beat Generation writers the visionary state reveals the truth of

the world—it is a peek behind the curtain of reality that provides an authentic glimpse of the universe", but this moment is transient and almost impossible to materialize in useful experience. Thus, writers like Jack Kerouac and Allen Ginsberg "both turn to the Buddhist conception of a 'stillpoint' lying beyond rigid ego consciousness for an answer. Although not always successful, Kerouac's and Ginsberg's deployment of the Buddhist stillpoint allows them to turn seemingly isolated visionary experiences into a means of connecting past, present, and future into a meaningful whole". Mortenson, who coined the term "stillpoint", admits that he derived it from Robert Aitken's and Shunryu Suzuki's "breath moment", or "moment of attention", cf. the Sino-Japanese term *sesshin*, and the Japanese term *soshin* (Mortenson 2009, p. 123).

Mortenson interprets the "breath moment" as a "stillpoint" and places it in opposition to "the eruptive visionary state" in an attempt to provide a useful tool for a better understanding of the work of Beat writers Jack Kerouac and Allen Ginsberg while admitting that this does not imply they manifest the same tendencies throughout their artistic careers: "they evidence two opposite tendencies—Kerouac continually seeks new visions while Ginsberg refers back to his original visionary experience. While both writers discovered Buddhism, their development in this area followed separate paths as well. Kerouac typically employs Buddhism as a means of avoidance, while Ginsberg, through an increasing focus on his body, utilizes the Buddhist stillpoint to harness his visionary experience" (Mortenson 2009, pp. 124–25). Simply put, they follow two different career paths, which also implies two different approaches to life: writing and spirituality or spiritual experience.

At least in Kerouac's case, and as a tool he uses in his constant search for new spiritual, visionary experiences, this type of breath moment is similar to the freeze-frame technique used extensively as a cliffhanger in 1960s cinema and 20th-century television (mainly in soap operas) as a generator of suspense, as a link to the future scene or episode. Peter Coates describes it as follows: "As a variety of 'false ending', freeze-frames proliferated in the 1960s, when social changes and the collapse of the studios' hegemony, among other things, shook traditional narrative schemata and their resolutions" (Coates 2021, p. 44). The main functionality of this "stillpoint" is to connect or to fuse the past, present, and future, to facilitate "a closer connection between the self and the world" (Mortenson 2009, p. 128) and thus ensure the flow.

Even though his (pseudo-)Buddhist practice was far from that of a great Zen Buddhist master, Kerouac used a similar—both, surprisingly, Buddhist and cinematic—technique in 1951 when he wrote his *On the Road* (published in 1957): instead of typing his novel on separate sheets of paper, he used a continuous scroll which helped him maintain the flow unbroken during the writing process (which, allegedly, took only three weeks). In such a process, every "break" would be just a "stillpoint" after which his recurrent epiphanies would continue to produce his "spontaneous prose" and build his text as a continuum.

This continuum, supported by his interest in the world combined with the struggle to separate himself (and his self) from the material mundane, reached a moment of balance, the stillpoint in his career due to his interest and total, albeit temporary and superficial, immersion into Buddhism. According to Jones, "Kerouac [. . .] *passed through* Buddhism in 1955 and 1956, and during these years, the movement of his writing, like a satellite in orbit, achieved equilibrium" (Jones 1992, p. 106). This stellar, imponderable moment in his career was the one that produced *The Dharma Bums*, Kerouac's most significant pseudo-Buddhist narrative. He found in Mahayana Buddhism "a fatalism that corresponded to his own Celtic nostalgia, with the important difference that the inevitable extinction of the ego, instead of an event to be feared, became the object and goal of his study and meditation—and of his writing" (Jones 1992, p. 107). The deficiency in Kerouac's Buddhist practice was attributable to the absence of a teacher of Zen, classical Buddhism, one able to teach him (the importance of) meditation, namely "how to actually take in his body the notion of emptiness or examine it as a process of mind, through the practice of classical meditation as handed down in immemorial 'ear-whispered' tradition" (Allen Ginsberg qtd. in Kerouac et al. 2017, p. 54).

However, if his spiritual (Buddhist or Christian) practice was always less than perfect, to say the least, and never final, though, paradoxically, total, Kerouac's spiritual literary practice was always one that tended to perfection or to perfecting the human being. In Christian terms, this struggle to achieve perfection is a path to deification, with its practical, formal counterpart, sanctification, while in Buddhism, it is generally known as enlightenment. In other words, the (albeit pseudo) hagiographical approach to his characters is due to his belief that the ultimate goal of existence is the cancellation of the self and that there is little or no perceptible difference between writing and real life. This is probably why his characters are all "deified", "sanctified", "enlightened", and heightened versions of real-life characters of a certain condition in the world, namely people who are capable of such spiritual development (writers, for example). Following Erik Mortenson's (mild) call for a more critical approach to the Beats and extending the area of research beyond their actual work (Mortenson 2009, p. 125), reading *The Dharma Bums* as a *roman à clef*, as a pseudo-bio-hagiography, in which the key is not necessarily the connection between fact and fiction but rather the tool which helps triangulate the spirituality of a whole generation, effects a process that would facilitate interdisciplinary research, thus expanding Beat studies beyond the immediate realm of the Beats themselves.

Since it is not at all easy to be "a saint in the city", the characters in *The Dharma Bums* flee urban life with the explicit intent to climb a mountain, imitating and/or perfecting the aspirations of their real-life counterparts, doppelgangers, i.e., the Beats, who "taken together have produced one of the most profound bodies of spirituality oriented literature since the American Renaissance—with Kerouac playing 'Emerson' to Ginsberg's 'Whitman' and Snyder's 'Thoreau'" (Inchausti 2017, p. 2). The literature they wrote was never just literature but more like an exalted form of spiritual experience, created as an alternative to life in postwar America and a spirituality outside the artificial form of organized Western religion: "[. . .]for the Beats, Buddhism became the new realism, poetry a tool for enhanced perception, science a critique of ideology, and Spengler's meta history their founding metaphysic. Literature was always to be something *more than literature*, something more akin to scripture. Kerouac once even described it as the Vedic yoga of the West, having more in common with the sacrament of confession than the rhetoric of Aristotle" (Inchausti 2017, pp. 4–5).

Therefore, *The Dharma Bums* is itself more than just a fictional autobiography, but rather a fictional *ojoden* of the Beats, in which the characters (just like their real-life doppelgangers) are born in an imagined Pure Land and inhabit the earth for just a limited period of time until they reach the final stage of enlightenment and enter Nirvana. Kerouac's entire work should be read as one single book, comprising one single set of characters, engaged in one single memory flow recorded "on the run"; the characters are always the same, and the volumes they populate are all chapters of one single piece, *The Duluoz Legend*. It is only for publishing purposes that Kerouac (and his early publishers) decided to give these chapters distinct titles and these characters different names in each of the works, as he declares in an explanatory note introducing his *Big Sur* (written in 1961 and published in 1962):

> *My work comprises one vast book like Proust's except that mu remembrances are written on the run instead of afterwards in a sick bed. Because of the objections of my early publishers I was not allowed to use the same personae names in each work.* On the Road, The Subterraneans, The Dharma Bums, Doctor Sax, Maggie Cassidy, Tristessa, Desolation Angels, Visions of Cody *and the others including this book* Big Sur *are just chapters in the whole work which I call* The Duluoz Legend. *In my old age I intend to collect all my work and re-insert my pantheon of uniform names, leave the long shelf full of books there, and die happy. The whole thing forms one enormous comedy, seen through the eyes of poor Ti Jean (me), otherwise known as Jack Duluoz, the world of raging action and folly and also of gentle sweetness seen through the keyhole of his eye.* (Kerouac 1992, p. iii)

Ti Jean, also known as Jack Duluoz, a member of the pantheon of characters imagined by one Jack Kerouac, acts like Ray Smith in *The Dharma Bums*, a book he wrote using the

same technique he used when he wrote *On the Road*, typing it on a paper roll like a sequel to *On the Road* and using the same reincarnated central characters. *The Dharma Bums* is

> a book about Gary Snyder and 'the rucksack revolution'; the events it describes occurred six years after the events at the end of *On the Road*. It is a 'sequel' because the central characters from *On the Road* (those based on Jack Kerouac, Neal Cassady, and Allen Ginsberg) reappear along with Kerouac's new hero, Gary Snyder named Japhy Ryder in this book. Biographically, the book is a sequel because it recounts Kerouac's own adventures; the author maintains the first-person point of view, this time as Ray Smith, a name left over from an early, unfinished version of *On the Road*. (Theado 2009, pp. 151–52)

The other characters are inspired by Beats Jack Kerouac knew well, such as Alvah Goldbook (based on Allen Ginsberg), Cody Pomeray (based on Neal Cassady), or George (based on Peter Orlovsky), and all of them appear to be engaged in their own story of becoming. However, only two of them seem to fit the profile of spiritual beings whose lives are worthy of being included in Kerouac's pseudo-*ojoden*. These characters are Japhy Ryder and his disciple Ray Smith. Another element that would also help qualify *The Dharma Bums* as a pseudo-*ojoden* is the style and the events which compose the plot. Matt Theado is very explicit in this respect when he refers to the novel as a worthy sequel to *On the Road*: "It contained no experimental prose, and the story unfolded in linear time with identifiable characters and set situations. [. . .] Like *On the Road*, *The Dharma Bums* was written rapidly, yet in a conventional style. [. . .] One big difference between the books is Kerouac's incorporation of Buddhism. As in his other Buddhist works, Christianity combines with Buddhism to produce the distinctive Kerouac religious flavor" (Theado 2009, pp. 152–53).

This "combination" could be interpreted as either religious syncretism or as heresy if the context would be something else but a fictional world imbued with a religious feeling, indeed in a very particular Kerouac style. The result is indeed a fictional *vitae sanctorum* or *ojoden* portraying several "saints", "bodhisattvas", "desert fathers", "itinerant (beggar) monks", or "bhikkhus", who are all citizens of the modern world, irrespective of where they were born or where they live. In *The Dharma Bums*, "[w]hat matters are latitudes and landmasses, not the countries that claim and dispute them. Citizenship here is potentially global; Dean Moriarty could only be American but Japhy appears in Ray's visions as a mischievous Chinese sage" (Douglas 2018, p. xv).

Just like Dean Moriarty, Ray Smith can only be an American "bhikku" on his way to enlightenment, to a heroic existence in Paradise. He quotes from the Diamond Sutra, and he is determined to practice charity without attachment and his "religious devotions almost to perfection." Just like his creator, Jack Kerouac, Ray admits that this was just a transient stage in his development and that he would strip his faith of all "lip service" and remain "neutral" (Kerouac 2018, p. 4). In other words, his pseudo-Buddhism depends exclusively on its foundational values and gradually transforms into a lifestyle bound to produce the same effects as its original version.

Ray's vision is based on Japhy Ryder's own interpretation of his identity, as a soul reincarnated in an Oregon kid as a result of his faults in a previous life and with a clear purpose to improve his karma through constant effort, meditation, and fasting:

> You know when I was a little kid in Oregon I didn't feel that I was an American at all, with all that suburban ideal and sex repression and general dreary newspaper gray censorship of all our real human values but and when I discovered Buddhism and all I suddenly felt that I had lived in a previous lifetime innumerable ages ago and now because of faults and sins in that lifetime I was being degraded to a more grievous domain of existence and my karma was to be born in America where nobody has any fun or believes in anything, especially freedom. That's why I was always sympathetic to freedom movements, too, like anarchism in the Northwest, the old-time heroes of Everett Massacre and all. . . (Kerouac 2018, p. 26)

When Japhy leaves, his presence still lingers "in the dim red light", and Alvah describes him as an extraordinary, exceptional American hero and bhikkhu: "he's the big hero of the West Coast, do you realize I've been out here for two years now and hadn't met anybody worth knowing really or anybody with any truly illuminated intelligence and was giving up hope for the West Coast? Besides all the background he has, in Oriental scholarship, Pound, taking peyote and seeing visions, his mountain climbing and bhikkuing, wow, Japhy Ryder is a great new hero of American culture" (Kerouac 2018, p. 26). This adds to the mythical, saintlike aura of Japhy Ryder and turns him into Ray Smith's model and Zen master, into one of the great figures of "the Zen lunatics of ancient Japan and China *and* contemporary California, where Japhy pursues free love, scholarship, poetry, and mountaineering as if they were one and the same thing" (Sørensen 2015, p. 116). Japhy, the protagonist of Kerouac's novel, is eventually revealed as the enlightened being who is able to teach his disciple how to achieve absolute knowledge. Ray, his disciple, witnesses the revelation of the being of his visions, the subject of a magic epiphany: "I saw the unimaginable little Chinese bum standing there, in the fog, with that expressionless humor on his steamed face. It wasn't the real-life Japhy of rucksacks and Buddhism studies and big mad parties at Corte Madera, it was the realer-than-life Japhy of my dreams" (Kerouac 2018, pp. 204–5).

This Japhy of Ray's dreams is the "number one" Dharma bum, the Buddha who acknowledges the existence of and holiness of other enlightened beings. If Japhy is a Buddha, then Ray is a Bodhisattva: "'Oh I always meet my Bodhisattvas in the street!' he yelled, and ordered beers" (Kerouac 2018, p. 9). Both belong to the Western order and are confined to an American Diamond Triangle between New York, Mexico City, and San Francisco. They are both urban figures: Bodhisattva walks in the street, and Buddha orders beers in a bar.

Even though Ray agrees that Japhy is an authority in matters of Buddhism (just like Gary Snyder himself), who was not interested in traditional Buddhism, but in "the Zen intellectual artistic Buddhism he loved", who knew everything about most traditions, and who was thus entitled to become the leader of the group of Dharma bums, he rejects his belief: "I warned him at once I didn't give a goddamn about the mythology and all the names and national flavors of Buddhism, but was just interested in the first of Sakyamuni's four noble truths, *All life is suffering*. And to an extent interested in the third, *The suppression of suffering can be achieved*, which I didn't quite believe was possible then" (Kerouac 2018, pp. 10, 97). Ray, the great virtuous "Bodhisattva", the "great wise being", the "great wise angel" prefers a blended faith, one in which all local flavors vanish to make room for the Western variant of Buddhism, which is supposed to coexist in his life—without the influence of any mythology (allusion to Gary Snyder's interest in Native American mythology)—with the Roman Catholic background.

East meets West in Ray's belief, but since his Roman Catholicism was not too profound either, he is determined to accept only the basic ideas of ancient Buddhism, namely two of the four noble truths (*All life is suffering* and, partly, *The suppression of suffering can be achieved*). Nevertheless, even though he has not read much (just like Kerouac himself), he describes his belief in very simple, straightforward terms: "'I'm not a Zen Buddhist, I'm a serious Buddhist, I'm an old-fashioned dreamy Hinayana coward of later Mahayanism', and so forth into the night, my contention being that Zen Buddhism didn't concentrate on kindness so much as on confusing the intellect to make it perceive the illusion of all sources of things" (Kerouac 2018, p. 11). If Ray is a "serious Buddhist", Kerouac himself declares himself as a promoter of his own variant of "Pure Essence Buddhism", which, according to Najarian is nothing else "but a loose Buddhist modernism" (Najarian 2016, p. 315).

When Ray confronts Japhy on matters of Buddhist belief or practice, he uses references to Pure Land Buddhism as protection to justify his inability to understand certain theoretical principles or to learn and practice meditation, for example. Some of Ray's false claims spring from his limited knowledge of Buddhist texts and from his hope that his pseudo-Buddhism might, eventually, become a legitimate, local variant of Buddhism, promoted by a Western holy Bodhisattva: "I went over to an old cook in the doorway of the kitchen and

asked him 'Why did Bodhidharma come from the West?'" (Kerouac 2018, p. 13). The only "perfect" and possible (Zen) answer that Jack Kerouac's bibliography listed in his *Some of the Dharma* would be able to provide to such a question is similar to the one provided by the cook in the second chapter of *Dharma Bums*: "I don't care." Transposing the difficult Zen koan (that Kerouac asked D.T. Suzuki when they met without getting any reaction) and the cook's answer into twentieth-century America, we understand that the East does not care about any new, perverted pseudo-Buddhist ideas coming from the West, for, the Dharma is already there (just like in the case of the Patriarch's journey from India to China).

Ray is an avid reader of Buddhist texts which he reads on a daily basis (he mentions the Lankavatara Sutra, or the "Sutra of the Appearance of the Good Doctrine in Lanka" and the Diamond Sutra), while Japhy impersonates one of the promoters of Buddhist ideas into the West, whose works he collects along with works of poetry he translates into English: "He had a slew of orange crates all filled with beautiful scholarly books, some of them in Oriental languages, all the great sutras, comments on sutras, the complete works of D. T. Suzuki and a fine quadruple-volume edition of Japanese haikus. He also had an immense collection of valuable general poetry" (Kerouac 2018, p. 15).

Kerouac met Daisetz Teitaro Suzuki, "Zen's 'missionary' to the West" and "a general figurehead for the Zen Buddhist movement in the United States and Europe", and helped build his image in America, based on "reader's imagination" and, obviously of that of the authors of fiction who referred to him in their work. People were not fascinated by his "lucid introduction to Buddhism and Japanese culture", but by Suzuki as a representative of the "enigmatic" East, "as a symbol of stylized religion" (Iwamura 2011, pp. 26–27, 38), as a Buddhist sage traveling to America to teach Zen. Kerouac's fascination for D.T. Suzuki matches Ray's fascination for Japhy, whom he sees as a promoter of Eastern wisdom in the West. The scene in the third chapter in which Ray and Japhy discuss the latter's translation from Han Shan's "Cold Mountain" is particularly interesting from this point of view. Japhy's free translation of the poems sounds strange and complicated: "'Course that's my own translation into English, you see there are five signs for each line and I have to put in Western prepositions and articles and such'" (Kerouac 2018, p. 17). Japhy does not simply translate poetry from Chinese into English but also (Eastern) Buddhism into the American culture, throwing in all the small but significant ingredients that make its syntax acceptable in the West. The Western world is too complex and cannot understand and appropriate the simple values of Buddhism as such.

Ray rejects not only Japhy's ideas about his translation of Chinese poetry into English but also his ideas about American society, his "vision of a great rucksack revolution." His attitude is that of a Boddhisatva determined to "go off somewhere and find perfect solitude and look into the perfect emptiness of my mind and be completely neutral from any and all ideas. I intended to pray, too, as my only activity, pray for all living creatures; I saw it was the only decent activity left in the world. To be in some river bottom somewhere, or in a desert, or in mountains, or in some hut in Mexico or shack in Adirondack, and rest and be kind, and do nothing else, practice what the Chinese call 'do-nothing'" (Kerouac 2018, p. 88). Ray neither sees any problem with living like a Christian desert father practicing compassion for all beings like a true Buddhist, nor does he care too much about the differences between Christianity and Buddhism (Kerouac 2018, pp. 96–97). To him, Heaven and Nirvana, Jesus and Buddha, even West and East are one and the same thing: "'I [. . .] pray under the stars for the Lord to bring me to Buddhahood after my Buddhawork is done, amen.' And as it was Christmas, I added 'Lord bless you all and merry tender Christmas on all your rooftops and I hope angels squat there the night of the big rich real Star, amen.' [. . .] 'Everything is possible. I am God, I am Buddha, I am imperfect Ray Smith, all at the same time, I am empty space, I am all things'" (Kerouac 2018, p. 104).

Saint Raymond of the Dogs is unable to keep the religion he was born into, as his mother and sister complain in chapter 21, but, outside his alcohol abuse episodes, practices meditation, miraculously heals himself twice of thrombophlebitis and his mother's coughing after a vision he had in a trance, proving that everything is possible "in magic

America", has a revelation on the mountaintop and then returns to the mundane world (Kerouac 2018, pp. 100, 125, 205). Ray knows he is an exceptional being: "It means I've become a Buddha", "I really thought myself a kind of crazy saint" (Kerouac 2018, pp. 123, 157), and he is consecrated by the congregation of Dharma bums at a party through the voice of Rheinhold Cacoethes (Kenneth Rexroth), whose ironical statement supports his claims to sainthood: Cacoethes "'Well I guess he's a Bodhisattva in its frightful aspect, 'ts about all I can say.' (Aside, sneering: 'He's too drrronk all the time.')" (Kerouac 2018, p. 163).

Moreover, this "crazy saint", always intoxicated just like all the "crazy Japanese saints" at a Buddhist lecture (i.e., the Japanese scholars promoting Buddhism in Americans), enjoys nature's protection while practicing meditation: "One night I was meditating in such perfect stillness that two mosquitoes came and sat on each of my cheekbones and stayed there a long time without biting and then went away without biting" (Kerouac 2018, p. 158). His prayer is listened to and produces cosmic effects: "One night in a meditation vision Avalokitesvara the Hearer and Answerer of Prayer said to me 'You are empowered to remind people that they are utterly free' so I laid my hand on myself to remind myself first and then felt gay, yelled 'Ta', opened my eyes, and a shooting star shot" (Kerouac 2018, p. 200), making him a member of the community of saints in Heaven/Nirvana.

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Article

A Humane Kings Convocation Held in the Zhongxing Palace: A New Study of the P. 3808 *Sutra Sermon*

Changchun Pei [1,*] and Wei Li [2,*]

[1] School of History and Cultre, Shandong Normal University, Jinan 250358, China
[2] School of Politics and Public Administration, Soochow University, Suzhou 215031, China
* Correspondence: peichangchun325@foxmail.com (C.P.); kongbai0412@yahoo.co.jp (W.L.)

Abstract: P. 3808 records a popular sermons ceremony, which was a Buddhist folk preaching event held in the Zhongxing Palace to celebrate the birthday of Emperor Mingzong of Later Tang. Through the analysis of this text, it is possible to conduct a more comprehensive study of Buddhist popular sermons that formed and gradually developed during the mid-Tang Dynasty. Additionally, this analysis can provide a more systematic understanding of the Humane Kings Convocations (*Renwang hui* 仁王會), which have had a significant impact on East Asia since the late Southern Dynasty.

Keywords: the Humane Kings Convocations; the *Sutra Sermon*; popular sermons; Emperor Mingzong of Later Tang

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P. 3808, the scriptures preached on the Holy Emperor's Birthday at the Zhongxing Palace in the fourth year of the Changxing era (933 AD) (Changxing sinian (933 nian) Zhongxing dian Yingsheng jie jiangjing wen 長興四年 (933 年) 中興殿應聖節講經文, referred to as the "*Sutra Sermon*"), documents a significant Buddhist popular sermons ceremony that was held in the Zhongxing Palace to commemorate the birthday of Emperor Mingzong of Later Tang 後唐明宗 (867–933, reigned 926–933). This ceremony was particularly noteworthy for two reasons. Firstly, the performance style adopted for the ceremony was the popular sermon (sujiang 俗講), which was a type of activity in which Buddhist monks used storytelling and songs to spread the teachings of Buddhism to laypeople, based on the content of Buddhist scriptures. This activity has had a great influence on the development of Chinese literature, folk art, and other areas. Therefore, this document is an important piece of material that can be used to help us understand the popular sermons. Secondly, the Buddhist scripture being preached in this ceremony is the Scripture for Humane Kings (Renwang jing 仁王經), which is a highly influential Buddhist scripture in the history of East Asian Buddhism. The Humane Kings Convocations (Renwang hui 仁王會) formed based on this sutra are also a powerful Buddhist ritual held across several East Asian countries. Therefore, the *Sutra Sermon* deserves our attention, regardless of whether it is being studied in the tradition of the Buddhist popular sermons or the tradition of the Humane Kings Convocations.

As early as 1934, Xiang Da 向達 (Xiang 1934, pp. 119–32; 2001, pp. 310–21) was the first scholar to reveal the relationship between the *Sutra Sermon* and popular sermons. He also made a record of the *Sutra Sermon*, which was later included in the widely circulated *Dunhuang Bianwen Collections* (*Dunhuang bianwen ji* 敦煌變文集, Wang 1957, pp. 411–25), arousing the attention of more scholars. Shaoliang Zhou (1984, p. 66) and others (Pan 1983, pp. 37–56; Yang 1989, pp. 35–37) revised the transcript, while Yang (1990, pp. 93–101) and others (Fukui 1984, p. 368; Pan 1989, pp. 1–7; Cheng and Xu 2015, pp. 61–6) systematically sorted out various elements involved in the manuscript from historical and literary perspectives, providing a very thorough historical background for our understanding of this sermon. However, previous studies of this sermon have not yet explored the historical scene of the Humane Kings Convocation 仁王會 from the perspective of ritual and performance, either starting from historical evidence or focusing on the style of the *Sutra*

Sermon. This article attempts to examine this sermon from the perspective of ritual and performance.

1. The Scripture for Humane Kings in the *Sutra Sermon*

The *Sutra Sermon* can be roughly divided into three parts: the first part explains the preface section of the *Scripture for Humane Kings*, but only discusses the scripture title and first sentence of the scripture: "Thus I have heard. Once the Buddha was residing on Vulture Peak in the city of Rājagṛha together with a great assembly of bhikṣus, eighteen-hundred in all" (如是我聞, 一時佛住王舍城鷲峰山中, 與大比丘眾千八百人俱). The second part focuses on praising the virtues of the Emperor, and lists the Emperor's achievements. The third part, also known as the "closing poems," praises the sons of Emperor Mingzong, including King Qin 秦王, while also subtly mocking King Qin's political enemies, such as King Lu 潞王. As for the latter two parts, due to the limitations of the research topic, they will not be discussed for now. The focus will be on the *Scripture for Humane Kings* explained in the *Sutra Sermon*.

1.1. Kumārajīva or Amoghavajra: That's a Question

According to Buddhist scriptures, the *Scripture for Humane Kings* has been translated into Chinese multiple times throughout history. However, in the current Buddhist canon, only two translations, one by Kumārajīva 鳩摩羅什 (T 245) and the other by Amoghavajra 不空 (T 246), have been preserved. The basic framework of these two translations is roughly the same, and many of differences between the two translations are minor. Amoghavajra's translation also uses many of the same terms as Kumārajīva's translation. Such similarities aside, Amoghavajra's translation has many unique aspects, such as the cleaning up of some Taoist vocabulary that existed in Kumārajīva's translation. Of course, the most unique aspect is that Amoghavajra's translation includes some Tārā mantras.[1]

In addition, while translating this scripture, Amoghavajra also compiled three ritual commentaries: *The Rite of Reciting the Tārā-Mantra of the Scripture for Humane Kings* (*Renwang huguo bore boluo miduo tuoluoni niansong yigui* 仁王護國般若波羅蜜多經陀羅尼念誦儀軌, T 994), *The Method of Reciting the Scripture for Humane Kings* (*Renwang huguo niansong fa* 仁王護國念誦法, T 995), and *The Explanation of the Tārā-Mantra in Scripture for Humane Kings* (*Renwang bore tuoluoni shi* 仁王般若陀羅尼釋, T 996). These commentaries cover most of the stages of the Humane Kings ceremony, describing the establishment of the altar, the recitation of mantras, and the meditation and other esoteric rituals, as well as explaining many of the key ritual steps and mantras, See Kazuo (1990, pp. 89–95), Orzech (1998, pp. 169–91). It can be said that Amoghavajra established a whole new system for the Humane Kings Convocations, from the text to the ritual itself. With the support of Emperor Daizong 唐代宗 (726–779; reigned 762–779) and other nobles, and under Amoghavajra's promotion, the translation of *the Scripture for Humane Kings* by Amoghavajra and the new Humane Kings Convocations established by him quickly became one of the largest, most popular, and most important Buddhist rituals in the entire East Asian region at that time.

However, after Amoghavajra's death in 774 CE, the esoteric teachings he promoted may have experienced a temporary decline. The circulation of the Amoghavajra' version of the *Scripture for Humane Kings* was also somewhat affected. We can see in the repertoire of Buddhist miraculous tales that the Amoghavajra's version was questioned to some extent thirty years after his death.

In the nineteenth year of the reign of Emperor Dezong 德宗 (803 AD), a monk whose identity and abode were unknown stayed overnight at the temple of Lord Taishan 泰山府君. During his stay, the monk recited the "four stanzas on impermanence" from a newly translated version of a Buddhist sutra. While he was sleeping, Lord Taishan appeared in his dream and declared, "I have personally heard the Buddha speak this sutra. Although the version translated by Kumārajīva may be relatively simple in style, it conveys accurately the complete content of Buddhist doctrine. Whenever I hear someone recite this particular version of the sutra, I feel cool and refreshed in both body and mind. Although the

language of the newly translated version is more beautiful, it is inferior in conveying the meaning of Buddhist teachings. This is the version you recited . . . " The monk awoke from his dream and began reciting both the old and new versions of the sutra.[2]

德宗皇帝貞元十九年 (803 年), 有一沙門, 不知名及住處, 宿太山府君廟堂. 誦新譯經四無常偈. 府君夢示云: 吾昔在佛前, 親聞此經, 什公翻譯詞質, 義味泯合. 聞讀誦聲, 身心清涼. 新經又詞甚美, 義味淡薄, 汝持本. . . . 沙門夢覺, 兼持舊本矣.

The so-called "newly translated version" refers to the translation by Amoghavajra, while the "old version" refers to the translation by Kumārajīva. This miraculous tale, conveyed through the mouth of Lord Taishan, expresses the author's attitude towards the two translations of the *Scripture for Humane Kings*. The Kumārajīva's version may be relatively simple in style, but it is fluent in style, and accurately conveys the complete content of Buddhist doctrine. While the Amoghavajra's translation may have more elegant language, it does not sufficiently convey the meaning of the sutra. In the author's view, each translation has its own merits, and both should be kept and recited. In fact, in terms of content, the two translations are almost identical, except for the addition of some tantric content in the two sections of the new translation. However, this anecdote highlights the differences between the two translations and strongly promotes the old version, reflecting a possible competition between the old and new translations at that time. This competition, of course, ultimately stemmed from sectarian interests, which may have been a struggle for the faith community between the believers of Manifest teaching and the believers of Esoteric Buddhism.

However, despite this, the influence of the Amoghavajra's version remains significant. The new Humane Kings Convocations established by Amoghavajra continues to this day in Japan and Korea. Additionally, our study of the *Sutra Sermon* also serves as evidence for the popularity of the Amoghavajra's translation. Although the text of the P. 3808 manuscript pertains to the *Scripture for Humane Kings*, in its nearly 5000 characters, it only contains one line from the scripture:

> The phrase "如是我聞" emphasizes the credibility of the scripture. . . . The words "一時" highlight the time when the Buddha was giving the teaching. . . . The word "佛" emphasizes that the teacher giving the teaching was the Buddha. . . . The phrase "住王舍城鷲峰山中" emphasizes the location where the Buddha was giving the teaching. . . . The phrase "與大比丘眾千八百人俱" emphasizes which audience members were present and listening to the Buddha's teaching.
>
> 如是我聞, 信成就; . . . . . 一時 兩字, 時成就; . . . . . 佛 之一字, 教主成就; . . . . . 住王舍城鷲峰山中, 處所成就; . . . . . 與大比丘眾千八百人俱, 聽眾成就.

The underlined portion is the content of the scripture, and it is from the first sentence of the sutra. This sentence comes from the Amoghavajra's translation, rather than the Kumārajīva's translation[3], which includes the corresponding sentence, "At one time, the Buddha dwelt in the city of Rājagṛha, on Mount Gridhrakūṭa, together with a congregation of eight hundred thousand million bhikṣus." (一時, 佛住王舍城耆闍崛山中, 與大比丘眾八百萬億).[4]

The *Sutra Sermon* was used for the purpose of congratulating the emperor on his birthday, indicating that the user must have been one of the most important monks in the capital at the time.[5] The fact that they chose the Amoghavajra's version instead of the Kumārajīva's version in this most solemn occasion shows that even as late as the Later Tang dynasty, the Amoghavajra's translation was more effective and trustworthy in the core Buddhist circles of the capital.

1.2. Contemporary Scholastic Exegesis in Buddhism

Although the popular sermon is a performative activity for lay practitioners, it essentially remains a form of Buddhist scriptural exegesis, thereby retaining the interpretive characteristics of traditional scholastic exegesis to some extent. As previously stated, this

particular sermon only explicated the first sentence of the text of the *Scripture for Humane Kings*, but even this provides insight into the exegetical style of the preacher.

In the *Sutra Sermon*, the exposition of the scripture begins with the title of the Buddhist scripture sung by the Director of Lectures (*dujiang* 都講), who is mainly responsible for reciting the Buddhist scripture. Prior to this, the content mainly praised the virtues of the Buddha. The exposition of the scripture ends with the statement that "It is always necessary to go through countless hardships before obtaining the opportunity to be close to the saints for a long time."(總因多劫因緣會, 方得長時近聖人) The content after this mainly sings the praises of the emperor and the kings.

If we compare the *Sutra Sermon* with other commentaries on the *Scripture for Humane Kings* written in different periods, we will find that the *Sutra Sermon* still follows the tradition of scholasticism in the way of interpretation, but with new changes. The best two commentaries for comparison are the *Scripture for Humane Kings Commentary* (*Renwang bore jingshu* 仁王般若經疏) written by Jizang 吉藏 (T 1707, hereinafter referred to as "*Jizang's Commentary*") and the *Scripture for Humane Kings Commentary* (*Renwang huguo bore boluo miduo jingshu* 仁王護國般若波羅蜜多經疏) written by by Liangbi 良賁 (T 1709, hereinafter referred to as "*Liangbi's Commentary*"). *Jizang's Commentary* was written in the early seventh century, *Liangbi's Commentary* was written shortly after the *Scripture for Humane Kings* was re-translated by Amoghavajra in the mid to late eighth century, and the *Sutra Sermon* was written in the early tenth century. Therefore, these three works represent the characteristics of the interpretation of the *Scripture for Humane Kings* by monks from three different periods. They share similarities in maintaining the traditional scholastic exegesis tradition, while their differences are related to the three commentators' understanding of the theme of the *Scripture for Humane Kings*.

The main differences among the three commentaries are primarily concentrated in the section of "Explicit Explanation of the Buddhist Scripture's Objective"(*ming jingzong* 明經宗). For instance, the *Jizang's Commentary* records:

> The objective of this scripture is to expound the concept that the nature of Buddha is neither born nor extinguished. . . . This scripture emphasizes two forms of protection: one is inner (*neihu* 內護), which is used by bodhisattvas to nurture the practices of the ten stages (*shidi* 十地) and to protect the buddha-fruit (*foguo* 佛果); the other is outer (*waihu* 外護), which refers to the protection of the country, to make it stable and peaceful, to extinguish the seven difficulties (*qinan* 七難), prevent disasters, and to make the people feel peaceful.
>
> 此經以無生正觀為宗, 離有無二見, 假言中道. . . . . 此經以外內二護為用. 內護者, 下文云為諸菩薩說護佛果因緣, 護十地行因緣; 所言外護者, 下文云吾今為汝說護國土因緣, 令國土獲安, 七難不起, 災害不生, 萬民安樂.[6]

The *Scripture for Humane Kings* not only promotes the Madhyamaka doctrine, but also extolls its function of protecting the country. However, by analyzing the order of *Jizang's commentary*, it becomes clear that he prioritizes the inner protection, namely the essence of Prajna, over the outer protection, namely the protection of the country. In fact, this is a continuation of the tradition of the Humane Kings Convocations since the Southern Dynasty. The corresponding content in the *Liangbi's Commentary* is:

> To provide an explanation of this Buddhist scripture, a comprehensive analysis of the two types of protection is necessary. The fourteen great kings, including both sages and commoners, all held the responsibility of nurturing their people and carried out deeds that can only be accomplished by Bodhisattvas.
>
> 今說此經, 廣陳二護. 十四王等, 有聖有凡, 皆育黎元, 植菩薩事.[7]

Liangbi's commentary places greater emphasis on the outer protection before the inner protection, in contrast to Jizang's approach. This reflects the shift in emphasis in the Humane Kings Convocations under the influence of Esoteric Buddhism, which deemphasizes the importance of the doctrine of Buddhist scriptures and highlights the pro-

tective function of the *Scripture for Humane Kings*. The corresponding content in the *Sutra Sermon* is as follows:

> During that time, the World-honored One expounded a remarkably profound Buddhist doctrine and transmitted it to the wise king. In the distant future, this king would become a Buddha and save sentient beings, and even in the near future, he would bring peace and prosperity to his empire. He would practice the ten virtuous deeds (*shishan* 十善) and pacify the three calamities (*sanzai* 三災), fostering inner peace that would lead to favorable natural conditions. His strict laws would ensure the proper motion of the celestial bodies in the sky. The teachings of truth and worldly wisdom would coexist like fish and water. The king's laws and Buddhist teachings together would serve to educate the people, just like clouds and dragons coexist in harmony.
>
> 於〔時〕世尊宣揚妙理, 付囑明君. 遠即成佛度人, 近即安民治國. 令行十善, 以息三災. 心行調而風雨亦調, 法令正而星辰自正. 真風俗諦同行, 而魚水相須; 王法佛經共化, 而雲龍契合.

It is evident that the *Sutra Sermon* only describes the outer protection and does not address the inner protection, thus completely abandoning the Prajna essence that the scripture originally possessed. This change may have been triggered by the different occasions for preaching, but it reflects the fact that the closer the preacher is to the imperial power, the less importance is attached to the Prajna essence of the *Scripture for Humane Kings*.

The veneration of imperial power is further evidenced through the "Canticles" (*zhuangyanwen* 莊嚴文) found in the *Sutra Sermon*, a text containing prayers for blessings to be bestowed upon the emperor and other nobles attending the celebration. The *Sutra Sermon* opens with an elaborate display of grandiose rhythmical prose and eight couplets that make clear the purpose of the sermon: to celebrate the birthday of Ming Zong. In typical Buddhist preaching ceremonies, the opening ritual is devoted to praising the Buddha's virtue. However, the preacher of the *Sutra Sermon* explicitly declares that the emperor is a bodhisattva or the Cākravartirāja (*zhuanlunwang* 轉輪王), stating, "If he is not an incarnation of a bodhisattva, then he must be the Cākravartirāja in the world." (若非菩薩之潛形, 即是輪王之應位). The preacher even directly compares the emperor to the Buddha, stating, "If he were to reside in the Buddha's country, he would be called 'Buddha'; if he were to reside in China, he would be called 'the Supreme One.'" (若居佛國名調御, 來往神州號至尊). In fact, not only in the Canticles at the beginning, but also throughout the entirety of the text, praises for the emperor are frequently interspersed, such as in the five-paragraph verse of "Five Kinds of Achievements" (*wuzhong chengjiu* 五種成就), where each paragraph uses eight-line verses to praise the Buddha and an additional eight-line verse to praise Ming Zong. This establishes a parallel between the emperor and the Buddha, where the emperor is elevated to a similar status as the Buddha. Such words represent a direct manifestation of imperial power.

2. The Sponsors and the Performance of the Humane Kings Convocation

The *Scripture for Humane Kings*, with its strong protective theme, enjoyed widespread popularity throughout East Asia, and its functions of national protection and rainmaking were revered by people from all social classes. The Humane Kings Convocations, which were based on this scripture, held the power to influence national policies, as well as political, military, and economic affairs during crucial times. The Humane Kings Convocations emerged during the mid to late period of the Northern and Southern Dynasties. In terms of its development, during the Southern Dynasty period, the Humane Kings Convocations focused primarily on the philosophical teachings of the Madhyamaka doctrine, even in the process of preaching to the secular believers. However, since the Sui and Tang Dynasties, particularly after Amoghavajra, the Humane Kings Convocations placed greater emphasis on using rituals and interpretations of select portions of the scriptures to highlight the

national protective function of the *Scripture for Humane Kings*. Thus, the protective theme of the *Scripture for Humane Kings* became increasingly significant over time.[8]

Meanwhile, with the evolution of Buddhist popular sermons culture in the later Tang Dynasty, monks began to incorporate various storytelling techniques when preaching the *Scripture for Humane Kings* to secular believers. Consequently, the rituals of the Humane Kings Convocations became more entertaining and theatrical. Today, we are able to comprehend the content and procedures of this type of popular Convocation through the manuscripts found in the Dunhuang Caves. Specifically, the *Sutra Sermon* offers detailed information about the sponsors, time, space, and performers involved in the Humane Kings Convocations' rituals.

2.1. The Sponsors of the Humane Kings Convocation

The *Sutra Sermon* was the text used for the celebration and performance of the birthday of the Later Tang Emperor Mingzong, which means that the sponsor of this ceremony was actually Emperor Mingzong himself. Although, as will be discussed later, other religious ceremonies, including Taoist ones, may have been held during this birthday celebration, we cannot equate the Humane Kings Convocation with other religious ceremonies simply because the Humane Kings Convocation itself was reserved for the exclusive use of the emperor. This exclusivity is fundamentally determined by the *Scripture for Humane Kings*.

Regardless of whether it is Kumārajīva's translation or Amoghavajra's, the *Scripture for Humane Kings* is restricted to "entrusting this scripture to the kings of states and not to *bhikṣus* and *bhikṣunīs*, *upāsakas* and *upāsikās*." (我以是經, 付囑國王, 不付比丘, 比丘尼, 優婆塞, 優婆夷.).[9] This is because "nothing but the august strength of kings is able to establish it." (無王威力, 不能建立.). Only the sovereign has the ability to "receive and keep this *Prajñāpāramitā*, to protect himself, the sons of kings, the empress, and concubines, and all of their retainers, the one hundred officers and the commoners [and if they do they will] all attain peace and happiness, in times of various disasters" (種種災起, 諸國王等, 為護自身, 太子, 王子, 后妃, 眷屬, 百官, 百姓, 一切國土, 即當受持此般若波羅蜜多, 皆得安樂.). This reflects the idea that has long been circulating in China that "the Buddhist cause cannot be maintained without relying on the emperor." (不依國主, 法事難立) If we shift our focus to the Northern and Southern dynasties, we can see that a tradition has formed that the Humane Kings Convocation can only be held when praying for the emperor or for the country. This tradition has never been broken and has even been well maintained in Korea and Japan. For example, Japan's Humane Kings Convocation is only held after the new emperor ascends to the throne (known as the "one generation, one time Humane Kings Convocation" 一代一度仁王會), and is held in the spring and autumn of a year to pray for the country, or is temporarily held to ward off external enemies and prevent or relieve disasters, See Noda (2006, pp. 149–35), Uchida (2017, pp. 50–75).

The *Scripture for Humane Kings* also specifies the scale of the Humane Kings Convocation ceremony:

> At that time the World-honored One told King *Prasenajit*, the others, and all of the other kings of great states, "Listen carefully, Listen carefully, and on your behalf I will expound the method for protecting the state. [Now], in all states, when [things are] on the brink of chaos and there are all [sorts of] disasters, difficulties, or bandits come to wreak havoc, you and the others and all kings should receive and hold, read and recite this *Prajñāpāramitā*. Sumptuously adorn a ritual arena and set up one hundred Buddha images, one hundred *bodhisattva* images, and one hundred seats for Buddhist masters, and invite one hundred masters of the Teaching to expound this scripture. Before all of the seats light all kinds of lamps, and burn all kinds of incense, scatter various flowers and make vast and abundant offerings of clothing and utensils, drink and food, broth and medicines, places of shelter and repose, and all of the usual affairs of offering. Twice each day [the Buddhist masters should] lecture on and read this scripture. If the king, the great officers, *bhikṣus*, *bhikṣunīs*, *upāsakas*, and *upāsikās* hear, receives, read,

> and recite it and practice it according to the [prescribed] method, the disorders and difficulties will forthwith be eradicated.[10]
>
> 爾時, 世尊告波斯匿王等諸大國王: "諦聽諦聽, 我為汝等說護國法. 一切國土, 若欲亂時, 有諸災, 難, 賊來破壞, 汝等諸王應當受持, 讀誦此般若波羅蜜多, 嚴飾道場, 置百佛像, 百菩薩像, 百師子座, 請百法師, 解說此經. 於諸座前, 然種種燈, 燒種種香, 散諸雜花. 廣大供養, 衣服臥具, 飲食湯藥, 房舍床座, 一切供事. 每日二時, 講讀此經. 若王, 大臣, 比丘, 比丘尼, 優婆塞, 優婆夷, 聽受讀誦, 如法修行, 災難即滅.[11]

According to the *Scripture for Humane Kings*, the Humane Kings Convocation was specified to "set up one hundred Buddha images, one hundred *bodhisattva* images, and one hundred seats for Buddhist masters, and invite one hundred masters of the Teaching to expound this scripture," etc. Therefore, the Humane Kings Convocation was also referred to as the "Hundred-Seat Humane Kings Convocation". The scale of the Humane Kings Convocation was far larger than any other Buddhist rituals. Although during the reign of Emperor Taizong of the Tang Dynasty (唐太宗, 599–649, reigned 626–649), a different form of Humane Kings Convocation was developed, namely, a small-scale Humane Kings Convocation held in each monastery that only required the recitation of the *Scripture for Humane Kings*. However, these small-scale rituals could only be held to pray for the emperor and the country, and individuals other than the emperor had no right to hold such rituals.

In the fourth year of the Changxing era, it was decided to hold the Humane Kings Convocation on the "Holy Emperor's Birthday" (應聖節), which was the birthday of Emperor Mingzong. This decision may have been influenced by the political situation of the Later Tang dynasty at that time, as well as Emperor Mingzong's personal health condition. The following reasons support this argument:

Firstly, the *Sutra Sermon* lists in detail Emperor Mingzong's achievements, especially the great accomplishments he made in recent years. For example, "[Because of the emperor's merits,] the rebellion in Eastern Sichuan (東川) was quelled, and Western Sichuan (西蜀) also returned to the court." (所以感東川之災息, 西蜀心回) This refers to how Meng Zhixiang 孟知祥 (874–934), the military governor of Western Sichuan, defeated Dong Zhang 董璋 (?–932), the military governor of Eastern Sichuan, in 932 and sent envoys to the Later Tang court. Another example is, "Like the regions of Western Zhejiang and Eastern Zhejiang, although they are thousands of miles away from the court, their commissioners are still moved by the emperor's kindness and accept the stipend bestowed by the emperor. They offer tribute to the court every year and do not allow themselves to be stained with disgrace. The emissaries sent by the court can safely arrive in the regions of Zhejiang to convey the court's orders, and the envoys sent by the regions of Zhejiang can also smoothly reach the imperial court to present the commissioners' tribute."(祇如兩浙, 遠隔蒼〔口〕, 感大國之鴻恩, 受明君之爵祿. 長時有貢, 志節寧虧. 天使行而風水無虞, 進貢來而舟航保吉) This refers to how Qian Liu 錢鏐 (852–932), the king of Wu and Yue, was relatively obedient to the emperor of the Later Tang dynasty and frequently provided tribute to the court.[12] Of course, the political situation described in the *Sutra Sermon* of a clean government and a stable world was only a superficial phenomenon, as the Later Tang court was overthrown two years later. However, even so, this superficial appearance corresponds to the words in the *Scripture for Humane Kings* that kings can protect their country and make the people all live in peace and happiness.

Secondly, in May of the fourth year of the Changxing, Emperor Mingzong, who was already 67 years old, began to fall ill. The *Zizhi tongjian* records:

> On the day of Jia Shen [of May in the fourth year of the Changxing], the emperor suddenly fell ill with a wind disease; on the day of Geng Yin, his body recovered slightly, and he met officials in the Wenming Palace.
>
> [長興四年五月] 甲申, 帝暴得風疾; 庚寅, 小愈, 見群臣于文明殿.
>
> The emperor did not receive with the court officials for ten days, causing internal discussions among them. Some officials even fled to the mountains or wilderness,

> while others took refuge in military camps. In the autumn, on the day of Geng Chen in July, the emperor's condition improved and he personally went to the Guangshou Palace. It was only then that the emotions of the court officials began to calm down slightly.
>
> 帝旬日不見群臣, 都人洶懼, 或潛竄山野, 或寓止軍營. 秋, 七月, 庚辰, 帝利疾御廣壽殿, 人情始安.[13]

It is evident that Emperor Mingzong fell ill by May, and by July, he was unable to attend court in person, causing emotional distress among the court officials. By August, his condition appeared to have worsened, causing some officials to express concerns regarding the issue of succession. The *Zizhi tongjian* reports that:

> He Ze, upon witnessing the Emperor's deteriorating health and the increasing power of Prince Qin Li Congrong 李從榮, sought to regain favor by appealing to Prince Qin's influence. He submitted a memorial to the Emperor, requesting the appointment of Prince Qin as the Crown Prince.
>
> 何澤見上寢疾, 秦王從榮權勢方盛, 冀己復進用, 表請立從榮為太子.[14]

Additionally, it was during this period that Emperor Mingzong celebrated his final birthday.

It must have been widely known that Emperor Mingzong's health was progressively deteriorating. Therefore, the Buddhist monks who participated in the birthday celebration incorporated numerous prayers for the Emperor's good health in their ritual performances. For example, "We only hope that the country will remain peaceful forever, and that the Emperor will enjoy long-lasting health," (唯希國土永清平, 只願聖人長壽命) and "As monks, we can appeal to the heavens to prolong the Emperor's life. We pray that the Yellow River will remain crystal clear for a long time." (臣僧禱祝資天算, 願見黃河百度清) Although these four verses may only be formulaic, they were in line with the actual situation at the time. Not only did they conform to the *Scripture for Humane Kings*'s doctrine of "protecting the country and the Emperor," but they also aligned with the purpose of the Emperor's birthday celebration, which was to offer him congratulations and blessings.

In reality, the Humane Kings Convocation did not alleviate Emperor Mingzong's illness. Shortly after the holy festival, Mingzong's condition continued to deteriorate, and he even reached a critical point. "On The day of Wuzi [in November], the Emperor's condition worsened again, and on the day of Jichou, he fell critically ill." ([十一月] 戊子, 帝疾復作, 己丑, 大漸)[15] It was during this critical illness that the mutiny of Prince Qin was triggered. Startled by the upheaval, Mingzong passed away.

2.2. The Time and Space of the Humane Kings Convocation

The *Sutra Sermon* begins by mentioning that the Humane Kings Convocation was held on the Double Ninth Festival, which corresponds to the ninth day of the ninth lunar month: "Every year in September, the red palace is shrouded in peaceful smoke; every year on the Double Ninth Festival, the country is immersed in the joy of the festival." ("年年九月,[16] 彤庭別布於祥煙; 歲歲重陽, 寰海皆榮於嘉節") The ninth day of the ninth lunar month was the birthday of Emperor Mingzong, which was designated as a national holiday at that time.

Hosting the Humane Kings Convocation on the Emperor's birthday was not a tradition that existed from the outset of the Convocation's formation. In historical development, during the Southern Chen dynasty, the Convocation was held twice a year, but there were occasional adjustments due to presence of eminent masters such as master Zhiyi 智顗 (538–597). During the Amoghavajra era, the Convocation was held on significant occasions, and certain temples also held the Convocation on special days.

Since the history of celebrating the Emperor's birthday as a festival may have begun with Emperor Xuanzong of the Tang dynasty 唐玄宗 (685–762, reigned 712–756), the history of preaching at the palace on the Emperor's birthday is not very long. Recorded instances of preaching on the Emperor's birthday also date back to the Xuanzong period

(729 AD, the 17th year of the Kaiyuan era). As for Emperor Mingzong of the Later Tang dynasty, it had already become a customary practice to invite monks to the palace to preach on the day of the Emperor's birthday. The *Cefu Yuangui* documents six such instances of Mingzong inviting monks to the palace on his birthday. Furthermore, the preaching event in 933 AD reflected in P. 3808 brings that total to seven:

(1) On the 9th day of the 9th lunar month of the first year [of Tiancheng (926 AD)], on the occasion of the emperor's birthday, a Buddhist fasting ceremony was established by the officials in Jingai Monastery 敬愛寺. Monks and Taoists were invited to debate in Zhongxing Palace.

[天成元年 (926 年)] 九月九日應聖節, 百寮于敬愛寺設僧齋, 召緇黃眾于中興殿論難經義.

(2) On the 9th day of the 9th lunar month of the second year [of Tiancheng (927 AD)], on the occasion of the emperor's birthday, in order to celebrate the emperor, officials set up a Buddhist fasting ceremony and burned incense in Jingai Monastery 敬愛寺, commanding the court musicians to play music. At the same time, monks and Taoists were invited to debate in Zhongxing Palace.

[天成] 二年 (927 年) 九月九日應聖節, 百官奉為應聖節, 于敬愛寺行香設齋, 宣教坊伎宴樂之. . . . . 召兩街僧道于中興殿講論.

(3) On the 9th day of the 9th lunar month of the third year [of Tiancheng (928 AD)], on the occasion of the emperor's birthday, monks and Taoists from two streets were invited to discuss the sutras in Chongyuan Palace.

[天成] 三年 (928 年) 九月九日應聖節, 召兩街僧道談經於崇元殿.

(4) On the 9th day of the 9th lunar month of the fourth year [of Tiancheng (929 AD)], on the occasion of the emperor's birthday, officials established a Buddhist fasting ceremony in Jingai Monastery 敬愛寺, and the emperor personally went to Zhongxing Palace to listen to the debate between monks and Taoists.

[天成] 四年 (929 年) 九月九日應聖節, 百官于敬愛寺齋設, ... 復御中興殿, 聽僧道講論.

(5) On the 9th day of the 9th lunar month of the first year of Changxing (930 AD), on the occasion of the emperor's birthday, officials established a Buddhist fasting ceremony in Jingai Monastery 敬愛寺, and the emperor personally went to Guangshou Palace to listen to the preaching of monks and Taoists.

長興元年 (930 年) 九月九日應聖節, 百官于敬愛寺齋設, 帝御廣壽殿, 聽僧道講論.

(6) On the 9th day of the 9th lunar month of the second year [of Changxing (931 AD)], on the occasion of the emperor's birthday, the emperor personally went to Zhongxing Palace to listen to the preaching of monks and Taoists.

[長興] 二年 (931 年) 九月九日應聖節, 帝御中興殿, 觀僧道講論.[17]

(7) On the 9th day of the 9th lunar month, on the occasion of the emperor's birthday, the emperor personally went to Zhongxing Palace to listen to the preaching of the *Scripture for Humane Kings* by the monks.

長興四年 (933 年) 九月九日應聖節, 帝御中興殿, 觀僧講《仁王經》.

It is not difficult to see that except for the absence of records in the third year of Changxing, during the eight years of Mingzong's reign (926–933), almost every birthday celebration was marked by inviting Buddhist monks to give sermons and setting up a fasting ceremony in Jingai Monastery. Regarding the record of the first event, it is also recorded in *Jiu Tangshu* 舊唐書, where it is recorded that "on the day of Guihai, the emperor's birthday, the officials established a Buddhist fasting ceremony at Jingai Monastery and invited monks and Taoists to debate in Zhongxing Palace. This arrangement follows a tradition that has been formed previously." (癸亥, 應聖節, 百寮于敬愛寺設齋, 召緇黃之眾于中興殿講論, 從近例也)[18] The two records are basically consistent, but the latter is more informative, stating that "this arrangement follows a tradition that has been formed previously," indicating that this is a continuation of the story since the reign of Zhuangzong of Later Tang 唐莊宗 (885–926 AD, reigned from 923–926 AD).

Actually, there is also reflection on Mingzong's practice of inviting monks to preach on his birthday in the *Sutra Sermon*:

> The emperor held Buddhism in high regard and was determined to practice Buddhism. He engaged in spiritual cultivation throughout the Three Periods of Time and showed great reverence for the Buddhas' teachings of the Ten Directions. If he did not have such aspirations, how could he possibly invite monks to preach on every birthday?
>
> 我皇帝翹心真境, 志信空門. 修持三世之果因, 敬重十方之佛法. 若不然者, 曷能得每逢降誕, 別啟御筵?

On the day of the Holy Emperor's Birthday, the exact time of the Humane Kings Convocation may have been at night. According to the *Cefu Yuangui*, most of the preaching activities were arranged after the Buddhist fasting ceremony held at the Jingai Monastery, and the Buddhist fasting ceremony should have ended after noon. The *Sutra Sermon* provides us with more details. Considering that the Mingzong's birthday was on the ninth day of the lunar calendar, which was also during the waxing moon phase, the moon could only be seen in the first half of the night. In the poem praising the newly built imperial garden, the preaching monk sung that "when autumn comes, the lotus flowers in the pond are as beautiful as Shu brocade (*shujin* 蜀錦), and the stars and moon in the sky look like daffodil lamps in the deep night." (秋後蓮荷蜀地錦, 夜深星月水仙燈). These two lines of poetry provide a specific description of the scene at that time. Therefore, we can infer that the Humane Kings Convocation was held in the first half of the night, when the stars and moon were in the sky.

The preaching activity held on the Holy Emperor's Birthday was a birthday celebration. When the Humane Kings Convocation was over, the celebration of the birthday was likely to end as well. Moreover, considering the limited duration of the birthday celebration at night, as well as the arrangement of other activities such as Taoist rituals, there could not have been much time for the monks to preach. This necessitated limitations on the content of the preaching, which had to conform to the purpose of the birthday celebration while also taking into account the performance duration. It is not difficult to understand why the *Sutra Sermon* only explained the title and the first sentence of the opening passage of the *Scripture for Humane Kings*, with the main content being to praise the emperor and to extol the virtues of the King Qin and other kings. The entire text, comprising just over 4700 words, may have taken only a relatively short time for recitation if it was just a form of singing or chanting.

The location of the Holy Emperor's Birthday celebration reflected in the *Sutra Sermon* was the Zhongxing Palace. According to the previous statistics on the seven birthday celebrations held during the reign of Emperor Mingzong, at least five of them (in 926, 927, 929, 931, and 933) were held in Zhongxing Palace, while only the one in 928 was held in Chongyuan Palace and the one in 930 was held in Guangshou Palace. During the Later Tang period, Zhongxing Palace mainly served as a place for the emperor to host guests. The *Sutra Sermon* also described the decoration of the palace at that time, stating that: "Every year in September, the red palace is shrouded in peaceful smoke." It can inferred that on this day, Zhongxing Palace was filled with smoke and decorated with red ornaments, creating a lively and festive atmosphere. This kind of scene, especially the decoration with red ornaments, is certainly not what is typically seen in a Buddhist ritual. However, since the most important aspect for the Holy Emperor's Birthday was to wish the emperor a long life, all arrangements should reflect the festive atmosphere of the celebration and could not be altered because of the Buddhist preaching.

According to the description in the *Sutra Sermon*, pavilions and towers outside the palace could be seen, as well as the imperial pond in the courtyard. In the palace garden, "there were as many as ten thousand beautiful flowers; their shadows were reflected in the pool, as if embroidered on the surface of the pool." (好花萬種, 布影而錦覩池中). Large areas of chrysanthemums were planted in the palace garden, and in September of the lunar calendar, the chrysanthemums were in full bloom and dazzlingly beautiful. The *Sutra Sermon* mentions "hundreds of thousands of pots of golden chrysanthemums blooming in the courtyard, their petals decorated with drops of dew, emanating a fragrant aroma."

(百千蘂之金菊, 惹露芬芳). The imperial pond was also filled with lotus flowers, and the *Sutra Sermon* described that "When the ship is driven it breaks a path through the pool full of lotus leaves; When the music was played, it startled the Mandarin ducks and egrets that stayed nearby." (撐舡而衝破蓮荷, 奏曲而驚飛鴛鷺). The lotus flowers bloom in June of the lunar calendar, and many flowers remain in bloom until the ninth month after autumn. According to the description in the *Sutra Sermon*, a yellow dragon boat was also moored in the imperial pond, and at that time, "people are watching the yellow dragon boat and making wishes, hoping that the wise emperor could always board the dragon boat." (人人盡指黃龍舫, 願見明君萬遍升). It can be inferred that Emperor Mingzong often rode this dragon boat to tour the lake and enjoy the scenery when he was in good health.

2.3. The Actors of the Humane Kings Convocation

The main actors of the Humane Kings Convocation were the preacher and the Director of Lectures, who was referred to as "dujiang" 都講. During the Southern and Northern Dynasties period, the term "Director of Lectures" was used to describe individuals who challenged and questioned preachers. By engaging in a dialogue with the preachers, they collaborated to provide an interpretation of the scripture. However, during the late Tang and Five Dynasties periods, the role of the Director of Lectures changed. In certain sermon activities, the Director of Lectures was no longer responsible for questioning the preachers. Instead, the Director of Lectures solely recited the scriptures for the preachers to interpret. Zanning 讚寧(919–1001), a prominent Buddhist scholar and historian of the Northern Song dynasty, commented on this phenomenon, stating that "Present day Directors of Lectures do not ask questions for stimulating discussion. By raising the text of the scripture [for discussion] by reciting it [instead of prompting with questions], they, in effect, imitate [the style of] Directors of Lectures of old." (今之都講, 不聞擊問, 舉唱經文, 蓋似像古之都講耳).[19] The role of the Director of Lectures in the celebration of the Holy Emperor's Birthday was identical, with the responsibility to recite the title of Buddhist scriptures.

During this Convocation, the Director of Lectures performed two recitations. In the manuscript preserved in Dunhuang, the recitation was omitted, but two marks were left at the 10th and 30th lines, indicating the presence of the word "jing" (經). The blank space before and after these two instances of "經" indicates that they are distinct from the preceding and following contents and that the original scripture was omitted. Although the recitation text is not preserved here, we can confirm, based on the content of the preacher's interpretation, that the two omitted scriptures were the title of the scripture "The prologue of *the Transcendent Wisdom Scripture for Humane Kings Who Wish to Protect Their States*" (仁王護國般若波羅蜜多經序品第一者) and the first sentence of the prologue: "Thus I have heard. Once the Buddha was residing on Vulture Peak in the city of Rājagṛha together with a great assembly of bhikṣus, eighteen-hundred in all." (如是我聞, 一時佛住王舍城鷲峰山中, 與大比丘眾千八百人俱). In normal sermon activities, all scriptures should be recited, but during the Holy Emperor's Birthday celebration, the recitation was only symbolically performed with a small part of the scripture.

During the performance activities of the Holy Emperor's Birthday celebration, the function of the Director of Lectures was significantly diminished and transformed into a form of entertainment. On one hand, this reduced the Humane Kings Convocation to a mere façade of preaching, devoid of the scholarly depth and interpretative tradition of Buddhist doctrine refinement, and abandoning the core of the exegesis tradition since the Southern and Northern Dynasties. On the other hand, the primary purpose of this type of preaching was to bestow longevity blessings on the emperor, and in the imperial era of "family and country as one" 家國一體, praying for the emperor was effectively praying for the nation. Therefore, the Convocation continued the "protecting the country tradition" of the Humane Kings Convocation.

In addition, during every Holy Emperor's Birthday celebration, Buddhist monks and Taoist priests jointly delivered sermons. In other words, the celebration not only featured Buddhist monks preaching, but also Taoist priests. The Taoist preaching was also part of

the celebration of the emperor's birthday. This is in accordance with the description in the *Sutra Sermon*, which states: "When the emperor came to the Golden Hall, he listened to the religious classics preached by the monks and Taoist priests who climbed onto the high platform." (君王聽法登金殿, 釋道談經寶臺上) "Wherever there were people in the palace, incense burners and fresh flowers were to be placed. Wherever there were monks and Taoist priests, fasting and precepts were to be observed. Taoist priests and monks performed their own rituals, but their inner wishes were the same." (有人煙處, 羅烈(列)香花; 有僧道處, 修持齋戒. 醮蔭庶道廣, 虔禱心同) The fact that Buddhist monks and Taoist priests performed together on the same stage may be related to the tradition of Buddhist–Taoist debates (*fo-dao lunheng* 佛道論衡) since the Southern and Northern Dynasties, but the information in the *Sutra Sermon* is insufficient for us to explore further the Buddhist–Taoist activities during the Holy Emperor's Birthday celebration in the fourth year of the Changxing period.

3. Conclusions

The development and evolution of the Humane Kings Convocation from the Southern and Northern Dynasties to the Tang and Song Dynasties can be regarded as a microcosm of the development of Chinese Buddhism, reflecting a shift from elite Buddhism to a more secular form. During the Southern and Northern Dynasties and early Sui and Tang Dynasties, the Convocation focused on the preaching of sermons and debating. However, after the reign of Emperor Taizong, and particularly with the growth of Esoteric Buddhism, the Convocation incorporated more elements of Tantra, making it more performative and emphasizing its utilitarian function of protecting the state.

In the middle and late Tang Dynasty, with the emergence and popularity of secular sermons, the Humane Kings Convocation also underwent a transformation, and there appeared the form of the *Sutra Sermon*. On the one hand, the Humane Kings Convocation reflected in this text retained two traditions: one being the tradition of scholasticism in the way of interpretation and the other being the tradition of emphasizing the protective efficacy of the *Scripture for Humane Kings* for the country. On the other hand, the two traditions were greatly simplified, as shown by the changing scale of the Humane Kings Convocation according to different occasions. These changes not only included the selection of sermon contents, but also the adjustment of the size of the staff. In terms of the former, to cater to the needs of sponsors, the Convocation might only select a small portion of scriptures for explanation and use more words to eulogize the lay host, which has strong performative and entertainment elements. In terms of the latter, due to time and space constraints, sermons might be completed with only one or two monks. This type of Humane Kings Convocation, while retaining the old traditions, is more performative and could be regarded as a "dramatized" Convocation.

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Notes

1 Regarding the differences between Amoghavajra's and Kumārajīva's translations, please refer to Charles D. Orzech (1998, p. 69).
2 See Sanbao ganying yaolüe lu 三寶感應要略録 (*the Collection of Essential Records on the Manifestations of the Three Jewels*), fascicle 2 (T 2084n846b).
3 *Renwang huguo bore boluo miduo jing* 仁王護國般若波羅蜜多經 (the *Scripture for Humane Kings*), fascicle 1 (T 08n834c).
4 *Foshuo renwang bore boluomi jing* 佛說仁王般若波羅蜜經 (the *Scripture for Humane Kings*), fascicle 1 (T 08n825a).
5 According to Liu (1988, pp. 43–55), the user may have been the renowned YunBian 雲辯 during the Later Tang period.
6 *Renwang bore jingshu* 仁王般若經疏 (the *Scripture for Humane Kings Commentary*), fascicle 1 (T33n315a).
7 *Renwang huguo bore boluo miduo jingshu* (the *Scripture for Humane Kings Commentary*), fascicle 1 (T33n429b).
8 For more information on the specific evolution and influence of these two traditions, see Pei (2017).
9 The scripture used here is based on the Amoghavajra's translation, but the Kumarajiva' translation has only minor differences.
10 Here I refer to Charles D. Orzech's translation, see Charles D. Orzech (1998, pp. 245–46).
11 *Renwang huguo bore boluo miduo jing* 仁王護國般若波羅蜜多經 (the *Scripture for Humane Kings*), fascicle 2 (T 08n840a).
12 Regarding the description of Emperor Mingzong's political situation in the *Sutra Sermon*, please refer to Yang (1990, pp. 95–98).
13 *Zizhi tongjian*, fascicle 278, p. 9084.
14 *Zizhi tongjian*, fascicle 278, p. 9087.
15 *Zizhi tongjian*, fascicle 278, p. 9091.
16 The three characters "年年九" are incomplete in the plate, but can be inferred according to the meaning of the text. Please refer to Qiu and Luo (2020, pp. 70–72).
17 The aforementioned records can be found in *Cefu yuangui*, fascicle 2, pp. 23–24.
18 *Jiu wudai shi*, fascicle 37, p. 510.
19 Here I refer to Albert Welter's translation, see Welter (2018, p. 242).

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The Formation of *Biaoquan* and *Zhequan* as a Pair of Philosophical Concepts in Chinese Buddhism

Junqi Wang

Institute for the Study of Buddhism and Religious Theory, Renmin University of China, Beijing 100872, China; wangjunqiwjq@outlook.com

Abstract: The general consensus in the field of Buddhist studies is that the terms "*biaoquan*" and "*zhequan*" are a pair of Buddhist philosophical concepts often used to designate two diametrically opposed forms of rhetoric. The former term constitutes its affirmative statement, while the latter defines a fact in negative terms—known in Christian theology as cataphatic and apophatic uses of language, respectively. Looking at the terms for which *biaoquan* and *zhequan* initially served as translations, especially in Xuanzang's works, it would seem that these two concepts have not always appeared as a related pair representing the above-mentioned affirmative–negative dichotomy. The former could designate both affirmation (**vidhi*) as well as the general activity of speech, syllables, and words (*nāma*). In the case of *zhequan*, it corresponds, in different texts, to the three Indian Buddhist concepts of negation (**pratiṣedha*, **vyāvṛtti*, **nivṛtti*), implicative negation (*paryudāsa*), and exclusion of others (*anyāpoha*), with each use of the term "*zhequan*" carrying a different set of meanings and associated doctrines. Indeed, in various texts, the concept of *zhequan* might be opposed to the concept of *biaoquan* (**vidhi *sadhana*) or opposed to pure negation (*prasajya*), or it might be applied on its own with no opposing concept. However, as Chinese Buddhism continued to develop throughout the Tang, *biaoquan* and *zhequan* came to be firmly associated and popularized as a pair of opposites. Looking at the doctrinal as well as the translation history of these two terms, this paper focuses on how they were used as a pair of opposing philosophical concepts, followed by an analysis of the profound influence of these two concepts on Chinese Buddhism.

Keywords: *biaoquan*; *zhequan*; Chinese Buddhism; Xuanzang

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1. Introduction

The terms *biaoquan* 表詮 and *zhequan* 遮詮, as a pair of concepts, have long been used in Chinese Buddhism to describe opposing rhetorical strategies for presenting truth statements. They have profoundly influenced the development of Chinese Buddhist philosophy, and they are still used by Chinese researchers to this day, informing the study of logic, doctrine, and Buddhist hermeneutics. In *Introduction to the Hetuvidyā*,[1] Wangdao Chen defines the two terms as follows: "What confirms the positive connection of [the subject and its predicate] is called *biaoquan* (logically affirmative proposition) in Buddhist logic (Skt. *hetuvidyā*). What expresses the disconnection of [the subject and its predicate] is called *zhequan* (logically negative proposition) in Buddhist logic." Chen here distinguishes the theses (*pakṣa*) in terms of the *biaoquan*/*zhequan* dichotomy in Buddhist logic, each end of the spectrum corresponding to logically positive and negative propositions, respectively.

Litian Fang (2002, p. 483) further expands the use of these concepts in Buddhist studies beyond their confinement to Buddhist logic, using them as conceptual tools for interpreting Chan rhetoric such as it is found in the discourses between Mazu 馬祖 and his disciples. Litian Fang says:

> [The statements] (1) "Mind is Buddha" and (2) "Neither mind nor Buddha," are two ways of expressing the relationship between the mind and the Buddha-nature of sentient beings, namely, *biaoquan* and *zhequan*. *Biaoquan* uses positive rhetoric

> to define the attributes and meanings of things, while *zhequan* uses negative rhetoric to reject attributes and meanings that things do not have. In the case of Mazu's exchange with his disciples, the [statement] "Mind is Buddha" is *biaoquan*, while the statement "Neither mind nor Buddha" is *zhequan*. These [two statements] illustrate that there is no difference between the mind of sentient beings and Buddha-nature via *biaoquan* and *zhequan* insofar as they are related in the present moment, both directly pointing to [the truth of] "Buddha" and "mind". As linguistic expressions, these two propositions are compatible [even though they seem to contradict one another] for they are complementary—they are not mutually exclusive statement.

Weiqun Yao (2014) goes a step further, claiming that *biaoquan* and *zhequan* were utilized in ancient India by early seekers after truth. Yao argues that "the Brahminical sacred text begins negation (*zhe*), after which [uses positive terminology] to describe an independent entity or an essence. In Buddhism (especially Mahāyāna Buddhism) "negation" speaks to the reality of things insofar as it denies that there is an independent entity or essence.".

Regarding the modern use of the term "*zhequan*", Cheng Lü (1991, p. 212) uses it in his Chinese translation of the title for the fifth chapter in Dignāga's *Pramānasamuccaya* called "*An Investigation into Zhequan*" 觀遮詮品第五. In this instance, Lü uses *zhequan* to translate Dignāga's concept of *apoha*, or *anyāpoha*.[2] Weihong Zheng (1996, pp. 105–10), in an examination of *biaoquan* and *zhequan*, criticizes the previous notion that *zhequan* only designates negation or negative propositions, stating that *zhequan* is in fact conceptually closer to Dignāga's concept of *apoha*/*anyāpoha*. Recent studies by Liangkang Ni (2008) and Xiang-yanxiang Zhou (2017) have also interpreted *zhequan* in terms of Dignāga's concept of *apoha*/*anyāpoha*.

From the above discussion on *biaoquan* and *zhequan* in contemporary Chinese Buddhist scholarship, we may note that while they all use the concepts of *biaoquan* and *zhequan*, there are diverse opinions about the actual meaning of these two terms. The term *biaoquan* is less controversial among contemporary Chinese scholars, and disagreements regarding this conceptual pair usually revolve around the definition of *zhequan*.

The present consensus regarding the relationship between *biaoquan* and *zhequan* is that they constitute a conceptual pair. No one, however, has investigated the original meaning of these two terms or looked at when or why they were paired in Chinese Buddhism.[3] To fill these gaps, this paper elaborates on their place in tradition, describing how they were established as a conceptual pair. As we see in this article, the terms *biaoquan* and *zhequan* came from Xuanzang's translation work, where they were initially not considered a conceptual pair. Indeed, these individual terms carry multiple distinct definitions and associations. The former could designate both affirmation (**vidhi*) as well as the general activity of speech, syllables, and words (*nāma*). The latter corresponds to at least three concepts: negation (**pratiṣedha*, **vyāvṛtti*, **nivṛtti*), implicative negation (*paryudāsa*), and the exclusion of others (*anyāpoha*). In his translation of Asvabhāva's *Mahāyānasamgrahopanibandhana* (henceforth *MSU*), Xuanzang first used the terms to define a pair of complementary explanatory methods, namely the *biaoquan men* 表詮門 and *zhequan men* 遮詮門. This rhetorical dichotomy was used by later authors, gradually eclipsing the other definitions of *biaoquan* and *zhequan* so that, in time, they came to be exclusively associated with affirmation and negation in discourse. Later Buddhist interpreters continued using *biaoquan* and *zhequan* as a rhetorical pair, further cementing their association as a conceptual pair, leading in turn to the debates in our present day between modern Chinese scholars regarding the origins and the semantics of these terms. Bearing this in mind, the following provides context and definition for both *biaoquan* and *zhequan*.

2. The Three Instances of *Zhequan*

2.1. Implicative Negation

Because the concept of *zhequan* has more ambiguity than *biaoquan*, this paper first discusses the concept of *zhequan*. In Xuanzang's translation of Dignāga's *Nyāyamukha* (*NM*), the word *zhequan* is used to express what is called "implicative negation" in Buddhist logic.

> There are two types of examples: those by similarity and those by dissimilarity. An instance of an example by similarity is: "sound is impermanent, because it is produced immediately after effort; whatever is produced immediately after effort is impermanent, as a pot etc." [An instance of an example by] dissimilarity is: "we see that things permanent are not produced immediately after effort, such as space". The former is ***zhequan*** **遮詮**, and the latter is only ***zhilan*** **止濫**, because they enable [people] to infer objects through *anvaya* and *vyatireka*, respectively. Therefore, even if the opponent does not admit the existence of space, etc., as a real substance, stillthe [example by dissimilarity is sufficient to] show that, were the probandum absent, the absence of the reason would be necessarily proved.[4]

In this translation, the concept of *zhequan* is not paired with *biaoquan* but is defined in contrast to the concept *zhilan* 止濫. Reading the relevant passages in the *NM*, the meaning of these two terms is not immediately clear. Because the Sanskrit version of the *NM* has not been made public and there is no known ancient Tibetan translation, it is not possible to use the Sanskrit and Tibetan texts of the *NM* to aid in its interpretation. Fortunately, according to Shoryu Katsura (1981, pp. 63–64) there is a parallel in the Tibetan translation to the third chapter of Dignāga's famous philosophical treatise, the *Pramāṇasamuccaya* (*PS*). The parallel passage in Tibetan reads as follows:

> *snga ma ni* ***ma yin par dgag pa*** *yin la phyi ma ni* ***med par dgag pa*** *yin par brjod do.*[5]

Looking at this passage in the *PS*, it would seem the word *zhequan* as it appears in parallel *NM* passage designates implicative negation (*paryudāsa*), while the word *zhilan* refers to pure negation (*prasajya*).[6]

In the *PS*, Dignāga (c. 480–540) elaborates on how *ākāśa* (space) can be used in Buddhist logic as an example based on dissimilarity (Skt. *vaidharmya-dṛṣṭānta*). In Dignāga's philosophy of inference, the example based on similarity enables one to infer the object of the proposition by positive concomitance (*anvaya*). On the other hand, the example by dissimilarity enables one to infer the object of the proposition by negative concomitance (*vyatireka*). According to Katsura (1981, pp. 63–65), given that this section elaborates on the properties of space, the implicative negation and pure negation—*zhequan* and *zhilan*, respectively—here relate to the words "impermanent" and "permanent", respectively. In the example by similarity, the word "impermanent" is an implicative negation insofar as it is used to designate things that are impermanent—the negation is not used to merely deny substantiality or permanence. In the case of examples by dissimilarity, the primary purpose of the word "permanent" is not to affirm what is permanent by saying "permanent", but to instead deny impermanence. Therefore, in Dignāga's investigation of space (*ākāśa*)—whatever that may be—its describing/qualifying word "permanent" is without necessarily implying the existence of permanent space, etc.

As demonstrated in the parallel passages found in the *PS* it is clear that the word *zhequan* in the *NM* designates implicative negation(*paryudāsa*), while *zhilan* designates pure negation (*prasajya*), a different pair with no mention of a concept that we could liken to *biaoquan*.

2.2. Negation

In the discussion on the epistemological principle that "every cognition has an object" in the fifth chapter of Samghabhadra's *Shun zhengli lun* 順正理論, the author explains how the cognition of non-existence (**abhāva*) is possible. In this treatise, the author mentions the word *zhequan*:[7]

> Since this cognition has language (**abhidhāna*) as its object, it should not be thought that it arises without an object. The reason must be so. For example, people say "*abrahman*" or "*anitya*" and [other such negations]. [These words] negate things other [than what they refer to, such as Brahman-ness, permanence, etc.] but [these things] in and of themselves are not non-existent. Indeed, in these instances cognition arises of the language which negates Brahman-ness and permanence, etc. After language negates Brahman-ness and permanence, etc., it is the objects of speech that they refer to, namely a certain *Kṣatriya* and *Saṃskāra*s, etc. However, all **negative language** is either with or without an object. The [negative language] with an object is, for example, "*abrahman*," "*anitya*," etc. Negative language without an object is, for example, "non-existent," "nothing," and such. If cognition arises from [negative language] that has an object, the cognition initially arises only by having the [negative] language as its object, and thus can recognize that the negated object [such as Brahman-ness] does not exist. The [cognition] that arises afterwards has the object of speech [e.g., a certain *kṣatriya*] as its own object, and realizes the absence of the negated object [e.g., *brahman*-ness] in the object of speech itself [e.g., a certain *kṣatriya*]. If cognition arises of [negative language] without an object as its own object, both the initial and subsequent moments of cognition arise only by having [negative] language as their objects, recognizing that the negated object does not exist.[8]

Samghabhadra first points out that this cognizance of non-existence is actually the cognizance of negative language, continuing on to explain the two kinds of negative language (*zhequan mingyan* 遮詮名言): negative language with an object and negative language without an object. The former refers to implicative negation, and the latter refers to pure negation. Interestingly, Samghabhadra also explains the cognitive processes of these two kinds of negation. The cognitive process of implicative negation involves at least two steps: First, cognition arises by having the negative speech as its object and realizes the absence of "Brahman-ness", etc.. The subsequent moment of cognition realizes the absence of "Brahman-ness" in, say, a human of the warrior caste (*kṣatriya*). However, in the cognitive process guided by pure negation, the initial and subsequent cognitions only have negative language as their object. Given that the word translated in Samghabhadra's work as "*zhequan mingyan*" includes both implicative negative language and pure negative language, *zhequan* here seems to have a broader semantic field than in the *NM*. Indeed, it is used as a more general designation of negation that includes both implicative negation and pure negation.

A similar use of the word *zhequan* is also found in Xuanzang's translation of Bhāviveka's **Hastaratna* 大乘掌珍論.

> In addition, other people who are arrogant in their cleverness make the following challenge: "If from the standpoint of ultimate reality all *saṃskṛta*s are like illusions, and are empty of essence, then they must be non-existent. Because [you] are attached to non-existence, you have the cognition of non-existence." [Bhāviveka replied]: "[You detractors] want to cover up the faults of you own claims by uttering [such] slanderous words. Could it be that the reasoning established by those who cling to existence is correct, rather than those who make a claim for emptiness? Because to slander ultimate reality this way is a great mistake. The meaning of the word "non-existent" constitutes a **negation** (*zhequan*). You think that the primary purpose of this rhetoric is to affirm, but I would rather say that the primary purpose of this rhetoric is to negate. The word 'non-existent' only negates there being an "existent." Once the function [of negation] is realized, there is no impetus to indicate other things. For example, if people speak of 'not-white-silk' we should not insist that this word indicates black [silk] and then claim the speaker has a faulty premise. [We hold that] the expression 'not-white-silk' is only a negation of 'white silk,' and once the function of [negation] has been fulfilled, there is no reason to speak of black, red, or yellow silk."[9]

Bhāviveka's detractors argue that according to the Madhyamaka theory of emptiness, things that are empty of essence are non-existent, at which point the Mādhyamikas may cling to reified "non-existence". Bhāviveka explains that such a rebuttal is wrong, pointing out that the word "non-existent" in Mādhyamika thought is only an implicative negation aiming to negate "existents", without affirming the existence of an entity called "non-existent", just like the word "not-white-silk" only denies the whiteness of the silk without implying the silk itself is black, red, etc. Bhāviveka's reply is based in the logics of both implicative and pure negation. Therefore, the word *zhequan* here should be interpreted as general negation (*pratiṣedha*) that includes both implicative negation and pure negation.

The term *zhequan* appears again in the translation of Bhāviveka's **Hastaratna*. It is Bhāviveka who developed the following argument, which was named as "the reasoning of the **Hastaratna"* in *Faxiang zong*: "An *asaṃskṛta* is not a real entity because it does not arise, like flowers in the sky"[10]. According to this reasoning, flowers in the sky are not real entities and they do not arise, a logic following the reasoning of the example by similarity. Regarding *asaṃskṛta* in relation to these sky-flowers, the Sāṃkhya school's position is presented as follows:

> We believe that all things in the three realms, just like the flowers in the sky, arise through transformation—it is not that there are no flowers in the sky. Because the [flowers in the sky do in fact] exist, [to use of sky-flowers] in an example by similarity does not apply and goes contrary to that which you posit.[11]

The Sāṃkhyas claim that flowers in the sky arise from the transformation of a primary matter and are therefore real existent things. According to them, sky-flowers can therefore not be used as an example by similarity for the object *asaṃskṛta*. In response to such a view, Bhāviveka concludes that:

> Since, [in this case], flowers in the sky constitute an example by similarity, they do not belong to the three realms. You should not say that because the three realms do exist, [sky-flowers] also exist. This statement shows that your wisdom is lacking. **Negative language** (*zhequan yan*) mainly aims to negate. Once it negates, its function is fulfilled and it says nothing more about the specific object of negation. Such a questioning has been explained before. Therefore, it is not what the heart of a wise man should believe.[12]

Bhāviveka is arguing that flowers in the sky are different from other things in the three realms—the former are non-existents and the latter are existents. The validity of Bhāviveka's defense is not relevant to the subject of this paper, so I do not discuss it. In this second instance of the term *zhequan*, it is explicitly stated that the function of negation is key. Therefore, the term *zhequan* here in its usage does not refer to implicative negation but to pure negation. However, in view of the fact that Bhāviveka then states that this point has been explained in a preceding passage of **Hastaratna*, we have reason to believe that the preceding passage refers to the first passage of **Hastaratna* we analyzed above. If so, the term *zhequan* here must not have been translated from the Sanskrit *prasajya* but rather from the word *pratiṣedha*. Therefore, it can be said that in the **Hastaratna*, the concept of *zhequan* is translated from *pratiṣedha*, a Sanskrit word that simply means negation, and only when Bhāviveka states his own claim does *zhequan* specifically mean pure negation.[13]

The term *zhequan* also appears in Xuanzang's translation of the ninth chapter of Asvabhāva's commentary, the *She dacheng lun shi* 攝大乘論釋 (Skt. *Mahāyānasamgrahopanibandhana*).

> The śāstra [of *Mahāyānasamgraha*] says: "Here, the nature of the non-conceptual wisdom is to leave five characteristics: because (1) it is not without attention (**amanaskāra*); (2) it does not transcend the **savitarka-savicāra-bhūmi*s; (3) it is not quietness caused by the cessation of representation and sensation (**samjñāveditanirodha*); (4) it is not of the nature of forms (**rūpasvabhāva*); (5) it is not the conceptual cognition taking *tattva* as its object (**tattvārthacitrīkāra*). It should be known that what leaves these five characteristics is called non-conceptual wis-

> dom." The commentary says: "Based on the nature of the non-conceptual wisdom, its leaving from the five characteristics is stated. Through *zhequan men* (遮詮門), its essence (**svarūpa*) is stated. Because it cannot be stated through *biaoquan men* (表詮門)."[14]

In this instance, *biaoquan* and *zhequan* are defined as two methods of explaining non-conceptual wisdom. According to the translated commentary, the essence of this form of wisdom can only be revealed by means of *zhequan*. Xuanzang's translation is clear and unambiguous, making it is easy to understand the overall content of the commentary. However, it is not easy to tell from the Chinese translation what both these terms actually represent. Fortunately, there is a Tibetan translation of Asvabhāva's commentary. It reads as follows:

> *ngo bo nyid kyi dbang du byas nas rnam pa lnga rnam par spangs pa zhes bya ba smos so || bzlog pa'i sgo nas mtshan nyid ston te | dmus long la gzugs bsnyad pa bzhin du bsgrub pa'i sgo nas brjod par mi nus pa'i phyir ro ||*[15]

In parallel to this Tibetan translation, Xuanzang's use of the term *zhequan* corresponds to the word "*bzlog pa*", a translation of the Sanskrit words "**nivṛtti*, **vyāvṛtti*" meaning "negation". The word *biaoquan* corresponds to "*bsgrub pa*", a translation of the Sanskrit word "**vidhi*, **sādhana*" meaning "affirmation". If this is true, then Asvabhāva here proposes that non-conceptual wisdom can only be described by means of negation, not by means of affirmation" This would be the earliest instance where we see the use of *biaoquan* (affirmation) and *zhequan* (negation) as a pair of opposite concepts. This confirms the earlier claim that the understanding of *biaoquan*/*zhequan* as an affirmation/negation pair espoused by Wangdao Chen, Litian Fang, and other scholars can indeed be traced back to a text translated by Xuanzang, namely the *She dacheng lun shi* 攝大乘論釋.

2.3. Exclusion of Others

The exclusion (*apoha*) theory, also known as the exclusion of others (*anyāpoha*) theory, is a system of semantics presented by Dignāga which holds that nominal words draw their meaning through the exclusion of everything other than their referents—the semantic correlate of a word such as "glass" is the exclusion of others such as "paper", "plastic", "metal", etc. In Xuanzang's translated oeuvre, there is no direct example of *zhequan* being used to translate Dignāga's concept of *apoha*/*anyāpoha*. However, as Weihong Zheng (1996, pp. 107–8) points out, Xuanzang's assistant Shentai 神泰 used the word *zhequan* to explain *apoha* in his own commentary on Dignāga's *NM*. In addition, the same use of the term can be found in many Buddhist texts from the Tang dynasty onward, as we see in Woncheuk's 圓測 *Boreboluomiduo xinjing zan* 般若波羅蜜多心經贊. Given that Dignāga's *PS*, which explains the theory of *apoha*, had not yet been translated in the seventh century, it is likely that the *apoha* theory known to Shentai, Woncheuk, and others, would have been learned through the oral teachings given by Xuanzang during his translation work. Therefore, it is possible that the practice of interpreting the Sanskrit term *apoha* as *zhequan* may have come from Xuanzang's oral teaching.

The following provides some examples of the use of the term *zhequan* in the commentaries written by Shentai and Woncheuk. For instance, in a commentary on Dignāga's *NM*, Shentai writes:

> **[The *NM* says:] "The former is *zhequan*, and the latter is only *zhilan*."** This statement sets apart two separate instances [of inference]. The former [instance refers to] the example by similarity. The latter [refers to] the example by dissimilarity. All things have two properties. One is the particular property, only cognized by the five consciousnesses such as the visual [consciousness], though it may not be cognized by the conceptual mind and such. The second is the universal property, cognized by means of the conceptual mind and such. Words may only refer to universal properties, not to the particular properties of things because particulars are distinct from language. When referring to a universal prop-

> erty, [a word] excludes [everything] other than its referent before it may refer to this [universal property.] For example, the word "blue" refers to the universal property of blueness only insofar as it excludes yellow, [red, orange, etc.] things which are non-blue. If the word "blue" did not indeed exclude yellow things, etc., then yellow things would come [to mind] when the word "blue" is said. In order to designate their referents, all words must refer to [their referents] by excluding (*zhe*) other things. There is no [word] that refers to something without excluding other things. However, some words can only exclude other things without designating a referent. For example, the word "not-blue" does not refer to a not-blue thing. In the example by similarity, [the word] "the-things-being-produced-immediately-after-effort," excludes the things-*not*-being-produced-immediately-after-effort by referring to things produced immediately after effort. [The word] "impermanent" excludes permanent things and refers to impermanent things arising and ceasing. Therefore, it is said [in the example by similarity] that exclusion comes first, and the reference follows. In the example by dissimilarity, [the word] "permanent" only excludes impermanent things—the word is not necessarily referring to permanent things. [The word] "not-produced" aims to exclude produced things without referring directly to a not-produced thing. The aim [of the example by dissimilarity] is [to show] that only impermanent things—where there is no "thesis-property"—are not-produced. The statement is a *zhilan* and does not refer to any real object. Therefore, [the *NM*] notes that "the latter is only *zhilan*". "Because they enable [people] to infer objects through *anvaya* and *vyatireka* respectively" is to explain the above-mentioned distinctions. Because [in Buddhist logic] the example by similarity enables [people] to infer insofar as it has the thesis-property and reason-property, it is therefore both exclusionary and referential. This is because its own "thesis-property" and "reason-property" constitute *zhequan*. Because the example by dissimilarity enables [people] to infer only by departing from its own thesis-property and reason-property, it is only *zhilan* without any further referential aim.[16]

This is Shentai's commentary on the passage in the *NM* regarding *zhequan* and *zhilan* mentioned in the previous section. In the previous passage, we noted that the word *zhequan* designates implicative negation, and *zhilan* designates pure negation. In his commentary, however, Shentai also includes Dignāga's exclusion theory, thus adding yet another semantic dimension to the term *zhequan*, wherein it effectively functions as an indicator for both exclusion theory and implicative negation.[17] Interestingly, the first half of Shentai's commentary seemingly models itself after Dignāga's exclusion theory, stating that words may only refer to universal properties, and the cognition of these universals must be cognized by means of excluding others. Indeed, in this commentary, the term "*qianzhe yufa* 遣遮餘法" is effectively a translation of "exclusion of others", the Sanskrit term "*anyāpoha*".

Dignāga's own works do not explicitly attempt to marry exclusion theory with the theory encompassing implicative and pure negation. Shentai elaborates on the theory of the exclusion of others in terms of the two negations theory. Indeed, Shentai seems to equate the exclusion of others with implicative negation. This results in an apparent self-contradiction in his exegesis: Shentai begins by saying that all words may refer to universals through the exclusion of others, but then proceeds to mention that some nominal words are exceptional in that they may only negate the other without having an actual referent. This two-fold system does not follow from Dignāga's exclusion theory but is instead Shentai's own synthesis of these two different streams in Buddhist logic. It would seem that although Shentai has a clear understanding of the two negations theory as well as the *apoha* theory, there is significant deviation in Shentai's commentary from Dignāga's own theory.

The problem in reading this commentary is that Shentai does not distinguish between *zhequan* as exclusion of others and *zhequan* as an implicative negation. Looking through

other related materials, we note that this problem is not unique to Shentai. For example, Woncheuk's (613–696) commentary on the *Heart Sūtra* states:

> All things may have two properties: a particular property and a universal property. A particular property is only cognized by perception, because it is not grasped by provisional cognitions (*jiazhi* 假智) and words. If provisional cognitions and words have objects to grasp, these are universal properties. For example, the word "blue" [takes the universal property "blue-ness" as its object] while diverse [particular] properties of a stem and a leaf may only be grasped by means of perception. Through provisional cognitions and words, only the universal properties of blue things may be revealed. The word "blue" negates yellow things, etc., thus [insofar as it excludes non-blue things] it is said to refer to blue things. Since it does not refer to blue things directly, it is called *zhequan* (=*apoha*). Regarding *zhequan* there are two theories. The first one is of Bhāviveka's school which states that ultimate reality cannot be expressed using words or characterized by certain properties. [Bhāviveka] negates but has nothing to grasp, and establishes but has no commitment to its existence. The reasons and authoritative scriptures cited should be understood as above. The second is presented by Dharmapāla's school. [He argues that] both conventional and ultimate realities exist, and both are separate from words. Given that "true nature" (Ch. *zhenxing* 真性; Skt. **tattva*) is opposed to conventional [conditioned reality] the word "true nature" has a real referent. In Bhāviveka's school, a master proposes something similar to [Dharmapāla's] position. Therefore, Dharmapāla criticizes Bhāviveka: "On the level of ultimate reality, the [thesis] that all elements are empty holds the fallacy of **prasiddhasambandha*." In Bhāviveka's theory, the *paratantrasvabhāva* is negated which is not accepted by Dharmapāla. Therefore, they hold different [theses.] Accordingly, the words "exist" and "not-exist" upheld by our school are both *zhequan*.[18]

In the first half of the above quotation, Woncheuk's explanation of *zhequan* is basically the same as that of Shentai. Woncheuk is essentially providing an introduction to Dignāga's *apoha* theory. According to his summary of Dignāga's theory, the word "blue" does not directly speak of blue things but does so through the negation of yellow, orange, red, etc., things. In the second half of the passage, the argument between Bhāviveka and Dharmapāla is used as a background to present two interpretations of *zhequan*: Bhāviveka believes that *zhequan* is pure negation, which only negates without any reference to a real object; Dharmapāla believes that *zhequan* is an implicative negation, wherein the word may have a real referent. Therefore, although it is not entirely consistent with the interpretation of *zhequan* by Shentai, Woncheuk's interpretation also mixes up Dignāga's theory of exclusion with the two negations theory. We may also note that it is in the Tang dynasty that the term *zhequan* was indeed associated to Dignāga's *apoha* theory, the intellectual origins of a tradition that came to color the understanding of *zhequan* in the works of modern scholars such as Cheng Lü and Weihong Zheng.

3. The Two Instances of *Biaoquan*

3.1. Affirmation

We noted at the beginning of this paper that the terms *biaoquan* and *zhequan* in Asvabhāva's *MSU* correspond to affirmation (*bsgrub pa*, **vidhi*, **sādhana*) and negation (*bzlog pa*, **nivṛtti*, **vyāvṛtti*), respectively. This definition of *biaoquan* as "affirmation" is well attested to and is not further developed here.

3.2. The Activity of Speech, Śabda

Similar to the term *zhequan*, which has its own distinct history of usage in Chinese Buddhist scriptures, the term *biaoquan* also appears separately from its conceptual counterpart

in various other texts. For example, Samghabhadra's *Shun zhengli lun* 順正理論 says the following:

> However, the speaker first grasps the *nāma* that he wants to [speak] in his mind, then he thinks: "I will make such-and-such a speech act and express such-and-such an object to others." Then he speaks according to his own will, and the speech invokes syllables, and the syllables invoke *nāma*s, and it is the *nāma*s that reveal the object. On the basis of this continuous process, it is said that speech invokes *nāma*s, and it is the *nāma*s that reveal the objects. The reasoning must be established as above. If the *nāma*s are not included in the mind at the beginning, even when [someone] is intent to speak, there will be no fixed *biaoquan* 表詮 and the object [of speech] will not be recognized by others.[19]

This passage of *Shun zhengli lun* is a rebuttal of the *Abhidharmakośabhāsya*, wherein Vasubandhu argues that the "*nāma*", as a property dissociated from cognition, is useless.[20] The word *biaoquan* does not appear again in this passage of Samghabhadra's translated works, but its meaning is not difficult to determine. Samghabhadra establishes a relational and processual continuum of speech–syllable–*nāma*–object, in which speech invokes syllables, syllables invoke *nāma*s, and *nāma*s invoke their objects. Then, *biaoquan*, which is located somewhere between the speech act and the object, refers to the two links in the middle, the syllables and the *nāma*s. It is possible that the original Sanskrit word may be *abhidhāna*. In this instance, the concept of *biaoquan* is not opposed to *zhequan*. In fact, there is no opposing concept here: *biaoquan* is not defined in contrast to some other concept.

A similar use of *biaoquan* denoting a *śabda*, or speech act, is found in the first volume of the *Cheng weishi lun* 成唯識論:

> Others claim that the *śabda*s of the Vedas are permanent and can be used as a determined and correct means of cognition to speak of (*biaoquan* 表詮) *dharma*s. Some claim that all *śabda*s are permanent and depend on conditions for manifestation, after which reveal (*quanbiao* 詮表) [the objects]. These [claims] are all unreasonable. Why? First of all, since the *śabda*s of the Vedas are admitted to be viable for speaking of (*nengquan* 能詮) [the *dharma*s], then they would have to be impermanent, just like other *śabda*s given that other *śabda*s also have impermanent *śabda*s as their essence, just as bottles, clothes, etc. depend on many conditions.[21]

In this quotation, the three words *biaoquan*, *quanbiao*, and *nengquan*, are interchangeable and they all mean "speak of", "reveal", or the "*śabda*s that speak of *dharma*s". The use of the term *biaoquan* in the *Cheng weishi lun* therefore differs from that in the *Shun zhengli lun*, which uses the term to designate the syllables and the *nāma*s in speech acts. That being said, although these two uses of the term differ, they remain semantically related insofar as they both refer to speech elements and, more generally, the activity of speech.

Finally, in his commentary on the last verse of Deva's *Catuḥśataka*,[22] Dharmapāla also gives an example of *biaoquan* in relation to general words/speeches.

> The opinion that "[something] exists" (*sat*) and the opinion that "[something] does not exist" (*asat*) have both been removed, and [the opinion] that "[something] exists and does not exist" (*sadasac*) and "[something] does not exist and does not non-exist" should be similarly removed. While existents, etc., are explicable (*ke biaoquan*), however, true nature (**tattva*) remains ineffable (*jue biaoquan*), showing that [true nature] is not an existent, etc.[23]

According to Dharmapāla, existents may be properly expressed via language, while true nature remains beyond the reach of words. Unlike the other example provided above, Dharmapāla does not, in this instance, discuss the forms of speech used to explain these things. Without any reference to affirmative or negative rhetoric, the terms "explicable" (*ke biaoquan*) and "ineffable" (*jue biaoquan*) are here related to the general activity of speech, not distinguishing between cataphatic and apophatic uses of language.

4. From *Biaoquan* and *Zhequan* to *Biaoquan Men* and *Zhequan Men*

As noted above regarding the development of *biaoquan* and *zhequan* as philosophical terms in the Chinese Buddhist tradition, both these concepts were closely related to Xuanzang's translation activities. We also noted that in most early instances, these terms were not presented as opposing concepts, with the only exception being the treatise of interest in this section, the translation of Asvabhāva's *MSU*. In Asvabhāva's work, *biaoquan* and *zhequan* became two opposing methods (*men* 門) used to describe non-conceptual wisdom. Indeed, it would seem that the translation of Asvabhāva's two-part hermeneutic framework made up of the *biaoquan men* and the *zhequan men* was, in a sense, more practical and applicable than the other varied definitions of *biaoquan* and *zhequan*. The broad semantic fields for both of these words were therefore fitted into Asvabhāva's two opposing methods of interpretation, the *biaoquan men* and the *zhequan men*. In the *NM*, *zhequan* and *zhilan* are effectively presented as opposing concepts, but because they were not identified by Xuanzang as opposing methods of interpretation when they were translated, this perhaps made them less accessible, preventing them from being further promoted as a conceptual pair in Chinese Buddhism. Indeed, it would seem they were ultimately absorbed into the categories of *biaoquan men* and *zhequan men* as defined in the translation to Asvabhāva's *MSU*.

Ultimately, in the writings of Xuanzang's disciples, the pairing of *biaoquan* and *zhequan* became prevalent. For instance, in Kuiji's 窺基 explanation on how examples by similarity and examples by dissimilarity both constitute existent things, *biaoquan* and *zhequan* are used as a pair of opposites.

> The example by similarity as [a part of] proof, when proving an existent [as a thesis subject], must be an existent [entity], and when proving a non-existent [as a thesis-subject], must be a non-existent [entity]. Both affirmation (*biaoquan*) and negation (*zhequan*) are valid in these instances. However, the example by dissimilarity is not so regardless of [whether the example by dissimilarity is] existent or not. It may only negate, for it is essentially pure negation (*zhilan*). In this way, the word "permanent" negates the thesis[-property] "impermanent", and the word "unproduced" affirms the absence of the reason[-property] "produced". However, these mentions of "permanent" and "unproduced" are not meant to express two [properties] with existent entities because the purpose [of such words in the *Nyāyapraveśa*] is to show that the example by dissimilarity can also be non-existent entities. The *NM* states: "The former is *zhequan*; the latter is only *zhilan*. Because they enable [people] to infer objects through *anvaya* and *vyatireka*, respectively". The former example by similarity both negates (*zhe*) and affirms (*quan*) because [the thesis-subject with an] existent [entity] should be established by [instances with] existent [entities], and [the thesis-subject with a] non-existent [entity] should be established by [instances with] non-existent [entities]. The latter example by dissimilarity only negates (*zhilan*), that is to say, that it negates (*zhe*) without affirming (*quan*). This is because the example by similarity is connected with (*he* 合) the probandum, and the example by dissimilarity is separate from (*li* 離) the probandum.[24]

Considering that Kuiji is one of Xuanzang's disciples, it is worth paying special attention to how he uses the terms *zhequan*, *biaoquan*, *zhe*, and *quan* in his commentary. Kuiji uses the word *zhequan* in two ways: *zhequan I* means negation, as opposed to *biaoquan*, which means affirmation here, whereas *zhequan II* consists of both negation (*zhe*) and affirmation (*biaoquan*; *quan*). *Zhequan II* only occurs when mentioning Dignāga's *NM* and is interpreted as a negation that also entails an affirmation.

Kuiji then comments that the example by dissimilarity, a proposition that "whatever is permanent is non-produced like space", is a pure negation. That is to say, in this case, the words "permanent" and "non-produced" do not affirm the existence of some entity but appear only as the opposite of "impermanent" and "produced". Kuiji explains that things that do not exist can effectively be used in an example by dissimilarity. In contrast, the

example by similarity can refer to either existents or non-existents, depending on whether the object of the proof exists. When the example by similarity is an existent thing, then the words "impermanent" and "produced" in the statement are affirmations, i.e., they affirm the existence of something. When the example by similarity is something that does not exist, then these elements in the statement are negations, i.e., denying the existence of something. In terms of definitions and philosophical content, we see a clear instance of how the concepts of *zhequan* (=*prayudāsa*) and *zhilan* (=*prasajya*) in the *NM* are subsumed into the framework of *zhequan men* and *biaoquan men* of Asvabhāva's *MSU*. Indeed, it would seem that Xuanzang's own disciples do not fully understand his translations.

In the *Commentary on the Humane King Sūtra*, Woncheuk also refers to the *zhequan men* and the *biaoquan men* to explain the question as to "whether reading the *Humane King Sūtra* could protect one from four grave karmas". Woncheuk writes that:

> Among the different schools, there are four distinct responses. (1) [According to] the Sarvāstivādas, [when a monk commits and act that triggers the four grave karmas, he] may never abandon the precepts. (2) [According to] the school of Sautrāntika and Yogacāra, [the monk] will definitely abandon the precepts. (3) [According to] the *Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra*, some of his precepts may be abandoned and some may not. (4) [According to] the *Vaitulya* scriptures and the *Sūtra of Meditating on Samantabhadra*, if he repents, he will not abandon the precepts; if not, he will abandon the precepts. The [third and fourth statements] become the third and fourth points [above]... Points three and four speak to the same teachings by negation (*zhe*) and affirmation (*biao*). If it is through affirmation (*biaoquan*), it will appear as it does in the third point. If it is through negation (*zhequan*), it will appear as it does in the fourth point. Therefore, the *Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra* and the *Vaitulya* scriptures reveal the same teachings but in different forms. Based on the *Vaitulya* scriptures as well as this *sūtra*, the meaning of the four heavy karmas and five cardinal sins are established.[25]

The question with which Woncheuk struggles here is: If a monk commits one of the four grave sins, must he renounce the precepts? The *Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra* and the *Vaitulya* scriptures seem to hold different opinions. In order to reconcile these two opposite theses, Woncheuk explains that although the third and fourth points are different, the meaning is essentially the same. This is because, according to Woncheuk, the third and fourth sentences are instances of *biaoquan* (point 3) and *zhequan* (point 4) that reveal the same teaching using different formulations of the same truth statement—namely that if he repents, he will not give up the precepts; if he does not repent, he will give up the precepts. By describing the third point of this fourfold logical argument (Skt. *catuṣkoṭi*) as affirmation (*biaoquan*) and the fourth point as a negation (*zhequan*), Woncheuk argues that they both represent the same meaning though they differ in terms of how they point to the truth—via affirmation or via negation. It is obvious that the use of the concepts of *biaoquan* and *zhequan* in this case is consistent with the *biaoquan men* and the *zhequan men* defined in Asvabhāva's *MSU*, respectively.

Similarly, in a commentary on the *Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra*, Wonhyo (617–686) elaborates on the four-part logical statement claiming that:

(1) Some Buddha-nature belongs to deluded beings (Skt. *icchantika*s) but not to people with wholesome roots.
(2) Some Buddha-nature belongs to people with wholesome roots but not to *icchantika*s.
(3) Some Buddha-nature belongs to both of them.
(4) Some Buddha nature belongs to none of them.[26]

Wonhyo comments:

> Regarding these two [kinds of people], the two first sentences expel two extreme opinions by relying on negation (*zhequan*). The latter two sentences that combine these two [kinds of] people are developed to show the middle way according to method of affirmation (*biaoquan men*).[27]

Wonhyo states that the first sentence denies the one-sided statement that "*icchantika*s definitely have no Buddha-nature" by means of negation; the second sentence once again denies the equally one-sided statement that "*icchantika*s definitely have Buddha-nature" by means of negation; and the third sentence directly affirms that Buddha-nature, unlike the proposition that a rabbit may have horns, does not exist; the fourth sentence directly affirms that Buddha-nature, unlike empty space, does exist. Wonhyo is clearly using the conceptual pairing of *biaoquan* and *zhequan* in the sense of affirmation and negation. This is the basic meaning of *biaoquan men* and *zhequan men* in Asvabhāva's *MSU*.

We can see that both *biaoquan* and *zhequan* were once widely used mainly as a hermeneutic tool in the exegetical works of Xuanzang's disciples and of their contemporaries. The ambiguous and varied meaning of these two terms were gradually made clearer, and we saw that, in most instances, they were reduced to the two methods of affirmation and negation introduced in Asvabhāva's *MSU*.

5. Conclusions

This paper showed that in most of Xuanzang's translations, the terms *biaoquan* and *zhequan* are not opposite—or even related—concepts but instead have their own various definitions. We saw that the term *biaoquan* can designate either an affirmation, a general speech act, or speech elements such as syllables and *nāma*s. The term *zhequan* has three possible definitions: (1) implicative negation, (2) negation, and (3) exclusion of others. In the *NM*, the concept of *zhequan* (implicative negation) represents the opposite of *zhilan* (pure negation), while *biaoquan* is not mentioned at all. In the *Shun zhengli lun*, the terms *biaoquan* and *zhequan* are not related to each other—*biaoquan* is the activity of speech, syllables, and *nāma*s, while *zhequan* is negation. In the translation to Bhāviveka's **Hastaratna*, it only mentions "*zhequan*" as negation, once again without *biaoquan*. In the works of several of Xuanzang's disciples, the word *zhequan* is sometimes used to refer to Dignāga's concept of exclusion of others (*anyāpoha*). It is, indeed, only in the translation of Asvabhāva's *MSU* that the two first appear as a pair of opposing concepts.

Because Xuanzang's translation of Asvabhāva's *MSU* explicitly established the hermeneutic methods known as the *biaoquan men* and the *zhequan men*, this pair of concepts was given great theological significance, gradually subsuming the semantic variance of *biaoquan* and *zhequan* into the categories of affirmation and negation, respectively. The works of Kuiji, Woncheuk, and Wonhyo all show such a tendency in their exegesis. Therefore, although other uses of *biaoquan* and *zhequan* occasionally appeared in the Chinese commentarial tradition, these do not disprove a general trend in the Tang when the two terms *biaoquan* and *zhequan* were finally established as a pair of fixed terms. This is the early history of the formation of this pair of Buddhist terms, two concepts that have long been points of contention and debate among Buddhists and among scholars.

It would seem that in the short span of one generation, from Xuanzang to his disciples, there must have been some confusion vis-à-vis the original meaning of these concepts. Two important issues remain unanswered. Firstly, assuming that Xuanzang translated these texts with reference to Sanskrit manuscripts, there is little possibility that he could have completely misunderstood or perhaps confused these concepts. That begs the question: why did Xuanzang use the terms *biaoquan* and *zhequan* to translate so many philosophical concepts taken from Sanskrit? Should he not have used different words to describe different concepts? Secondly, during histranslation workshops, Xuanzang often provided oral teachings such as may be found in the large number of explanatory phrases included in the translation to the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya*. It is likely that Dignāga's theory of exclusion of others would also have been transmitted in a similar oral form.[28] Can we, therefore, conjecture that Xuanzang did not actually intend to treat *biaoquan* and *zhequan* as a pair of fixed terms and did not have a systematic teaching related to them, but that it was the disciples, influenced by the translation of Asvabhāva's *MSU*, who actively tried to unify all the examples of *biaoquan* and *zhequan*? If such conjecture is justified, we must also consider a more crucial question: the scholarly community sometimes speculates about the

doctrine of the Faxiang school (*faxiang zong* 法相宗) as transmitted by Xuanzang based on the commonality of the various commentaries written by his disciples. Is such speculation not also shaken by the implication that these disciples played such an active role in the promotion of *biaoquan* and *zhequan* as a pair of concepts?

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Notes

1 The original book was published in 1931, and Wangdao Chen (2006) is a reprint of it.

2 Only two Tibetan translations of Dignāga's *Pramānasamuccaya* exist. First, in the translation by Vasudhararakṣita (D no. 4203; P no. 5701), the fifth chapter is entitled *gzhan sel ba brtag pa'i le'u ste lnga pa*, which can be approximated to Sanskrit as **anyāpoha-parīkṣā*. Kanakavarman's translation (P no. 5702) does not record the title of the fifth chapter.

3 Ho (2022), while analyzing the theory of *apoha* in Chinese Buddhism, especially among the works of Shentai, Kuiji, and others, also points out the polysemy of the concept of *zhequan*. However, this study does not trace the concept of *zhequan* further back to Xuanzang's translations or examine the original Sanskrit terms to which *zhequan* may correspond and its possible meanings.

4 喻有二種：同法、異法。同法者，謂立聲無常，勤勇無間所發性故；以諸勤勇無間所發，皆見無常，猶如瓶等。異法者，謂諸有常住，見非勤勇無間所發，如虛空等。前是**遮詮**，後唯**止濫**。由合及離，比度義故。由是雖對不立實有太虛空等，而得顯示無有宗處，無因義成。(T1628.32.2c5-11).

5 V 60a6-7; K 148b2. For the translation and interpretation of this sentence, see Kitagawa (1965, pp. 241–42). Kitagawa has elaborated on the correspondence between this sentence in the *NM* and in the *PS*. However, Kitagawa's interpretation of this sentence is rather problematic. Lü and Shi (1934) also point out the correspondence between *zhequan* and implicative negation (*paryudāsa*), *zhilan* and pure negation (*prasajya*).

6 Zamorski (2015) focuses on the terminological confusion of the term *zhequan* in Shentai's *Zhenglimen lun shuji*, Wengui's *Ruzhenglilun shu*, and Kuiji's *Dashu*.

7 This material is also noted by Zamorski (2015, pp. 207–8).

8 此覺既緣能詮為境，不應執此緣無境生。理必應爾。如世間說"非婆羅門"及"無常"等，雖遮餘有，而體非無。此中智生，緣遮梵志及常等性。能詮所詮，即此能詮能遮梵志及常等性，於自所詮剎帝利身、諸行等轉。然諸所有**遮詮名言**，或有有所詮、有無所詮者。有所詮者，如"非梵志"、"無常"等言。無所詮者，如說"非有"、"無物"等言。因有所詮而生智者，此智初起但緣能詮，便能了知所遮非有。後起亦有能緣所詮，知彼體中所遮非有。因無所詮而生智者，初起後起但緣能詮，於中了知所遮非有。(T1562.29.624a7-20).

9 復有餘師，懷聰叡慢，作是難言："若諸有為，就勝義諦，猶如幻等，空無自性，即是非有，執非有故，便為無見。"彼欲覆障自宗過難，矯設謗言。寧俱有過，勿空論者，所立量成，謗勝義諦過失大故。此"非有"言，是**遮詮**義，汝執此言表彰為勝，我說此言遮止為勝。此"非有"言，唯遮有性，功能斯盡，無有勢力更詮餘義。如世間說"非白絹"言，不可即執此言詮黑，與能說者作立宗過。"非白絹"言，唯遮白絹，功能斯盡，更無餘力詮表黑絹、赤絹、黃絹。(T1578.30.270c6-15). Also see He (2015, p. 38).

10 無為無有實，不起似空花。(T1578.30.273c2).

11 我宗三界一切皆似空花轉變，非無空花。由彼是有，同喻不成，違所立故。(ibid.275b1-3).

12 若說空花為同法喻，即非三界，不應說言三界有故彼亦是有，此言顯汝自慧輕微。又**遮詮言**，遮止為勝，遮所遮已，功能即盡，無能更表所遮差別。如是難辭，前已具釋，故非智者心所信受。(ibid.275b11-15).

13 In the **Hastaratna*, the concept of *zhequan*, although literally meaning negation, is consistently regarded as pure negation by Bhāviveka from his Madhyamaka standpoint, and such an approach can also be seen in another work of Bhāviveka, the *Prajñāpradīpa*. Bhāviveka, in this work, says: "The negation of 'not from self' should be regarded as the meaning of pure negation (*med par dgag pa, *prasajya*). Because negation is primary, and because [Nāgārjuna], by negating all the nets of conceptual constructions in this way, wants to establish non-conceptual wisdom that is endowed with all cognizable objects. If it is taken to be an implicative negation (*ma yin par dgag pa, *paryudāsa*), because affirmation is primary, and [implicative negation] would teach non-origination by affirming that things are unoriginated, it would be contrary to [our] doctrine. For it is said in scripture that if one practices the non-origination of matter, one does not practice the perfection of discernment" (bdag las ma yin zhes bya ba'i dgag pa 'di ni med par dgag pa'i don du lta bar bya ste | dgag pa gtso che ba'i phyir dang | 'di ltar rtogs pa ma lus pa'i dra ba dgag pas rnam par mi rtog pa'i ye shes shes bya'i yul ma lus pa dang ldan pa 'grub par dgongs pa'i phyir ro || ma yin par dgag pa yongs su bzung na ni de sgrub pa gtso che ba'i phyir chos rnams ma skyes so zhes sgrub pas skye ba med pa ston pa'i phyir mdzad pa'i mtha' dang bral bar 'gyur te | lung las gzugs kyi skye ba med pa la spyod na shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa la spyod pa ma yin no zhes 'byung ba'i phyir ro || PP Derge no.3853, 48b6-49a1). See (Ames 2019, pp. 28–29).

14 論曰：此中無分別智，離五種相以為自性：一離無作意故、二離過有尋有伺地故、三離想受滅寂靜故、四離色自性故、五離於真義異計度故。離此五相，應知是名無分別智。釋曰：依智自性說離五相，由**遮詮門**說智體相，以**表詮門**不可說故。(T1598.31.429b27-c3).

15 D no.4051, 266a7-266b1.

16 前是遮詮，後唯止濫者。此簡二喻差別。前者同喻也。後者異喻也。諸法有二相：一自相。唯眼等五識等得，非散心意等得也。二共相。即散心意識等約也。名言但詮共相，不能詮表諸法因（自）相，以自相離言說故。詮共相要遣遮餘法，方詮顯此法。如言青，遮非青黃等，方能顯彼青之共相。若不遮黃等，喚青，黃即應來故。一切名言，欲最（顯？）其法，要遮餘詮此，無有不遮而詮法也。然有名言，但遮餘法，更無別詮。如言"無青"，更不別顯無青體也。今同喻云"諸是勤勇無間所發"，遮非勤勇無間所發，顯勤勇無間所發。"皆是無常"，遮是常住，詮顯無常生滅之法。故云前是其遮，後是詮也。其異法喻云"諸常住者"，但遮無常，故云"常住"，不欲更別詮常住。"即非所作"，但欲遮其所作，不別詮顯非作法體。此意但是無常宗無之處，皆無所作，但是止濫而已，不欲詮顯法體，故言"後唯止濫"也。"由合及離比度義故"者，此釋上差別。由同喻合本宗因，而比度故。故是遮而得詮。以本宗因是遮詮故。由異喻，但欲離本宗因，而比度故，故唯止濫，不欲別有詮表也。(X86.654b14-655a15).

17 There is indeed a correlation between the doctrine of exclusion of others and the two negation theories. For example, since Dignāga's time, the doctrine of the exclusion of others has undergone three stages: (1) the negative doctrine of the exclusion of others (Dignāga, Dharmakīrti), (2) the affirmative doctrine of exclusion of others (Śāntarakṣita), and (3) the affirmation qualified by exclusion of others (Jñānaśrimitra, Ratnakīrti). Among them, the negation in the negative doctrine of the exclusion of others is considered to be pure negation; the negation in the affirmative doctrine of the exclusion of others is implicative negation. See Nagasaki (1984, pp. 347–48).

18 然一切法皆有二相：謂即自、共。自相唯是現量智得，非假智言所可得故。若假智言所詮得者，謂即共相，且如說"青"　。莖葉等相，其相各異，唯現量得。由斯假智及諸名言，但能詮表青上共相。而說"青"　時，遮黃等，故名為說青。非正表青，故說遮詮。就遮詮中自有兩說。一清辨宗，其性道理，不可以名名，不可以相相。破而無執，立而無當。所引理教，準上應知。二護法宗，實有世俗勝義道理，皆離名言。於中真性對世俗故，說真性言，非無所詮。清辨宗中一師所說，亦同此釋。是故護法破清辨曰："若依真性說，諸法空便成相符極成之失。"於清辨宗遣依他性，護法不許，故有差別。由斯道理，內宗所說"有""無"等言，皆是遮詮。(T1711.545b22-c7).

19 然能說者，以所樂名先蘊在心，方復思度：我當發起如是如是言，為他宣說如是如是義。由此後時隨思發語，因語發字，字復發名，名方顯義。由依如是展轉理門，說語發名，名能顯義，如斯安立其理必然。若不以名先蘊心內，設令發語無定表詮，亦不令他於義生解。(T1562.29.414b3-9).

20 *idaṃ cāpi na jñāyate, kathaṃ vāṅ nāmni pravarttata iti | kiṃ tāvad utpādayaty āhosvit prakaśayati | yady utpādayati | ghoṣasvabhāvatvād vācaḥ sarvaṃ ghoṣamātraṃ nāmotpādayisyati, yādṛśo vā ghoṣaviśeṣa isyate nāmna utpādakaḥ sa evārthasya dyotako bhavisyati | atha prakāśayati | ghoṣasvabhāvat vācaḥ sarvaṃ ghoṣamātraṃ nāma prakāśayisyati, yādṛśo vā ghoṣaviśeṣa isyate nāmnaḥ prakāśakaḥ, sa evārthasya dyotako bhavisyati |* AKBh.

21 有餘偏執明論聲常，能為定量表詮諸法。有執一切聲皆是常，待緣顯發方有詮表。彼俱非理。所以者何？且明論聲許能詮故，應非常住，如所餘聲。餘聲亦應非常聲體，如瓶衣等待眾緣故。(T1585.31.3b14-19).

22 *sad asat sadasac ceti yasya paksọ na vidyate | upālambhaś cireṇāpi tasya vaktuṃ na śakyate ||* Lang (1986, p. 150).

23 有非有見於此既除，俱是俱非皆應類遣，以其有等皆可表詮，真絕表詮故非有等。(T1571.30.250a12-14).

24 同喻能立，成有必有，成無必無，表詮遮詮二種皆得。異喻不爾，有體無體一向皆遮，性止濫故。故"常"　言者，遮非無（無 should be deleted ）常宗。"非所作"言，表非所作因。不要"常""非作"別詮二有體。意顯異喻通無體故。理門論云："前是遮詮。後唯止濫。由合及離比度義故。"前之同喻亦遮亦詮，由成無以無，成有以有故。後之異喻一向止濫，遮而不詮。由同喻合比度義故。由異喻離比度義故。(T1840.44.111c11-19). See Chen (2018, pp. 341–42) and Weihong Zheng (2020, pp. 307–9).

25 如是諸宗，應作四句：一一向不捨，如薩婆多；二一向捨戒，如經部宗及《瑜伽》等；三亦捨亦不捨，如《涅槃經》等；四非捨非不捨，如方等經及《普賢觀經》等。若懺不捨、不懺便捨，成第三句及第四句。所以者何？汎論四句，有其二種：一者別體，如婆沙等。第三第四別法成句，二者問（同？）體，第三第四遮表一法。若表詮門，成第三句；若遮詮門，成第四句。由此《涅槃》、方等法同，句別。今依方等及此經文，四重五逆諸義得成。(T1708.33.409c4-13).

26 《大般涅槃經》卷36 ："或有佛性一闡提有，善根人無。或有佛性善根人有，一闡提無。或有佛性，二人俱有。或有佛性，二人俱無。"(T374.12.574c5-7).

27 前二人說二句者，依遮詮義以遣二邊。後總二人立句者，依表詮門以示中道。(T1769.38.252b21-23).

28 The biography of Xuanzang also shows the information of his oral teachings. See《大唐大慈恩寺三藏法師傳》卷7："每日齋訖，黃昏二時講新經論，及諸州聽學僧等恒來決疑請義。. . . . . 日夕已去，寺內弟子百餘人咸請教誡，盈廊溢廡，皆詶答處分無遺漏者。雖眾務輻湊，而神氣綽然，無所擁滯。猶與諸德說西方聖賢立義，諸部異端，及少年在此周遊講肆之事，高論劇談，竟無疲怠，其精敏強力，過人若斯。"(T2053.50.260a22-23; 260a26-b2). The biography of Kuiji also tells that Xuanzang "lectured on Dignāga's epistemology", and Kuiji "was very good at the three branches [of *hetuvidyā*]." 基聞之，慚居其後，不勝悵怏。奘勉之曰：測公雖造疏，未達因明。遂為講陳那之論，基大善三支，縱橫立破，述義命章，前無與比。" (T2061.50.725c27-726a1). From these records, it can be seen that Xuanzang gave oral teachings both publicly and privately.

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Article

On the Patriarchal Lineages of Vinaya Transmission Starting with Upāli: Narratives and Interpretations in the Vinaya School 律宗 in China and Japan

Weilin Wu

School of Foreign Languages, Sun Yat-sen University, Guangzhou 510275, China; wuwlin@mail.sysu.edu.cn

Abstract: In both Pāli and Chinese vinaya literature, there are various patriarchal lineages of vinaya transmission in which Upāli is honored as the first patriarch. These lineages that start with Upāli can be categorized into two types. The first type is found mainly in Indian vinaya texts, including two groups of texts: the *Mohe sengqi lü* 摩訶僧祇律 (Skt. *Mahāsāṃghika-vinaya*), and the *Samantapāsādikā*, a Pāli *Vinaya* commentary, as well as its parallel Chinese version, the *Shanjianlü piposha* 善見律毗婆沙. The second type was constructed by Chinese Vinaya school masters in the Northern Song dynasty, who aimed to establish an orthodox Indian origin for the Vinaya school. After their introduction into China and Japan, the first type of lineages experienced transformation in later Vinaya school works composed by medieval Chinese and Japanese Buddhist monks. A comparative philological study on the *Samantapāsādikā* and *Shanjianlü piposha* shows a "mistranslated" Tanwude 曇無德 (Skt. Dharmagupta) in the patriarchal lineage of vinaya transmission in the *Shanjianlü piposha*, the parallel of which is "Buddharakkhita" in the Pāli sources. Further investigation on the Vinaya school reveals that both Dingbin 定賓 and Gyōnen 凝然, monks from the Vinaya school in later periods, identified the *Shanjianlü piposha* as a commentary on the *Dharmaguptaka-vinaya*, and they consequently considered the patriarchal lineage in the *Shanjianlü piposha* as the patriarchal genealogy of the Dharmaguptaka school, with the purpose of establishing an orthodoxy of the Vinaya school that could be traced back to Upāli. Furthermore, in the genealogy in the *Mohe sengqi lü*, Gyōnen associated the master Fahu 法護 with the Dharmaguptaka school. Yuanzhao 元照, an eminent Vinaya school monk, criticized the second type of lineages as false construction. Instead, he established a patriarchal lineage that starts with Tanwude, the editor and compiler of the *Dharmaguptaka-vinaya*, for the Chinese Vinaya school.

Keywords: Upāli; the Dharmaguptaka school; patriarchal lineages of vinaya transmission; Pāli sources; the Vinaya school

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1. Introduction

Patriarchal worship plays a significant role in Chinese Buddhism, which originated in Indian Buddhism and was further developed in China. Chan Buddhism is one of the Chinese Buddhist schools in which patriarchal tradition is honored most, and that later influenced other Chinese Buddhist schools. In Chan Buddhism, there exists a will to orthodoxy in the construction of patriarchal lineage beginning with an Indian master, Bodhidharma 菩提達摩. Regarding patriarchal worship in Chan Buddhism, scholars such as Bernard Faure and John R. McRae have conducted a great number of studies.[1] Will to orthodoxy is also shown in the construction of patriarchal lineages in China's vinaya tradition, particularly the later dominant Vinaya school based on the *Dharmaguptaka-vinaya*? Ann Heirman has published an article on the early history of the Dharmaguptaka school, in which she traces it from its beginnings to the Tang dynasty in China. She provides a clear and useful survey of some important sources relevant to the history of the Chinese Dharmaguptaka tradition (Heirman 2002). Jinhua Chen conducted a detailed survey on the earlier Chinese vinaya patriarch Zhishou 智首 and his contemporaneous vinaya

specialists in connection with these predecessors, and reappraised Zhishou's historical position against the backdrop of a reconstructed history of the early vinaya tradition in China. His scholarship has clarified confusion surrounding some of the early Chinese vinaya patriarchs and their interrelationships (Chen 2017). In another article, Jinhua Chen performed an informative investigation on the lineage of the Chinese Vinaya school beginning with Facong 法聰 presented by Yan Zhenqing 顏真卿, a Tang bureaucrat, general, and calligrapher, in his *Fuzhou Baoying si Lüzang yuan jietan ji* 撫州寶應寺律藏院戒壇記 (*A Record of the Precept-platform in the Cloister of the Precept Treasure at the Baoying Temple in Fuzhou*) (Chen 2020). These studies have shed light on the earlier development of the Dharmaguptaka school in the Sui–Tang vinaya history.

However, the aforementioned studies do not focus on the Chinese vinaya masters' construction of the Indian patriarchal tradition in their engaging but historically unreliable myths in their sectarian narratives. This article will investigate these sectarian narratives and reveal the Chinese vinaya masters' will to orthodoxy in their construction of patriarchal tradition. My opinion is that one of the most typically Chinese features of the Vinaya school, which claimed to derive from the Indian patriarch Upāli, or Dharmagupta, was its insistence on a patriarchal tradition.

Upāli, one of the ten chief disciples of the Buddha, according to early Buddhist texts, is the person in charge of reciting and reviewing monastic discipline at the First Buddhist Council. However, according to vinaya literature, Upāli is also the first person in the lineage to transmit the Buddhist vinaya. There are two types of patriarchal lineages of vinaya transmission, starting with Upāli. The first type is descended from an Indian origin, as recorded in the Pāli and Chinese vinaya literature, including the *Samantapāsādikā*, a Pāli *Vinaya* commentary, and its parallel Chinese version, the *Shanjianlü piposha* 善見律毗婆沙, as well as in the *Mohe sengqi lü* 摩訶僧祇律 ascribed to the Mahāsāṃghika school. The second was constructed by monks from the Chinese Vinaya school 律宗. However, there is little research that discusses these types of patriarchal lineages starting with Upāli, or that probes their origin and transformation in the context of Chinese and Japanese Buddhism. Scholars in Indian Sanskrit and Pāli Buddhist studies have not paid attention to this issue in the context of East Asian Buddhism. Conversely, scholars in Chinese Buddhist studies have hardly used the relevant Pāli sources to investigate the origin and development of the patriarchal lineage, starting with Upāli, in the *Shanjianlü piposha*, nor have they paid attention to the *Mohe sengqi lü* or the second type of patriarchal lineages of vinaya transmission, starting with Upāli.

This paper examines how monks from the Vinaya school in China and Japan interpreted the Indian origin of the Dharmaguptaka school 法藏部 and made the *Sifen lü* 四分律 an authority based on the first type of lineages. By investigating the second type of lineages and relevant criticism from Yuanzhao 元照 in the Northern Song dynasty, this research also examines the Nanshan Vinaya school's 南山律宗 interpretation of the historical development of Buddhist vinaya. Throughout this study, we can see the Vinaya school masters' sectarian views on Indian Buddhism, and we thereby gain a deeper understanding of the development of the Vinaya school in China and Japan.

2. The Patriarchal Lineages of Vinaya Transmission Starting with Upāli in Pāli and Chinese Vinaya Literature

2.1. The Patriarchal Lineages of Vinaya Transmission in the Shanjianlü piposha and Samantapāsādikā

The *Shanjianlü piposha* (*Taishō* 1462) is one of the most important vinaya commentaries in China. Between 488 and 489 A.D., it was translated into Chinese in Guangzhou by a foreign monk named *Sengjiabatuoluo* 僧伽跋陀羅 (Saṅghabhadra, dates of birth and death unknown), and co-translated by Sengyi 僧猗 (dates of birth and death unknown). The *Samantapāsādikā* is a commentary on the Pāli *Vinaya*, written by the end of the fourth century or the beginning of the fifth century and traditionally ascribed to the commentator Buddhaghosa. In 1896, J. Takakusu initially stated that the *Shanjianlü piposha* is a translation of the *Samantapāsādikā*, and found that the Chinese translation corresponds, in general, to

the Pāli text of Buddhaghosa (Takakusu 1896). After Takakusu, two other Japanese scholars, M. Nagai and K. Mizuno, made further efforts to compare both texts. M. Nagai assumed that the original Indic text of the *Shanjianlü piposha* could not be the *Samantapāsādikā* we see today, for there are many terms transliterated from Sanskrit rather than Pāli in the Chinese version (Nagai 1922, pp. 69–133). K. Mizuno considered that the *Shanjianlü piposha* might be a translation of the Pāli *Samantapāsādikā*, though the former is much shorter than the latter (Mizuno 1937, 1938). P. Demiéville pointed out that the *Shanjianlü piposha* might be a translation of a prototype of the *Samantapāsādikā*, rather than the translation of the Pāli text as we know it today (Demiéville 1951). F. Lottermoser also proposed that the *Shanjianlü piposha* is a translation made from a version of the vinaya commentary that is different from the *Samantapāsādikā* as we see it now (Lottermoser 1982, p. 163). H. Bechert supports Lottermoser's proposal. He remarks that the differences between both texts indicate that it seems impossible that the extant Pāli *Samantapāsādikā* was the direct source of the *Shanjianlü piposha*, despite their relatively close correspondence (Bechert 1986, p. 138). By studying the title "Shanjianlü piposha" and terms transliterated from Sanskrit, as well as the structure of the Chinese version, Ananda W. P. Guruge proposed that the origin of the *Shanjianlü piposha* could be either a Sīhala commentary or a version of the *uttaravihāra-aṭṭhakathā* from the Abhayagiri monastery (Guruge 2005). However, Toshiichi Endo held an opposite opinion (Endo 2006). Ann Heirman also assumes that the Abhayagirivihāra connection is possible in the Chinese version, and that the translator was under many different kinds of influences (Heirman 2004). Thus, she is also cautious about coming to a conclusion as to the origins of the *Shanjianlü piposha*. According to her, giving a definite answer to the exact role that the Abhayagirivihāra tradition plays in the *Shanjianlü piposha* is extremely difficult because very little is known about the Abhayagirivihārins' viewpoints. Gudrun Pinte argued in her dissertation that the *Shanjianlü piposha* preserves an older layer of the *Samantapāsādikā*, which itself underwent changes and was elaborated at a date following its translation into Chinese in 489 A.D. (Pinte 2012, p. 532).

The abovementioned Japanese scholars, Nagai and Mizuno, attributed the differences between the *Shanjianlü piposha* and *Samantapāsādikā* to the influence of the *Dharmaguptaka-vinaya*, which was translated into Chinese as the *Sifen lü* (T.1428, the Four-part Vinaya) around 410 A.D. in Chang'an by Buddhayaśas 佛陀耶舍 (dates of birth and death unknown), who recited the text by heart while Zhu Fonian 竺佛念 (dates of birth and death unknown) rendered it into Chinese. This idea still survived in the English translation of the *Shanjianlü piposha* made by P.V. Bapat and A. Hirakawa (Bapat and Hirakawa 1970, pp. L–LIII). This assumption of Dharmaguptaka influence might result from the fact that the eminent Japanese monk Gyōnen 凝然 (1240–1321) classified the *Shanjianlü piposha* as a commentary on the *Dharmaguptaka-vinaya* in his *Risshū Kōyō* 律宗綱要 (*The Outline of the Vinaya School*). He states, 善見論釋四分律 *Zenken ron shaku Shibunritsu*, or in classical Chinese, *Shanjian lun shi Sifen lü* ("The *Shanjian lun* explains the *Sifen lü*") (Satō 1994, trans., p. 247). *Shanjian lun* is an alternative name for the *Shanjianlü piposha*. Ann Heirman further argues that the influence attributed by Bapat and Hirakawa to the *Dharmaguptaka-vinaya* is at some points wrong, and in other cases, could equally be ascribed to Sarvāstivādin influence or to any of the other *vinaya*s preserved in Chinese translation. She emphasizes the fact that, in the fifth century in South China, the *Sarvāstivādin-vinaya* was far more influential than the *Dharmaguptaka-vinaya* (Heirman 2004). Based on previous studies, Bhikkhu Ñaṇatusita has concluded that the *Shanjianlü piposha* is not a genuine translation of the *Samantapāsādikā* without any Chinese influence, nor is it an original Chinese composition. Instead, it is a Chinese Buddhist hybrid composition. It mainly consists of an abridged translation of the *Samantapāsādikā*, into which large passages from the *Suttavibhaṅga* and other unidentified texts were inserted, perhaps copied from earlier Chinese translations of these works, and it was occasionally adapted to fit the *Sifen lü*, popular in China, so that it was more of use to Chinese monastics (Ñaṇatusita 2014).

However, scholars such as Nagai, Mizuno, Heirman, and Pinte simply mention Gyōnen's classification to illustrate that this misinterpretation comes from the *Risshū*

Kōyō, leaving its origin underexamined. Bhikkhu Ñaṇatusita also ignored the source of Gyōnen's classification. Finding out exactly where Gyōnen's classification issued from has significant implications for our understanding of the history of the transmission of the *Shanjianlü piposha* in medieval China and Japan. I have published two articles on the relationship between the *Shanjianlü piposha* and the Vinaya school. According to my analysis, many elements from the *Sifen lü* were inserted into the translation of the *Shanjianlü piposha*. Therefore, the *Shanjianlü piposha* has been regarded as a commentary on the *Sifen lü* in Chinese Buddhism, with its Theravādin origin unknown to Chinese Buddhist monks. This misinterpretation could be traced back to Dingbin 定賓 (active in the Kaiyuan period (713–741), dates of birth and death unknown) of the Xiangbu Vinaya school 相部律宗. It was carried on by later vinaya masters of the Nanshan Vinaya school in the later Tang and Song dynasties, such as Jingxiao 景霄 (?–927), Yunkan 允堪 (?–1061), and Yuanzhao 元照 (1048–1116), and it further exerted an influence on Gyōnen's understanding of the relationship between the *Shanjianlü piposha* and the Dharmaguptaka school.[2] However, in these two articles, the patriarchal lineages of vinaya transmission in both the Pāli sources and Chinese translation are not mentioned.

Based on the previous research, I continue the study on Dingbin's and Gyōnen's narratives and interpretations on the patriarchal lineage of vinaya transmission in the *Shanjianlü piposha*. I further demonstrate how Chinese and Japanese vinaya masters interpret the relationship between the *Sifen lü* and the patriarchal lineage of vinaya transmission, starting with Upāli, in the *Shanjianlü piposha*.

In Book 2 of the *Shanjianlü piposha*, it is said,

> "In the Jambudīpa (Skt. Jambudvīpa; Ch. Yanfuli 閻浮利), I shall tell the names of [vinaya masters] in due order: first Youboli 優波離 Upāli, second Duoxieju 馱寫拘 Dāsaka, third Xunaju 須那拘 Soṇaka, fourth Xijiapo 悉伽婆 Siggava, fifth Mujianlianzi Dixu 目揵連子帝須 Moggaliputta Tissa. These five masters handed down the *vinayapiṭaka* in succession in the Jambudīpa, without any interruption in the *vinayapiṭaka* up to the Third Buddhist Council. After the Third [Council], at the time of entering into *parinibbāna* (Skt. *parinirvāṇa*), Moggaliputta Tissa handed it over to his disciple Moshentuo 摩哂陀 Mahinda, the son of King Aśoka. Moshentuo brought the *vinayapiṭaka* into the Sīhaḷadīpa (Skt. Siṃhaladvīpa). At the moment of entering into *parinibbāna*, Moshentuo handed [the *vinayapiṭaka*] over to his disciple Alizha 阿栗吒 Ariṭṭha. Since then it has been handed down till today. One should know this. Now I will state the names of masters of ancient times. Five masters brought the *vinayapiṭaka* from the Jambudīpa to the Sīhaḷadīpa: first Moshentuo, second Yidiyu 一地臾 Iṭṭhiya, third Yudiyu 欝帝臾 Uttiya, fourth Canpolou 參婆樓 Sambala, fifth Batuosha 拔陀沙 Bhadda. These five masters had perfect wisdom and unhindered supernatural powers as well as three insights, and instructed disciples in the Sīhaḷadīpa respectively. Moshentuo, at the time of entering into *parinibbāna*, handed [the *vinayapiṭaka*] over to Alizha. Alizha handed it over to his disciple Dixudaduo 帝須達多 Tissadatta; Dixudaduo handed it over to his disciple Jialuoxumona 伽羅須末那 Kālasumana; Jialuoxumona handed it over to his disciple Dijiana 地伽那 Dīghanāmaka; Dijiana handed it over to his disciple Xumona 須末那 Dīghasumana; Xumona handed it over to his disciple Jialuoxumona 伽羅須末那 Kālasumana; Jialuoxumona handed it over to his disciple Tanwude 曇無德; Tanwude handed it over to his disciple Dixu 帝須 Tissa; Dixu handed it over to his disciple Tipo 提婆 Deva; Tipo handed it over to his disciple Xumona 須末那 Sumana; Xumona handed it over to his disciple Zhuannajia 專那伽 Cūlanāga; Zhuannajia handed it over to his disciple Tanwupoli 曇無婆離 Dhammapālita; Tanwupoli handed it over to his disciple Qimo 企摩 Khema; Qimo handed it over to his disciple Youbodixu 優波帝須 Upatissa; Youbodixu handed it over to his disciple Fapo 法巨 Puppha; Fapo handed it over to his disciple Apoye 阿婆耶 Cūlābhaya (?); Apoye handed it over to his disciple Tipo 提婆 Cūladeva (?); Tipo handed it over to his disciple Sipo 私婆 Sīva."

于閻浮利地，我當次第説名字：第一、優波離，第二、馱寫拘，第三、須那拘，第四、悉伽婆，第五、目揵連子帝須。此五法師于閻浮利地，以律藏次第相付，不令斷絶，乃至第三集律藏。從第三之後，目揵連子帝須臨涅槃，付弟子摩哂陀。摩哂陀是阿育王兒也，持律藏至師子國。摩哂陀臨涅槃，付弟子阿栗吒。從爾已來，更相傳授至於今日，應當知之。我今説往昔師名，從閻浮利地，五人持律藏至師子國：第一、名摩哂陀，第二、名一地臾，第三、名欝帝臾，第四、名參婆樓，第五、名拔陀沙。此五法師，智慧無比，神通無礙，得三達智，于師子國各教授弟子。摩哂陀臨涅槃，付弟子阿栗吒，阿栗吒付弟子帝須達多，帝須達多付弟子伽羅須末那，伽羅須末那付弟子地伽那，地伽那付須末那，須末那付伽羅須末那，伽羅須末那付曇無德，曇無德付帝須，帝須付提婆，提婆付須末那，須末那付專那伽，專那伽付曇無婆離，曇無婆離付企摩，企摩付優波帝須，優波帝須付法巨，法巨付阿婆耶，阿婆耶付提婆，提婆付私婆。[3]

Now, we move on to the parallel in the *Samantapāsādikā*:

"Jambudīpe tāva Upālittheram ādiṃ katvā ācariyaparamparāya yāva tatiyasaṅgī ti tāva ābhataṃ. tatrāyaṃ ācariyaparamparā:

Upāli Dāsako c'eva, Soṇako Siggavo tathā,

Tisso Moggaliputto ca, pañc'ete vijitāvino,

paramparāya vinayaṃ dīpe Jambusirivhaye

acchijjamānamānesuṃ, tatiyo yāva saṅgaho ti.

tass'attho ettavatā pakāsito hoti. tatiyasaṅgahato pana uddhaṃ imaṃ dīpaṃ Mahindâdīhi ābhataṃ. Mahindato uggahetvā kañci kālaṃ Ariṭṭhattherâdīhi ābhataṃ. tato yāva ajjatanā tesaṃ yeva antevāsikaparamparābhūtāya ācariyapara mparāya ābhatan ti veditabbaṃ. yathâhu porāṇā:

tato Mahindo Iṭṭiyo Uttiyo Sambalo pi ca

. . . . . [4] Bhaddanāmo ca paṇḍito;

ete nāgā mahāpaññā Jambudīpā idhâgatā:

vinayaṃ te vācayiṃsu piṭakaṃ Tambapaṇṇiyā.

nikāye pañca vācesuṃ satta c'eva pakāraṇe.

tato Ariṭṭho medhāvī Tissadatto ca paṇḍito

visārado Kālasumano, thero ca Dīghanāmako

. . . . . (see note 4) Dīghasumano ca paṇḍito.

punar eva Kālasumano Nāgatthero ca Buddharakkhito,

Tissatthero ca medhāvī Devatthero ca paṇḍito.

punar eva Sumano medhāvī vinaye ca visārado,

bahussuto Cūlanāgo, gajo 'va duppadhaṃsiyo.

Dhammapālitanāmo ca Rohaṇo sādhupūjito,

tassa sisso mahāpañño Khemanāmo tipeṭako.

dīpe tārakarājā 'va paññāya atirocatha,

Upatisso ca medhāvī Phussadevo mahākathī.

punar eva Sumano medhāvī, Pupphanāmo bahussuto,

mahākathī Mahāsivo piṭake sabbattha kovido.

punar eva Upāli medhāvī vinaye ca visārado,

mahānāgo mahāpañño, saddhammavaṃsakovido.

punar eva Abhayo medhāvī piṭake sabbattha kovido,

Tissatthero ca medhāvī vinaye ca visārado.

tassa sisso mahāpañño, Pupphanāmo bahussuto,

sāsanaṃ anurakkhanto Jambudīpe patiṭṭhito.

Cūlābhayo ca medhāvī vinaye ca visārado,
Tissatthero ca medhāvī saddhammavaṃsakovido.
Cūladevo ca medhāvī vinaye ca visārado
Sīvatthero ca medhāvī vinaye sabbattha kovido.
ete nāgā mahāpaññā vinayaññū maggakovidā,
vinayaṃ dīpe pakāsesuṃ piṭakaṃ Tambapaṇṇiyâti."[5]

It has been handed down in the Jambudīpa up to the Third Council by the succession of masters beginning with the Elder Upāli. Here is the succession of masters: Upāli, Dāsaka, as well as Soṇaka, similarly Siggava and Tissa Moggaliputta—these five victorious ones transmitted the vinaya in the glorious (is)land of Jambusiri (i.e., Jambudvīpa), in unbroken succession up to the time of the Third Council. And to this extent is its meaning declared. And after the time of the Third Council, it has been brought to this island by Mahinda and others. Having learned it from Mahinda, for some time, it was handed down by the Elder Ariṭṭha and others: and it should be known from that time up to the present day. It has been handed down by the succession of masters who constituted their own line of resident-pupils. According to the *porāṇa*s:

> Thereupon Mahinda, Iṭṭhiya, Uttiya, Sambala and the learned Bhadda—these sinless sages of great wisdom came hither from Jambudīpa. They taught the *vinayapiṭaka* in the Tambapaṇṇi. They also taught five *nikāya*s and seven (*abhidhamma*) treatises. Then the wise Ariṭṭha and the learned Tissadatta, the skilled Kālasumana, the Elder named Dīghanāmaka and the learned Dīghasumana, and another Kālasumana, the Elder Nāga, Buddharakkhita, the wise Elder Tissa and the learned Elder Deva, and another wise Sumana proficient in the vinaya, Cūlanāga of great learning, unassailable as an elephant, and the Elder named Dhammapālita is like Mount Rohaṇa, revered by the virtuous. His pupil named Khema is of great wisdom and learned in three *piṭaka*s, who in his wisdom shone with great splendor in the island, like the king of the stars, Upatissa the wise, Phussadeva the great orator, and another wise Sumana, he of great learning named Phussa, the great orator Mahāsiva proficient in all the contents of the piṭaka, and again another wise Upāli skilled in the vinaya, Mahanāga of great wisdom, proficient in the tradition of the good teaching, and again the wise Abhaya skilled in all the contents of the *piṭaka*, the wise Elder Tissa proficient in the vinaya. His pupil named Puppha of great wisdom and of much learning, who while protecting the dispensation had established himself in the Jambudīpa. The wise Cūlābhaya proficient in the vinaya, the wise Elder Tissa skilled in the tradition of good teaching. Cūladeva the wise, proficient in the vinaya, and the wise Elder Sīva skilled in all the contents of the vinaya. These sinless sages of great wisdom, knowing the vinaya and skilled in the path, proclaimed the *vinayapiṭaka* on the island of the Tambapaṇṇi.[6]

This succession of vinaya masters found in the *Samantapāsādikā* is identical to the one from the *parivāra* in the Pāli *Vinaya*.[7] According to both the *Samantapāsādikā* and *Shanjianlü piposha*, the five masters, Upāli, Dāsaka, Soṇaka, Siggava, and Moggaliputta, transmitted the vinaya on the Indian continent. Mahinda, who was Tissa Moggaliputta's disciple, went to the island Tambapaṇṇi with Iṭṭhiya and three other masters to transmit the vinaya. There are thirty-three vinaya masters starting from Mahinda in this succession in the *Samantapāsādikā*, while there are only twenty-three masters in its parallel, the *Shanjianlü piposha*. K. Mizuno explained the differences between the two versions as some kind of confusion on the part of the Chinese translators because, for example, there were so many Tissas on the list. Besides this, he observed that the adjectives *dīgha*, *cūla*, and *nāma* have not always been transliterated or accurately translated (Mizuno 1996, p. 114). Gudrun Pinte assumed that Saṅghabhadra did not have a written document at hand, and that he remembered the material by heart, or rather most of it, or the co-translator Sengyi and his

team, who wrote the translation down in Chinese, simply became confused with lists of proper names (Pinte 2012, p. 50). It is difficult to give an exact answer about the reason why such differences arose between the two versions because so little is known to the translators. Based on Mizuno's research on the successions of vinaya masters in both versions, I drew up the following table to show the comparison of the lineages of vinaya masters (Table 1):

Table 1. A comparison of the lineages in the *Shanjianlü piposha* and Pāli sources.

Lineage in Pāli Sources	Lineage in the *Shanjianlü piposha*
1. Mahinda	摩哂陀
2. Iṭṭiyo	一地臾
3. Uttiyo	欝帝臾
4. Sambalo	參婆樓
5. Bhadda	拔陀沙
6. Ariṭṭha	阿栗吒
7. Tissadeva	帝須達多
8. Kālāsumana	伽羅須末那
9. Dīghanāmaka	地伽那
10. Dīghasumana	須末那
11. Kālasumana	伽羅須末那
12. Nāga	
13. Buddharakkhita	曇無德
14. Tissa	帝須
15. Deva	提婆
16. Sumana	須末那
17. Cūḷanāga	專那伽
18. Dhammapālita	曇無婆離
19. Khema	企摩
20. Upatissa	優婆帝須
21. Phussadeva	
22. Sumana	
23. Pupphanāma	
24. Mahāsīva	
25. Upāli	
26. Mahānāga	
27. Abhaya	
28. Tissa	
29. Pupphanāma	法叵
30. Cūlābhaya	阿婆那(?)
31. Tissa	
32. Cūladeva	提婆(?) [1]
33. Sīva	私婆

[1]. According to Mizuno, Apona 阿婆那 is the Chinese transliteration of Cūlābhaya, and Tipo 提婆 is the Chinese transliteration of Cūladeva (Mizuno 1996, pp. 113–14). However, I am sceptical about this and thus add question marks.

As is shown in Table 1, Buddharakkhita, the 13th patriarch in the *Samantapāsādikā*, has Tanwude in the parallel of the *Shanjianlü piposha*. However, Buddharakkhita should be translated into Chinese as Fohu 佛護, and there is no Pāli name corresponding to Tanwude in the succession of vinaya masters in Pāli sources, including the Pāli *Vinaya*, *Samantapāsādikā*, *Mahāvaṃsa*, and *Dīpavaṃsa*. According to R. Saloman's study of a Gāndhārī inscription on a pot (Salomon 1999, p. 214), Tanwude is probably the transliteration of the Gāndhārī "dhamaüte" (Skt. dharmagupta; Pā. dhammagutta), which means Fazang 法藏 or Fahu 法護 in Chinese. Thus, the Dharmaguptaka school, which specifically promotes the *Sifen lü*, has Fazang bu 法藏部 or Tanwude bu 曇無德部 as its Chinese translation. The name Tanwude, which also appears in some other parts of the *Shanjianlü piposha*, is usually used as the translation of the Pāli term "Dhammarakkhita" rather than "Dhammagutta". However, the transliteration of "Dhammarakkhita" is Tanmo leqiduo 曇摩勒棄多, which also means Fahu in Chinese. Both "gutta" (Skt. gupta) and "rakkhita" mean protection in Pāli, and therefore, "Dhamma-gutta" and "Dhamma-rakkhita" are literally synonymous. As a result, translators of the *Shanjianlü piposha* chose the term "Tanwude" to translate its literally synonymous term, "Dhamma-rakkhita", as "Tanwude" usually appears in other Chinese Buddhist texts that predate the *Shanjianlü piposha* and thus is better known to Chinese readers. There are many similar cases in the *Shanjianlü piposha*. For instance, the Pāli term *nikāya* is not well known to Chinese Buddhist monks, so translators use the synonymous term *ahan* 阿含 (Skt. *āgama*) instead to paraphrase *nikāya*, which is already well known to Chinese readers.

K. Mizuno infers that the difference between Tanwude in the *Shanjianlü piposha* and Buddharakkhita in the *Samantapāsādikā* is a mistake caused by a certain reason, for which he gives no further explanation (Mizuno 1996, p. 114). Buddharakkhita is also mentioned in other chapters of the *Shanjianlü piposha* and *Samantapāsādikā*, and it is translated into Fowude 佛無德 or Fotuo leqiduo 佛陀勒棄多 in the *Shanjianlü piposha*. In Book 5 of the *Shanjianlü piposha*, it is said,

> "there are more than one kind of surnames, e.g., the surname of Gotama (Ch. Qutan 瞿曇), or the surname of Moggallāna (Ch. Mujianlian 目揵連), as well as more than one kind of given names, e.g., the given name of Buddharakkhita (Ch. Fowude 佛無德), or the given name of Dhammarakkhita (Ch. Tanwude 曇無德)".
>
> 姓非一種，名非一種，或姓瞿曇，或姓目揵連，或名佛無德，或名曇無德。[8]

Here, the translation "Fowude" is an imitation of "Tanwude", both of which serve as examples to explain Indians' given names rather than certain individuals. In Book 10 of the *Shanjianlü piposha*, it is stated,

> "One gives a verbal command to another" means: There are a number of *bhikkhu*s. One of them is a teacher, and the other three are pupils. The first pupil's name is Buddharakkhita, the second is Dhammarakkhita, and the third is Saṅgharakkhita. The teacher sees an object belonging to others, and the thought of stealing it arises in his mind. He calls Buddharakkhita with these words: 'You command Dhammarakkhita to instruct Saṅgharakkhita in going to take that object away.' At the very moment he commands the first pupil, the teacher becomes guilty of *dukkaṭa*. When Dhammarakkhita instructs [Saṅgharakkhita] and when Saṅgharakkhita receives the instruction, the teacher becomes guilty of *thullaccaya*. If [the third pupil] removes the object from its original place, the teacher and his three pupils all become guilty of a grave offense."
>
> 教語此人者，有衆多比丘，一是師、三是弟子，第一弟子名佛陀勒棄多（Pā. Buddharakkhita），二名曇摩勒棄多（Pā. Dhammarakkhita），三名僧伽勒棄多（Pā. Saṅgharakkhita）。師行見他物，起盜心，喚佛陀勒棄多語言：" 汝教曇摩勒棄多，教僧伽勒棄多，往取彼物。" 師教第一弟子時，師得突吉羅。曇摩勒棄多語、僧伽勒棄多受語時，師得偷蘭遮。若往取物離本處，師及三弟子俱犯重。[9]

This passage corresponds to its parallel in the *Samantapāsādikā* and explains the details of the law of theft with the case of four *bhikkhu*s. It is clear that the names of Buddharakkhita and Dhammarakkhita mentioned here have nothing to do with those in the succession of vinaya masters. We can see that a proper name usually has various translations or transliterations in the *Shanjianlü piposha*. For instance, the name of *Visuddhimagga* is mentioned at least three times in the *Shanjianlü piposha* and each has a different translation: *Jingdao jing* 淨道經, *Jingdao piposha* 淨道毗婆沙, and *Apitan piposha* 阿毗曇毗婆沙. The *Shanjianlü piposha* was not translated by a well-organized translation team with a highly specialized division of labor, nor with adequate proofreading. Consequently, there are many inconsistencies in the Chinese translation. However, generally speaking, both the terms *buddha* and *dhamma* have specific meanings in Buddhism, which could hardly be confused by the translators. Regarding the difference between Buddharakkhita and Tanwude, it appears to be a deliberate change made by later people because the *Dharmaguptaka-vinaya* had not yet achieved a dominant position in China around 488 and 489 A.D. It is very difficult to figure out why Buddharakkhita was "translated into" Tanwude in the absence of crucial historical evidence. However, I think, as far as this "mistranslation" is concerned, two questions should be focused on: Firstly, how does this "mistranslation" in the *Shanjianlü piposha* exert influence on Chinese and Japanese Buddhist monks' identification of the Indian origin of the Dharmaguptaka school (Ch. Fazang bu 法藏部)? Secondly, how do Chinese and Japanese Buddhist monks interpret this patriarchal lineage of vinaya transmission in the *Shanjianlü piposha* in their Vinaya school works?

2.2. The Interpretations Made by the Vinaya School in China and Japan

The Vinaya school is a scholastic tradition of East Asian Buddhism based on the study of the *Dharmaguptaka-vinaya*. There are three branches of the Vinaya school: the Nanshan Vinaya school associated with Daoxuan 道宣 (596–667), the Xiangbu Vinaya school associated with Fali 法礪 (569–635), and the Dongta Vinaya school 東塔律宗 associated with Huaisu 懷素 (625–698). Of these three, the Nanshan Vinaya school eventually eclipsed the other two. Monks from both the Xiangbu and Nanshan Vinaya schools had their own Sinicized interpretations of the patriarchal lineage of vinaya transmission in the *Shanjianlü piposha*, while monks from the Dongta Vinaya school paid little attention to this lineage, according to the historical records we see today.

2.2.1. Dingbin's Interpretation

The first person who notices the patriarchal lineage of vinaya transmission in the *Shanjianlü piposha* is Dingbin, who is a vinaya master of the Xiangbu Vinaya school in the Kaiyuan 開元 period of the Tang dynasty. Dingbin wrote a subcommentary on Fali's *Sifen Lü* commentary called *Sifen lüshu shi zong yi ji* 四分律疏飾宗義記 (*For the Decoration of the School: Study on [Fali's] Sifen Lü Commentary*) that is signed as a *śramaṇa* in the Zhenguo *Bodhimaṇḍa* in Mount Song (Songyue zhenguo daochang shamen 嵩岳鎮國道場沙門), and therefore he is also known as the vinaya master of Songyue 嵩岳律師.[10] In his subcommentary, he extensively quotes the stories about the Third Council and King Aśoka's mission to spread Buddhism that are recorded in the *Shanjianlü piposha*:

> During the Third Council, two sects have already formed. However, in this commentary (i.e., the *Shanjianlü piposha*), it is argued that there exists only one sect that has been handed down. Consequently, the distinguishing characteristics of split sects are ignored in this commentary. From that time onwards, [Tissa Moggaliputta 目揵連子帝須] handed the *vinayapiṭaka* over to Moshentuo, the son of King Aśoka. Moshentuo handed the *vinayapiṭaka* over to Alizha, and Alizha handed the *vinayapiṭaka* over to his disciple Dixudaduo. The next successor is Jialuoxumona . . . The next successor is Sipo, twenty-four masters in total[11] . . . According to the *Shanjianlü piposha*, the thirteenth patriarch in these twenty-four is named Tanwude. I read through this commentary from beginning to end and find that it shares a very similar structure with the *Sifen lü*, and many passages

> in both are corresponding. Therefore, this *Shanjianlü piposha* is a commentary on the *Sifen lü*. And this Tanwude is the master of this *Sifen lü*. It is also said in this commentary that the master Mohe tanwude 摩訶曇無德 went to the Abo lanruo guo 阿波蘭多國 (Pā. Aparāntaka) for the purpose of transmitting the *vinayapiṭaka*. Here this [Mohe tanwude] is not the name of the master of *Sifen lü*. For, in no context is this Mohe tanwude considered to be the name of the master of *Sifen lü*. It is asked: as the former Tanwude is considered as a religious name (Ch. faming 法名) of a Buddhist monk, why is this [Mohe tanwude] stated to be a secular personal name? The answer is: a master is named after the *dharma*s he transmits. For instance, masters [who transmit Chan *dharma*s] are nowadays called Chan masters (Ch. chanshi 禪師) etc."
>
> 第三結集之時，因分二部，然由此論，但欲自辨一支相傳，故略不説分部差別也。從此已後，(目揵連子帝須) 付摩哂陀，此即育王之子也。摩哂陀付阿栗吒，阿栗吒付弟子帝須達多，次伽羅須末那 . . . . . 次私婆，合二十四人。 . . . . . 又准《見論》，二十四人之中，第十三人，名曇無德者。竊尋彼論，勘其始末，其與《四分》科段相當，故知彼論釋《四分律》。其曇無德即是此律主也。彼論複説，摩訶曇無德，至阿波蘭多國，流通律藏。此即非是律主名也，以其無文云是摩訶曇無德故也。問前已成立曇無德者，乃是法名。何故今言是人名也？答：此蓋就所弘法，以號其人，如即今人號禪師等。[12]

The quoted passage reveals that Dingbin's interpretation is deeply influenced by the "mistranslated" Tanwude in the succession of vinaya masters in the *Shanjianlü piposha*. Firstly, the earliest Chinese Buddhist work in which Tanwude is considered to be the master of *Sifen lü* is *Lidai sanbao ji* 歷代三寶紀 (*Records of Three Treasures Through the Ages*) was written by Fei Changfang 費長房 (dates of birth and death unknown) in the Sui dynasty.[13] It could be inferred that Dingbin identified the master of *Sifen lü* as this thirteenth patriarch, Tanwude, in the lineage of vinaya transmission based on his own standpoint towards the Xiangbu Vinaya school. Secondly, Dingbin also regards the master Mohe tanwude 摩訶曇無德 (Pā. Mahādhammarakkhita) in Aśoka's mission as the promoter of the *Dharmaguptaka-vinaya*. The name Mohe tanwude is formed by "mohe 摩訶" and "Tanwude 曇無德". Tanwude is the historical figure who compiled the *Dharmaguptaka-vinaya* and founded the Dharmaguptaka school, known as Tanwude bu in Chinese. Therefore, according to Dingbin, a person is named Mohe tanwude due to his promotion of the Dharmaguptaka doctrine, just as nowadays monks who promote Chan Buddhism are called Chan masters.

However, regarding Mahādhammarakkhita or Mohe tanwude in the *Samantapāsādikā* and *Shanjianlü piposha*, we cannot find any definite Dharmaguptaka connection. In Aśoka's mission, the master Yonaka-Dhammarakkhita, who came from the Yonaka (Ch.Yuna guo 臾那國), was sent to preach *Aggikkhandhopama* (Ch. *Huoju piyujing* 火聚譬喻經) for the purpose of spreading Buddhism in the Aparantaka (Ch. Abo lanruo guo 阿波蘭多國), and the master Mahādhammarakkhita was sent to preach the *Mahānāradakassapajātaka* (Ch. *Mohe naluotuo jiaye benshengjing* 摩訶那羅陀迦葉本生經) in order to spread Buddhism in the Mahāraṭṭha (Ch. Mohe lezha guo 摩訶勒吒國).[14] Neither *Aggikkhandhopama*,[15] which is found in the present *Aṅguttaranikāya*, nor *Mahānāradakassapajātaka*,[16] which is found in the present *Khuddakanikāya*, can be attributed to the Dharmaguptaka school. Erich Frauwallner proposes that both Dhammarakkhitas in the mission are related to the origin of the Dharmaguptaka school, but no historical evidence is presented in his hypothesis (Frauwallner 1956, p. 22). There is no evidence to confirm a definite connection between this Mahādhammarakkhita and the Dharmaguptaka school. Thus, it is a fact that Dingbin distorted the meaning of the context by quoting fragments from passages in the *Shanjianlü piposha*. As told by him, the *Shanjianlü piposha* and *Sifen lü* share a similar structure, and many passages in both texts are corresponding 其與《四分》科段相當. As a result, he misidentified the *Shanjianlü piposha* as a commentary on the *Sifen lü* due to his lack of learning on the Theravādin vinaya. According to the historical records we have today, Dingbin is the first one to misunderstand the *Shanjianlü piposha* as a commentary on the

Sifen lü. That is to say, no later than the Kaiyuan period in the Tang dynasty, the school affiliation of the *Shanjianlü piposha* had been interpreted as the Dharmaguptaka by the Chinese Vinaya school.

Dingbin noticed the correspondence between the *Shanjianlü piposha* and *Sifen lü*, but he presented no detailed discussion. M. Nagai and K. Mizuno have performed comparative studies on both texts. M. Nagai points out that the ordering of the 85th–91st *pācittiya*s and some *Khandhaka* (Ch. qiandu 犍度) chapters in the *Shanjianlü piposha* are consistent with those in the *Sifen lü*. Table 2 shows the comparison of relevant references in the *Sifen lü*, *Shanjianlü piposha*, and *Samantapāsādikā*.

Table 2. A comparison of the ordering of the 85th–91st *pācittiya*s and *khandhaka*s in the *Sifen lü*, *Shanjianlü piposha*, and *Samantapāsādikā*.

The *Sifen lü*	The *Shanjianlü piposha*	The *Samantapāsādikā*
From the 85th to 91st *pācittiyas*		
非時入聚落戒 rules for entering a village out of hours	非時入聚落戒 rules for entering a village out of hours	*vikālagāmappavisana-sikkhāpada* (rules for entering a village out of hours)
過量床足戒 rules for excessive feet of bedsteads and chairs	高床戒 rules for bedsteads and chairs	*sūcighara-sikkhāpada* (rules for needle cases)
兜羅貯床褥戒 rules for bedsteads stuffed with cotton	兜羅紵坐褥戒 rules for chairs stuffed with cotton	*mañca-sikkhāpada* (rules for bedsteads and chairs)
骨牙角 作針筒戒 rules for needle cases made of bones, teeth and horns	針筒戒 rules for needle cases	*tūlonaddha-sikkhāpada* (rules for bedsteads and chairs stuffed with cotton)
過量尼師檀戒 rules for excessive mats	尼師檀戒 rules for mats	*nisīdana-sikkhāpada* (rules for mats)
覆瘡衣過量戒 rules for excessive garments for covering sores	覆瘡衣戒 rules for garments for covering sores	*kaṇḍupaṭicchādi-sikkhāpada* (rules for garments for covering sores)
雨衣過量戒 rules for excessive garments made for the rainy season	雨浴衣戒 rules for garments made for the rainy season	*vassikasāṭika-sikkhāpada* (rules for garments made for the rainy season)
Khandhakas		
1 受戒揵度 on the ordination of Buddhist monks	1 受戒犍度 on the ordination of Buddhist monks	1. *mahākhandhaka* (the great section) [1]
2 説戒揵度 [2] on teaching the precepts	2 布薩犍度 on the *uposatha*	2. *uposathakkhandhaka* (on the *uposatha*)
3 安居揵度 on the rains	3 安居犍度 on the rains	3. *vassūpanāyikakkhandhaka* (on the rains)
4 自恣揵度 on teachings regarding self-indulgence	4 皮革犍度 on the use of leather	4. *pavāraṇākkhandhaka* (on teachings regarding self-indulgence)
5 皮革揵度 on the use of leather	5 衣犍度 on robes	5. *cammakkhandhaka* (on the use of leather)
6 衣揵度 on robes	6 藥犍度 on medicines	6. *bhesajjakkhandhaka* (on medicines)
7 藥揵度 on medicines	7 迦絺那衣犍度 on the *kathina*	7. *kathinakkhandhaka* (on the *kathina*)
8 迦絺那衣揵度 on the *kathina*	8 別住犍度 on isolation for improper conduct	8. *cīvarakkhandhaka* (on robes)
9 拘睒彌揵度 on [monks] at *Kosambī*	9 拘睒彌犍度 on [monks] at *Kosambī*	9. *campeyyakkhandhaka* (on [monks] at *Campā*)
10 瞻波揵度 on [monks] at *Campā*	10 瞻波犍度 on [monks] at *Campā*	10. *kosambakakkhandhaka* (on [monks] at *Kosambī*)
11 呵責揵度 on rebuking quarrelsome monks	11 滅諍犍度 on resolution of disputes	11. *kammakkhandhaka* (on formal acts)
12 人揵度 [3] on correction of minor crimes	12 比丘尼犍度 on Buddhist nuns	12. *pārivāsikakkhandhaka* (on isolation for improper conduct)

Table 2. *Cont.*

The *Sifen lü*	The *Shanjianlü piposha*	The *Samantapāsādikā*
13 覆藏揵度 on remedies for those who conceal their crimes	13 法犍度 on ritual performances [4]	13. *samuccayakkhandhaka* (on accumulation of [offences])
14 遮揵度 on dealing with offenses not treated at the *uposatha*		14. *samathakkhandhaka* (on settlements of legal questions)
15 破僧揵度 on destruction of the *saṅgha*		15. *khuddakavatthukkhandhaka* (on minor matters)
16 滅諍揵度 on resolution of disputes		16. *senāsanakkhandhaka* (on lodgings)
17 比丘尼揵度 on Buddhist nuns		17. *saṅghabhedakakkhandhaka* (on destruction of the saṅgha)
18 法揵度 on ritual performances		18. *vattakkhandhaka* (on observances)
19 房舍揵度 on lodgings		19. *pātimokkhaṭṭhapanakkhandhaka* (on suspending the *pātimokkha*)
20 雜揵度 on miscellany		20. *bhikkhunikkhandhaka* (on Buddhist nuns)
		21. *pañcasatikakkhandhaka* (on the Five Hundred)
		22. *sattasatikakkhandhaka* (on the Seven Hundred)

[1] "The mahākhandhaka" in Pāli sources deals with the ordination of Buddhist monks, which is equivalent to 受戒犍度. [2] The 說戒揵度 in the *Sifen lü* deals with *uposatha* ceremony, which is equivalent to 布薩犍度. [3] The 人揵度 in the *Sifen lü* deals with isolation for monks who are guilty of *saṃghāvaśeṣa*, which is equivalent to 別住犍度. [4] The editors of the *Taishō* version interpret 法犍度 as the Chinese translation for the Pāli *vattakhandhaka*. However, in fact, the 法犍度 in the *Shanjianlü piposha* deals with lodgings, which has its parallel in the *senāsanakkhandhaka* chapter in the *Samantapāsādikā*. In Pāli sources, the *vattakhandhaka* chapter deals with Buddhist monks' manners and behaviors. The term 法犍度 only appears in the *Sifen lü* and *Shanjianlü piposha*. In both texts, the chapters before 法犍度 are 比丘尼犍度.

As is seen in Table 2, on the one hand, the *khandhaka* part of the *Shanjianlü piposha* is much shorter than that of the *Samantapāsādikā*. On the other hand, except for the *Biezhu qiandu* 別住犍度, the order of the *khandhaka* chapters in the *Shanjianlü piposha* is nearly the same as that in the *Sifen lü*. According to K. Mizuno, the *Yao qiandu* 藥犍度 (the *khandhaka* chapter on medicines) and *Pige qiandu* 皮革犍度 (the *khandhaka* chapter on the use of leather) not only share the same order in both the *Shanjianlü piposha* and *Sifen lü*, but they also have the same textual content, which indicates the definite influence of the Dharmaguptaka school on the *Shanjianlü piposha* (Mizuno 1996, pp. 89–96). Apart from this, in the *Shanjianlü piposha*, there are precepts about the *stūpa* directly copied from the *Sifen lü*.

The two precepts about staying overnight in or hiding one's things in a shrine of the *stūpa* of the Buddha did not exist in the original Indic text. They did not exist because when the Buddha was alive, there could not have been any *stūpa* of his. These precepts (in the *prātimokṣa*) were laid down by the Buddha: [It is not allowed to] enter the *stūpa* with leather-shoes on, or when one holds them in his hand; [It is not allowed to] enter the *stūpa* of the Buddha with a leg-cover-shoe on, or when one holds it in his hand; [It is not allowed] to eat at the foot of the *stūpa* of the Buddha, or to carry a dead body on one's shoulders and burn it at the foot of the *stūpa* of the Buddha, or to burn it in front of the *stūpa*, or to burn the dead body around on any of the four sides of the *stūpa*. So also, one is not permitted to carry the clothes or a bed-cot of a dead person across the foot of the *stūpa*. One is not permitted to answer the calls of nature at the foot of a *stūpa*, nor in front of it, nor around the *stūpa* of the Buddha. One is not permitted to approach the place for answering the calls of nature while holding a Buddha image in his hand. One is not permitted to bite and chew a tooth-stick at the foot of a *stūpa* of the Buddha, nor in front of it, nor around any of its four sides. One is not permitted to drop mucus [from his nose], or saliva [from his mouth] at the foot of a *stūpa* of the Buddha, or in its front, or any of the four sides. One is not permitted

to stretch his legs towards a *stūpa* of the Buddha; nor can one place the Buddha image in a room on a lower level. These precepts, more than twenty, did not exist in the original Indic text, as the Buddha was alive and, hence, no *stūpa* existed.

> 佛塔中止宿及藏物，此二戒梵本無有。所以無者，佛在世未有塔。此戒佛在世制。是故無著革屣入佛塔，手捉革屣入佛塔，著腹羅入佛塔，手捉腹羅入佛塔，佛塔下食擔死尸，塔下燒死尸，向塔燒死尸，繞塔四邊燒死尸，不得擔死人衣及床從塔下過，佛塔下大小便，向佛塔大小便，繞佛塔大小便，不得持佛像至大小便處，不得佛塔下嚼楊枝，不得向佛塔嚼楊枝，不得繞佛塔四邊嚼楊枝，不得佛塔下涕唾，不得向佛塔涕唾，不得繞佛塔四邊涕唾，向佛塔舒脚，安佛置下房。此上二十戒，梵本無有，如來在世塔無佛故。[17]

K. Mizuno noticed this passage and found out that the *prātimokṣa* of the *Sifen lü* gives rule nos. 60–85, dealing with the *stūpa* or image of the Buddha, to which this passage closely corresponds.[18] To sum up, the correspondence to the *Sifen lü* mainly lies in the latter part (i.e., some *pācittiya* rules and *khandhaka* chapters) of the *Shanjianlü piposha*. Though the corresponding part does not make up a major percentage of the total text, it shows a clear indication of the Dharmaguptaka connection.

2.2.2. Gyōnen's Interpretation

Dingbin's work spread to Japan and deeply influenced Japanese Buddhism after Jianzhen 鑒真 (Jp. Ganjin, 688–763) crossed over to Japan in the Tianbao 天寶 period of the Tang dynasty (X. Wang 1979, annotated, pp. 88–96). Influenced by Dingbin, Gyōnen, an eminent Japanese monk learned in doctrines of both the Xiangbu and Nanshan Vinaya schools, also misinterpreted the *Shanjianlü piposha* as a commentary on the *Sifen lü* in his *Risshū Kōyō* (Satō 1994, trans., p. 247), where he quoted Dingbin's abovementioned passage and gave further analysis as follows:

> In the *Shanjian* 善見 (i.e., *Shanjianlü piposha*), ancient masters are listed. However, the chronology of these masters is not mentioned. It is said in this commentary (i.e., *Shanjianlü piposha*), by the time the elders arrived in the Siṃhaladvīpa, with Moshentuo as the head master, 236 years after the Buddha's *nirvāṇa* had passed. When Buddhist doctrines were transmitted to the Siṃhaladvīpa, Moshentuo who was the sixth patriarch in the lineage of vinaya masters, had been transmitting and holding Buddhist doctrines at that time. The Tanwude, who is the thirteenth patriarch in the lineage of vinaya masters, is identified by Dingbin as the master of this *Vinaya* (i.e., the *Sifen lü*). Today it is clearly known that the Tanwude, the master of *Sifen lü*, lived around one hundred years after the Buddha's *nirvāṇa*. However, according to the *Shanjian lun* 善見論 (i.e., the *Shanjianlü piposha*), Moshentuo, the sixth patriarch in the lineage, lived more than two hundred years after the Buddha's *nirvāṇa*. So if [the date of] this Tanwude, the thirteenth patriarch, [is ascribed to around one hundred years after the Buddha's *nirvāṇa*], is it matchable [or reasonable]? [Of course, it is not the case.] Therefore, it should be inferred that in the twenty schools of Buddhism, the Dharmaguptaka school is also known as Fazang bu 法藏部, Fami bu 法密部, Fahu bu 法護部, and Fazheng bu 法正部, which emerged 380 years [after the Buddha's *nirvāṇa*].[19] This date could match the chronological record in the *Jian lun* 見論 (i.e., the *Shanjianlü piposha*). According to Dingbin, the master of *Sifen lü*, who lived around one hundred years after the Buddha's *nirvāṇa*, had the same name with the founder of the Dharmaguptaka school. Therefore, this founder is also considered as the master of *Sifen lü* [due to promotion of the *Sifen lü* by the Dharmaguptaka school]. Isn't there any contradiction in this statement?[20]

> 《善見》列諸師，未別指時代。然彼論云，爾時，諸大德到師子州中已，摩哂陀爲上座，于時佛涅槃已二百三十六歲。佛法通流至師子州中，哂陀即是第六傳律，乃在彼時，傳持佛法。彼第十三曇無德者，嵩岳定賓律師判云，其曇無德即是此律主也。今詳，《四分》律主曇無德者，如來滅後百年時出，《善見論》

> 意，第六摩哂陀既是二百餘年而出，況第十三豈相符乎？是故應言二十部中，曇無德部，此云法藏，亦云法密，亦云法護，亦云法正。法藏三百八十年起，與《見論》意時分相稱。嵩岳師意，彼興百年時《四分》律主其名既同，故後法藏言此律主，有何遮妨？

The quoted passage indicates that Gyōnen agreed with Dingbin and had his own further understanding. Firstly, he states that Tanwude, the master of *Sifen lü*, lived around one hundred years after the Buddha's *nirvāṇa*, which is correspondent to the Chinese vinaya master Zhihong's 志鴻 (alive in the Tang dynasty, dates of birth and death unknown) saying in his *Sifen lü xingshichao sou xuan lu* 四分律行事鈔搜玄錄 (*Investigation: Study on [Daoxuan's Xingshi Chao]*):

> "Four-part" means: according to the *Fufazang zhuan* 付法藏傳 (i.e., *Fufazang yin yuan zhuan* 付法藏因緣傳), 優波毱多 (Skt. Upagupta) had five disciples. After one hundred years after the Buddha's *nirvāṇa*, each of them believed in their own claims for the vinaya which were taken as their own guidelines, and hereby the basic vinaya was divided into five sects of classics. The proper name "four-part" thus emerged. As ancient masters said, a vinaya master named Tanwude, four times edited and transmitted the great [*Vinaya*]*piṭaka* in Eighty Recitations 大藏八十誦律, with full annotations and interpretations. Therefore, [the vinaya edited and transmitted by Tanwude] is named "the Four-part [Vinaya]".
>
> 言四分者，《付法藏傳》云，百年之後，優波毱多有五弟子，各執一見，以爲揩准，遂分大藏，以爲五典。四分別號，從此而興，古師云，曇無德律主，於大藏八十誦律中四度傳文，盡所詮相，故云四分。[21]

As is recorded in the *Fufazang yin yuan zhuan* 付法藏因緣傳 (*The Work Explaining The Handing Down of Śākyamuni's Teaching by Mahākāśyapa and The Olders*), Upagupta, who lived around one hundred years after the Buddha's *nirvāṇa*, was predicted by the Buddha to be the one enriching all sentient beings.[22] Tanwude was Upagupta's disciple, both of whom lived in the same period. However, as is said in the *Shanjianlü piposha*, at the time when the elders arrived in the Siṃhaladvīpa with Mahinda as their leading master, it was 236 years since the Buddha's *nirvāṇa*. 諸大德到師子洲中已，摩哂陀爲上座。于時佛涅槃已二百三十六歲。[23] That is to say, Mahinda, the sixth patriarch in the lineage, lived more than two hundred years after the Buddha's *nirvāṇa*. In this case, how could Tanwude, the thirteenth patriarch in the lineage, have lived around one hundred years after the Buddha's *nirvāṇa*? Gyōnen's answer is as follows: The Dharmaguptaka school emerged 380 years after the Buddha's *nirvāṇa*. What Dingbin really meant is that this Tanwude, the thirteenth patriarch in the lineage in the *Shanjianlü piposha*, should be referred to as the founder of the Dharmaguptaka school that emerged in later times. Although he was also called Tanwude and shared the same name with the master of *Sifen lü* who lived around one hundred years after the Buddha's *nirvāṇa*, this Tanwude in the lineage was referred to as ci lüzhu 此律主 (the master of this *Vinaya* (i.e., the master of *Sifen lü*)) as well because the Dharmaguptaka school promoted the *Sifen lü*. In Gyōnen's interpretation above, the master of *Sifen lü* called Tanwude who lived around one hundred years after the Buddha's *nirvāṇa* was not the founder of the Dharmaguptaka school of the sectarian period. The Dharmaguptaka school, which specifically transmitted and promoted the *Sifen lü*, emerged more than two hundred years after the edition and compilation of the *Sifen lü*. Thus, the founder of the Dharmaguptaka school was also named Tanwude. Mahinda, the sixth patriarch in the lineage, lived 236 years after the Buddha's *nirvāṇa*. Tanwude, the thirteenth patriarch in the lineage, who should be the founder of the Dharmaguptaka school, lived around 380 years after the Buddha's *nirvāṇa*, much later than Mahinda. As Gyōnen finally concluded, the identification of this Tanwude in the lineage as the founder of the Dharmaguptaka school is matchable with the chronological record in the *Shanjianlü piposha* 與《見論》意時分相稱. We can conclude that, in order to solve the possible chronological problem in Dingbin's narrative, Gyōnen thought of a seemingly reasonable explanation to justify Dingbin's lineage assertion.

2.3. The Patriarchal Lineage of Vinaya Transmission in the Mohe sengqi lü 摩訶僧祇律

In the *Mohe sengqi lü* ascribed to the Mahāsāṃghika school, a Chinese vinaya text translated by Faxian 法顯 (337–422) in the Eastern Jin dynasty, there exists another patriarchal lineage of vinaya transmission, as follows: Youboli 優波離 (Upāli)→Tuosuopoluo 陀娑婆羅→Shutiposuo 樹提陀娑→Qiduo 耆哆→Genhu 根護→Fagao 法高→Juxi 巨醯→Muduo 目哆→Nenghu 能護→Mohena 摩訶那→Moqiuduo 摩求哆→Jusheluo 巨舍羅→Niuhu 牛護→Shanhu 善護→Huming 護命→Chatuo 差陀→Yeshe 耶舍→Futiluo 弗提羅→Qipojia 耆婆伽→Fahu 法護→Tinajia 提那伽→Faqian 法錢→Longjue 龍覺→Fasheng 法勝→Sengjiatipo 僧伽提婆→Fushapotuoluo 弗沙婆陀羅→Daoli 道力.[24] There are twenty-seven masters in this lineage. However, their dates are not mentioned at all by the translator. This lineage also has Upāli as its first patriarch. There is a master named Fahu in it, who is interpreted by Gyōnen as follows:

> In this vinaya text, although twenty-seven masters are listed, it is not known how many years after the Buddha's *nirvāṇa* they lived. The twentieth master named Fahu shared the same name as the master of *Sifen lü*. In the Root Section 根本部, the master of *Sifen lü* is Tanwude, who lived around one hundred years after the Buddha's *nirvāṇa*. In the twenty schools, there is a Dharmaguptaka school, the founder of which had the same name as his predecessor but kept the root text *Mohe sengqi* 根本摩訶僧祇.[25] His date is 380 years [after the Buddha's *nirvāṇa*]. Isn't there any contradiction? Though [the founder] had his own school affiliation, he preached both [the *Mohe sengqi lü* and the *Sifen lü*].
>
> 彼律雖列二十七人，不明佛滅經幾許年。第二十師名曰法護，與《四分》律主名全同。而是根本部《四分》律主是百年時。二十部中有法藏部，彼部主取前人法名而持根本《摩訶僧祇》，在其三百八十年時，有何遮妨？雖有自計，兼弘爾故。(Satō 1994, trans., p. 232)

The dates of these twenty-seven vinaya masters are not clear due to a lack of historical evidence. According to Gyōnen, the name of the twentieth master (i.e., Fahu) and that of the master of *Sifen lü* (i.e., Tanwude) from a Root Section are literally synonymous.[26] The founder of the Dharmaguptaka school also took the name Tanwude, while he kept the *Mohe sengqi lü* as well. As Gyōnen thought, there was no problem for the founder of the Dharmaguptaka school to preach both the *Mohe sengqi lü* and *Sifen lü*, despite his own school affiliation. With the aim of asserting that the Vinaya school had a direct lineage from Indian patriarchs beginning with Upāli, Gyōnen made an artificial link between this Fahu in the *Mohe sengqi lü* and the promotion of the *Sifen lü*, assuming that the transmission of the *Mohe sengqi lü* was also linked to the Dharmaguptaka school.

3. Construction and Critique of Patriarchal Lineages of Vinaya School Starting with Upāli

3.1. Construction of Patriarchal Lineages of Vinaya School Starting with Upāli

Besides Dingbin's efforts to claim a direct lineage from Upāli, the discussion on the origin of the Vinaya school continued in later periods. The Xiangbu Vinaya school declined and gradually merged into the Nanshan Vinaya school after Dingbin (J. Wang 2008, p. 259). In the Song dynasty, the construction of a patriarchal genealogy of the Vinaya school was a prevailing practice among eminent monks for the purpose of inheriting and developing the Nanshan Vinaya school.

The vinaya master Puning 普寧 established five patriarchs:

Upāli→Fazheng 法正 (i.e., Dharmagupta)→Jueming 覺明 (i.e., 佛陀耶舍 Buddhayaśas, the translator of the *Sifen lü*)→Zhishou→Nanshan 南山 (i.e., Daoxuan).

Renyue 仁嶽 established ten patriarchs:

Upāli→Fazheng→Jueming→Facong 法聰→Daofu 道覆→Huiguang 慧光→Daoyun 道雲→Daohong 道洪→Zhishou→Daoxuan.

Shouren 守仁 established seven patriarchs:

Upāli→ Fazheng→Jueming→Facong→Zhishou→Daoxuan→the authors of the *Zenghuiji* 增輝記主.[27]

Likewise, Renkan 仁堪 established seven patriarchs:

Upāli→Fazheng→Tandi 曇諦→Jueming→Facong→ Zhishou→Daoxuan.[28]

These four masters from the Nanshan Vinaya school claimed that the vinaya canon was handed down directly from Upāli to Fazheng, the founder of the Dharmaguptaka school. But the accurate dates of both Upāli and Dharmagupta are obscure. Nothing seems to have predestined Dharmagupta to become the successor to Upāli. In this case, the order of the basic succession—from Upāli to Dharmagupta—was called into question and severely criticized by Yuanzhao, an eminent monk from the Nanshan Vinaya school of the same period.

3.2. Yuanzhao's Criticism

Yuanzhao opposed such a construction of patriarchal genealogies going back to Upāli in the *Zhiyuan yibian* 芝園遺編 (*The Collected Posthumous Works of Yuanzhao*), edited by his disciple Daoxun 道询:

> Upāli was identified as the first patriarch by these four masters. However, there are three reasons for such an untenable lineage assertion. Firstly, the fundamental *vinayapiṭaka* compiled and recited by Upāli is the present *Mohe sengqi lü* ascribed to a Root Section. Although the [Dharmaguptaka] school which the *Sifen lü* is ascribed to have derived from this [Root Section], the fundamental sects and their branches co-existed and competed with each other, starting in the sectarian period. As a result, they are attributed to different school affiliations. Aren't these not recorded in the preface [to the *Sifen lü*]? What *Chao* 鈔 (i.e., Daoxuan's *Sifenlü shanfan buque xingshichao* 四分律刪繁補闕行事鈔) is based on is the Dharmaguptaka school. How could the person who has compiled [the vinaya of a Root] Section be the first patriarch of this [Dharmaguptaka] school? Thus the [Dharmaguptaka school we have] today should not base on this. This is the first reason for such an untenable [lineage assertion].
>
> 四師並以波離爲始祖，其所不可者三焉。且波離結集誦律，即今《僧祇》根本部也。《四分》一宗，雖從彼出，然派分已後，本枝競行，彼此相望，號爲異部，序不云乎？曇無德部，《鈔》者所宗，安有結集彼部之人，而預此宗之祖？此謂非今所宗，一不可也。[29]

According to Yuanzhao, the fundamental *vinayapiṭaka* compiled and recited by Upāli is the *Mohe sengqi lü* ascribed to a Root Section 僧祇根本部 in Indian Buddhism.[30] After the council of the five hundred saints, the denominational split in Indian Buddhism is rather complicated. Only the master who compiled the *Dharmaguptaka-vinaya* could be revered as the first patriarch of this school.

The second reason given by Yuanzhao is as follows: Moreover, though Upāli is credited with the achievements of compiling the vinaya, he is not the one transmitting it. In addition, Tanwude's master is Juduo 𨷹多 (i.e., Youbojuduo 優波𨷹多). [The learning of] Juduo could date back to Qieye 迦葉 (Skt. Kāśyapa). The genealogy [beginning with Kāśyapa] differs greatly from that [beginning with Upāli]. How could this be confused?

> 又，波離雖有結集之功, 不在傳法之數。況曇無德師本承𨷹多, 𨷹多已上, 至于迦葉, 師承頗異, 安可混同？[31]

According to the *Siji* 私記 (private record) of the *Mohe sengqi lü*,

> After the Buddha's *nirvāṇa*, Mahākāśyapa, who held eighty-four thousand *dharma* baskets compiled the *vinayapiṭaka* as to be the tenet of masters. After Mahākāśyapa's *nirvāṇa*, the elder Ānanda (Ch. Anan 阿難) also held eighty-four thousand *dharma* baskets, and then the elder Madhyāntika (Ch. Motiandi 末田地) also held eighty-four thousand *dharma* baskets, and then the elder Śāṇakavāsa (Ch. Shenaposi 舍那婆斯) also held eighty-four thousand *dharma* baskets. And then the

elder Upagupta, who was predicted by the Buddha to become the Buddha without the thirty-two or eighty marks (Skt. nirlakṣaṇa-buddha, alakṣana-buddha; Ch. Wuxiang fo 無相佛), could not hold eighty-four thousand *dharma* baskets, as is said in the *Xiangmo yin yuan* 降魔因緣 (*Nidāna on Overcoming Demons*). Consequently, five divisions arose: the Dharmagupta (Ch. Tanmojueduo 曇摩崛多) being the earliest, then the Mahīśāsaka (Ch. Mishasai 彌沙塞) being the second, the Kāśyapīya (Ch. Jiayewei 迦葉維) being the third, the Sarvāstivāda (Ch. Sapoduo 薩婆多) being the fourth.

佛泥洹後，大迦葉集律藏爲大師宗，具持八萬法藏。大迦葉滅後，次尊者阿難亦具持八萬法藏，次尊者末田地，亦具持八萬法藏，次尊者舍那婆斯，亦具持八萬法藏，次尊者優波崛多，世尊記無相佛，如降魔因緣中説，而不能具持八萬法藏。於是遂有五部名生：初曇摩崛多別爲一部，次彌沙塞別爲一部，次迦葉維複爲一部，次薩婆多。[32]

In Sengyou's 僧佑 (445–518) *Chu sanzang ji ji* 出三藏記集 (*Collected Records concerning the Tripiṭaka*), similar stories of Mahākāśyapa and Upagupta are also told in its *Xinji lü fenwei wubu jilu* 新集律分爲五部記錄 (*Records on the newly compiled vinaya divided into five divisions*). Yuanzhao was influenced by these records and argued that Dharmagupta was not the successor to Upāli. His further analysis is as follows:

According to the *Datang nei dian lu* 大唐内典錄 (*A Catalog of The Buddhist Library in The Tang Dynasty*) [made] by Daoxuan, Upāli handed the *vinayapiṭaka* over to his disciple Dāsaka, Dāsaka handed it over to his disciple Sonaka, Sonaka handed it over to his disciple Siggava, Siggava handed it over to his disciple Tissa Moggaliputta. Tissa Moggaliputta handed it over to his disciple Zhantuobashe 旃陀跋闍 (Pā. Caṇḍavajji). The names of masters in the middle of this lineage are not evident. Finally, the *vinayapiṭaka* was handed over to Sengjiabaluo 僧伽跋羅 (Saṅghabhadra). It is known that Upāli started another lineage that merely promoted the *Sthavira-vinaya*. How could [Saṅghabhadra ascribed to] the Fazheng [bu] (i.e., the Dharmaguptaka school) get inserted into this lineage to inherit the *Sthavira-vinaya*?

又案南山《内典錄》云，波離以律藏付弟子陀寫俱，俱付須俱，須俱付悉伽婆，婆付目揵連子帝須，須付旃陀跋闍。中間不顯名氏，乃至付僧伽跋羅。是則波離別分一枝，專弘上座一律，安得横以法正繼其後乎？[33]

This passage is mainly copied from the *Lidai sanbao ji* 歷代三寶記:

Upāli compiled the *vinayapiṭaka* after the Buddha's *nirvāṇa*. Immediately after that, on the fifteenth day of the seventh month of the same year, they held the *pravāraṇā* ceremony. They worshipped the *vinayapiṭaka* with fragrant flowers and made a dot at the front of the *vinayapiṭaka*. Year after year they did so. At the time Upāli was about to enter *nirvāṇa*, he handed the *vinayapiṭaka* over to his disciple Dāsaka. At the time Dāsaka was about to enter *nirvāṇa*, he handed the *vinayapiṭaka* over to his disciple Soṇaka. At the time Soṇaka was about to enter *nirvāṇa*, he handed the *vinayapiṭaka* over to his disciple Siggava. At the time Siggava was about to enter *nirvāṇa*, he handed the *vinayapiṭaka* over to his disciple Moggaliputta Tissa. At the time Moggaliputta Tissa was about to enter *nirvāṇa*, he handed the *vinayapiṭaka* over to his disciple Caṇḍavajji.[34] In this way, it was transmitted from master to master until the present *trepiṭaka* and *dharma* master. This *trepiṭaka* and *dharma* master arrived with the *vinayapiṭaka* in Guangzhou. Just before he was about to go on board a ship to return home and leave, he handed the *vinayapiṭaka* over to his disciple Saṅghabhadra. Saṅghabhadra, with the *śramaṇa* Sengyi translated the *Shanjian piposha* 善見毗婆沙 (i.e., the *Shanjianlü piposha*) in the sixth year of Yongming 永明六年 (488 A.D.) in the Zhulin Monastery 竹林寺in Guangzhou. On account of that, they stayed together for the rainy season retreat. Having held the *pravāraṇā* ceremony and worshipped the *vinayapiṭaka* with fragrant flowers at

> midnight [on the 15th] of the seventh month, in the seventh year of Yongming 永明七年 (489 A.D.), they added a dot [to the record] as the former masters did.
>
> 佛涅槃後優波離既結集律藏訖，即於其年七月十五日受自恣竟，以香華供養律藏，便下一點置律藏前，年年如是。優波離欲涅槃，持付弟子陀寫俱; 陀寫俱欲涅槃, 付弟子須俱; 須俱欲涅槃, 付弟子悉伽婆; 悉伽婆欲涅槃, 付弟子目揵連子帝須; 目揵連子帝須欲涅槃, 付弟子旃陀跋闍。如是師師相付, 至今三藏法師。三藏法師將律藏至廣州臨上舶反還去, 以律藏付弟子僧伽跋陀羅。羅以永明六年（488）共沙門僧猗，于廣州竹林寺譯出此《善見毗婆沙》。因共安居，以永明七年（489）庚午歲七月半夜受自恣竟，如前師法。以香華供養律藏訖，即下一點.[35]

"A dotted record of many sages 衆聖點記" is considered to be one of the most important historical sources for calculating the date of the historical Buddha. However, its authenticity was questioned as early as the Tang dynasty by Zhisheng 智昇, who emphasized that the *Shanjianlü piposha* is a vinaya commentary that interprets the tenets of a particular denomination and explains the outline 釋一家義，撮要而解 rather than an original vinaya canon recited by Upāli, and thus, it is not possible that the dotted record started from Upāli.[36] Yuanzhao also finds Fei Changfang's record questionable because Upāli and his later disciples merely promoted the *Sthavira-vinaya* 專弘上座一律, which means that Saṅghabhadra, a monk attributed to the Dharmaguptaka school, cannot be forcibly added to this genealogy. Influenced by his predecessors, Yuanzhao also identified the *Shanjianlü piposha* as a commentary on the *Sifen lü*. In his *Sifen lü xingshichao zi chi ji* 四分律行事鈔資持記 (*Commentary to Help Upholding the Vinaya for the Manual for Practice Based on the Sifen lü*), he says, "This vinaya commentary is composed by five hundred *arhat*s and is a commentary on the *Sifen lü*." 此論五百羅漢造, 釋《四分律》。[37] Here, "this vinaya commentary" refers to the *Shanjianlü piposha*. This narrative was copied from the *Sifen lü xingshichao jianzheng ji* 四分律行事鈔簡正記 (*A Collection of the Fine Comments from the Subcommentaries of the Sifen lü xing shi chao*) by Jingxiao 景霄, a monk from the Nanshan Vinaya school as well: The so-called *Shanjian* (i.e., the *Shanjianlü piposha*) means it is co-composed by five hundred *arhat*s and is a commentary on the *Sifen lü* 所言善見者, 謂五百羅漢共造, 斯論解《四分律》。[38] Among documents that predate Yuanzhao, this narrative is only seen in Jingxiao's work. They both claimed that the original Indic text of the *Shanjianlü piposha* arose during the First Council, but they gave no evidence to justify their claim. As far as I can see, the precise date of the *Samantapāsādikā* is also not mentioned in either the Pāli sources or Chinese translation. Nothing can demonstrate that any vinaya canon we see today came into being during the First Council. I assume Jingxiao's narrative is based on his own sectarian bias and reflects his emphasis on the orthodoxy in the Nanshan Vinaya school, which could be traced to the First Council. [39]

Yuanzhao further states,

> In vinaya canons, it is Ānanda and Śāriputra (Ch. Shenzi 身子) that asked the Buddha about problems in the rules when the Buddha was alive. Besides, Śāriputra asked the Buddha to regulate rules, which was the beginning of the vinaya canons. His contribution is greater. Why isn't he the first patriarch? At the beginning of the *Sifen lü*, Upāli is called the beginner.[40] That is because the master of a section 部主 would compile the vinaya with a desire for all [five hundred] saints' verification. Upāli collected all helpful opinions from saints and thus is called a beginner. If one rigidly adheres to the literal meaning and makes Upāli the first patriarch, the five hundred saints [in the First Council] are all witnesses and participants to the compilation of the vinaya and thus should be the first patriarchs as well. Why is Upāli the only one to be the first? This is not transmission [of the vinaya]. This is the second reason for such an untenable [lineage assertion].
>
> 若謂佛世多所疑問者，律中阿難、身子請決尤多。況身子請佛制戒，爲發起之端，其功益大，何不爲祖？若謂律序初標波離爲首者，此乃部主將與集律，祈本

> 衆聖，以爲證信。而波離結集當衆之長，故言爲首耳。苟泥此文，必立爲祖，則餘身證者五百之衆，同是所祈，皆應爲祖，豈特波離乎？此謂不係傳襲。二不可也。[41]

The third reason given by Yuanzhao is as follows:

> Moreover, if we refer to the *Fufazang yin yuan zhuan* with Indian origin, as well as Buddhist *sūtra*s and *abhidharma*s introduced into this kingdom, no schools would consider the one who compiled the canons as their first patriarch. If a certain first patriarch should be determined, it ought to follow the canonical corpora. For example, is Ānanda identified as the first patriarch [in any Buddhist text] ? However, there is no such example.
>
> 又，歷觀西天《付法藏》，傳此土經論之家，未見取結集者爲祖。必如所立，亦應經宗，例以阿難爲祖邪？此無此例。[42]

The person who recited and compiled the texts in Buddhist councils is never treated as the first patriarch in Buddhist scriptures or historiographic works, such as the *Fufazang yinyuan zhuan*. As Yuanzhao said, if the one who recited and compiled the texts could be honored as the first patriarch, then Ānanda should be the choice, for the reason that Ānanda's listening to Buddha's teaching is a regular narration in Buddhist scriptures. There are many stories about Ānanda's direct learning from the Buddha about the regulation of rules in the vinaya canon as well. However, the schools of Huayan 華嚴, Tiantai 天台, Chan 禪, and other schools never regard Ānanda, who recited the texts, as their first patriarch. In the same case, Upāli cannot be revered as the first patriarch in the lineage of the Vinaya school. Therefore, Yuanzhao wrote the *Nanshan lüzong zucheng tulu* 南山律宗祖承圖錄 (*An Illustrated Catalogue of the lineage of the Nanshan Vinaya school*) to identify nine patriarchs of the Vinaya school, in which Dharmagupta is honored as the first patriarch. This was approved by contemporaries and, later, Buddhists. Gyōnen also quotes Yuanzhao's lineage of nine patriarchs in his narrative on the history of the Vinaya school in his *Risshū Kōyō* (Satō 1994, trans., p. 254).

4. Conclusions

This study pinpoints several aspects for further discussion.

Upāli is identified as the first patriarch in the patriarchal lineages of vinaya transmission in both the Pāli *Vinaya* commentary *Samantapāsādikā* and its parallel Chinese version, the *Shanjianlü piposha*, as well as in the *Mohe sengqi lü*, according to his reciting and compiling of the vinaya in the First Council. Yet, the latter two lineages were incorrectly interpreted by monks from the Vinaya school after the *Shanjianlü piposha* and *Mohe sengqi lü* were introduced into China and Japan.

The original Indian text of the *Shanjianlü piposha* was not known to Dingbin or other monks from the Vinaya school. Because the *Shanjianlü piposha* shares a very similar structure with that of the *Sifen lü* and both have corresponding passages, Dingbin misunderstood the *Shanjianlü piposha* as a commentary on the *Sifen lü*. In the patriarchal lineage recorded in the *Shanjianlü piposha*, there exists a "mistranslated" Tanwude, who is not found in its parallel in the Pāli sources. All these factors made Dingbin conceive this patriarchal lineage according to his sectarian bias.

Gyōnen followed Dingbin's assumption and further identified the patriarchal lineage in the *Shanjianlü piposha* as a patriarchal lineage of the Dharmaguptaka school. Apart from this, Fahu, in the patriarchal lineage in the *Mohe sengqi lü*, was also interpreted by Gyōnen as a patriarch transmitting the *Dharmaguptaka-vinaya*. That is to say, seen from Gyōnen's sectarian bias, any name that shares a literally synonymous meaning with Tanwude could be associated with the transmission of the *Dharmaguptaka-vinaya*. Both Dingbin and Gyōnen made great efforts to "present/promote" the Vinaya school with an orthodox Indian origin that could date back to Upāli. Because little learning about Indian Buddhism and original Indic texts was known to monks from the Vinaya school in medieval China and Japan,

Dingbin and Gyōnen could justify themselves in their narratives, and their explanations seemed convincing to those who knew little about Indian Buddhism.

During the Tang and Song dynasties, many Vinaya school monks studied both the Xiangbu and Nanshan Vinaya schools, although the former gradually merged into the latter in a later period. In the Northern Song dynasty, during the time when the Vinaya school had a temporary revival, Upāli was usually honored as the first patriarch in the various patriarchal genealogies of vinaya transmission constructed by eminent Chinese monks, which also revealed their will to orthodoxy. Yuanzhao, a renowned Nanshan Vinaya master of the same period, criticized this false construction, and he furthermore determined another patriarchal lineage of the transmission of the Vinaya school, in which the Indian patriarch Dharmagupta is made the first patriarch. This lineage determined by Yuanzhao also indicates his will to Indian Buddhist orthodoxy, and it receives the most attention, which both sectarian apologists and modern scholars have relied on.

Therefore, based on the narratives of monks from the Chinese and Japanese Vinaya schools, we can conclude that their own interpretations of the patriarchal lineages starting with Upāli in Indian vinaya texts that were later translated into Chinese are not historically reliable, while their orthodox construction of the patriarchal lineages beginning with Upāli, as well as later criticisms, fully display their limited knowledge of Indian Buddhism.

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Abbreviations

Ch.	Chinese
Jp.	Japanese
Pā.	Pāli
Skt.	Sanskrit
T	*Taishō shinshū daizōkyō*. Takakusu Junjirō 高楠順次郎 and Watanabe Kaigyoku 渡邊海旭 eds. *Taishō shinshū daizōkyō* 大正新修大蔵経 [*Buddhist Canon Compiled under the Taishō* Era (1912–1926)]. 100 vols. Tokyo: Taishō issaikyō kankōkai 大正一切経刊行会, 1924–1932.
X	*Xinbian wanzi xu zangjing*. Nakano Tatsue 中野達慧, et al., eds. *Dai Nihon zokuzōkyō* 大日本續藏經 150 vols. Kyoto: Zokyō shoin, 1905–1912. Rpt. *Xinbian wanzi xu zangjing* 新編卍字續藏經 [*Buddhist Canon, Continued*] Taipei: Xinwenfeng, 1968–1978. Rpt, Chinese Buddhist Electronic Texts Association 中華電子佛典協會, CBETA Electronic Tripitaka Collection 電子佛典集成 Taipei: 1998–2018.

Notes

1 Regarding the literature review on this issue, see Robson (2011).

2 Regarding this issue, see Wu (2018a, 2018b).

3 *Shanjianlü piposha* 2, *T* no. 1462: 24. 684b16-c11.

4 According to Jayawickrama, there is the lacuna of a *pāda* here. But the PTS version does not take this into account in the arrangement of the stanza. See Jayawickrama (1962, p. 181).

5 The Pāli passages and stanzas here are based on Takakusu and Nagai (1975, 2nd edition, pp. 61–63) and Jayawickrama (1962, pp. 181–82).

6 For an English translation, see Jayawickrama (1962, pp. 55–56). My translation is slightly different from Jayawickrama's.

7 Oldenberg (1982, 3rd edition, pp. 2–3). The same succession of vinaya masters is also recorded in the Pāli chronicles *Mahāvaṃsa* and the *Dīpavaṃsa*. For an investigation on this lineage's connections with inscriptions, Vincent Tournier shows how the epigraphic record of Āndhradeśa contains interesting clues with respect to the Tāmraparṇīya monks' self-representation, the echoes existing between inscriptions composed under their influence and the phraseology and terminology of Pāli Vinaya and historical writings. See Tournier (2018).

8 *Shanjianlü piposha* 5, *T* no. 1462: 24. 708a17–19. The parallel Pāli text reads, nānānāmā ti buddharakkhito dhammarakkhito tiādi nāmavasena vividhanāmā. nānāgottā ti gotamo moggallāno tiādi gottavasena vividhagottā. See Takakusu and Nagai (1975, 2nd edition, p. 187). Here, the Chinese text corresponds to the Pāli source.

9 *Shanjianlü piposha* 10, *T* no. 1462: 24. 740a18–23.

10 Regarding Dingbin's life biography, see Moro (2003) and L. Wang (2019).

11 According to the *Shanjianlü piposha*, there are twenty-four masters in the lineage from Tissa Moggaliputta and Mahinda to Sīva.

12 *Sifen lüshu shi zong yi ji* 3, *X* no. 733: 42. 41b1–21.

13 *Lidai sanbao ji* 5, *T* no. 2034: 49. 79b.

14 *Shanjianlü piposha* 2, *T* no. 1462: 24. 684b.

15 The *Aggikkhandhopama* has Chinese parallels in the *Mujiyu* 木積喻 (*T* no. 425) in the *Zhong ahan jing* 中阿含經, and in the *Kushu* 枯樹 (*T* no. 689) in the *Zengyi ahan jing* 增一阿含經.

16 The *Mahānāradakassapajātaka* has no Chinese parallels.

17 *Shanjianlü piposha* 16, *T* no. 1462: 24. 787a27–b12. My translation is slightly different from that of Bapat and Hirakawa.

18 In the English translation, Bapat and Hirakawa also give relevant numbers in this passage in the brackets (see Bapat and Hirakawa (1970, pp. 487–88)).

19 In the documents that predate the *Risshū Kōyō*, this saying only appears in Jingxiao's *Sifen lü xingshichao jian zheng ji*: Within the Sthaviravāda, there existed more sages and less ordinary persons. The Sthaviravāda remained in perfect harmony within two hundred years. At the beginning of the third century [after the Buddha's *nirvāṇa*], there was a little dissension and it was divided into two schools: 1. the Sarvāstivāda, 2. the [original] Sthaviravāda, which changed its name into the Haimavata school. Subsepuently 320 years [after the Buddha's *nirvāṇa*], one school named Vātsīputrīya issued from the Sarvāstivāda. Subsepuently 330 years [after the Buddha's *nirvāṇa*], four schools sprang from the Vātsīputrīya: 1. the Dhammottarīya, 2. the Bhadrāyaṇīya, 3. the Sammatīya, 4. the Channagirika. Subsepuently 360 years [after the Buddha's *nirvāṇa*], another school, the Mahīśāsaka, issued from the Sarvāstivāda. Subsepuently 380 years [after the Buddha's *nirvāṇa*], one school named the Dharmaguptaka (or called Fami bu) issued from the Mahīśāsaka. 其上座部，聖多凡小，二百年内，和合一味。至三百年初，有小乖諍，分爲二部，一説一切有部，二上座部轉名雪山部。次三百二十年，從一切有部，分出一部，名犢子部。次三百三十年後，從犢子部中，分出四部，一法上部，二賢冑部，三正量部，四蜜林山部。次三百六十年，從一切有部復分出一部，名化地部。次三百八十年，從化地部中，流出一部，名法藏部，或云法蜜。 See *Sifen lü xingshichao jian zheng ji* 1, *X* no. 737: 43. 21a10–b20. The cited passage deals with the divisions in the Sthaviravāda school, which Jingxiao mainly copies from the *Yibu zong lun lun* 異部宗輪論 (*A Treatise [called] the wheel of doctrines of different schools*) translated by Xuanzang 玄奘. However, Jingxiao's version is quite different from Xuanzang's translation in the dates of school divisions. According to Jingxiao, the Dharmaguptaka school emerged 380 years after the Buddha's *nirvāṇa*, while in Xuanzang's translation, it is stated, Immediately afterwards, during this third century, another school, the Mahīśāsaka, issued from the Sarvāstivāda. Immediately afterwards, during the same century, one school named the Dharmaguptaka issued from the Mahīśāsaka. 次後於此第三百年，從説一切有部，復出一部，名化地部。次後於此第三百年，從化地部流出一部，名法藏部。 See *T* no. 2031: 49. 15b14–16. For the English translation of this passage in the *Yibu zong lun lun* 異部宗輪論, see Masuda (1925, p. 16).

20 (Satō 1994, trans., pp. 234–35). This passage is also found in Gyōnen's *Risshū Gyōkanshō* 律宗瓊鑑章 (see 律宗瓊鑑章6, *dai nihon bukkyō zensho* 大日本仏教全書 105, p. 30).

21 *Sifen lü xingshichao sou xuan lu* 1, *X* no. 732: 41. 839b22–c2. Zhihong's *Sifen lü xingshichao sou xuan lu* is recorded in Eichō's 永超*Tōiki dentō mokuroku* 東域傳燈目錄 (*Catalog of the Transmission of the Torch to the East*). That is to say, it was transmitted into Japan after the Tang dynasty. See *T* no. 2183: 55. 1156a2.

22 *Fufazang yin yuan zhuan* 3, *T* no. 2058: 50. 306a9–11. This passage about the division of five sects in the *Fufazang yin yuan zhuan* is extensively quoted in the donors' inscriptions in Dunhuang Cave 196. In addition, it is also stated in the donors' inscriptions in Dunhuang that the master of the *Sifen lü* is Tanwude. Regarding this issue, see Sheng (2017).

23 *Shanjianlü piposha* 2, *T* no. 1462: 24. 687a10–11. Here, it perfectly corresponds with its parallel in the Pāli sources. Regarding the dates of Mahinda and other vinaya masters in the lineage in the Pāli sources, see Mori (1984, pp. 455–56).

24 *Mohe sengqi lü* 32, *T* no. 1425: 22. 492c17–493a14.

25 The term *genben mohe sengqi* 根本摩訶僧祇 (the root text *Mohe sengqi*, or the *Mohe sengqi lü* ascribed to a Root Section) is also found in Yuanzhao's work. I will discuss it in the following note.

26 The term *genbenbu sifen lü* 根本部四分律 (the *Sifen lü* from a Root Section) reflects Yuanzhao's possible influence on Gyōnen. In his *Sifen lü xingshichao zi chi ji*, Yuanzhao states, From the Root Section, Venerable Fazheng edited and compiled the texts according to his own willing. Where he suspended his preach, there he marked with "one part 一分". [The texts from the Root

Section] was finally edited into a single volumn after he made such marks four times, thus this volunmn is called "Four-part vinaya". 以法正尊者於根本部中，隨己所樂，采集成文，隨說止處，即爲一分。凡經四番，一部方就，故號四分。 See *T* no. 1805: 40. 158a24–26.

27 Here, the authors of the *Zenghuiji* 增輝記主 possibly means the authors of the *Xingshichao zenghuiji* 行事鈔增暉記 (*A Zenghui Record on Daoxuan's Xingshichao*) (i.e., the vinaya master Huize 慧則 and his disiple Xijue 希覺 in Qianfo Monastery 千佛寺 in Qiantang 錢塘 in the period of Ten States 十國). See the *Xingshichao zhujiaji biaomu* 行事鈔諸家記標目 (*A Catalogue of Subcommentaries on Daoxuan's Xingshichao*), *X* no. 741: 44. 304c21–22. For an investigation on the *Zenghuiji*, see Zhan (2021).

28 *Zhiyuan yibian* 3, *X* no. 1104: 59. 647a5–12.

29 *Zhiyuan yibian* 3, *X* no. 1104: 59. 647a15–19.

30 The term *genben mohe sengqi* is also seen in the abovementioned Gyōnen work. Here, Yuanzhao's opinion can also be found in Daoxuan's *Sifenlü shanfan buque xingshichao* 四分律刪繁補闕行事鈔 (*the Sifen lü, Unnecessary Details Removed and Gaps Filled from Other Sources*): "The original texts [quoted here] means: The *Mohe sengqi lü* ascribed to a Root Section, and the others are ascribed to five divisions: 1. The Dharmaguptaka, that is the Four-Part Vinaya (*Sifen lü*), which the *Sifenlü shanfan buque xingshichao* is based on; 2. The Sarvāstivāda, that is the Vinaya of Ten Recitations (*Shisong lü*); 3. The Mahīśāsaka, that is the Five-part Vinaya (*Wufen lü*); 4. The Kāśyapīya, that is the Vinaya of Extrication (*Jietuo lü*, i.e., the *Jietuo jie jing* 解脫戒經), the *prātimokṣa* of which is existant; 5. The Vātsīputrīya whose vinaya has not come [to China]." 言正本者，《僧祇律》是根本部，餘是五部。曇無德部，《四分律》也，《鈔》者所宗。薩婆多部，《十誦律》也。彌沙塞部，《五分律》也。迦葉遺部，《解脫律》，此有戒本。婆麁富羅部，律本未至。See *Sifenlü shanfan buque xingshichao* 1, *T* no. 1804: 40. 3b23–25. Dajue 大覺 (dates of birth and death unknown), another monk from the Nanshan Vinaya school in the Tang dynasty, further argues in his *Sifenlü xingshichao pi* 四分律行事鈔批 (*A Critical Study on [Daoxuan's] Sifenlü Xingshi Chao*), "The *Mohe sengqi lü* is ascribed to a Root Section. The Sengqi school is called Mahāsaṃghika in the foreign language, here it is called 'Large community (dazhong 大衆)'. This means the council inside the city [of Rājagṛha], which is called the 'Section of the High-seated' with Kāśyapa as the leader. This is named after the senior age [of Kāśyapa]. Zhong 衆 means the group of five hundred saints, thus is called the 'Section of the Large Community'. This 'Section of the High-seated' is also called the 'Section of the Large Community', which is actually not the 'Section of the Great Community' gathering outside the city [of Rājagṛha]. The five divisions we have today derived from the former 'Section of the Large Community' organized by the High-seated, thus is called sengqi 僧祇. The 'Section of the Great Community' gathering outside the city is not the base of the *Sifen lü*. Therefore, the *Mohe sengqi lü* is identified as a root text of the five divisions. According to the *Dajijing* 大集經 (i.e., *Dafangdeng da ji jing* 大方等大集經), [the Buddha said, my disciples should] read extensively books of five divisions, which are thus called the Mohe sengqi. Here says "read extensively books of five divisions", that is to say, [the Mohe sengqi] is not any [certain division] of the five divisions, and so it is identified as a root section." 《僧祇律》是根本部者，僧祇部，外國云摩訶僧祇（Mahāsaṃghika ），此云大衆。此是[王舍] 城内前結集者，名上座部，以迦葉在座年老得名也。衆既五百，名大衆部。呼此上座部爲大衆部耳，實非城外結集之大衆部也。今茲五部，皆從前上座之大衆部出，故呼僧祇。城外大衆部，非四分之根本也，所以將《僧祇》爲五部根本。據《大集經》云，廣博遍覽五部經書，是故名爲摩訶僧祇。既言遍覽五部，明知非五部數，故判爲根本部。See *Sifen lü xingshi chao pi* 1, *X* no. 736: 42. 623a9–16. According to Dajue, during the First Council, there existed two groups of saints: one group of five hundred saints with Mahākāśyapa as their leading elder who compiled the vinaya inside the city of Rājagṛha, in which Upāli recited it as the only systematic set of rules of the Buddha, and another group of one thousand saints who performed the compilation outside the city of Rājagṛha, which is called the "Section of the Great Community" due to the greater number of saints. The later five divisions are derived from the council in which the group of five hundred saints beginning with Mahākāśyapa gathered (i.e., the "Section of the Large Community organized by the High-seated 上座之大衆部" in Dajue's narrative). That is why the *Mohe sengqi lü* is regarded as a root text. This report, as far as I can see, is also repeated in Yuanzhao's *Sifen lü xingshichao zi chi ji* 四分律行事鈔資持記. (See *T* no. 1805: 40. 170a6–10.) But the expressions "compilation inside the city 城内結集" and "compilation outside the city 城外結集" only appear here in Dajue's work, while Yuanzhao states "compilation inside the [Pippala-]cave 窟内結集" and "compilation outside the [Pippala-]cave 窟外結集" instead. It seems that, here, the division between *Shangzuo* 上座 and *Dazhong* 大衆 was a natural one that occurred during the First Council rather than a schism, which only occurred around the events of the Second Council in Pāṭaliputra. Yuanzhao argues that what Upāli recited in the First Council is the root text the *Mohe sengqi lü*. It is quite possible that Dajue exerted an influence on Yuanzhao's identification. Therefore, regarding the terms *genben mohe sengqi* 根本摩訶僧祇 or *sengqi genbenbu* 僧祇根本部, it seems that Daoxuan, Dajue, Yuanzhao, and Gyōnen shared some common narrative lore, which indicates that they all assumed that the formation of the *Mohe sengqi lü* was earlier than vinaya texts attributed to other schools.

31 *Zhiyuan yibian* 3, *X* no. 1104: 59. 647a19–21.

32 *Mohe sengqi lü* 40, *T* no. 1425: 22. 548b9–17.

33 *Zhiyuan yibian* 3, *X* no. 1104: 59. 647a21–24.

34 Caṇḍavajji is treated as a disciple of Tissa Moggaliputta in the narrative of the *Lidai sanbao ji*. However, this Caṇḍavajji is Tissa Moggaliputta's teacher according to the *Shanjianlü piposha*: "Has learnt the line of succession of his teachers and has retained it without letting it slip from memory" means: Upāli learnt [the Vinaya] from the Tathāgata; Dāsaka learnt it from Upāli; Soṇaka from Dāsaka; Siggava from Soṇaka, Moggaliputta Tissa from Siggava and Caṇḍavajji. Thus the succession of teachers continues until it reaches the present. 次第從師受持不忘者，優波離從如來受，陀寫俱從優波離受，須提那俱從陀寫俱受，悉伽婆從須那

俱受，目揵連子帝須從悉伽婆受、又栴陀跋受，如是師師相承，乃至於今。See *Shanjianlü piposha* 6, *T* no. 1462: 24. 716c25–29. Here, both Zhantuoba 栴陀跋 and Zhantuobashe 旃陀跋闍 are transliterations of Caṇḍavajji. The *Shanjianlü piposha* relates the same as the Pāli *Samantapāsādikā* and chronicles: namely, that Caṇḍavajji was the teacher of Moggaliputta Tissa, not his successor. W. Pachow has pointed out that the sixth name Caṇḍavajji that Fei Changfang gave here is a mistake. See Pachow (1965).

35 *Lidai sanbao ji* 11, *T* no. 2034: 49. 95b20–c6.

36 *Kaiyuan shijiao lu* 開元釋教錄 (*Record of Śakyamuni's Teachings Compiled During the Kaiyuan period*) 6, *T* no. 2154: 55. 536a7–9.

37 *Sifen lü xingshichao zi chi ji* 4, *T* no. 1805: 40. 170b4. It is interesting to note Yuanzhao's contradiction in interpreting the vinaya canon compiled/composed in the First Council. Here, he claimed that the original Indic text of *Shanjianlü piposha* was composed by five hundred *arhat*s in the First Council. However, according to the *Zhiyuan yibian*, as shown in the abovementioned passages, he stated that the fundamental *vinayapiṭaka* compiled and recited by Upāli is the present *Mohe sengqi lü* ascribed to a Root Section, which the later *Dharmaguptaka-vinaya* was derived from. The contradiction here is obvious: because Yuanzhao classified the *Shanjianlü piposha* as a *Dharmaguptaka-vinaya* commentary made in the First Council, how could the date of a vinaya commentary be much earlier than the vinaya texts it comments on?

38 *Sifen lü xingshichao jianzheng ji* 4, *X* no. 737: 43. 57b10–11.

39 For a full discussion on this, see (Wu 2018a).

40 In the verses at the beginning of the *Sifen lü*, it is said: Upāli is the beginner, with other witnesses and participants [in the First Council]. Now the outline of rules should be told, listened by all saints. 優波離爲首，及餘身證者；今說戒要義，諸賢咸共聽。See *Sifen lü* 1,*T* no.1428: 22. 567b28–c1.

41 *Zhiyuan yibian* 3, *X* no. 1104: 59. 647b1–7.

42 *Zhiyuan yibian* 3, *X* no. 1104: 59. 647b7–10.

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Article

"Lamp and Candle": Classical Chinese Imagery in Taixu's Poetry

Xiaoxiao Xu

Faculty of Arts and Philosophy, Ghent University, 9000 Ghent, Belgium; xiaoxiao.xu@ugent.be

Abstract: Taixu 太虛 (1890–1947), a prominent figure in modern Chinese Buddhism, produced a voluminous collection of poetry abounding with diverse classical Chinese images. Notably, the "lamp and candle" (*dengzhu* 燈燭) holds great significance, reflecting Taixu's personal affinity with this imagery and an intimate connection to classical Chinese poetry. Acting as a potent Buddhist metaphor, it encapsulates multifaceted sentiments while also intertwining with other evocative images, such as the boat, the moon, and falling leaves. Symbolizing Taixu's unwavering spirit, it represents his profound dedication to his craft. This article explores Taixu's literary achievements as a poet by focusing on his adept utilization of "lamp and candle" imagery, complementing the study of his multifaceted and intricate identities. This detailed examination offers novel insights into Chinese literature and Buddhist studies, highlighting the interplay between spiritual practice and artistic expression.

Keywords: classical Chinese imagery; poetry; Taixu; lamp and candle

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1. Introduction

During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, China experienced a notable revival of Buddhism, which led, in turn, to the advancement of Buddhist literature (Tan 2010).[1] Taixu, a prominent scholar who played a key role in organizing and promoting this Buddhist movement, had a deep connection with classical Chinese literature, particularly poetry. Born into a literary family, he was raised by his grandmother, Zhou Lixiu 周理修, a knowledgeable practitioner of Buddhism and Daoism who specialized in poetry (TDQ, vol. XXXI, pp. 156–57). Moreover, he received guidance from his uncle, Zhang Zizang 張子綱, a talented literatus who was well versed in Chinese literature (ibid., pp. 159–60). This upbringing and educational background deeply influenced Taixu's early involvement with poetry, which was further nurtured by his exceptional intellect and prodigious memory (ibid., p. 159). Remarkably, he started learning and reciting poetry at the tender age of five, with a specific focus on the Tang Dynasty (618–907), which he felt represented the zenith of classical Chinese poetry (ibid., p. 159).[2] Throughout his formative years, he continued to hone his own poetic skills by collaborating with mentors, companions, disciples, and students.[3] Notably, in 1916, he achieved a significant milestone by publishing his inaugural poetry collection—*Meian shilu* 昧盦詩錄 (*The Poetry Collection of Meian*)—which cemented his reputation as a recognized poet (ibid., p. 197).[4] Thereafter, he continued to dedicate himself to his craft until his passing in 1947 (TDN, p. 346).

As a prolific poet for more than three decades, Taixu produced a significant corpus of over a thousand poems. These works, which include collaborations as well as individual compositions, are compiled in the "Shicun 詩存" (Poetry Collection) chapter of the *Taixu dashi quanshu* 太虛大師全書 (*Collected Works of Master Taixu*), a comprehensive anthology edited primarily by Yinshun 印順 (1906–2005),[5] one of Taixu's most distinguished disciples. A number of additional verses appear in the *Taixu dashi nianpu* 太虛大師年譜 (*Chronological Biography of Taixu*), also edited by Yinshun, and *Taixu zizhuan* 太虛自傳 (*Taixu's Autobiography*). All of these poems serve as invaluable resources for exploring Taixu's philosophical beliefs, personal emotions, and remarkable accomplishments.

However, despite extensive studies on various aspects of Taixu's life, research has often focused on his identities as a reformer, political activist, and educator, while neglecting his identity as a poet.[6] In this sense, his poetry has been overlooked as a valuable resource for understanding his multifaceted personality. Interpreting Taixu's poetry from both Buddhist and literary perspectives will undoubtedly add crucial information on the role he played in Chinese society.

Taixu's poetry is replete with classical Chinese imagery, with the "lamp and candle" especially prevalent and prominent. As essential sources of light, lamps and candles have held deep symbolic significance in Chinese literature since ancient times, particularly within the realm of poetry.[7] Furthermore, this imagery has experienced a resurgence in popularity among modern poet-monks.[8] Taixu, following in the footsteps of generations of Chinese literati, deftly employed "lamp and candle" imagery in over sixty of his poems, establishing himself as one of the most prolific users of this motif. In this way, he not only conveyed his personal perspectives and emotions but also showcased his unique artistic sensibilities.

This article will explore a series of questions relating to this imagery:

- Why is the "lamp and candle" so prominent in Taixu's poetry?
- What symbolic meaning does this imagery hold as a Buddhist metaphor?
- Which personal sentiments are expressed through Taixu's use of this imagery?
- How does this imagery serve as a conduit for transmitting Taixu's personal emotions and spiritual experiences?

Scrutinizing Taixu's adept utilization of "lamp and candle" imagery in his poetic compositions provides unprecedented insights into how he reinforced his identity as a poet by fusing artistic expression with religious devotion.

The article is founded upon three primary objectives:

- It presents an uncharted examination of Taixu's accomplishments as a poet-monk, serving as a complementary study to his multifaceted and intricate identities.
- It illuminates Taixu's extensive collection of poetry, which has received scant attention from both Buddhist and literary scholars.
- It innovatively analyses the metaphorical image of the "lamp and candle", which held profound influence over Taixu's life and monastic vocation, yet has remained largely overlooked in the comprehensive inquiries into various facets of his life.

2. The Significance of "Lamp and Candle" Imagery in Taixu's Poetry

Before embarking on a thorough exploration of the philosophical and literary aspects of "lamp and candle" imagery, it is imperative to address its significance in Taixu's poetry. Although he possessed a personal fondness for lamps and candles (which served as the main sources of illumination in his daily life), the transformation of these utilitarian objects into weighty poetic imagery was far from straightforward. Rather, it was a complex process that reflected the poet's upbringing, education, and subsequent life experiences.

Taixu developed a profound affinity for lamps and candles from a very early age. For example, he recalled experiencing the warm radiance of an oil lamp for the first time while residing with his grandmother—a devout Buddhist—in the Dayin Nunnery (Dayin an 大隱庵) at the age of five (TDQ, vol. XXXI, p. 156).[9] This initial encounter with a lamp's soothing glow left an indelible imprint upon the young Taixu, as he explains in his autobiography:

> 我最早的意識和想像，是庵內觀音龕前的琉璃燈；有一次看著外婆把燈放下來，添了油，燃了火，又扯上去，注視得非常明晰深刻。同時，並想像屋樑下懸有一個什麼靈活的東西在牽動著，而各種知識記憶乃從此萌芽了。
>
> My earliest consciousness and imagination revolved around the glass lamp that stood before the Guanyin (Avalokiteśvara) altar in the nunnery. On one occasion, I watched as my grandmother placed the lamp down, replenished its oil, kindled the flame, and raised it once more, observing the entire process with remarkable

clarity and profundity. Concurrently, I imagined an agile presence suspended from the roof beam, a moment from which various memories and knowledge sprouted forth.[10]

This mysterious and romantic experience holds a significant place in Taixu's earliest childhood memories. The illuminating glass lamp, symbolizing his curiosity and thirst for life, became an indelible image deeply ingrained in his mind. While Taixu refrained from explicitly elucidating this "agile presence", we may infer that it played a key role in his enlightenment and the development of his craft. Indeed, it is possible to trace his numerous depictions of "lamp and candle" imagery within religious contexts, including temples, churches, and other sacred spaces, to this early, wondrous encounter. For instance, more than three decades later, in October 1928, during a visit to the Sacred Heart Basilica in Paris,[11] his attention was immediately drawn to the flickering candles:[12]

高處巋然古教堂，紛陳像設燭騰光。

High above, the ancient church majestically stood, Statues and candles arranged, a dazzling flood.[13]

Taixu was clearly captivated by the sight of candlelight within temples and grand churches, and this is certainly a plausible explanation for his repeated use of "lamp and candle" imagery both during and after his travels. However, he was also able to detach it from any religious context and give it a more universal essence. This process was facilitated by the advent of the "electric lamp" (*diandeng* 電燈), which revolutionized traditional "lamp and candle" imagery.

The electric lamp made its first appearance in Beijing's Forbidden City (Zijin Cheng 紫禁城) in 1888,[14] just two years before Taixu's birth. Over the next six decades, his life unfolded amidst a gradual proliferation of electric lighting. During his youth and early adulthood, prior to a period of seclusion on Putuo Mountain (Putuo shan普陀山) in 1917,[15] the "lamp and candle" imagery in his work related exclusively to oil lamps and candles. However, following the conclusion of his retreat, Taixu's exposure to electric lighting increased significantly as he ventured abroad and started to spend considerable amounts of time in major, modern cities. For example, a burgeoning fascination with the warm glow of electric lamps is evident in a poem he composed en route to Japan in the autumn of 1917:

驚起鴛鴦眠不定，粲然微笑電燈前。

Stirred awake like the restless mandarin ducks, [I] sparkle with a smile before the electric lamp.[16]

Taixu had dreamed of this journey for some time, as he had long hoped to study the amalgamation of Buddhism and Western philosophy in a country where East met West (TDQ, vol. XXXI, p. 288). However, on board the ship, at midnight, amidst autumnal winds and rain, his excitement was tinged with trepidation. Restless and unable to sleep, he finally found solace in the light from an electric lamp. His admiration for the bulb's comforting radiance imbued the "lamp and candle" imagery with a modern and rational essence that distinguished it from classical Chinese images, such as mandarin ducks.

Five years later, in 1922, Taixu visited Yingjiang Temple (Yingjiang si 迎江寺), a renowned Chan monastery in Anqing安慶, and subsequently composed a poem dedicated to its Zhenfeng Pagoda (Zhenfeng ta 振風塔):[17]

雲樹風帆明遠近，電燈高照大江南。

Clouds, trees, wind, sails, far and near, Electric light high shines, over the great river south.[18]

Here, a number of classical Chinese elements—clouds, trees, wind, and sails—epitomize the natural beauty that envelops the temple, while the electric light infuses the scene with modern brilliance and dynamism. The convergence of these natural and artificial images

achieves a level of harmonization unparalleled in classical Chinese poetry, facilitated by the poet's enduring reverence for "lamp and candle" imagery.

Taixu's skillful incorporation of this imagery into his work may be attributed, at least in part, to his educational background and, particularly, his study of Tang poetry. His formal introduction to the genre began in *mengguan* 蒙館,[19] where his knowledgeable uncle played a pivotal role (TDQ, vol. XXXI, p. 159). Thereafter, as his schooling continued through interactions with various masters and friends in monasteries, as well as self-study, his respect for his Tang predecessors remained steadfast (TDQ, vol. XXXI, pp. 169–74). Many of these poets frequently employed "lamp and candle" imagery in their work (TDQ, vol. XXXII, p. 414). For example, in the *Quan Tangshi* 全唐詩 (*Complete Collection of Tang Dynasty Poetry*),[20] lamps are mentioned 1,563 times, while candles appear 986 times (Fu 2007, p. 234). One of Taixu's favorite poets, Bai Juyi 白居易 (772–846),[21] used such imagery no fewer than 185 times in the course of his career (ibid.), including in the following couplet:

> 香火一爐燈一盞，白頭夜禮佛名經。
>
> A furnace of incense and a lamp in sight, At night with white hair, [I] pay my respects and recite.[22]

While the faint incense flames may soon fade, the light of the lamp will endure, enabling Bai Juyi, a devout Buddhist, to continue to read the scriptures and meditate. Hence, the lamp is far more than a simple source of illumination; it also lights the path to Buddhist wisdom. More than a millennium later, Taixu would echo this sentiment in his own poetry by utilizing similar imagery to convey spiritual insight and enlightenment.

3. The Mind Lamp: A Buddhist Metaphor

Taixu uses the "mind lamp" (*xindeng* 心燈) metaphor to draw parallels between the mind's cognitive functions and lamplight. Specifically, this metaphor, which is deeply rooted in Buddhist tradition,[23] finds expression in two distinct dimensions of his work: the embodiment of Buddhist wisdom and the dissemination of the Buddhist Dharma. He first employed it in the spring of 1913, when writing an article in which he heralded the establishment of a new Buddhist association:[24]

> 吾人既稱佛子，不可不於佛法中自覓安心立命之地，以紹佛之心燈於不絕。
>
> As practitioners of Buddhism, it is essential [for us] to seek within the teachings of Buddhism a place of inner peace and existential grounding, so that [we may] perpetuate the illuminating light of the Buddha's mind lamp.[25]

This elucidation accentuates the importance of studying Buddhist teachings as a means to illuminate the mind—analogous to using a lamp to dispel darkness. Taixu reiterates this message numerous times in his poetry. By drawing parallels between the lamp and the enlightenment that results from the Buddha's teachings, he underscores the former's significance as a symbol of illumination and spiritual awakening:

> 燈比佛果上之恩德，以燈能破闇，而佛之大悲，亦能破除眾生癡闇。
>
> The illumination of the lamp symbolizes the meritorious compassion inherent in Buddha's fruition,[26] as the lamp dispels darkness, the profound compassion of the Buddha also dispels the ignorance of sentient beings.[27]

Hence, Taixu argues that studying Buddhism enables ordinary individuals to cultivate their mind lamps. Another text reiterates this point by highlighting the transformative effect of Buddhist enlightenment:

> 蓋漫漫生死長夜，佛為明燈；今既不信佛燈，是即失大利樂，如"盲人騎瞎馬，半夜臨深流"。
>
> In the vast cycle of birth and death, which resembles a long night, the Buddha serves as an illuminating lamp. Those who fail to place their trust in the Buddha's

lamp relinquish immense benefits and joy, akin to a "blind person riding a blind horse, approaching a deep stream in the middle of the night."[28]

Along with many other metaphors in the Buddhist tradition (Fu 2007, p. 245), the lamp represents the inherent wisdom of Buddhism, while discovering the mind lamp symbolizes the process of acquiring that wisdom. Both feature prominently in Taixu's exchanges with fellow poets, as in the following example:

剔燈曾共展奇文，今日重來倍憶君。

We once shared the brilliance under the lamp's glow, Today, revisiting, memories of you (Huoxuan) multiply and grow.[29]

This couplet was written in response to a poem by Huoxuan 豁宣,[30] one of Taixu's closest friends, in 1916. When they met again after a long period apart, Taixu's most vivid memory was of them reading Buddhist scriptures together. In this context, "the brilliance under the lamp's glow" symbolizes not only the Buddhist wisdom they acquired prior to their separation but also their enduring bond of friendship. An identical sentiment is evident in a poem that Taixu wrote during an overnight stay at Lingyun Temple (Lingyun si 靈雲寺):[31]

主人寒夜來生客，一剔心燈耀古今。

On a wintry night, the host welcomes the guest, A flicker of the mind lamp illuminates the past and present.[32]

On this cold night, a lamp lit by the abbot for Taixu signifies the two monks' friendship and camaraderie. In addition, the mind lamp symbolizes the Buddhist wisdom that has persisted since ancient times, and perhaps the transmission of the Buddhist Dharma.

Taixu's poetry often incorporates the concept of the "endless lamp" (*wujin deng* 無盡燈)—an extension of the mind lamp metaphor that encompasses the transmission of the Buddhist Dharma. The interplay of light from an infinite number of lamps creates a space filled with radiant brilliance. Taixu clarifies this idea in a treatise entitled *Wo zhi zongjiao guan* 我之宗教觀 (*My Religious Views*), written in 1925:

所謂一室千燈，光光互遍，相涉無礙，不壞自相。

The so-called one room, thousand lamps scenario, where many lights permeate, intersect without hindrance, and do not diminish one another.[33]

According to Taixu, the Buddhist Dharma is transmitted through both promotion and education. For example:

修行證果，弘法利世，焰續佛燈明。

Engaging in spiritual practice to attain realization, Promoting the Dharma for the welfare of the world, The flame perpetuates the radiance of the Buddha's lamp.[34]

Therefore, those who study Buddhism transmit its teachings for the good of the world through their Buddhist practice, ensuring the perpetuation of the mind lamp. Taixu revisits this idea in his response to a poem by Shi Ji'an 施寄庵,[35] a Taiwanese 臺灣 journalist, following a Buddhist assembly (TDN, p. 59):

願將文字[36]有為法,[37] 傳作光明無盡燈！

May these written poems embody the conditioned phenomena, Transmitting as an infinite and radiant lamp![38]

Taixu is a strong advocate of disseminating the Buddhist Dharma through various means, ranging from inspirational poetry to the luminosity of countless mind lamps, but he also understands that education has a crucial role to play in this process:

新參僧教育，無盡佛明燈。

Through the education of novice monks, The infinite light of the Buddha shines endlessly.[39]

According to Taixu, such education is key to the reformation of Chinese Buddhism (TDQ, vol. XIX, p. 14).[40] The infinite light from devotees' mind lamps signifies the diffusion of the Buddhist Dharma throughout the world, filling Taixu with hope for the future of Buddhism in China. This is just one of the ways in which he uses the image of a warm lamp to symbolize his inner feelings.

4. Taixu's Personal Emotions in "Lamp and Candle" Imagery

Taixu's incorporation of metaphorical "lamp and candle" imagery in his poetry is intimately connected to his personal emotions. Within classical Chinese culture, such imagery often symbolizes the aspirations and hopes of individuals (Fu 2007, p. 248), as in the *Ben Cao Gang Mu* 本草綱目 (*Encyclopedia of Materia Medica*),[41] a renowned medical text:

燈花爆而百事喜。

When the flame of a lamp wick suddenly bursts forth, it signifies joyousness in every aspect.[42]

Similarly, the *Yi Wen Zhi* 藝文志 (*Treatise on Arts and Letters*),[43] the earliest comprehensive catalogue of books in China, includes descriptions of how people in ancient times would forecast the future based on the brightness of lamps and candles. As a classical Chinese literatus, Taixu was deeply influenced by the traditional significance of this imagery, with the warm lamps and glowing candles in his poetry frequently evoking a sense of tranquility and inner peace:

晚來偕向市場遊，燈火星羅車水流。

In the evening, [we] venture together to the bustling market, Where lanterns shimmer and carriages flow like a river.[44]

Taixu composed this couplet during a visit to Taipei in November 1917.[45] He found himself in a state of tranquility as he wandered through the bustling local market (signified by carriages flowing "like a river") under the illuminating glow of lanterns. It is important to note that this imagery symbolizes his sense of calm. Thus, rather than explicitly expressing his inner feelings, he skillfully allows a simple description of the market's lamplight to convey his emotions to the reader. The same technique is evident in a poem he wrote the following month in Kyoto:[46]

夜從書城搜蠹殘，花海燈市才一瞥。

In the evening, [I] search for remnants of decay in the city of books, But caught only a fleeting glimpse of the sea of flowers and the bustling lamplit market.[47]

Here, the lamplight evokes Taixu's sense of inner peace as he catches an all-too-brief glimpse of natural beauty in the midst of the busy market. As a monk accustomed to a life of solitude, he clearly felt considerable unease when venturing into unfamiliar, public places, yet even the briefest glimpse of a lamp could relax him and inspire him to write poetry. That said, he preferred more serene environments, and particularly the tranquility of his own residence:

剪燈同夜話，高躡待明朝。

Engaging in late-night conversations under the dimly lit lamp, [We] ascend to higher grounds, awaiting the arrival of dawn.[48]

This poem records a conversation between Taixu and a visiting woodcutter on Jiuhua Mountain in 1929. Both the lengthy conversation itself and the elevated location reflect Taixu's excitement and joy in their dialogue. Once again, while the poet does not explicitly express his happiness, every word is infused with positivity, particularly in his depiction of the lamp that burns through the night.

Interestingly, there are more overt expressions of happiness in Taixu's later work, as in the following poem, which dates from the final few years of his life:

清談娓娓消初夜，喜有明燈耀案頭。

Engaging in a lively conversation, the first night dissipates gracefully, Delighted to have a bright lamp illuminating the desk.[49]

In his secluded private residence, which is usually characterized by tranquility and solitude, Taixu engages in conversations with friends that can continue throughout the night, using the term *xi* 喜 to convey the pleasure that these lamplit discussions provide.

Although Taixu often employs "lamp and candle" imagery as a metaphor for human behavior and emotions, this is not always the case. On occasion, he simply expresses the joy he feels when observing the play of light in a serene natural setting, far removed from any human activity:

上界繁星隔岸燈，湖天一碧萬光騰。

Across the celestial realm, stars twinkle, while lamps illuminate the distant shores, The lake and sky merge as one, a boundless expanse gleaming with myriad lights.[50]

Taixu was inspired to write this poem on a peaceful boating excursion on West Lake (*Xihu* 西湖) during his residence in Hangzhou in the summer of 1927 (TDN, pp. 154–55).[51] He focuses solely on the ethereal glow of the humble lamplight, which becomes a bridge between the vast expanse of the heavens above and the tranquil waters below. Through this artistic device, he effortlessly traverses the spatial constraints of the sky and the lake, crafting an intertwining realm of luminosity shaped by the radiance of stars and lamps. Once again, the reader senses Taixu's excitement at witnessing this enigmatic and resplendent landscape, even in the absence of any explicit emotional declaration. Furthermore, his exhilaration is accentuated by the insects that gather in the flickering glow of the lamplight:

雲中金粟[52]影，燈下草蟲啼。

In the realm of clouds, Buddha's radiance shines, Underneath the lamp's glow, insects' songs chime.[53]

This chorus of illuminated insects symbolizes vibrant vitality. Their ceaseless melodies complement the eternal illumination of the lamp, creating a scene brimming with life. Taixu finds himself rejuvenated by this dazzling spectacle.

In stark contrast to his frequent use of joyful "lamp and candle" imagery, Taixu sometimes employs similar metaphors to express negative emotions, such as anxiety about the inexorable passage of time, anguish over absent friends, and homesickness. This transition from positive to negative connotations is achieved through Taixu's skillful use of two distinct techniques: first, he reduces the number of lamps and thereby diminishes the intensity and luminosity of the light, as in such phrases as "one lamp" (*yideng* 一燈) or "lone lamp" (*gudeng* 孤燈); and, second, he places the lamp in a bleak setting. Both techniques are evident in the following passage:

獨坐寒宵盡，寒宵忽已深，一燈冷相對，惆悵去來今。

Sitting alone, the cold night wanes, In the sudden depth of the chilling hours. One lamp, cold and solitary, faces me, Regret and melancholy, the passage of time.[54]

On a frigid night, Taixu finds some solace in the company of his lamp, as if it were an old friend, silently witnessing the relentless march of time. He penned this poignant poem in 1908, at the age of nineteen, yet there is already a sense of anxiety over his advancing years. Five years later, he composed another poem that explored the same theme:

朱顏隨歲改，華髮映燈寒。

The rosy complexion changes with the passing years, The gray hair reflects the coldness of the lamp's glow.[55]

In classical Chinese literature, a person's changing complexion invariably symbolizes the unstoppable passage of time.[56] This poem was composed on the Chinese New Year's Eve of 1913—a significant moment when Taixu reflected upon his lack of purpose. The description of a pallid face and gray hair draws attention to the aging process, even though Taixu was still only twenty-three years old at the time. By exaggerating his own physical decline, he conveys a sense of loneliness and frustration in the aftermath of a turbulent period fraught with challenges and setbacks in the development of Chinese Buddhism, as well as his own life.[57]

Taixu's apprehension about the passage of time is magnified when he commemorates festive occasions, as in the following example:

等閒又度中秋節,[58]風雨孤燈思悄然!

Once again waiting idly for the Mid-Autumn Festival to arrive, With wind and rain, the solitary lamp quietly ponders.[59]

This poem was completed in 1943, near the end of Taixu's life. While others celebrate the Mid-Autumn Festival, a traditional time for family reunions, the poet sits alone, facing a single lamp, as a storm rages outside. He highlights the unrelenting passage of time, year after year, with the character *you* 又. Now an old man in a state of perpetual solitude and anxiety, does he long for some company in the lamplit night? And who is he missing most? Through his poetry, we learn that he yearns for an old friend, while the lamp bears witness to his torment:

寒窗深坐一燈昏，苦憶軒昂磊落人。

In the depths of the cold study, sitting alone in the dim lamplight, Bitter memories flood my mind of that remarkable and upright individual.[60]

The individual in question was Chen Chunbai 陳純白 (1897–1964),[61] a well-respected mayor of Hangzhou. In marked contrast to his subtle expressions of personal joy or excitement, here Taixu's yearning for his friend could scarcely be any more explicit. And he is similarly candid in a poem from 1909, evidently written during a bout of homesickness:

薄寒憶歸去，燈火見前村。

In the slight chill, memories of the journey home arise, The lamplight reveals the village ahead.[62]

As he gazes at a river, Taixu sees lamps shining in the distance, symbolizing the reunions and harmonious gatherings of countless families. This stirs up a longing for home, prompting him to declare his desire to return there. His upbringing had lacked the love and care of his parents: he had lived solely with his grandmother until leaving her behind in 1904 to become a monk, without bidding her farewell (TDQ, vol. XXXI, p. 164).[63] He had not seen her since, and the manner in which he had left his hometown had been a source of great regret, which he evokes through skillful use of "lamp and candle" imagery.

As we have seen, Taixu often interweaves "lamp and candle" imagery with other classical Chinese literary symbols—especially those associated with the night—to evoke both positive and negative emotions. Three of these groups of images are explored below.

5. Three Imagery Groups in Taixu's Poetry

The night provides an atmospheric backdrop against which the illumination of lamps and candles enables human activities to continue (Fu 2007, p. 251). Alongside the prominent "lamp and candle" imagery, Taixu utilizes a diverse range of imagery associated with nocturnal settings to articulate deeply held sentiments and emotions to the reader.

5.1. Night, Fire, Boat, and Lamp (Ye Huo Chuan Deng 夜火船燈)

There is a cohesive unity in the "night, fire, boat, and lamp" imagery group, which encapsulates multifaceted depths that resonate with the poet. The boat is a symbolic vessel, representing Taixu's lifelong journey, while the darkness of the night amplifies the intense emotions within his soul. Consequently, this imagery group bears witness to Taixu's personal wanderings, specifically capturing the essence of his melancholia during his travels:

起看繁霜白蓬背，冷冷水逼一燈寒。

[I] rise and see the boat's awning covered in frost, The chilling water presses, one lamp in solitude.[64]

In the winter of 1907, Taixu endured a restless night on a boat as the incessant cries of the crows on the riverbanks kept him awake.[65] Unable to sleep, he stepped out from beneath the boat's awning to discover a world blanketed in frost. The entire landscape shimmered as if plated in silver, yet Taixu remained untouched by its ethereal glow. A single, faint lamp illuminated his immediate surroundings, though its feeble light, reflected on the river's surface, seemed somehow diminished in the face of the cold night air. This poem vividly captures Taixu's sense of feeling lonely and adrift within the icy natural environment. Notably, he articulates these emotions through deft use of an imagery group that features in many classical Chinese poems, such as the following example:

燈影秋江寺，篷聲夜雨船。

In the temple by the autumnal river, lantern shadows flicker, Amidst the night rain, the sound of awnings echoes on the boat.[66]

This famous poem by Wen Tingyun 溫庭筠 (801–866),[67] a celebrated poet of the late Tang Dynasty, also depicts a night-time river journey. However, whereas Wen Tingyun's boat is sailing in the autumn, Taixu shifts the season to winter—a much bleaker time—and transforms the rain into frost, intensifying the harshness of the natural environment. Moreover, the gentle sound of rain on awnings is replaced by the mournful cries of crows, while the lamp, rather than illuminating the sanctuary of a temple, hangs from the boat, emphasizing Taixu's powerlessness in the face of merciless nature alongside his loneliness and vulnerability. Nevertheless, like the warm glow of a lamp piercing the darkness of a wintry night, the "night, fire, boat, and lamp" imagery group also symbolizes the poet's hope for a brighter future.

The loneliness of the traveler is a recurring theme in Taixu's work, as in the following poem that he composed during his visit to Japan in 1917:

海燈搖出西風意，漁火遠明微雪村。

The sea lantern sways, evoking the essence of the west wind, Distant fishing fires faintly illuminate the snowy village.[68]

In classical Chinese poetry, the "west wind" (*xifeng* 西風) is often synonymous with the "autumn wind" (*qiufeng* 秋風)—a metaphor for the wistfulness and yearning that are commonly associated with that season. Similarly, in Taixu's poem, the faint glow of the lantern reflects his uncertain, somewhat rudderless life. On the other hand, the distant fires of the fishermen suggest a welcoming harbor where weary travelers may find temporary respite, once again symbolizing Taixu's enduring hope. Therefore, through a poetic fusion of "night, fire, boat, and lamp" imagery, he succeeds in evoking two conflicting emotions and gives the reader a glimpse into his complex, multifaceted inner world.

5.2. Forest, Moon, Mountain, and Lamp (Lin Yue Shan Deng 林月山燈)

Taixu regarded the evocation of a capacious landscape as one of the pinnacles of poetic achievement.[69] By skillfully merging "lamp and candle" imagery with other classical Chinese images—such as forests, the moon, and mountains—he created an imagery group that imbues much of his poetry with a sense of vastness. Specifically, the moon symbolizes the immeasurable expanse of the sky, mountains represent the grandeur of the land,

and the flickering flames of lamps and candles within a forest signify the poet's creative endeavors. Thus, this imagery group encompasses three distinct elements—the celestial realm, the earthly domain, and the human experience—within a single, infinite space.

茂林深谷萬燈明，謖謖松濤月下鳴。

In the dense forest and deep valley, myriad lamps shine bright, The murmuring sound of pine waves[70] resonates under the moon's light.[71]

In mountain forests, lamps shed light on the limitations of human activities, creating a visual spectacle. Meanwhile, under the moonlight, resounding pine waves leave the poet awestruck. This interplay of moonlight and candlelight creates a captivating panorama of the celestial expanse above and the valley below. Once again, Taixu's debt to classical Chinese literature is apparent, as Tang poets often likened the moon to a bright lamp in order to emphasize the theme of illumination and its symbolic significance. For example:

師親指歸路，月掛一輪燈。

Under the guidance of the master, [I] am directed towards the homeward path, Where the moon hangs in the sky, resembling a radiant lamp.[72]

In this poem, Hanshan 寒山[73] narrates his journey down a mountain enveloped by swirling clouds. In the darkness of the night, he lifts his gaze and joyfully beholds the radiant moon that not only illuminates his path but also serves as a metaphorical lamp, bridging the gap between the celestial realm and the poet's earthly existence. The moon, then, is a unifying presence, harmonizing various elements to create a beautiful, complete picture. It is precisely for this reason that Taixu employs "lamp and candle" imagery to evoke thoughts of the moon in the minds of his readers:

天真爛漫聽童歌，人影燈光林外過。

With innocent delight, I listen to the children's songs, As shadows of people pass beyond the light in the woods.[74]

Taixu composed this poem in September 1925 after falling ill while delivering lectures in Singapore (TDN, p. 145).[75] During his recovery, he became intrigued by the sight of people's shadows along the edge of a forest, illuminated by the gentle glow of a lamp. Although there is no explicit mention of the moon in this poem, its radiance casts a luminous aura on Taixu's face, merging with the lamplight to illuminate his surroundings and lull him into a form of serene languor—a novel experience for the usually energetic poet. The expansive realm created by the "forest, moon, mountain, and lamp" imagery group leads the reader to the conclusion that he must have been overwhelmed by homesickness,[76] given his illness and the enforced inactivity he encountered in an unfamiliar place.[77] Hence, the poem provides a valuable insight into the subtle shifts in Taixu's personal emotions.

5.3. Falling Leaves and Autumn Lamps (Luoye Qiudeng 落葉秋燈*)*

The combination of falling leaves and autumn lamps—a prominent imagery group in both classical and modern Chinese poetry—is often used to evoke a sense of melancholy and unease. However, the free-thinking Taixu attempted to reinterpret this aesthetic cornerstone by associating it with pleasure and joy, rather than sadness and depression. The contrast is clear in the following couplets:

雨中黃葉樹，燈下白頭人。

Amidst the rain, yellow leaves adorn the trees, Like the fate of this white-haired figure beneath the lamp's glow.[78]

紅燈迴夕照，黃葉落空庭。

The red lantern casts a distant glow in the evening, While yellow leaves fall in the empty courtyard.[79]

The first couplet is taken from one of the most celebrated works in the annals of Chinese poetry.[80] It bears the imprint of Sikong Shu 司空曙 (720–790), a remarkably talented but impoverished poet of the mid-Tang era. The poem describes the events of an autumn night during which another distinguished poet, Sikong Shu's cousin Lu Lun 盧綸 (739–799),[81] pays him a visit. In the confines of Sikong Shu's humble abode, the two aged poets gaze upon raindrops falling incessantly on the windowpane as yellow leaves quiver on the trees. A dim lamp lends a pallid glow to their weathered countenances and graying hair. This forlorn scene is the setting for an elegy on the transience of time that generates an overpowering sense of despondency.[82]

In stark contrast, the second couplet, by Taixu, opens with the radiance of a red lamp, symbolizing the joy and harmony of traditional Chinese culture.[83] This crimson beacon sets a positive and uplifting tone that suffuses the whole poem, with the sunset, which typically evokes the bittersweet passage of time,[84] instilling a mood of tranquility and serenity. The falling leaves, as witnessed by Taixu, dispel the melancholy often associated with the advent of autumn, instead awakening his delight and kindling his curiosity. Therefore, although Taixu refrains from explicitly articulating any positive emotions, an unmistakable undercurrent of optimism permeates the verses.

A similar sentiment is evident in another poem he crafted during his convalescence in Singapore in 1925 (TDN, p. 145):

樹樹明燈呈幻境，窗窗涼雨寫秋痕。

The trees, each adorned with radiant lamps, present a surreal scene, While the windows, adorned with cool rain, inscribe traces of autumn.[85]

Here, Taixu rejects the traditional portrayal of a dim lamp in classical Chinese poetry and instead introduces radiant lamps that illuminate a scene of enchantment and wonder. In addition, he employs the term "*cool* rain" (*liangyu* 涼雨), rather than "*cold* rain" (*lengyu* 冷雨)—a subtle difference that suggests summer has only recently passed and autumn has not yet fully arrived—to symbolize the enduring vitality of all living things. These allusions to life and energy imbue the poem with vibrancy and optimism. In contrast, "cold rain" would have evoked later autumn—a more plaintive time of the year—as we saw earlier in his poem in remembrance of Chen Chunbai. There are echoes here of Taixu's equally nuanced descriptions of the intensity and luminosity of lamps and candles. In all instances, his aim is to convey his fluctuating emotions with absolute precision.

It is worth noting that, while Taixu's reimagining of "falling leaves and autumn lamps" imbues this imagery group with unconventional optimism, his innovation lies in reinterpreting the dynamic interplay between "lamp and candle" imagery and human emotions, rather than altering the imagery itself. Hence, meticulous analysis of his poetry is essential in order to gain full understanding of his use of this imagery to convey the peaks and troughs of his emotional landscape.

6. "Lamp and Candle": A Symbol of Taixu's Inner Spirit

As we have seen, Taixu employs vivid "lamp and candle" imagery in his poetry when reflecting on Buddhist teaching as well as his own heartfelt emotions. However, he also utilizes it to symbolize his inner spirit—an attribute that is best characterized as "self-sacrificing dedication" (*fen shen zhi yong* 焚身致用) (Fu 2007, p. 258). In this respect, he is a natural heir to countless classical Chinese poets who confronted the adversities and complexities of the secular world.

The essence of the imagery—a radiant light illuminating the world—harmonizes with the purpose of the mind lamp, which embodies the transmission of Buddhist wisdom. Moreover, it symbolizes Taixu's unblemished purity and unwavering integrity:

燈燈相續光無盡，塞地充天氣浩然。

The continuous glow of each lamp is boundless, Filling the earth, engulfing the vast sky.[86]

This poem was written in December 1943, after Taixu accepted an invitation from Shufang 漱芳,[87] the abbot of Huguo Temple (Huguo si 護國寺),[88] and spent a night in Hengyang 衡陽[89] (TDN, p. 329). Deeply moved by the temple's illustrious history, he composed the poem in celebration of it. The eternal radiance of each lamp symbolizes the temple's pivotal role in the evolution of Buddhism, as well as the timeless righteousness of contemporary monks, including Taixu himself. Amidst the trials and tribulations of the era, as a prominent figure amongst China's Buddhists, Taixu reflected on the darkness that shrouded the secular world.[90] Within this metaphorical shade, his virtue and honesty radiated like a guiding lamp, illuminating the path ahead. Nurturing and upholding these qualities was no simple feat, but Taixu understood the importance of persevering.

Furthermore, lamps and candles, which expend themselves to emit light, are powerful metaphors for Taixu's self-sacrifice and unwavering dedication. In this respect, his poetry perpetuates a longstanding tradition of Chinese literature that dates back two millennia, as in the following examples:

明無不見，照察纖微。以夜繼晝，烈者所依。

With brilliance that reveals all, [the lamp] illuminates even the tiniest details, Continuing day into night, it is the reliability of the resolute souls.[91]

燭之自焚以致用，亦有殺身以成仁。

The candle burns itself to serve its purpose, Sacrificing its own life to achieve benevolence.[92]

Through images of radiant lamps that illuminate the world and burning candles that fulfill their light-emitting purpose, early Chinese poets consistently highlight the importance of self-sacrifice and dedication. Taixu, a poet with a deep knowledge of the traditions of Chinese classical literature, not only embodied this spirit in his daily life but also maintained the symbolic significance of such imagery in his poetry:

千年長暗室，照破一燈寒。

In a dimly lit room, shrouded in darkness for a thousand years, One solitary lamp casts its feeble glow, piercing through the chill.[93]

Even a dim lamp may indeed illuminate a darkened chamber for as long as it burns, dedicating all its energy to lighting the room, much as Taixu commits himself to the preservation of China and the advancement of Buddhism throughout his life. This spirit of self-sacrifice finds further expression in another poem he composed on 7 July 1937—a date of great significance in China, as it was the day on which the Lugouqiao Incident (*Lugouqiao shibian* 盧溝橋事變) took place:[94]

心海騰宿浪，風雨逼孤燈。

The vast sea of the heart surges with restless waves, As winds and rains threaten the solitary lamp.[95]

When Taixu heard of the Lugouqiao Incident, he was enveloped by profound and overwhelming sorrow (*bei kai wusi* 悲慨無似) (TDN, p. 271). As a deeply conscientious monk, he remained steadfast in his commitment to both the welfare of his homeland and the promotion of Buddhism.[96] However, the incident heralded a period of immense suffering for the Chinese people, coupled with a hiatus in the development of Buddhism. Both were reflected in Taixu's subsequent poetry, as he started to question Buddhism's capacity to rescue the nation and secure its own future.[97] Nevertheless, he continued to work selflessly for both causes, undeterred by increasing physical and mental frailty.[98] In the face of this adversity, he more than ever resembled a solitary lamp glowing dimly but resolutely amidst biting wind and persistent rain.

It is this inherent dimness that imbues the "lamp and candle" imagery in Taixu's poetry with such a resonant theme of tragedy. As mentioned earlier, he often employs such imagery—and especially depictions of a single lamp—to evoke negative emotions, such as homesickness, loneliness, and anxiety in relation to the passage of time. Indeed, even his

prose contains a number of poignant narratives that revolve around this imagery, as in the following example:

> 譬如然燈，膏油既盡，不久將滅。老亦如是，壯膏既盡，不久將死。
>
> Metaphorically speaking, just like a lamp, once its oil is exhausted, will soon extinguish, so is the nature of aging. When one's vitality and vigor are depleted, death will not be far behind.[99]

This is Taixu's interpretation of the concept of *laoku* 老苦 (*jarā-duḥkha*),[100] which symbolizes the hardships of old age. With the passage of time, the elderly poet Taixu, like a lamp burning its final drops of oil, moves inexorably toward the realm of death. Moreover, his frequent use of the phrase "wind candle" (*fengzhu* 風燭) in his later works conveys a deep understanding of the inherent tragedy of his own destiny:

> 風燭無常願無盡，海天雲水正茫茫。
>
> The fleeting nature of the wind candle embodies boundless aspirations, The vastness of the sea, sky, clouds, and water appears infinite and profound.[101]

Taixu composed this poem in Berlin on his fortieth birthday in 1928. In it, he strikingly juxtaposes the vastness of the natural world with the humble, flickering candle that symbolizes his own isolation, vulnerability, and helplessness. Despite nurturing numerous aspirations, he must confront the reality of his own advancing years and make grave decisions regarding how best to dedicate himself to the causes of China and Buddhism.

The same image again evokes the fleeting nature of human existence in one of Taixu's final texts, an elegy for his cherished disciple Fushan 福善 (1915–1947),[102] which he composed in 1947:

> 現在，風燭殘命的我，仍風中燭似的殘存著。
>
> In the present moment, I, like a wind-blown candle, continue to exist with a flickering flame.[103]

Fushan had declared his intention to care for the aging Taixu (TDQ, vol. XXXIII, p. 226), but it was the younger man who died first—from smallpox on 20 February 1947. The profound grief that Taixu experienced due to the loss of his beloved student compounded the sorrow he felt for the fate of Chinese Buddhism (TDN, p. 348). Less than a month later, on March 17, he suffered stroke while delivering a lecture and his remarkable life came to an end (TDN, p. 349).

There is undoubtedly a hint of regret in some of Taixu's reflections on his life of self-sacrifice, as is evident in a poem in which he dedicates himself unconditionally to the Buddha:

> 仰止唯佛陀，完就在人格。
>
> In profound meditation, the sole pursuit is the Buddha, Complete fulfillment resides within the virtuous nature of humanity.[104]

Nevertheless, his final poem, *Feng Zangweng* 奉奘翁 (*Poem Dedicated to Master Zang*),[105] demonstrates that he never abandoned his dual, self-imposed mission to safeguard the nation's well-being and advance Buddhism. He remained a deeply emotional and selfless monk and poet until the very end of his life. Indeed, these are the qualities that his readers have always most admired in him.

7. Conclusions

Taixu not only inherited but also creatively developed classical Chinese "lamp and candle" imagery in his poetry. This artistic choice was deeply rooted in his personal affinity for the imagery and nurtured by his upbringing in an environment steeped in classical Chinese literature, and especially Tang poetry, in which these sources of light carry enormous symbolic significance. As a devoted monk, Taixu skillfully employs this imagery as a metaphor for both Buddhist wisdom and transmitting the Buddhist Dharma. Simultaneously, as a skilled poet, he adeptly communicates his personal sentiments—encompassing

the full panoply of positive and negative human emotions—by drawing on a diverse array of classical Chinese imagery, from lamps and candles to boats, the moon, and falling leaves.

The recurring themes of burning and illumination, which lie at the heart of this imagery, provide invaluable insights into Taixu's defining characteristics—purity, integrity, devotion, and self-sacrifice. Yet, they suggest that he viewed himself not only as a virtuous Chinese Buddhist leader but also as a gifted poet. This aspect of his personality certainly warrants further scholarly exploration.

In conclusion, Taixu's poetic engagement with "lamp and candle" imagery exemplifies his mastery of classical Chinese poetic tropes while also offering thought-provoking insights into the human condition. It serves as a conduit for transmitting Buddhist wisdom and simultaneously affords a glimpse into his complex inner world. Through his deft use of this imagery, Taixu exhibits a unique fusion of spiritual devotion, artistic sensibility, and emotional depth. It is to be hoped that further study will help to unravel the intricacies of his poetic legacy and clarify its enduring impact on Chinese literature and modern Buddhism.

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Abbreviations

TDQ (Shi 2005)
TDN (Shi 2011)

Notes

1 The Buddhist reform movement was a collaborative effort involving various groups, including reformists such as Kang Youwei 康有為 (1859–1927), Liang Qichao 梁啟超 (1873–1929), Tan Sitong 譚嗣同 (1865–1898), and Zhang Taiyan 章太炎 (1869–1936), lay Buddhists like Yang Renshan 楊仁山 (1837–1911) and Ouyang Jian 歐陽漸 (1871–1943), and Buddhist monks such as Jing'an 敬安 (1851–1912), Taixu 太虛, Xuyun 虛雲 (1840–1959), and Su Manshu 蘇曼殊 (1884–1918). For more information related to Chinese modern Buddhist reform movements, refer to the following three books: Tarocco (2005); Jessup and Kiely (2016); Campo and Bianchi (2023).

2 According to Taixu: "In the realm of Chinese poetry, the Tang Dynasty reigns supreme" 中國詩以唐為盛 (TDQ, vol. XXXII, p. 414).

3 The TDQ contains approximately 500 poems by Taixu's mentors, companions, disciples, and students. All of these works are intimately connected with Taixu himself, encompassing verses presented to him as well as collaborative compositions. For further details, (see TDQ, vol. XXXIV, pp. 290–444).

4 *Meian shilu* soon gained many readers. Their support is reflected in the prefaces of the TDQ, which were composed by several of Taixu's fellow poets and friends (TDQ, vol. XXXII, p. 510).

5 Yinshun was a renowned Buddhist philosopher who joined Taixu in the modern Buddhist revival movement in 1930. Throughout the rest of his life, he dedicated himself to promoting "humanistic Buddhism" (*renjain fojiao* 人間佛教), which encompassed many of the concepts and principles advocated by Taixu. For more in-depth study of Yinshun (see Bingenheimer 2009; Lee 2021).

6 There are several important works dedicated to the study of Taixu. Welch (1968) devotes a chapter to Taixu, presenting him as a disingenuous self-promoter. Jiang (1993) provides a balanced perspective on the first half of Taixu's life. Hong (1999) takes a thematic approach to examining Taixu's activities and contributions. Pittman (2001) is considered a significant work, delving into Taixu's efforts to make Chinese *Mahāyāna* Buddhism relevant to the modern world. Goodell (2008) sheds light on Taixu's seminal period of life and thoughts. Ritzinger (2017) focuses on Taixu's Buddhist radicalism. Jones (2021) regards Taixu as a transitional figure in the establishment of a "Pure Land in the Human Realm" (*renjian jingtu* 人間淨土).

7 For the study of "lamp and candle" imagery in classical Chinese poetry, there are two notable works. Tian (2005) offers a Buddhist perspective to study Liang (502–557) poetry through the lens of this imagery. Fu (2007), in the chapter titled "Zhuguang dengying

li de zhongguo shi" 燭光燈影裏的中國詩 (Chinese Poetry in the Glow of Candlelight and Lamplight), pp. 231–61, provides a comprehensive examination of the literary and religious significance of this imagery in Tang poetry.

8 In modern China, many monks have shown a preference for incorporating "lamp and candle" imagery into their poetry. For instance, Xuyun, in his poem *Zai Jilongpo Lingshan si Yang Shaohong laifang buyu*在吉隆玻靈山寺楊少洪來訪不遇 (*Yang Shaohong's Unmet Visit to Lingshan Temple in Kuala Lumpur*), poetically employs the lamp as a symbol of hope for a new day: "Under the lamp, I read repeatedly through the night/Unknowingly, the eastern window gradually reveals a tinge of red" 夜來燈下頻頻讀，不覺東窗漸透紅. Jing'an, in his poem *Zixiao shi* 自笑詩 (*Self-Mockery of Poetry*), utilizes the imagery to depict his self-sacrifice for Buddhism: "Sacrificing flesh, lighting the lamp for the Buddha's service / Realizing that the body is but a bubble in water" 割肉燃燈供佛勞，了知身是水中泡. Also Hongyi 弘一 (1880–1942), in his poem *Xijiang yue Su Tanggu lüguan* 西江月 宿塘沽旅館 (*The Moon over West River*), employs the lamp to convey his sense of solitude in the night: "The remaining trickle startles within a dream/A solitary lamp and the scenery form a pair" 殘漏驚人夢裏，孤燈對景成雙. Su Manshu, in his poem *Dongju* 東居 (*Eastern Abode*), sensitively captures the ambiance through descriptions of the lamp in autumn: "The lamp floats amidst beaded curtains, the jade zither resonates in the autumn/Several melodies echo at the waterside pavilion" 燈飄珠箔玉箏秋，幾曲回闌水上樓.

9 According to Taixu, the Dayin Nunnery was situated approximately three miles from Chang'an 長安, Taixu's birthplace (TDQ, vol. XXXI, p. 155).

10 Taixu, "Shengzhang Zai Nong Gong Dao Shang Du De Xiangzhen" 生長在農工到商讀的鄉鎮 (Growing up in a Town: From Farming and Laboring to Commerce and Education), in *Taixu zizhuan* 太虛自傳 (*Taixu's Autobiography*) (TDQ, vol. XXXI, p. 156).

11 The Sacred Heart Basilica (Basilique du Sacré-Cœur) is one of Paris's most prominent landmarks.

12 In 1925, Taixu decided to travel to Europe as a Buddhist missionary. He and his companions began their journey on 11 August 1928, and arrived in Paris on September 16. He remained in the city for more than a month, during which time he delivered lectures to various political and academic associations (See TDQ, vol. XXXI, pp. 326–27, 334–42).

13 Taixu. *Bali jiyou* 巴黎紀遊 (*Travelogue of Paris*) (TDQ, vol. XXXIV, pp. 135–37).

14 The Forbidden City served as the imperial residence for twenty-four emperors of the Ming and Qing dynasties, and it is considered to be the largest and most complete architectural complex of its kind still in existence.

15 The Putuo Mountain, in the Zhoushan 舟山 Archipelago, Zhejiang Province 浙江省, is a renowned center of Buddhist pilgrimage and worship.

16 Taixu. *You Shanghai di Mensi manyin* 由上海抵門司漫吟 (*A Rambling Poem from Shanghai to Moji Ward*) (TDQ, vol. XXXIV, p. 75). Moji is a ward of the city of Kitakyushu in Fukuoka Prefecture, Japan.

17 Yingjiang Temple in Anqing, Anhui Province 安徽省, was established in 1619. The Zhenfeng Pagoda, a seven-story tower within the temple, was previously known as the "Tower of Ten Thousand Buddhas" (Wanfo ta 萬佛塔).

18 Taixu. *Yingjiang si Zhenfeng ta* 迎江寺振風塔 (*The Zhenfeng Pagoda of Yingjiang Temple*) (TDQ, vol. XXXIV, p. 103).

19 A *mengguan* ("hall for untaught children") was essentially a primary school that taught boys how to read and write in preparation for imperial examinations (See Brokaw 2020).

20 The *Quan Tangshi* anthology was completed in 1706. It includes 49,403 poems written by 2873 poets during the Tang Dynasty.

21 The poems of Bai Juyi (also known by his courtesy name Letian 樂天) are renowned for their accessibility and clarity.

22 Bai Juyi. *Xizeng lijing laoseng* 戲贈禮經老僧 (*A Playful Tribute to the Elderly Monk who Meditates and Recites Scripture*) (Xie 2006, p. 2646).

23 In Buddhist philosophy, the mind lamp concept symbolizes the attainment of mental clarity and illumination that arises from a state of stillness and tranquility (See Ding 2012, p. 710).

24 The association in question was the Buddhist Alliance for Preservation (Weichi Fojiao Tongmenghui 維持佛教同盟會), which Taixu hoped to establish in March 1913. However, he abandoned the idea following discussions with friends, who perceived it as no different from any number of existing organizations (See TDN, p. 39).

25 Taixu. *Weichi Fojiao Tongmenghui xuanyan* 維持佛教同盟會宣言 (*Declaration of the Buddhist Alliance for Preservation*) (TDQ, vol. XXXIII, p. 6).

26 In Taixu's perspective, the sun, the moon, and the lamp serve as three illuminating symbols, reflecting the profound wisdom and luminosity of the Buddha's *tathāgatagarbha* (*rulai zangxin* 如來藏心). These illuminants are metaphorically associated with the Buddha's radiant fruition: the sun symbolizes the merit of the Buddha's wisdom (*zhide* 智德), the moon represents the merit of severing afflictions (*duande* 斷德), and the lamp embodies the merit of the Buddha's compassion (*ende* 恩德) (See TDQ, vol. XI, p. 78).

27 Taixu. *Fahua jiangyan lu* 法華講演錄 (*Recorded Lectures on the Lotus Sūtra*) (TDQ, vol. XI, p. 78).

28 Taixu. *Yaoshi liuli guang rulai benyuan gongde jing jiangji* 藥師琉璃光如來本願功德經講記 (*Annotated Lectures on the Original Vows of the Medicine-Master Tathāgata of Lapis Light*) (TDQ, vol. XV, p. 387).

29 Taixu. *He Zhan'an guo Hanyang Guiyun Si diaoyun yan*和湛庵過漢陽歸元寺吊雲岩 (*A Poetic Tribute to Zhan'an at Guiyuan Temple in Hanyang, When Observing the Diaoyun Yan*) (TDQ, vol. XXXIV, p. 63).

30 Huoxuan, also known as Zhan'an 湛庵, is a poet-monk who shares a profound friendship with Taixu, forged through their mutual appreciation of each other's poetry (TDQ, vol. XXXI, p. 184). His poetic exchanges with Taixu are preserved in the latter's poetry collections and a short biography (TDQ, vol. XXXIII, pp. 299–302).

31 Lingyun Temple, in Taizhou 臺州, Zhejiang Province, is located in a breathtaking natural landscape, surrounded by picturesque mountains.

32 Taixu. *Wansu Taohua Lingyun si* 晚宿桃花靈雲寺 (*An Evening Stay at Lingyun Temple, Where Peach Blossoms Flourish*) (TDQ, vol. XXXIV, p. 246).

33 Taixu. *Wo zhi zongjiao guan* 我之宗教觀 (*My Religious Views*) (TDQ, vol. XXII, p. 225).

34 Taixu. *Sanbao ge* 三寶歌 (*Song of the Three Treasures*) (TDQ, vol. XXXIV, p. 262).

35 According to Taixu, Shi Ji'an was an exceptionally talented poet who deserved the title "poetic master" (*shi zhi cizong* 詩之詞宗) (See TDQ, vol. XXXI, p. 305).

36 On 11 November 1917, following the conclusion of the Buddhist assembly in Zhanghua 彰化, Taixu joined local officials and journalists at a poetry gathering (TDN, p. 59). The term 文字 refers to the poems the participants composed during that meeting.

37 "Conditioned phenomena" (*youwei fa* 有為法) are manifestations of causes and conditions.

38 Taixu. *Zhanghua Tanhua tang jixi da Shi Ji'an*彰化曇華堂即席答施寄庵 (*Spontaneous Response to Shi Ji'an's Poem at the Tanhua Hall in Zhanghua*) (TDQ, vol. XXXIV, p. 82). This poem is a response to Shi Ji'an's *Zeng Taixu fashi* 贈太虛法師 (*A Poem Dedicated to the Venerable Taixu*), ibid., p. 311.

39 Taixu. *Jiuhua zashi shishou* 九華雜詩十首 (*Ten Miscellaneous Poems on Jiuhua*) (TDQ, vol. XXXIV, p. 143).

40 Taixu wrote numerous articles on the subject of Chinese Buddhist education, including: *Zhongguo de seng jiaoyu ying zenyang* 中國的僧教育應怎樣 (*How Should Buddhist Education in China Be?*) (TDQ, vol. XIX, p. 31); *Xiandai xuyao de seng jiaoyu*現代需要的僧教育 (*Contemporary Needs of Buddhist Education*), ibid., p. 37; and *Fojiao yingban zhi jiaoyu yu seng jiaoyu* 佛教應辦之教育與僧教育 (*Education in Buddhism and Buddhist Education that Should Be Established*), ibid., p. 20. For more information about Taixu's modern Buddhist education (see Li 2013; Travagnin 2017; Lai 2017).

41 The *Ben Cao Gang Mu*, compiled by the distinguished medical scientist, pharmacist, and naturalist Li Shizhen 李時珍 (1518–1593), is a comprehensive collection of Chinese materia medica from ancient times to the sixteenth century.

42 Li Shizhen, "*zhujin* 燭燼, candle remains" (Li 2021, p. 135).

43 *Yi Wen Zhi*, a significant bibliographic work compiled by Ban Gu 班固 (32–92) that forms part of the *Hanshu* 漢書 (*History of the Former Han Dynasty*), draws heavily upon Liu Xin's 劉歆 (50 BCE–23 CE) *Qishu* 七書 (*Seven Summaries*).

44 Taixu. *You Taibei jie* 遊臺北街 (*Exploring the Streets of Taipei*) (TDQ, vol. XXXIV, p. 80).

45 In September 1917, Shanhui 善慧 (1881–1945), the abbot of Lingquan Monastery (Lingquan si 靈泉寺) on Yuemei Mountain 月眉山, Jilong 基隆, Taiwan, expressed his intention to organize a Buddhist assembly. He invited Yuanying 圓瑛 (1878–1953) to deliver a lecture, but the latter was unable to attend and suggested Taixu should take his place. Taixu had already planned his trip to Japan, so he decided to break his journey in Taiwan in order to attend the assembly (See TDN, p. 58).

46 Kyoto holds considerable historical and cultural significance as a political center of Japan from the Middle Ages to modern times. It served as the country's capital from 794 to 1869.

47 Taixu. *Jingdu you* 京都遊 (*A Visit to Kyoto*) (TDQ, vol. XXXIV, p. 91).

48 Taixu. *Jiuhua zashi shishou* 九華雜詩十首 (*Ten Miscellaneous Poems on Jiuhua*) (TDQ, vol. XXXIV, p. 143).

49 Taixu. *Guan Zongxian ju* 觀宗閒居 (*Observing the Leisure Dwelling*) (TDQ, vol. XXXIV, p. 236).

50 Taixu. *Xihu xiaye* 西湖夏夜 (*A Summer Night at West Lake*) (TDQ, vol. XXXIV, p. 129).

51 West Lake is on the western side of old Hangzhou 杭州. Bai Juyi is credited with coining the appellation in one of his poems.

52 In ancient Chinese literature, *jinsu*金粟 typically denotes the wick of a lamp. In the context of this poem, it symbolically represents the Buddha.

53 Taixu. *Jiuhua zashi shishou* 九華雜詩十首 (*Ten Miscellaneous Poems on Jiuhua*) (TDQ, vol. XXXIV, p. 143).

54 Taixu. *Shenye* 深夜 (*Late Night*) (TDQ, vol. XXXIV, p. 11).

55 Taixu. *Guichou chuxi* 癸醜除夕 (*New Year's Eve of the Year Gui Chou*) (TDQ, vol. XXXIV, p. 48).

56 In *Die lian hua: Yuejin tianya libie ku* 蝶戀花·閱盡天涯離別苦 (*Butterflies in Love with Flowers: Experiencing the Bitterness of Farewell across the Ends of the Earth*), a *ci* 詞 poem by Wang Guowei 王國維 (1877–1927), one verse expresses the transience of life: "The passage of time cannot be detained / Rosy cheeks bid farewell to the mirror, flowers to the tree" 最是人間留不住，朱顏辭鏡花辭樹. Wang Guowei, a renowned scholar and poet, hailed from Taixu's hometown—Haining 海寧, Zhejiang Province.

57 During the early Republican period, Taixu underwent a series of tumultuous experiences that greatly influenced his life and work. (See TDQ, vol. XXXI, pp. 188–92).

58 The Mid-Autumn Festival (*Zhongqiu jie* 中秋節), observed on the fifteenth day of the eighth lunar month, holds great significance in Chinese culture. It celebrates the reunion of loved ones, often represented by the full moon, and is infused with a profound sense of longing for one's hometown and relatives.

59 Taixu. *Renwu Zhongqiu Guanyue ting*壬午中秋觀月亭 (*Observing the Moon Pavilion on the Mid-Autumn Festival in the Year of Renwu*) (TDQ, vol. XXXIV, p. 254).

60 Taixu. *Huai Chen Chunbai* 懷陳純白 (*In Remembrance of Chen Chunbai*) (TDQ, vol. XXXIV, p. 48).

61 Chen Chunbai was a native of Yongjia 永嘉, Zhejiang Province.

62 Taixu. *Qiujiang wantiao* 秋江晚眺 (*Autumn Evening Gazing by the Riverside*) (TDQ, vol. XXXIV, p. 13).

63 Taixu's cherished grandmother exerted a profound and enduring influence on his life and literary career (See TDQ, vol. XXXI, pp. 155–56, 161–62).

64 Taixu. *Zhouzhong muye* 舟中莫夜 (*Embracing the Night in the Boat*) (TDQ, vol. XXXIV, pp. 9–10).

65 In the same poem, Taixu writes: "The remaining drops of the night's hourglass drip, and the dreams wane in the haze/The crows' cries on both riverbanks penetrate the ears with a poignant sorrow" 滴殘更漏夢闌珊，兩岸烏啼入耳酸 (See TDQ, vol. XXXIV, p. 9).

66 Wen Tingyun. *Songseng dongyou* 送僧東遊 (*Sending the Monk on an Eastern Journey*) (Liu 2016, p. 427).

67 Wen Tingyun was a native of Taiyuan 太原 in Shanxi Province 山西省. His elegant, rhythmical, exquisitely crafted poetry often focuses on the themes of sorrow and loss.

68 Taixu. *Bo Mensi* 泊門司 (*Anchored at Moji Ward*) (TDQ, vol. XXXIV, p. 93).

69 Many of Taixu's predecessors shared this opinion, especially during the high point of Tang poetry between the first year of the Kaiyuan 開元 era and the fourteenth year of the Tianbao 天寶 era (713–755). For instance, an esteemed poet of that period, Wang Wei 王維 (692–761), captured the imagination of both contemporary and future generations through his depiction of a seemingly infinite wasteland in *Shi zhi saishang* 使至塞上 (*On a Mission to the Frontier*). In particular, the famous lines "In a boundless desert lonely smoke rises straight/Over an endless river the sun sinks round 大漠孤煙直，長河落日圓" vividly evoke the grandeur and splendor of this vast landscape, leaving an indelible impression on the reader. Three centuries later, a scholar–official of the Northern Song Dynasty, Fan Zhongyan 范仲淹 (989–1052), revisited this theme in his *Yujiaao Qiusi* 漁家傲秋思 (*The Pride of Fishermen*): "All hills low/Dust touches the town with hue" 千嶂裏，長煙落日孤城閉. A third example is provided by Li Panlong 李攀龍 (1514–1570), a Ming Dynasty literatus, in his poem *Guangyang shan daozhong* 廣陽山道中 (*The Path of Guangyang Mountain*): "The thunderous roar descends upon a thousand peaks/The rain-hued colors arrive on myriad mountains" 雷聲千嶂落，雨色萬峰來.

70 A "pine wave" is the rhythmical sound of wind sweeping through a pine forest.

71 Taixu. *Yuexia you Guling fan Zhibi feng hui Dalin*月下由牯嶺翻擲筆峰回大林 (*Moonlight from Guling over the Fanzhibi Peak to Dalin*) (TDQ, vol. XXXIV, p. 115).

72 Hanshan. *Shi Sanbai sanshou qi yiliuliu* 詩三百三首其一六六 (*Three Hundred and Three Poems: Poem One Hundred and Sixty-Six*) (Xiang 2000, p. 434). In the annotation of this poem, Xiang Chu項楚 provides a detailed explanation regarding the historical context and rationale behind the comparison of the moon to a lamp.

73 Hanshan lived in seclusion at Guoqing Monastery (Guoqing si 國清寺) on Tiantai Mountain (Tiantai shan 天臺山). He practiced a unique amalgamation of Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism, reflecting a harmonious synthesis of all three influential schools of thought.

74 Taixu. *Oucheng* 偶成 (*Occasional Composition*) (TDQ, vol. XXXIV, p. 249).

75 Taixu traveled to Singapore in July 1925 in preparation for the much more ambitious journey to Europe and America that he would undertake three years later (See TDQ, vol. XXXI, p. 273).

76 In classical Chinese literature, the moon, like the lamp, is often used to convey homesickness. For instance, in his poem *Jingye si* 靜夜思 (*A Tranquil Night*), Li Bai 李白 (701–762) writes: "Looking up, I find the moon bright/Bowing, in homesickness I drown" 舉頭望明月，低頭思故鄉.

77 This notion is supported by the fact that Taixu resolved to return to China after a mere two weeks of recovery (See TDN, p. 147).

78 Sikong Shu. *Xi waidi Lu Lun jiansu* 喜外弟盧綸見宿 (*Glad to See Cousin Lu Lun's Overnight Stay*) (Wen 2011, p. 286).

79 Taixu. *Xianju* 閒居 (*Inactivity*) (TDQ, vol. XXXIV, p. 128).

80 In *Siming shi hua* 四溟詩話 (*Siming Poetry-Talk*), a treatise on poetry dating from the Ming Dynasty, Xie Zhen 謝榛 (1495–1575) cites Sikong Shu's poem as the finest example of a poet's use of the falling leaves and autumn lights imagery group, placing it above similar works by Wei Yingwu 韋應物 (731–791) and Bai Juyi in terms of its powerful depiction of the season.

81 Lu Lun, a poet of the Tang Dynasty, faced a lack of success in his literary career. His poetic compositions primarily revolved around the themes of presentation and response, while also offering insights into the realities of life within the army.

82 Sikong Shu's verses are frequently melancholic, especially when he reflects on the aftermath of war.

83 In classical China poetry, the candle is often used in place of a red lamp when depicting joyous or festive occasions. A notable example may be found in Li Shangyin's 李商隱 (813–858) *Huaxia zui* 花下醉 (*Intoxicated with Flowers*), in which he gazes upon flowers after an evening drinking with friends: "Guests departed, now sober amidst the late hours/Holding a candle, [I] venture to behold the excessive blossoms" 客散酒醒深夜後，更持紅燭賞殘花.

84 There is a fine example in Li Shangyin's *Deng Leyou yuan* 登樂遊原 (*Atop Mount Leyou*): "The setting sun seems so sublime/Yet it nears its waning hours" 夕陽無限好，只是近黃昏.

85 Taixu. *Daguan yuan jijing* 大觀園即景 (*Observations of the Grand View Garden*) (TDQ, vol. XXXIV, p. 249).

86 Taixu. *Shufang yaosu Hengyang Huguo si* 漱芳邀宿衡陽護國寺 (*Invitation to Reside at Hengyang Huguo Temple by Shufang*) (TDQ, vol. XXXIV, p. 232).

87 Shufang, who had been one of Taixu's students, played a significant role in the latter's activities in Hengyang. In December 1943, when Taixu became abbot of Huayao Temple (Huayao si 花藥寺), he undertook the reorganization of the Hengyang Buddhist Association (Hengyang fojiao hui 衡阳佛教会) and appointed Shufang as its president.

88 Huoguo Temple, also known as Jiulong Monastery (*Jiulong an* 九龍庵), was originally constructed in 1579 and underwent several reconstructions over subsequent centuries. However, it was destroyed during the Cultural Revolution (*Wenhua dageming* 文化大革命; 1966–1976).

89 Hengyang is in the south of Hunan Province 湖南省. On 6 December 1943, Taixu visited the city in order to promote the Buddhist Dharma. He received a warm welcome from his students, including Shufang (TDN, pp. 329–30).

90 China was in the midst of the most challenging phase of the Second Sino-Japanese War (1931–1945) at this time.

91 Liu xin 刘歆 (50 BCE–23 CE). *Deng Fu* 灯赋 (*Ode to the Lamp*). (Yan 1999a, p. 410).

92 Fu Xian 傅鹹 (239–294). *Zhu Fu* 燭賦 (*Ode to the Candle*) (Yan 1999b, pp 533).

93 Taixu. *Zeng Huang Baoguang* 贈黃葆光 (*A Poem to Huang Baoguang*) (TDQ, vol. XXXIV, p. 126).

94 The Lugouqiao Incident, a military confrontation between Chinese and Japanese troops at Lugouqiao 盧溝橋 in Wanping County 宛平縣, Hebei Province 河北省, is widely regarded as the catalyst that ignited the Second Sino-Japanese War—a protracted and devastating conflict between the two nations.

95 Taixu. *Lushan zhu mao jishi* 廬山住茆即事 (*Observations of Residing in a Bothy on Mount Lu*) (TDQ, vol. XXXIV, p. 190). Taixu was living on Mount Lu (Lushan 廬山), a prominent Buddhist mountain in Jiangxi Province 江西省, at the time of the Lugouqiao Incident.

96 In *Lushan zhu mao jishi*, Taixu writes: "For three decades, I have borne the worries of the world/For twenty years, I have dedicated myself to the salvation of monks" 卅載知憂世，廿年勵救僧.

97 Also in *Lushan zhu mao jishi*, Taixu writes: "In the end, witnessing the bravery of demons/Withheld is the declaration that the Buddha lacks power" 終看魔有勇，忍說佛無能.

98 In *Sanbao ge* 三寶歌 (*Song of the Three Treasures*), composed toward the end of his life, Taixu writes: "With fullness of life, dedicating [my] being and destiny/In faith and acceptance, diligently fulfilling [my] duty" 盡形壽，獻身命，信受勤奉行 (See TDQ, vol. XXXIV, p. 262).

99 Taixu. *Dacheng liqu liu boluomiduo jing guiyi sanbao pin jianglu* 大乘理趣六波羅蜜多經皈依三寶品講錄 (*A Discourse on the Chapter "Taking Refuge in the Three Treasures" in the Dasheng liqu liu boluomiduo jing*) (TDQ, vol. IV, p. 44).

100 *Laoku* is one of the four sufferings (*siku* 四苦) associated with birth, old age, sickness, and death.

101 Taixu. *Sishi chudu zai Bolin sheying ziti* 四十初度在柏林攝影自題 (*Self-Portrait Taken in Berlin at Forty*) (TDQ, vol. XXXIV, p. 139).

102 Fushan, who displayed a remarkable intellect from a very young age, entered the monastic life at the age of thirteen and became one of Taixu's students in August 1937.

103 Taixu. *Tong Fushan* 慟福善 (*Sorrowful Death of Fushan*) (TDQ, vol. XXXIII, p. 226).

104 Taixu. *Man sishi ba shuoji huixiang wai zumu Zhang-Zhou shi mu Lüshi huozeng anle*滿四十八說偈回向外祖母張周氏母呂張氏獲增安樂 (*A Discourse in Verse on Turning Forty-Eight, Offering Dedication to Grandmother Zhang-Zhou and Mother Zhang for Increased Peace and Happiness*) (TDQ, vol. XXXIV, p. 262).

105 In February 1947, Taixu returned to Ningbo to visit one of his masters, Zangnian 奘年. It was after this meeting—which Yinshun pointedly terms a "farewell" (*you juebie zhi zhao* 有訣別之兆)—that he composed *Feng Zang Weng*, including the lines "With unwavering dedication and simplicity, a lifetime promoting Buddhism/Transcending worldly affairs, freely and effortlessly" 勤樸一生禪誦力，脫然瀟灑出凡塵. There is a sense of urgency, of time slipping away, in these lines, coupled with a hint of sadness as Taixu reflects on the future of Chinese Buddhism after his master's—and possibly his own—death. Moreover, he draws an implicit contrast between Zangnian's selfless magnanimity and his own failure to find solace at the end of a life of devoted service. This echoes the sentiments of some of his earlier writings, where he occasionally describes his Buddhist endeavors as a "loss" (See TDN, p. 346).

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Article

Filial Piety in Fluidity: The Tension between the Textual and Visual Traditions of *Śyāma Jātaka* in Early Medieval China

Jinchao Zhao

Department of Cultural Industries, School of Humanities, Tongji University, Shanghai 200092, China; zhaojinchao123@tongji.edu.cn

Abstract: The *Śyāma jātaka* is renowned for its portrayal of a devoted son who cared for his blind parents. The story has been translated into various textual versions and depicted in reliefs and murals, gaining wide circulation in the Buddhist world. Previous scholarship on the story's transmission in China has primarily focused on its representation of filial piety and its resonance with the Chinese context. However, a careful examination of surviving visual depictions of *jātaka* stories brings to light historical and regional disparities that have often been overlooked in relation to the reception of *Śyāma jātaka*'s didactic teachings in early medieval China. While the story has flourished in North China (including the Central Plain and the Hexi Corridor) from the late fifth century onwards, it was intriguingly absent from the region during the first half of the sixth century. This absence of the *Śyāma jātaka* stands in contrast to the popularity of other jātakas such as Sudāna and Mahasattva, which were widely circulated in China. In this article, I explore the uneven adaptation of the *Śyāma jātaka* within Chinese visual culture by placing the story's textual and visual traditions within the broader historical milieu of depicting Buddhist stories and filial paragons in the sixth century. My study demonstrates that the story's theme in multiple dimensions was simplified to filial piety during the textual translation process of the story in third- and fourth-century China. Moreover, it reveals that the story's visual legacy faced challenges and negotiations when integrating into the local teaching of filial piety. This reluctance can be attributed to two historical factors: the revival of pre-existing visual traditions depicting Chinese filial sons, and the growing preference for other *jātakas* that embodied teachings on generosity in early sixth-century North China. Furthermore, this study sheds light on the tension between textual and visual traditions when incorporating Buddhist teachings into a new social context. While various rhetoric strategies were developed in text translation to integrate Buddhist teachings into existing Chinese thought, the visual tradition posed separate questions regarding its necessity, the didactic intentions of patrons, and the visual logic understood by viewers.

Keywords: *Jātaka*; buddhism; narrative; filial piety; Śyāma; northern dynasties

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1. Introduction

The *Śyāma jātaka*,[1] a story of a filial son supporting his blind parents, has been widely circulated in the Buddhist world. The story has been translated into multiple textual versions and depicted in various reliefs and murals. While the visual representation of the story became popular in fifth-century North China (including the Central Plain and the Hexi Corridor, see Figure 1), it soon declined duringthe first half of the sixth century. The story was later revived in the mid-sixth century in the Hexi Corridor 河西走廊 (approximately present-day Gansu 甘肅 province), a region connecting North China and Central Asia, however, in a completely new pictorial mode.[2]

Figure 1. *Śyāma Jātaka*. Pillar, west gate of the Great Stupa at Sañchī. Bhopal, India. First century BCE. Photo taken by author.

This study aims to unravel the imbalanced adaptation of the *Śyāma jātaka* in early medieval China by contextualizing its textual and visual traditions within the broader historical dissemination of Buddhist *jātakas* and the promotion of filial piety as a moral code. It examines how the storyline of the *jātaka* underwent certain degree of modifications in its Chinese translations made during the third and fourth centuries, how story's visual tradition lost popularity from the North China art scene at the beginning of the sixth century, and how the story was perceived and received by local society. Previous work in Buddhist studies has used visual materials of the *Śyāma jātaka* as supporting evidence to emphasize the Chinese interest in filial piety, but often leaving the story's visual representations unexamined in pictorial and historical contexts. This study addresses this gap by focusing on the tension between textual and visual traditions when incorporating Buddhist teachings into a new social context.

I propose two historical factors to understand the unexpected decline in popularity of the *Śyāma jātaka* in the early sixth century. The first factor is the replacement of the *Śyāma jātaka* with the *Sudāna* (*Xudana* 須大拏) *jātaka*, a different popular tale, to form a pair with the *Mahasattva* 薩埵 *jātaka* in major artistic venues. It suggests a shift in the emphasis of *jātakas*' didactic purpose on filial piety. The second factor is the emergence of a new arena for teaching filial piety in early sixth-century North China, made available by the revived artistic tradition of portraying local Chinese filial paragons (*xiaozi gushi* 孝子故事).

The first factor is highlighted through the comparative study of the *Śyāma jātaka* with the *Sudāna* and *Mahasattva jātakas*. In the fifth century, the *Mahasattva jātaka* was always depicted together with the *Śyāma jātaka* on steles. However, in the sixth century, the *Mahasattva jātaka* started to be displayed together with the *Sudāna jātaka*. In other words, the *Sudāna jātaka* replaced the *Śyāma jātaka* to create a new pair of the popular *jātakas* since the early sixth century, or late Northern Wei 北魏 dynasty (386–534 CE). This study thus emphasizes the importance of studying *jātakas* in relation to one another and examines how Buddhist stories are appropriated in context, with a detailed dissection of the social, cultural, and artistic background of *jātakas*.

I propose a second factor that is rooted in the contemporaneous artistic developments in the capital region of Luoyang, where the popularity of the *Śyāma jātaka* declined and the depiction of the filial son stories rose to prominence in local burials. A careful examination of the early sixth century's historical context points to the Sinicization reform, which was carried out during the reign of Emperors Xiaowen 孝文 (r. 471–499 CE) and Xuanwu 宣武

(r. 499–515 CE). This reform process aimed to adopt the Chinese cultural framework, which may have influenced the revival of depicting Chinese filial paragons.

These two factors contribute to our understanding of the fluidity of the concept of filial piety in the visual representation of the *Śyāma jātaka*. It also reveals the tension between the textual and the visual traditions in adapting Buddhist teachings into the indigenous Chinese social milieu. While various rhetoric strategies in text translation were developed to integrate Buddhist teachings into existing Chinese thoughts, the visual tradition encountered separate questions concerning the availability, the necessity, and the visual logic of viewers, etc. This study reveals that the visual tradition of *jātaka* stories not only conforms to the textual tradition but is also deeply intertwined with the cultural and social norms, state policies, patrons' personal tastes, etc.

2. The Transmission of *Śyāma Jātaka* from India to China

Śyāma's story narrates one of the previous lives of the Buddha, who was born as Śyāma. In this particular life, Śyāma resided with his blind parents in an ascetic lifestyle. One fateful day, while Śyāma was on his way to fetch water, an arrow struck him, mistakenly or intentionally (in different versions) shot by the king of Benares (or Kapilavastu in the story's Chinese versions). Śyāma told the king about his concern for the plight of his blind parents. Out of fear, the king promised to take care of the elderly couple. Subsequently, the king discovered the blind couple and revealed the tragic incident involving Śyāma. Overwhelmed with sorrow, the couple wept upon Śyāma's lifeless body. Witnessing Śyāma's profound compassion, the God Sakka was deeply moved and descended to restore Śyāma back to life. Miraculously, the blind parents also regained their sight.[3]

Several earlier Chinese translations of the *Śyāma jātaka* were made during the third and fourth centuries, including a chapter in *Liudu ji jing* 六度集經 (*Ṣaṭpāramitā-saṃnipāta Sūtra*) (T03, no. 152, 24b-25a) by Kang Senghui 康僧會 from Wu 吳 (222–280), *Foshuo Pusa Shanzi jing* 佛說菩薩睒子經 (*Śyāmakajātaka sūtra*) (T03, no. 174, 438b-440a) by Shengjian 聖堅 of the Western Qin dynasty (385–431), *Sengjialuocha suoji jing* 僧迦羅刹所集經 (Sūtra Compiled by Saṅgharakṣa) (T04, no. 194, 116c-117a), and *Za baozang jing* 雜寶藏經 (*Saṃyuktaratna Piṭaka Sūtra*) (T04, no. 203).[4] In these versions, Śyāma's name is translated into *Shanmo* 睒摩 or *Shanzi* 睒子. Huijiao also mentions the story in his work *Gaoseng zhuan* 高僧傳 (Biographies of Eminent Monks).[5] Additional references can be found in Buddhist encyclopedia works, such as *Fayuan zhulin* 法苑珠林 (T53, 656ff) and *Jinglü yixiang* 經律異相 (T53, no. 2121, 51b-52c). Xuanzang briefly mentions the story in his work *Datang xiyu ji* 大唐西域記 (T51, no. 2087, 881b). In the Song dynasty, the story was even adapted into popular literature and listed as one of the twenty-four standard models of piety (Xie 2001).

Overall, the emphasis on Śyāma's act of filiality in the story's Chinese versions is a noticeable modification that has been extensively examined in previous scholarship. This modification is used as primary evidence for the claim that Buddhist beliefs and practices were adapted to traditional Chinese values of filial piety and ancestor worship. In other words, the story is used as an example to expound how Buddhists conform to Chinese culture by emphasizing the moral teaching of filial piety in Buddhism. As Kenneth Ch'en argued, the teaching of filial piety was a distinctive aspect of Chinese Buddhism. The rhetoric strategy used in the literature of filial piety, such as the *Śyāma jātaka*, highlights how the monk achieves a unique position to convert his own parents to accept redemption and escape the endless cycle of suffering (Ch'en 1968, pp. 81–97). This argument is partially challenged by later scholarship that retrieves the importance of filial piety in Buddhist teachings prior to Buddhism's dissemination in China.[6] Although filial piety might not be fundamental to the belief system as it is for Confucian ethics, its practice has been always portrayed as the chief good karma in the Buddhist moral teaching.

The exact source text of the Chinese versions of the *Śyāma jātaka* remains unaddressed due to the scarcity of earlier texts that have survived. Scholars that write at length about the story usually focus on its Chinese lineage. The most cited version of the *Śyāma jātaka* is listed as number 540 in the Pāli collection of *jātakas* (Sāma in Pāli) and is categorized

under the teaching of "loving-kindness," the ninth perfection.[7] This version features a highly detailed prelude, or the "story of the present" that sets the context for the *jataka* (Fausbøll 1896, pp. xiii–xv; Grey 1990; Shaw 2006, pp. 280–310). In this prelude, the protagonist faces the dilemma of either supporting his family or pursuing a monastic life, until the Buddha reveals a path where he can fulfill his duties as an ascetic to support his parents. It is within this context that the Buddha recounts the story of supporting blind parents in a previous life, namely, Śyāma's story. The significance of "loving-kindness" is emphasized through the narrative, as none of the figures harbor any anger towards one another. The Sanskrit version of the story is found in the *Mahāvastu* and the *jātakamālā* (Jones 1952, vol. 2, pp. 199–231; Khoroche 2017, pp. 95–103). The two versions bear multiple different details, such as the occupation of the blind couple before their retreat into the forest, yet more similarities in the structure are found in the Sanskrit versions in comparison to the Pāli version. There is no frame story in either Sanskrit version, unlike the lengthy account of a separate story of an ascetic. The story is recounted in a lengthy version that reveals multiple plots and settings for the lives of Śyāma's parents.

Previous scholarship on the *Śyāma jataka*'s Chinese popularity often attributes the story's Chinese translations to the Pāli version for the frame story shared by them.[8] The *jātakamālā* version has rarely been mentioned. Yet, a brief comparison of these later Pāli and Sanskrit versions with the surviving Chinese versions reveals multiple different accounts here and there, suggesting a more complicated history of transmission.[9] The exact scriptures that the *Śyāma jātaka*'s Chinese translations are based on have been lost. It is beyond the scope of the present research to unravel the transmission lineage of the scripture of the *Śyāma jātaka.* However, several interesting alterations might be worth highlighting here. For instance, in the *Foshuo Pusa Shanzi jing*, after learning about Śyāma's death, the blind parents uttered "the act of truth," expressing that if Śyāma truly embodied filial piety and honesty, then let him be restored to life.[10] Such an emphasis on the power of filial piety is not found in the Sanskrit or Pāli versions, although the Sanskrit versions also expound upon the foremost significance of supporting one's parents. In comparison, the Pāli version lists a number of duties for the king to fulfill, rather than pinpointing the filial piety or Śyāma. The core teaching as propounded in the Pāli version primarily targets the king's duty.

Another interesting difference also involves the king. In the Chinese texts and two Sanskrit versions, the king accidentally injures Śyāma because Syama is wearing deerskin coverings, rather than intentionally shooting Śyāma as described in the Pāli version. Realizing the consequences of his actions, the king in the Chinese translations experiences great remorse and offers to care for Śyāma's blind parents, similar to the Sanskrit versions but differing from the Pāli version where the king informs Śyāma's parents merely out of fear of retaliation. This distinction decides whether the king's action is intentional or accidental, making the king himself a victim or not.

Not only has the textual tradition of the *Śyāma jātaka* undergone changes in the Chinese context, but the story's visual representations found in reliefs and murals in China also exhibit a diverse range of iconography, styles, and compositions that deviate from earlier traditions in South Asia. The visual depiction of the story first emerged in India around the first century BCE, adorning monumental stūpas, and subsequently spread to major Buddhist sites throughout South Asia. For example, at the Great Stūpa at Sañchī, the story is rendered within a confined rectangular space on the inner face of the gateway pillar, with figures and elements from the *Śyāma jātaka* filling the space (Figure 1) (Marshall 1918, p. 73; Dehejia 1997, pp. 114–15). Surviving reliefs from the first century CE in Gandhāra (Figure 2), located in present-day northwestern India and Pakistan, employ a different narrative mode. Notably, for instance, two stair risers preserved in the British Museum show the story in a horizontal format, with scenes divided by trees that serve as a natural framing device. The staircase reliefs present three sequential scenes from the left to the right: (1) the king approaching the blind couple; (2) the king leading the couple towards the right; and (3) the couple collapsing by the body of Śyāma. This sequential

arrangement demonstrates the use of the continuous, linear mode typical of Gandhāran art. In later depictions at Ajanta, specifically in murals found in Caves 10 and 17, the story is arranged according to location rather than following a strict chronological order.[11]

Figure 2. *Śyāma Jātaka*. Stair-riser, Gandhara, 2nd–3rd Century CE, No. 1880.55. The British Museum.

Kizil cave temples, located on the northern edge of the Tarim basin, are the primary site in Central Asia where the *Śyāma jātaka* is frequently depicted (Figure 3).[12] Like other *jātakas* in Kizil, the *Śyāma jātaka* is portrayed within rhombus-shaped spaces on vaulted ceilings or in rectangular sections on side walls.[13] In these limited areas, the central scene captures the moment when Śyāma draws water from a pond while the king takes aim with his arrow. Occasionally, depictions of the blind parents sitting in huts can be seen in the background.

Figure 3. Kizil Cave 198, west wall on tunnel ceiling. *Zhongguo shiku: Kezier shiku*, vol. 3, Figure 105.

In the heartland of China, the earliest depiction of the *Śyāma jātaka* can be found on the backscreen of four surviving statues dating back to the mid-to-late fifth century.[14] These statues were unearthed near Pingcheng 平城, the capital city of the Northern Wei dynasty, and they share remarkably similar relief carvings on their backscreens. These reliefs illustrate Śyāma's story in conjunction with the *Mahasattva jātaka*, which tells the story of Prince Mahasattva's self-sacrifice to save a starving tigress and her cubs, as well as the life story of the Buddha.

For instance, one of the statues, dating back to 455 CE, features a backscreen divided into four registers (Figure 4). The upper register depicts scenes of the Buddha's birth 樹下誕生 and first bath 九龍吐水, while the middle two registers showcase various scenes from the *Śyāma jātaka*. The lowest register is dedicated to the *Mahasattva jātaka*. The *Mahasattva jātaka* tells the story of how the prince Mahasattva offers his own body to feed a hungry tigress and her cubs so that the tigress would not have to eat her own children. In case the tiger would not eat him alive, the prince jumps off from the edge of a cliff. The right section shows the prince being surrounded by the cubs. The *Śyāma jātaka* unfolds chronologically from the upper left to the lower right, depicting Syama assisting his blind parents in the wilderness, fetching water, and being shot by the king, and concludes with the blind parents falling collapsed by Śyāma's body. The other three statues feature reliefs similar to the one from 455, combining *Śyāma* and *Mahasattva jātakas* as well. The depiction of the Buddha's birth and first bath became a convention in Buddhist statuary and steles from the mid-fifth century onwards in Pingcheng and Chang'an 長安. Hence, the combination of the *Śyāma* and *Mahasattva jātakas* emerges as a prominent feature these four statues.

Figure 4. Zhang Yong statue. Circa 455 CE, Northern Wei. H. 35.5 cm. Repository: Yūrinkan Museum, Kyōto. (Sun 2005, pp. 255–57).

Two decades later, in the 470s, the *Śyāma jātaka* was depicted in three caves at Yungang 雲岡 cave-temples, located to the west of Pingcheng (Yagi 1997; Hu 2005; Yi 2017; Peng 2017). At Yungang, the story unfolds in a continuous mode, with the protagonist Śyāma appearing repetitively in each individual scene. For instance, in Cave 7, the story is organized in a rectangular space without a clear framing device between each scene, yet Śyāma is depicted repeatedly. In the upper left corner, Śyāma is shown taking care of his blind parents. The central scene portrays the king shooting at Śyāma, while the lower left shows Śyāma lying down with an arrow in his chest. The upper right section is damaged, but the lower right depicts Śyāma preaching to the king after his resurrection.

Reliefs in both Caves 1 and 9, which were excavated slightly later than Cave 7, present a more complete story in a continuous, linear mode (Figures 5 and 6). Each individual scene is separated by pillars. Starting from the south wall and moving through the west

and north walls, the story begins with a scene of the palace and the figures standing in a row, likely representing the king leaving the city. In the following scenes, we see the blind parents sitting in the same hut, while another figure kneels down with clasped hands and animals approaching in the background, symbolizing Śyāma leaving home to fetch water. The next cell, although partially damaged, is recognizable as the hunting scene, indicated by the arrangement of five figures riding on horses and holding bows. The last two scenes on the north wall depict the aftermath of the tragic event. The blind parents, sitting in huts, stretch out their arms, while a figure kneels down to the right side, representing the moment when the king informs the parents of Śyāma's death.

Figure 5. Cave 1, Yungang. Circa 480s, Northern Wei. (Yungang shiku wenwu baoguansuo 1991–1994, vol. 1, Figure 7).

Figure 6. *Cont.*

Figure 6. *Śyāma Jātaka*. West and north walls of Cave 9. Yungang Grottos. Circa 490s. (Yungang shiku wenwu baoguansuo 1991–1994, Figures 20–25).

Although the compositional modes at Yungang vary, the visual narrative logic remains consistent. Śyāma appears as the dominant protagonist in every scene, driving the plot's progression. Each scene is contained within a narrative cell that is separated from others by framing devices such as trees and pillars. This compositional feature aligns with the overall pattern of depicting narrative tales in Northern Wei and shows a certain degree of influence from Gandhara. However, examples from the Dunhuang and Maijishan cave-temples, which are located along the Hexi corridor, differ from the Yungang examples. At the Mogao cave-temples in Dunhuang, *Śyāma jātaka* decorates the ceiling space in seven caves, including four from the Northern Zhou 北周 (557–581 CE) and three from the Sui dynasty 隋 (581–618 CE).[15] Taking Northern Zhou Cave 299 as an example, the story is situated on three sides of the ceiling's edge (Figure 7), while the remaining space is filled with the *Mahasattva jataka* (Takada 1982; Dunhuang Wenwu Yanjiusuo 敦煌文物研究所 1980–1984; Li 2000, 2001; Xie 2001; Higashiyama 2011; Sha 2011; Gao 2017a, 2017b). On the left, the king is shown marching with his servants, while on the right, Śyāma's parents are depicted sitting in their huts. The figures' activities unfold in a landscape of hills, trees, and streams that divide the narrative cells. These new features signify a departure from the fifth-century tradition by emphasizing the king's retinue, the natural setting, and, particularly, a non-linear narrative mode. These murals skillfully integrate natural and figural images, contrasting with the previous relief carving tradition in Chang'an and Pingcheng, which focused on depicting the movement of the protagonist Śyāma to unfold the story. Current studies suggest an influence from Maijishan on these Dunhuang murals of the *Śyāma jataka* (Donohashi 1978; Bell 2000; Li 2000; Cai 2004; Zheng and Sha 2004; Gao 2017a, 2017b).

The Maijishan cave temples was carved into Maiji Mountain starting from the mid-fifth century onwards. The story of Śyāma is depicted on the front side of the sloping wall of Cave 127, which is dated to the 540s, Western Wei (Figure 8). Unfolding from right to left, identifiable scenes include the king leaving the palace, the hunting scene, the mistaken shooting at Śyāma, and the blind couple collapsing upon learning about Śyāma's death. Overall, the composition and selection of scenes in Dunhuang and Maijishan murals diverge from the fifth-century Yungang tradition of the Northern Wei.

Nevertheless, more questions arise as we examine the *Śyāma jātaka*'s Chinese adaptations. Intriguingly, there is no trace of any depictions of the *Śyāma jātaka* from the 480s to the 540s when the *Śyāma jātaka* first appeared in Maijishan and Dunhuang. In other words, the *Śyāma jātaka* lost its popularity- in North China at the start of the sixth century.

Figure 7. Ceiling, Mogao Cave 299. Northern Zhou, late sixth century. (Li 2001, Figure 110).

Figure 8. Maijishan Cave 127, ceiling, front side. Western Wei, 540s. (Xia 1998, Figure 167). Annotated by author.

In north China, the only example of *Śyāma jātaka* from the sixth-century Central Plain is found carved on the pedestal of the Liubeisi 劉碑寺 Stele, which dates back to 557 CE (the eighth year of the Tianbao 天保 era), Northern Qi dynasty (Figure 9) (Wang 2006). While the right section of the relief is damaged, its middle section portrays a massive hunting scene, and the left section shows the story's central plots. This tripartite composition is almost identical to the mural depicted in Maijishan Cave 127. This striking similarity indicates a direct influence from the Hexi Corridor, rather than adhering to the established tradition of fifth-century Pingcheng (see Figure 8). Consequently, it suggests the actual decline in the popularity of the Syama jataka in the Central Plain. Considering the geographical proximity of the Liubeisi Stele to the Central Plain rather than Maijishan, the preference for a Hexi prototype on the Liubeisi Stele may imply a lack of local references to depict the *Śyāma jātaka*. Thus, this circumstantially supports the argument that the *Śyāma jātaka* was not widely popular anymore during the early sixth century in the Central Plain.

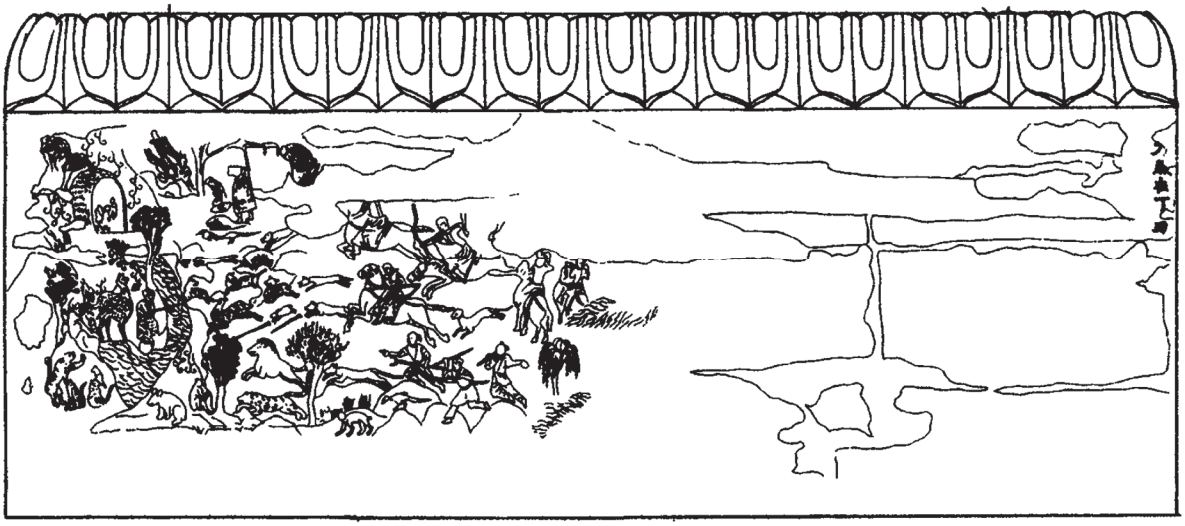

Figure 9. Liubeisi stele, 557 CE, Northern Qi. Southern Henan. (Wang 2006, Figure 6).

3. *Śyāma Jātaka*'s Rise to Prominence in the Fifth-Century Northern Wei Court

To better understand the story's decline in popularity in the sixth century, it requires a closer analysis of factors contributing to its sudden rise to prominence in the fifth century. In the late fifth century, an influential translation project took place in Pingcheng, led by the renowned and enigmatic monk Tan Yao 曇曜. Notably, Tan Yao was also the chief designer of the initial construction of the Yungang cave temples.[16] Assembling eminent monks near Yungang, Tan Yao embarked on a significant endeavor of translating sūtras, starting around 462.[17] Among these translated sūtras is the *Za baozang jing* 雜寶藏經 (The Sūtra of the Miscellaneous Treasures), which Tan Yao collaborated on with Ji Jiaye 吉迦夜 in 472.

The stories and their arrangement in the *Za baozang jing* reveal the central role of the didactic teaching of filial piety in the sūtra. The stories in the sūtra are organized thematically, which is believed to have been re-edited by the translators. Most stories are also retold with certain degrees of discrepancy from the major versions. Liang Liling's 梁麗玲 research suggests that the stories were initially retold by Ji Jiaye based on memory and later translated by Tanyao and the others. The first category of the sūtra is about filial piety, which includes four specific topics. The *Śyāma jātaka* is the second story listed in this category. The story itself also underwent certain modifications, as the introductory section discusses the offering of flesh to parents, which is not part of the storyline of the *Śyāma jātaka*. As proposed by Liang Liling, such an emphasis on filial piety is not seen in any other contemporaneously translated sūtras of Buddhist narratives (Liang 1998, pp. 117–25).

The direct religious and political context that influenced Tan Yao's emphasis on filial piety in the sūtra is understood to be the persecution of Buddhism in the 450s. Emperor Taiwu 太武 (r. 423–452) issued the persecution, motivated by a conglomeration of interests, including the fear of social and economic disruption brought about by the expansion of the Sangha. Following the Taiwu persecution, Tao Yao's translation project likely highlighted Buddhist stories that expounded on filial piety, a traditional Confucian moral teaching, in order to defend Buddhists against Confucian criticism. One of the main criticisms of Buddhism focused on the Buddhist ideals of renouncing family duties for a life of celibacy, which posed a possible threat to the Confucian emphasis on lineage continuity and social stability (Ch'en 1968, 1973). Considering Tan Yao's influence in promoting Buddhism in court, the sūtra's interest in filial piety would inherently have a significant impact in the capital area.

Another factor contributing to the rise of prominence of the *Śyāma jātaka* at Pingcheng can be attributed to the overall promotion of filial piety by the Northern Wei emperors since the early fifth century. Especially since the 460s, Emperor Xiaowen's preference for the *Xiao Jing* 孝經 (Sūtra of Filial Piety) is evident in historical records.[18] Xiaowen frequently quoted from the *Xiao Jing*[19], likely influenced by his study with the chief master Feng Xi 馮熙, who was

the elder brother of the Empress Dowager Wenming and known for advocating the *Xiao jing*.[20] Several court orders regarding filial piety were issued in the 480s (Zou 2015, pp. 124–28, and chart 7). Zou Qingquan attributes this extravagant emphasis on filial son stories to the Dowager Empress regent Feng 馮太后, who endorsed these policies to indoctrinate the juvenile Emperor Xiaowen with Confucian values, ensuring his obedience to the Dowager Empress.

A recent study conducted by Xing Guang contributes another factor that highlights the importance of the *Śyāma jātaka* before the Tang dynasty. Guang argues that the *Fumu en nanbao jing* 父母恩難報經, an earlier translated text on filial piety, appears to conflict with Confucian filial piety by advocating leaving household life.[21] In comparison, such a direct tone is not found in the story of the *Śyāma jātaka*. The frame story found in *Śyāma jātaka*'s Pāli version, about *Śyāma*'s parents leaving their household life for ascetic practice, is not absent in the story's surviving Chinese versions.

4. From Pingcheng to Luoyang: *Śyāma Jātaka*'s Replacement by Sudāna *Jātaka*

Considering the particular importance of the *Śyāma jātaka* in the fifth-century Northern Wei in Pingcheng, its decline of popularity in the art scene in the early sixth century North China is indeed surprising. Why and how did the tradition of depicting the *Śyāma jātaka* completely disappear at the turn of the sixth century? What does this disappearance reveal about how Chinese Buddhism views filial piety? The above section examined the social context surrounding the *Śyāma jātaka*'s rise to prominence in the late fifth century, highlighting the sudden decline in its popularity by the beginning of the sixth century. In the following two sections, I argue for two historical factors that contributed to the waning popularity of the story: the new preference for other *jātakas* that embody teachings on generosity in early sixth-century North China, and the revival of the pre-existing visual tradition that depicts local Chinese filial paragons.

In terms of the immediate historical context, a pivotal event occurred in 494 CE when the Northern Wei court relocated its capital from Pingcheng to Luoyang. This shift marked a new phase of artistic production in various aspects. Following the establishment of the new capital, Buddhist steles experienced a flourishing period in the Luoyang region.[22] Carved reliefs depicting *jātakas* can be found in Luoyang and its adjacent areas. Notably, the pair of the *Mahasattva jātaka* and the *Sudāna jātaka* emerged as the most popular theme, overshadowing the depiction of the *Śyāma jātaka* (Lee 1993; Hsieh 1999; Li 1996, 2016). No early or mid-sixth-century steles from the region have been found featuring any depiction of the *Śyāma jātaka*.

The *Mahasattva jātaka* is known to be carved in a pair with the *Śyāma jātaka* on the backscreen of statues in the previous tradition in fifth-century Pingcheng (see Figure 4). Therefore, the absence of the *Śyāma jātaka* in the early sixth century is accompanied by the rise of the *Sudāna jātaka* to prominence. In other words, since the early sixth century, the *Śyāma jātaka* was replaced by the *Sudāna jātaka* in forming a pair with the *Mahasattva jātaka*.

The first pairing of *Sudāna jātaka* and *Mahasattva jātaka* was found in the Binyang Central Cave 賓陽中洞 at Longmen 龍門, the most significant Buddhist cave temple site in present-day Henan Province (Figure 10). Together with two other cave temples, Binyang Central Cave was a project supported by the imperial-sponsored project (ca. 508–523 CE) during the late Northern Wei.[23] It was sponsored by Emperor Xuanwu (r. 499–515 CE), Xiaowen's son and successor, to commemorate his deceased parents. Binyang Central Cave includes fascinating images of exquisite craftsmanship. The cave's entrance wall is divided into multiple horizontal registers, from top to bottom portraying the debate between Mañjuśri (Mile 彌勒) and Vimalakīrti (Weimojie 維摩詰),[24] the Sudāna and Mahasattva jātakas, the imperial processions,[25] and spirit kings. The paired composition of the two stories became widely spread in the next several decades, not only in North China but also in cave temples located along the Hexi Corridor (Li 1996, 2016).

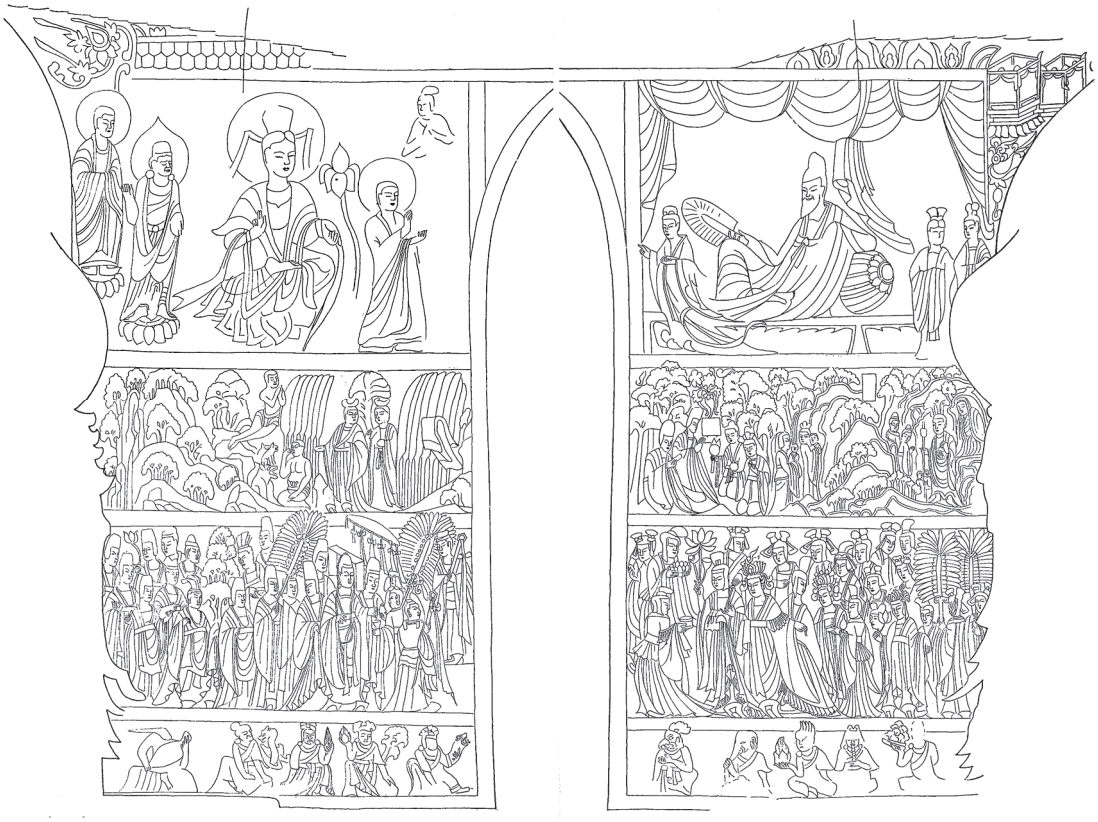

Figure 10. Second register of the relief to the right side of the doorway. Binyang Central Cave, Longmen 龍門 cave temples. Luoyang洛陽, Henan河南. Northern Wei, 520s. (Mizuno et al. [1941] 1980, Figures 18 and 19).

Why was the *Śyāma jātaka* replaced by the *Sudāna jātaka*? It is necessary to examine the didactic and religious significance of the three *jātakas* in the context of when and where they were depicted. It is because the *Sudāna jātaka* can serve two purposes that it rose to prominence and substituted the *Śyāma jātaka*. The two purposes include the teaching of generosity and the emphasis on transcendence seeking in two aspects.

Firstly, generosity, the virtue of gift-giving, one of the six *pāramitās* of Buddhism, is the fundamental teaching imbued in both the *Sudāna jātaka* and the *Mahasattva jātaka*. The *Mahasattva jātaka* tells the story of how the prince Mahasattva offers his own body to feed a hungry tigress and her seven cubs so that the tigress would not have to eat her own children. In case the tiger would not eat him alive, the prince jumps off from the edge of a cliff. In terms of the *Sudāna jātaka* (also called the *Vessantara jātaka* in major versions), the protagonist and his family are banished to exile after he gives away his kingdom's magic elephant to Brahman emissaries from another region.[26] After Sudāna settles down in the forest, a Brahman from a distant land finds Sudāna and makes the request of his two children.[27] A visual representation of the *Sudāna jātaka*'s first occurred in India around the first century BCE in reliefs adorning monumental stūpas and was disseminated at major Buddhist sites across South Asia and Central Asia in the following centuries (Schlingloff 1988, 2013; Dehejia 1990).[28] The pair of the Sudāna and Mahasattva *jātakas* can be understood as a site for the generation of merit, given the stories' embodiment of charitable giving (McNair 2007, pp. 49–50).

The second factor contributing to the *Sudāna jātaka*'s rise to prominence derives from its newly coined teaching on the seeking of transcendence. Illustrations of *jātakas* from this period depict only a few select scenes to represent the story. In the case of the *Sudāna jātaka*, the most frequently depicted scenes shift from the act of giving to Sudāna's exile. In previous South Asian and Central Asian traditions, as well as the Northern Wei reliefs from the fifth century, the selected scenes often center on Sudāna's act of gifting, either an elephant, a chariot, or chil-

dren. However, in the sixth-century Chinese cases, we found the outstanding emphasis on the scenes of exile. The perception of the knowledge, teaching, or message that is embedded in each group of episodes typically changes as the story focus changes from one set to the next (Dehejia 1990; Shih 1993; Murray 1995, 1998; Brown 1997). In the current case, the selection of the exile scene implies that the exile scenes grew significant enough to take the place of the previous emphasis on scenes of gifting.

A recent study shows that this shift in focus to the exile of Sudāna was partly shaped by the strengthened pursuit of practicing asceticism in early sixth-century Luoyang (Zhao 2021). According to the research, the depiction of Sudāna in exile echoes the elevated status of seeking transcendence in mountainous settings, a mentality shared by both Buddhists and Daoists at the time. This transition is interpreted through the study of new visual elements and selected scenes that were not developed until the early sixth century but exerted a huge influence in the following two decades in North China. The most crucial new visual element in reliefs of the *Sudāna jātaka* is the seated meditative monk, or sometimes a Daoist figure, in reliefs from sixth-century North China.[29] A textual episode of the exile scene in two third-century Chinese translations sheds light on the current inquiry by revealing the identity of this figure in question as a rhetorical adaptation of Chinese immortals by translators.[30] In both *Taizi Xudana jing* and *Liudu ji jing*, the figure sitting in the mountains is named Azhoutuo 阿州陀/阿周陀, who is famous for his virtue and longevity of five-hundred years, and his important role in guiding Sudāna during his exile in the mountains. His characteristics literally borrow lines describing Chinese immortals in contemporaneous writings such as *Liexian zhuan* and *Baopuzi*, rather than any earlier *jātaka* texts.[31] Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that the *Sudāna jātaka*'s prominence in the sixth-century visual tradition partly stems from the concept of 'seeking transcendence,' which had been developing as an underlying religious mentality ever since the third century. It was likely further advanced by the flourishing of Buddhist meditation practices at the time,[32] a common interest in seeking transcendence at that time also connecting Buddhist and Daoist traditions (Poo 1995).

Furthermore, it is crucial to acknowledge that illustrations of these *jātakas* can be modified to fulfill ritualistic and symbolic purposes, underscoring the significance of shifts in the visual realm. Previous research on Buddhist narrative tales has demonstrated that the visual depictions could also serve the needs of various ritual practices (Wu 1992; Brown 1997). At the Central Bingyang Cave, an important imperial project being undertaken at Longmen, the mural illustration of Sudāna, the protagonist, alongside the ascetic figure in meditation, is positioned above the panels depicting an imperial procession. This arrangement carries particular significance during the late Northern Wei period. Not only does this composition speaks to the careful choice made in selecting the *Sudāna* and *Mahasattva jātakas*, but it also serves as a model and exemplar for future *jātaka* depictions in the subsequent decades. While not all Buddhist images from Northern Wei Luoyang can be directly attributed to court designs, the prominence of the pairing of the *Sudāna* and *Mahasattva jātakas* in the following years suggests that the artwork in Longmen acted as a pervasive model across the North. The imperial endeavor thus stands as a prototype or precedent for the later representations of *jātakas* in North China.

5. Filial Piety in Sixth-Century Funerary Context

The decline in the *Śyāma jātaka*'s popularity in the early sixth century can be attributed, as I argue, to a second factor: the resurgence of the pre-existing visual tradition of filial paragons in the Luoyang region. Concurrent with the disappearance of the *Śyāma jātaka* during this period, depictions of Chinese filial sons engaged in virtuous deeds experienced a revival within the funerary context in North China. This resurgence provides additional evidence to comprehend the perception of filial piety in the sixth century (Figure 11).[33] At the new capital Luoyang in the early sixth century, the enhanced co-existence and equal importance of Buddhism and Han tradition inexorably encouraged the necessity of defining the ritual space as governed by the two traditions, respectively.

Figure 11. Wang Lin story, stone sarcophagus. Nelson-Aktins Museum of Arts.

As I argue, the ritualistic and symbolic significance of filial piety as propounded in the *Śyāma jātaka* in the realm of Buddhism was challenged by the preference for filial paragons of the local tradition. The separation of the function of the Chinese ritual space from the Buddhist cave-temples was a natural outcome of the court's supervision of constructions and designs, adhering to the traditional Han practices prevalent in Luoyang during the early sixth century. Against this historical backdrop, the Confucian moral teaching and ancestral worship inherent in filial piety predominantly found expression through traditional Chinese filial paragons in the funerary space. Conversely, the Buddhist cave temples were reserved for representing the teachings of Buddhism, emphasizing generosity and the pursuit of transcendence through the stories of Mahasattva and Sudāna.

While one could argue that the resurgence of filial paragons in Luoyang's funerary art may not be directly responsible for the disappearance of the *Śyāma jātaka* in Buddhist art, both traditions derive their didactic significance from the focused teaching of filial piety. The *Śyāma jātaka*'s rise to fame in the fifth century in Pingcheng was influenced, to some extent, by the imperial court. Therefore, a comprehensive understanding of the sudden decline in the popularity of the *Śyāma jātaka* in the sixth century in Luoyang necessitates the consideration of the broader historical context of Sinicization (the assimilation of non-Han people into Chinese culture) and the rulers' perception of filial piety during the Northern Dynasties.

The circulation of traditional Han filial stories dates back to at least the Warring States period and their maturity during the Han dynasty has been researched. Depicting the stories of historical personages, these filial paragons emerged as one of the most widely represented subjects for narrative illustrations alongside Buddhist stories in early medieval China. They were revered as embodiments of the quintessential Confucian morality. Although rich visual evidence in the form of relief carvings from the Han period has been unearthed in archaeological discoveries over the past few decades, very few visual remnants of these filial stories have survived from the subsequent two centuries. However, a notable shift occurred in the early sixth century in the Luoyang area, where stories of filial sons suddenly became the predominant subject depicted on stone funerary structures.

Filial stories were carved primarily on stone funerary structures, including stone coffins, mortuary couches, and house-shaped sarcophagi. The tradition of stone coffins, which prevailed during the Han dynasty, disappeared between the third and fifth centuries, only to be revived under the reign of the Northern Wei in Luoyang (Cheng 2011, pp. 191–218; Huang 1987). It is believed that the textual source for these stories during that time was the

Xiaozi zhuan 孝子傳 (Accounts of Filial Offspring), a collection of popular didactic texts compiled in the early medieval period (Knapp 2005, pp. 46–82; Xu 2015; Xu 2017, pp. 105–12).[34]

According to recent scholarship, the reintroduction of stone mortuary equipment during the Northern Dynasties served not only as a symbol of political status but also as a means for non-Han Chinese to negotiate and establish their cultural and religious identities. Most of the surviving stone coffins belong to higher-ranking officials in the court of the Northern Wei. The elaborate illustrations of filial paragons on stone sarcophagi indicate the rapid popularity these tales gained within a relatively short period. The diverse pictorial programs showcased on the mortuary equipment serve as primary visual aids. Considering the historical backdrop of the state policy of Sinicization, the revival of stone coffins in Luoyang becomes more comprehensible (Huang 1987; Wu 2002).

The focus on Confucianism and the art and culture of the contemporaneous Southern Dynasties, which were founded by the Han Chinese, exemplify the process of Sinicization embraced by the rulers of the Northern Dynasties.[35] The reform that took place during the Taihe 太和 period (477–499 CE) in Pingcheng redefined crucial aspects of the empire's administration and laid the groundwork for localized court ceremonies and rituals. A more systematic and refined new style further developed after the Northern Wei court relocated to Luoyang in 494. According to the *History of the Northern Wei*, officials undertook construction and design projects for architecture and art that aimed to represent a more Sinicized concept of power. The newly constructed palaces and residences were meticulously planned in accordance with ancient ritual codes and drew inspiration from traditional styles and techniques (Tsiang 2002).

The profound impact of Sinicization on the art world has been extensively explored in recent scholarly works, illuminating that the Northern Wei was not a passive recipient of the new Han tradition. On the contrary, the magnitude of changes in the visual vocabulary and the rapidity with which they took place indicate a dynamic and active campaign to develop new imagery. Through historical records and the examination of stone and bronze artistic remains, scholars have demonstrated that late Northern Wei Luoyang Buddhist art was notably influenced by traditional Chinese sources, particularly the art of the Han dynasty and its contemporary counterparts in the Southern regions, which often featured an integrated and courtly style. Katherine R. Tsiang, for example, has conducted detailed research on the celestial or holy space within Luoyang Buddhist art, providing valuable insights into this specific area of investigation (Tsiang 2002).

Meanwhile, this remarkable preference for filial illustrations in Luoyang can be better comprehended by considering the geographical distribution of these illustrations. Although they were discovered in the north, most attributed authors of the *Accounts of Filial Offspring* hailed from the territory of the Southern Dynasties. This indicates a significant interaction and exchange between the Northern Wei and the Qi court in the South, as evidenced by recorded regular embassies between the two.

Furthermore, the Sinicization process in Luoyang not only facilitated the revival of filial paragons in the mortuary space but also suggested a deliberate separation of the roles and symbolic significance between the mortuary visual world from the Buddhist space. Through visual representation, the teachings of filial piety were potentially transferred from the Buddhist realm back to the context of ancestor worship within burials.

A crucial element in shaping this division between the mortuary and the Buddhist, as I argue, lies in the heightened significance of filial piety within the realm of rituals. The hierarchical structure within families is believed to be divinely sanctioned (孝悌之至，通于神明). Recent research conducted by Xu Jin highlights that filial illustrations on the mortuary equipment from Luoyang are often arranged in accordance with two principles: the family member principle and the principle of life and death. This theory diverges from the previous one that argues for a sequential order based on the textual references, indicating deliberate and thoughtful visual design choices. The principle of life and death distinguishes between stories that emphasize nurturing the living and those that focused on the deceased, underscoring the importance of these stories within the mortuary context. Additionally, the careful sequencing of these filial stories prominently features the parents' scene at the center, reminiscent of the tradition of

depicting portraits of the deceased couple to serve as the focal point of ancestral sacrifice and worship within the tomb space (Xu 2017, p. 172; Lin 2003, p. 222).

In addition, the emphasis of state policy on standardizing the visual representation of filial piety is further supported by the disappearance of filial paragons immediately following the division of North China between the Eastern Wei (534–550 CE) and the Western Wei (535–556 CE). From the mid-sixth century onwards, new pictorial programs featuring immortals and gatherings of nobility replaced the filial paragons on mortuary equipment (Xu 2017, Introduction). This transition, underscoring the evolving priorities and shifting cultural landscape during that period, attests to the crucial role of court sponsorship in this age of turmoil.

Considering the distinct symbolic and ritual significance associated with these filial paragons within the funerary setting, a clear separation between the mortuary and Buddhist realms becomes imperative. To put it another way, the need to impart the teachings of filial piety through the Buddhist narrative of Śyāma faced a formidable challenge posed by the growing importance of traditional Han filial paragons. As Keith Knapp aptly states, the prevalence of filial paragon illustrations helps elucidate how Confucianism successfully permeated and assumed dominance over the values and ritual practices of the literati, despite its waning philosophical vigor (Knapp 2005, p. 8).

6. Conclusions: In between the Visual and Textual Traditions

This study demonstrates that the acceptance of *Śyāma jātaka* within local Chinese society was not a straightforward and continuous procession. Its initial popularity in the fifth century was subsequently followed by a period of silence in the early sixth century. The story's later revival in the second half of the sixth century was limited to the Hexi Corridor and executed in a completely new compositional style.

These visual pieces of evidence present a challenge to the conventional discourse that attributes the tale's popularity solely to its teaching of filial piety, highlighting the dynamic and fluctuating nature of its reception and circulation within Chinese society. To a degree, the conventional discourse on filial piety was shaped by a preference of textual sources. My research offers an illustrative example of the complexities involved in the interaction between textual and visual mediums when transmitting Buddhist teachings in a changing cultural landscape. By arguing for the "tension between the textual and visual traditions," I aim to highlight the different logic of transmitting didactic teachings to different groups of viewers, as well as the distinct capacities of textual and visual evidence in representing historical transitions. This study reveals the challenges associated with utilizing texts alone to reconstruct the popularity of certain narratives after their initial translation era. However, often, studies of certain visual representations of jātaka stories focus on aligning the images with surviving texts, treating the visual tradition of these stories primarily as a static portrayal of specific texts and a pure embodiment of the teachings of filial piety, disregarding the intricate nature of images in terms of dissemination, adaptation, and perception. In addition, it is important to recognize that illustrations of jātakas possess inherent ritual and symbolic functions that are shaped by the immediate political and cultural contexts in which they are created. By acknowledging the historicity and materiality of these visual sources in this study, a wealth of evidence emerges, providing a deeper understanding of how Buddhist *jātakas* were perceived and interpreted in early medieval China.

This study also offers an opportunity to reflect on the Sinicization model employed in previous scholarship to comprehend the concept of filial piety. In recent scholarship, the historical issues associated with the Sinicization model have been critically examined. As pointed out by John Kieschnick, the broad focus on Sinicization "is too crude to be useful" (Kieschnick 2003, p. 19). Embracing this revisionist perspective, it becomes evident that the transmission of the *Śyāma jātaka* in the visual culture is not solely a linear progression from India to China, nor is it confined to the emphasis on the teaching of the filial piety. Rather, it encompasses a multifaceted adaptation spanning various dimensions, including the geographical transition from Pingcheng to Luoyang, the temporal shift from the fifth to the early sixth century, and the constantly shifting interactions with the existing art tradition in China. By

acknowledging the immediate pictorial, historical, and religious contexts, a more nuanced understanding can be achieved, providing a more comprehensive analysis of this complex subject matter.

Last but not least, another noteworthy aspect highlighted in this study is the importance of considering *jātakas* in relation to one another in order to fully comprehend the reception and localization of Buddhist narratives in China, especially the process of appropriating an unfamiliar narrative from a different cultural tradition. It is essential to analyze how *jātakas* were paired, which specific episodes were selected, and how the narrative emphasis of each story was modified.

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Abbreviation

T. *Taishō shinshū daizōkyō* 大正新脩大藏經 (Taishō-era new edition of the Buddhist canon), 1924–1935, edited by Takakusu Junjirō 高楠順次郎 (1866–1945) and Watanabe Kaikyoku 渡辺海旭 (1872–1932) et al. 100 vols (Tokyo: Taishō issaikyō kankōkai).

Notes

1 A *Jātaka* is a story about one of a past life of the Buddha. Therefore, *jātakas* are also called the birth stories of the Buddha. Many such stories form an important genre of Buddhist literature. See (Appleton 2020), https://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/display/document/obo-9780195393521/obo-9780195393521-0020.xml, accessed on 13 May 2023.

2 So far, no pictorial remains of jātaka tales survive from the Southern Dynasty. Overall, evidence of Buddhist art of the Southern Dynasties is extremely rare, with only a very small number of stone and bronze sculptures preserved in situ or discovered later. Yet, the influence exerted by the art of the Southern Dynasties on that of the Northern Dynasties has been a crucial question in debate among scholars. For a detailed discussion, see (Tsiang 2002, pp. 225–26.)

3 For more information of the storyline, also see (Wray et al. 1972; Shaw 2006).

4 Other than the two versions, another version is preserved in Dao'an's 道安 catalogue, as recorded by *Chu Sanzang Jiji* 出三藏記集 by Sengyou 僧佑, *T*2145, vol. 3, pp. 17–18. This version is translated by an anonymous in the Western Jin.

5 Huijiao mentions *Shan song* 睒頌 (Eulogy of Shanzi). See T50, 415. A recent study of Xing Guang also discusses the reference of the *Śyāma jātaka* in *Weimo yiji* (A Commentary on the *Vimalakīrti Nirdesa Sūtra*), which was composed by Huiyuan 慧遠 during the Sui dynasty. See (Guang 2022, pp. 85–87).

6 See (Strong 1983; Schopen 1984, 1997). Guang Xing's recent article combs through evidence in early Buddhist resources, the Nikāyas and Āgamas. See (Guang 2016a, 2016b).

7 For the Pāli version, see (Fausbøll 1896, vol. VI, pp. 68–95). For the English translation, see (Cowell and Rouse 1957, vol. VI, pp. 38–52).

8 See (Ch'en 1968, p. 83; Liu 2020). Guang pinpoints the Pāli and the *Mahāvastu* versions particularly, but not contending for any direct source text of the Chinese versions. See (Guang 2022, p. 90).

9 Surviving Sanskrit and Pāli texts are generally dated later than the earlier Chinese translations of Buddhist texts. For an overview, see (Nattier 2008).

10 This is an abbreviated version based on Kenneth Ch'en's translation. See (Ch'en 1968, p. 85). Additionally, see *Foshuo Pusa Shanzi jing*, T03, no. 174.

11 It is a compositional feature that is unique at Ajanta to arrange murals based on locations where a plot takes place. In Cave 10, for instance, the story is shown in two main sections, the section centered on the forest life on the left, and that of the palace on the right, resulting in possible chronological difference among scenes taken place in the same location. See (Schlingloff 1988, 2013). The very similar composition of the *Śyāma jātaka* by location is also found employed in Thai murals dated in much later periods. Elizabeth Wray provided a focused study. See (Wray et al. 1972).

12 Despite the *Śyāma jātaka*'s popularity in general, it is not found prevalently prominent in major Gandharan or Central Asian sites. Remains from Bamiyan in Afghanistan and some Buddhist kingdoms located along the southern edge of the Taklamakan Desert, such as Khotan, do not show traces of the story.

13 Similar to early Buddhist reliefs in Sanchi, Kizil *jātaka* illustrations adopt a synoptic mode that encapsulates multiple elements of the story into a single space with no chronological sequence. See Le Coq and Waldschmidt (1922–1933); Zhu (1993); Xinjiang weiwuer zizhiqu wenwu guanli weiyuanhui et al. (1997); Schlingloff (2000).

14 As Gao Haiyan observed, it remains in question if the statue dated to 427 is a fakery copied after the statue of 455 according to their striking similarities, the scarcity of surviving statues from the early fifth century. See (Gao 2017a, 2017b). In addition, these statues, bearing execution dates in inscriptions, date about two decades earlier than reliefs in Yungang Grottoes. Therefore, some recent study that refers to Yungang reliefs as the earliest examples requires further revision.

15 The mural in Sui Cave 124 was brought away by the Oldenburg expedition of 1914–15 and is now in preservation in the Hermitage Museum in St. Petersburg. No. Dh 197–198. See (Giès and Cohen 1995; Yagi 2012).

16 Tan Yao directly participated in the design of the five colossal cave temples, which were considered in honor of the five emperors of the Northern Wei, from Taizu 太祖 onwards. See (Su 1996; Yagi 1997; Hu 2005; Peng 2017; Yi 2017).

17 See Fei Changfang 費長房, *Lidai sanbao ji* 歷代三寶記, T49, no. 2034, 85b05. Daoxuan 道宣, *Xu Gaoseng zhuan* 續高僧傳, T50, no. 2060, 427c27. *Da Tang neidian lu* 大唐內典錄, T55, no. 2149, 267b28.

18 On *Xiao Jing*, see (Cai 1970).

19 Such as "苟孝悌之至，无所不通" in his conversation with the official Mu Liang 穆亮. *Wei Shu*, vol. 27, p. 669.

20 Wei Shou, *Wei Shu*, vol. 83, p. 1819.

21 A constant tension between Buddhist practices and the Chinese traditional virtues lies in the contrast between monastic order of abstaining from household life and filial piety. See (Guang 2022, chp. 3, p. 83; Winston 2006).

22 For an overview of stele production in Henan in late Northern Wei, see (Wong 2004, chp. 6).

23 For a detailed study of the cave's pictorial programme and relevant scholarship, see (McNair 2007).

24 The imagery represents the legendary discourse between the famous Buddhist layman Vimalakīrti and the Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī. The story was first translated into Chinese in the third century, whereas its artistic repertory developed without prototypes in southern China around the fourth century. Two versions of the story were circulating at the time: the Vimalakīrti Sūtra and the Lotus Sūtra. Yet, none of the temple paintings in the south have survived. Most surviving representations are stone reliefs from the north in the fifth and sixth centuries. See (Bunker 1968). Many studies have debated this issue. For its textual tradition, see (Zürcher 1959, pp. 50–70; Lamotte 1962).

25 The emperor's procession relief is currently preserved in the Metropolitan Museum, while the empress's procession is kept at the Nelson-Atkins Museum.

26 Surviving texts use different names to refer to the prince, indicating the circulation of various textual editions in both India and China. In this study, Sudāna (Xudana 須大拏) is used to refer to the prince, the other names for him being pointed out when relevant. Among the eight surviving Chinese texts, the prince is called *Xudana* in the two texts from the third century CE and three Dunhuang manuscripts, *Yiqiechi* 一切持 in the pseudo-*Pusa benyuan jing* of the sixth century, and *Weishifu duoluo* 尾施縛多羅 in Yijing's translation from the seventh century. *Xudana*, the name most often used, derives from Sudāna in the early Indian texts. This is different from Vessantara in the Pali tradition and Viśvantara, another name used in the Sanskrit tradition. For major studies on the story's textual tradition, see (Chen 2013a, 2013b; Nattier 2008; Bokenkamp 2006).

27 In some versions, to add to Sudāna's problem, the god Śakra disguises himself as another Brahman and asks Sudāna for Mādrī. In the Pali tradition, the story's status in depicting the last incarnation of the Buddha also indicates its importance for achieving Buddhahood. See (Kim 2009; Zhao 2017).

28 Its initial popularity at early Buddhist sites in India may have been related to the story's sequence in the textual tradition, as it is considered to be the last incarnation of the Buddha in the Pali canon. For an overview of its dissemination in early Indian tradition.

29 In Binyang Central Cave, the figure is located to the right of the panel, sitting in a mountainous setting, and wearing a robe that covers his head (see Figure 10). His appearance is typical of representations of meditating monks in China since the late fifth century. See (Chen 2016). A figure rendered in a very similar way also appears in the Xiahou Xianmu 夏侯顯慕 Stele of the 560s. On excavation of the Xiahou Xianmu statue, see (Han 1980). However, in a relief carving on the pedestal from the Penn Museum, the figure is rendered completely differently in the look of a Daoist practitioner or laity holding a *zhuwei* 麈尾 in their hands. See (James 1989; Liu 1997, 2001; Abe 2001; Huang 2012).

30 *Taizi Xudana jing*, T. 171, 3. 421a. In *Taizi Xudana jing*, the episode starts with the following account: 山上有一道人名阿州陀，年五百歲，有絕妙之德。太子作禮，却住白言："今在山中何所有好甘果泉水可止處耶？"阿州陀言："是山中者普是福地，所在可止耳。" ... ... 道人問太子："所求何等？"太子答言："欲求摩訶衍道。"道人言："太子功德乃爾，今得摩訶衍道不久也。太子得無上正真道時，我當作第一神足弟子。"道人即指語太子所止處，太子則法道人結頭編髮，以泉水果蓏為飲食 ... ... There is an ascetic named Azhoutuo in the mountains, who is five hundred years old and renowned for his excellent virtue. The prince paid homage to him and said, 'Are there any good places with fruits and springs where one can stay in the mountains?' Azhoutuo replied, 'All the places in this mountain are blessed land for residing.' ... The ascetic asked the prince, 'What are you looking for?' and the prince replied, 'I am looking for the Mahāyāna path.' The ascetic replied, 'The prince has good virtue. You will achieve the Mahāyāna path soon. Once you achieve what you pursue, I would like to be your first follower.' The ascetic showed the prince a place to reside. The prince learned from the ascetic how to braid hair and survive on springs, fruit, and vegetables ...

31 Azhoutuo's defining characteristics—his good moral deeds and his longevity—intriguingly coincide with the works by local Chinese authors about ascetics who seek immortality in the mountains. In indigenous Chinese writings on immortality, ascetics can live for five hundred years. Similar accounts of immortals living for five hundred years longevity are scattered throughout *Baopuzi* 抱樸子 and

Shenxian zhuan 神仙傳. For major studies of Daoist ascetics and immortality, see (Kohn 1989; Poo 1995; Bokenkamp 1997; Campany 2002, 2009). On *Boapuzi* and *Shenxianzhuan*, see (*Baopuzi neipian jiaoshi*, 80–81; *Shenxian zhuan* 153).

[32] For a glimpse of recent studies on the importance of meditation in early medieval Chinese Buddhism, see (Chen 2014; Greene 2014, 2021a, 2021b). On artistic traditions related to meditation, see (Liu 1978; He 1980; Hsu 2002).

[33] For an overview of filial paragons in medieval China, see (Wang 1999, 2003; Knapp 2005, 2012; Zheng 2002, 2012, 2013; Xu 2015, 2017).

[34] These accounts were usually privately compiled collections ranging in length from one to thirty chapters. The current title serves as a general reference. None of those dated to the Six Dynasties has survived. Most fragments were preserved in the Tang and Song encyclopedia. Only three fully intact versions survive today. One is attributed to Tao Yuanming, and two manuscripts have survived in Japan.

[35] The southern influence in both style and subject matter on late Northern Wei art has long been a central topic of art historians.

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The Story of Sadāprarudita's Search for Dharma and the Worship of the *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra* from India to Sixth-Century China

Wen Zhao

College of Philosophy, Nankai University, Tianjin 300350, China; wenzhao358@163.com

Abstract: The story of bodhisattva Sadāprarudita's search for Dharma in the *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra* has served to successfully shape the characters of the Dharma seeker, bodhisattva Sadāprarudita, and the Dharma preacher (*dharmabhāṇakas*), bodhisattva Dharmodgata. This narrative carried much information about the veneration of the *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra* in Indic contexts, and it also enthused Chinese Buddhists of the sixth century CE to create the *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra* written in gold calligraphy. Emperor Wu of the Liang organized *pañcavārṣika* assemblies centred on the lectures and veneration of the gold-calligraphy Sūtra, and the Tiantai master Huisi made a vow to create such a scroll around the same time. In the relevant accounts, Chinese preachers are always associated with the Dharma preacher Dharmodgata in the narrative, which in turn enhanced their authority in the contexts in which they operated. The narrative thus helped to promote the transmission of the text across the cultural boundaries in which the Dharma preacher, as the embodied agent of the *Prajñāpāramitā* text, played a significant role.

Keywords: *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra*; Dharma preacher; Emperor Wu of Liang; Master Huisi

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1. The Worship of the *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra* in Early Mahāyāna Buddhism and the Narrative of Seeking Prajñāpāramitā

The frequent occurrence of relics and *stūpa*s, the monuments in which relics are kept and honoured, in early Mahāyāna texts, and particularly in the *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra*, has garnered much attention in scholarship. Hirakawa (1963) sees *stūpa* sites as the primary institutional base of the early Mahāyāna. However, based on textual evidence found in Mahāyāna literature, Schopen (1975, pp. 170, 179) argues that early Mahāyānists rejected the veneration of the *stūpa* and relics and instead developed new places of worship named *caityabhūta*, where Mahāyāna texts were to be memorized, recited, written and taught. The term *caitya* (shrine) can refer to a *stūpa*, to a *bodhimaṇḍa* (the place where Buddhas sit on the night they attain Buddhahood) or to other places associated with the life of the Buddha. Nevertheless, Drewes (2007) contradicts Schopen on this point,[1] arguing that the comparison between the *stūpa* and the places where *sūtra*s were recited is nothing but a simile, a rhetorical strategy that can be found in both Mahāyāna and non-Mahāyāna literature. For instance, one interesting case from a Mahāyāna text indicates that the Buddha-to-be in his mother's womb is comparable to the relics in a *stūpa* (Drewes 2007, pp. 107–8). In Mahāyāna literature, the merit of reciting, copying and preaching Mahāyāna texts is emphasized by comparing them with the relatively smaller amount of merit generated by paying respect and giving donations to the *stūpa* and relics.

Merit (*puṇya*) is a fundamental aspect of Buddhist ethics across all traditions. Discussions concerning the creation of merit are hence abundant in Buddhist literature, and one of the most significant merit-making deeds is paying respect to the three jewels: the Buddha, Dharma and Saṅgha (Buddhist order or community). Nevertheless, in Mahāyāna literature, as Tanabe (2004) notes, the notion of merit is extended to the idea of benefits obtained by means of some ritual actions related to Mahāyāna Sūtras.[2] If we read through the

Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā (Perfection of Wisdom in 8000 lines, which contains chapters I to XXXII) as a whole, such merits of taking up, reciting and writing the *Prajñāpāramitā* text are repeated in chapters III to XII more frequently than in the other chapters. In chapters III to XII, many discussions are devoted to comparing these ritual actions with other well-known beneficial religious practices, arguing, for instance, that their merit exceeds that of offering to *stūpa*s (III) or relics (IV) whilst affirming the *Prajñāpāramitā* as the great incantation (*vidyā*) and declaring its worldly benefits (III) as being greater than other Buddhist teachings (V), etc. Likewise, one who criticizes the *Prajñāpāramitā* is said to go to hell (VII), and one who does not recite the *Prajñāpāramitā* text correctly is deemed to be under the influence of Māra (XI), etc. As will be seen in the discussions below, such statements were not merely regarded as a form of literary expression but as clear exhortations to the Buddhist community to venerate the *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra*.

The title "8000 lines" is actually a later classification. Karashima (2011, p. 1, n. 1) assumes that the earliest Chinese translation by Lokakṣema 支婁迦讖, dating to 179–180 CE, was originally entitled *Banruoboluomi jing* 般若波羅蜜經 (Skt. *Prajñāpāramitā*) or *Mohe banruoboluomi jing* 摩訶般若波羅蜜經 (Skt. *Mahāprajñāpāramitā*), and that by adding the name of its first chapter "Daoxing pin" 道行品, the title was thereafter changed to *Daoxing banruo jing* 道行般若經. The translation of this text was probably based on an original text in Gāndhārī (Karashima 2013). In and around the first half of the 3rd century, the original *Prajñāpāramitā* was further expanded into the "*Larger Prajñāpāramitā*", since sometime after 260 CE, Zhu Shixing 朱士行 heard of the existence of the *Larger Prajñāpāramitā* and set off on a long journey to Khotan.[3] The "*Larger Prajñāpāramitā*" refers to a group of Prajñāpāramitā texts of different sizes: the *Śatasāhasrikā* (100,000 lines), *Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikā* (25,000 lines) and *Aṣṭadaśasāhasrikā* (18,000 lines). This classification according to the size of the texts denotes the number of metrical units, with one metrical unit "line" (the metrical unit applied to prose) containing 32 syllables (*śloka*) (Zacchetti 2015, p. 176). In outlining the process by which the *8000 lines* was expanded to form the *Larger Prajñāpāramitā*, Zacchetti writes "The adoption of lists [of terms] as a key expository strategy is a prominent feature of the *Larger Prajñāpāramitā.* This form of exposition, which is found in the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā* in an embryonic form, is used systematically in *Larger Prajñāpāramitā* texts." (Zacchetti 2015, p. 184). Following the *8000 lines* and *Larger Prajñāpāramitā*, a series of shorter *Prajñāpāramitā* texts, consisting of condensed summaries of these larger texts, also appeared, including the *Vajracchedikā Prajñāpāramitā* (Diamond-Cutter Perfection of Wisdom), *Suvikrāntavikrāmiparipṛcchā Prajñāpāramitā* (Perfection of Wisdom Requested by Suvikrāntavikrāmin) and the *Saptaśatikā Prajñāpāramitā* (Perfection of Wisdom in 700 lines), etc.[4]

In this section, I would like to first examine the internal and external evidence concerning the earliest development of the veneration of the *Prajñāpāramitā* in India and the role that the Dharma preacher (*dharmabhāṇaka*) played in this process. In particular, one narrative of bodhisattva Sadāprarudita's search for Dharma, which is preserved in some versions of the text in *8000 lines* and the *Larger Prajñāpāramitā* (Zhao 2020, p. 254), may have contributed significantly to promoting the veneration of the *Prajñāpāramitā* text and the authority of its Dharma preacher.

Internal evidence concerning the veneration of the *Prajñāpāramitā* can be traced back to the earliest versions of the *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra.* As Karashima (2013, p. 181) has pointed out, in the narrative of bodhisattva Sadāprarudita in the *Perfection of Wisdom in 8000 lines* (including its earliest Chinese translation, the *Daoxing banruo jing*), the destination of Dharma seeking, the country/city of Gandhāvatī, seems to hint at Gandhāra. In 1999, in the Bajaur region of north-western Pakistan, birch bark manuscript fragments, written in the Gāndhārī language and the Kharoṣṭhī script, of the *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra* were unearthed. The date and contents of these fragments are quite close to those of the *Daoxing banruo jing* 道行般若經 by Lokakṣema (Falk and Karashima 2012), and the latter is very likely translated from a Gāndhārī original (Karashima 2013). Thus, along with the dissemination of

the Gāndhārī *Prajñāpāramitā* text, presumably during the Kuṣāṇa period, it would appear that the worship of the *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra* was already present in Gandhāra.

According to the narrative of bodhisattva Sadāprarudita from the *Daoxing banruo jing*, a copy of the *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra*, written on a gold tablet, is kept in a container made of seven gems in a pavilion (Ch. *tai* 臺) of the city Gandhāvatī:

> There is a bodhisattva named Dharmodgata, the most honorable one among human beings. Everybody serves him and pays homage to him. For the sake of the *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra*, the bodhisattva built such a pavilion. Therein, there is a *Sūtra*-container made of the seven gems. Using the best gold as the writing material (*su* 素 literally means "white silk"), he wrote the *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra* on it. In the container, there are many hundreds of kinds of rare incense. The bodhisattva Dharmodgata makes offerings to [the *Sūtra*] everyday, employing diverse flowers and famous incense, lighting lamps and hanging banners. A baldachin with a variety of precious substances and many hundred kinds of music are dedicated to the *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra*.[5]

The prototype of the *Sūtra* in this passage could be connected with the archaeological finding of a fragmentary 9th-century text of the *Larger Prajñāpāramitā* (paralleling the first *Abhisamaya* of *25,000 lines*) from Sri Lanka, which is inscribed on seven gold leaves of considerable size (von Hinüber 1983). In addition, a number of small fragments of *Perfection of Wisdom in 25,000 lines* inscribed on copper plaques were also discovered in the remains of a *stūpa* in Sri Lanka in 1923 (Paranavitana 1933, p. 200; Zacchetti 2015, p. 188), which reflect the influence of the conception of the Dharma relic (see below). However, we can assume that the gold or copper plates with Kharoṣṭhī inscriptions made in the first century CE[6] share more physical features with the original type of the gold tablet *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra* mentioned in this passage, since the earliest *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra* might have been composed in Gāndhārī around the same period in Gandhāra (Karashima 2013).

The circumstances of the *Sūtra's* veneration are described in more detail in the Sanskrit version of *8000 lines*, presenting a modified ritual that differs from the one which was enacted in the Gandhāran area:

> The bodhisattva Dharmodgata had at that time built, for the perfection of wisdom, a peaked house[7] which was made of seven precious substances, decorated with saffron, and surrounded by ornaments of pearls. On the four corners of the peaked house, *Maṇi* jewels were placed, which served as the lamps. The incense pots were suspended at the four directions, in which pure black agar-woods were perfuming. And in the middle of that peaked house a couch made of the seven precious substances was put up, and thereupon a container made of four large gems. Into that the perfection of wisdom was placed, written with melted *vaiḍūrya* on golden tablets. The peaked houses were decorated with various hanging strips and garlands.[8]

Compared with the *Daoxing banruo jing*, this passage supplies additional information concerning the arrangement of the sacred space where the Sūtra's veneration takes place. Although this record of the sacred space is found in the narrative, it may not merely be literary description; it could also reflect the dimensions of the *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra*'s veneration before the 5th century in the Gupta period (319–550 CE), since Kumārjīva's translation (T. 227), completed at the beginning of 5th century, is a very close parallel to this Sanskrit recension.[9]

The earliest external evidence (i.e., archaeological or textual sources beyond *Prajñāpāramitā* literature) concerning the veneration of *Prajñāpāramitā* texts in India can be found in the travel report of Faxian 法顯 (ca. 337–422 CE), composed in the early 5th century. When Faxian visited Mathurā, he made the following records of the *stūpa*s among the local Buddhist community:

> The *stūpa*s of Śāriputra, Maudgalyāyana and Ānanda, and the *stūpa*s of Abhidharma, Vinaya and Sūtra are established in the dwelling place of the Buddhist

> assembly. One month after *varṣa* (the rains retreat) . . . after Dharma-preaching, people make offerings to the *stūpa* of Śāriputra with various flowers, lighting the lamps for all nights. The drama players are asked to display the story that Śāriputra, as a great Brāhmaṇa, visited Buddha to be converted to Buddhism. [The veneration of] Mahāmaudgalyāyana and Mahākāśyapa are the same. Buddhist nuns (*bhikṣuṇī*) always make offerings to Ānanda, since Ānanda requested the Lord to allow the ordination of women. Novice monks (*śrāmaṇera*) always make offerings to Rāhula, masters of the Abhidharma give donations to the Abhidharma, and masters of the Vinaya make offerings to the Vinaya on a specific day of each year. Mahāyāna followers make offerings to *Prajñāpāramitā*, Mañjuśrī and Avalokiteśvara, etc.[10]

Faxian visited India during the Gupta period, at a time when Mathurā had long been established as a significant Buddhist centre, already from the Kuṣāṇa period. In Faxian's accounts, the veneration of the Buddhist texts and relics (the physical remains of the Buddha or eminent monks) are deeply integrated, and the textual objects of veneration are not limited to the text of the *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra* but also refer to "mainstream" Buddhist texts, viz., the *Abhidharma*, *Vinaya* and *Sūtras*. In addition, the *stūpa*s containing Buddhist texts occur side by side with the *stūpa*s of holy disciples such as Śāriputra, Maudgalyāyana, Mahākāśyapa and Ānanda, etc., which indicates that both "mainstream" and Mahāyāna texts were worshipped in the same way as relics. Indeed, the above case concerning the *Perfection of Wisdom in 25,000 lines* on copper plaques that was discovered in the remains of a *stūpa* in Sri Lanka testifies to the affinities between the ritual veneration of relics and *sūtras* in the Buddhist community. It moreover proves that the association between the veneration of Buddhist texts and the idea of the Dharma relic was prevalent among both "mainstream" and Mahāyāna Buddhist traditions.

With regard to the followers of Mahāyāna Buddhism, according to Conze (1978, p. 14), the idea of the "mother of Tathāgatas" in the *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra* influenced the personification of Prajñāpāramitā as a female bodhisattva. He argues that Faxian's records prove that statues of Prajñāpāramitā can be dated in India to as early as 400 CE. However, the "Prajñāpāramitā" mentioned in Faxian's passage likely refers to *Prajñāpāramitā* scripture, just as the he refers to "mainstream" scriptures, rather than the image of a female bodhisattva. The earliest description of Prajñāpāramitā as a female bodhisattva is found in a 7th-century Chinese translation of the ritual text, the *Tuoluoni ji jing* (Ch. 陀羅尼集經, Skt. *Dhāraṇīsamuccaya Sūtra*; T. 901), which remarks on the figure of Prajñāpāramitā as well as on the relevant mantras and rituals.[11] Currently we only have surviving examples of Prajñāpāramitā's presence in India as a female bodhisattva from the 7th century CE, the earliest surviving example being an early-7th-century bronze from Gilgit, Kashmir (Chemburkar 2022).

The veneration of Buddhist texts is always accompanied with the preaching of the text. In his article "*Dharmabhāṇaka* in early Mahāyāna", Drewes (2011) opens up a fresh perspective on the composition of Mahāyāna texts by investigating a certain figure therein who is given particular place of prominence, the Dharma preacher (*dharmabhāṇaka*). Following Drewes, in a more recent study, Apple argues as follows:

> Indian Buddhist cultural understandings of textual discourses resulted in individual and group domestic worship of texts, the veneration of copies of sūtras owned by *dharmabhāṇaka*s, and the veneration of *dharmabhāṇaka*s as Buddhas who embodied the dharma texts that they recited . . . I will suggest for constructive consideration that the "cult of the book" was a cult of a certain type of textual culture that was both oral and written, and that, rather than being a stable or local cult phenomena, it was comprised of highly mobile and translocal textual communities who carried their object of veneration with them and kept such objects in domestic locations. (Apple 2014, p. 26)

The cult of texts and the function of the Dharma preacher in transmitting them shed new light on our understanding of passages which refer to the merits of venerating Mahāyāna Sūtras in the early works of that tradition. As Apple demonstrates, the practitioners' intention was to concurrently establish the "worship of texts" and the authority of the Dharma preacher as the textual agent.

Evidence concerning the authority of the Dharma preacher in relation to the *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra* can also be found in the narrative of bodhisattva Sadāprarudita's search for Dharma. Karashima (2013, p. 183) has briefly mentioned that the composer of the narrative might have been a *dharmabhāṇaka(s)* in Gāndhara. In the narrative, Sadāprarudita, as a bodhisattva who has just begun his career, acquires instruction from a voice in the sky and a manifestation of the Buddha, which indicate to him the direction in which he may find the text. Subsequently he encounters the present Buddhas engaged in meditative concentration (*samādhi*). The story climaxes in a meeting with a Dharma preacher (who can be understood as a Buddha), namely, the bodhisattva Dharmodgata residing in the city Gandhāvatī. As a matter of fact, the whole course of Sadāprarudita's search for Dharma resembles the course of Buddha visualization as reflected in the *Pratyutpanna-buddhasaṃmukhāvasthitasamādhi Sūtra* 般舟三昧經, and that the story seeks to emphasize the significance of the Dharma preacher (Zhao 2020). The story was thus included in the *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra* to establish the authority of the Dharma preacher and thereby justify its transmission.

Although we lack sufficient proof, beyond textual sources, that would substantiate the role of this Dharma preacher in the early Mahāyāna community in Indic contexts, such evidence does arise in the context of 6th-century China. At this time, Emperor Wu of Liang 梁武帝 (Xiao Yan 蕭衍, 464–549 CE), a famous Chinese Buddhist monarch, organized ceremonial Dharma assemblies in his Buddhist Palace Chapel, which included lectures centred on the *Larger Prajñāpāramitā*, emulating, in certain regards, the actions of the Dharma preacher in the narrative of Sadāprarudita. In his lectures, the emperor always used a *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra* written in gold calligraphy, and his veneration of the text in the capital of the Liang Dynasty promoted its worship more widely in northern China. Around the same time, Master Huisi, who preached the *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra* in the area close to the border between northern and southern China, also made a vow to create a copy of the *Sūtra* in gold calligraphy. However, as a Dharma preacher, he had chosen to treat the *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra* in a different manner, regarding it as an incantation to resolve urgent secular issues, to which end a gold copy would stand the test of time until the arrival of the future Buddha Maitreya.

2. The Narrative of Sadāprarudita and Emperor Wu's Gold-Calligraphy *Prajñāpāramitā*

Translations of Mahāyāna Sūtras into Chinese were always accompanied by explanations and preaching. Lokakṣema's *Daoxing banruo jing* represents the first attempt at translating the Mahāyāna Sūtra into Chinese. Another Chinese recension of the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā*, the *Da mingdu jing* 大明度經 (T. 225), attributed to Zhi Qian 支謙, contains such an exposition in the form of an interlinear commentary in its first chapter. Nattier points out that the first chapter of T. 225 cannot be attributed to Zhi Qian,[12] arguing that its interlinear commentary is likely the product of the Buddhist community headed by Kang Senghui 康僧會 (?–280 CE) that was active in 3rd-century southern China (Nattier 2008, pp. 136–37). Such a commentary represents the earliest evidence for the preaching of the *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra* in China.

Around the same period, the followers of the *Daoxing banruo jing* in the northern Chinese Buddhist centre of Luoyang 洛陽 heard about the existence of a "more complete" version of the *Prajñāpāramitā*, i.e., the *Larger Prajñāpāramitā*.[13] Thus, Zhu Shixing 朱士行 travelled from Luoyang to Khotan in search of this more complete version. The well-known legend of his experience in Khotan adopts the motif of the indestructible scripture, unburnt even by fire, which can be found in a series of early Buddhist stories (Zürcher 2007, p. 63). The Sanskrit scripture sent by him back to China was translated with the title *Fangguang jing* 放光經 in 291 CE, and slightly earlier, another scripture, the *Guangzan jing* 光讚經,

was also carried by a Khotanese monk to China and translated by Dharmarakṣa 竺法護 in 286 CE.

Due to its mutual promotion in legend and philosophy, the *Larger Prajñāpāramitā* became favoured among Buddhist monks and literati from the beginning of 4th century.[14] However, the discussions and debates surrounding the teaching of the above two recensions of the *Larger Prajñāpāramitā* came to their end after the arrival of the Kuchean monk Kumārajīva 鳩摩羅什 (343–413 CE) in Chang'an 長安 in 401 CE, who translated the *8000 lines*, the *Larger Prajñāpāramitā* and many other Buddhist texts. The *Larger Prajñāpāramitā* was retranslated in close conjunction with its commentary, the *Da zhidu lun* 大智度論 (T. 1509), which can be viewed as a result of teaching and discussions surrounding the meaning of the text during the translation process. However, after Kumārjīva's death in 413 CE, the *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra* generally lost its attraction among the Chinese Buddhist elite, many of whom, and even the disciples of Kumārjīva themselves, turned to the theory of Buddha nature 佛性, as elaborated in the *Da banniepan jing* (Ch. 大般涅槃經, Skt. *Mahāparinirvāna Sūtra*) and to one Abhidharma treatise, the *Chengshi lun* (Ch. 成實論, Skt. *Satyasiddhi-śāstra*), which was also translated by Kumārjīva. This remained the case until Emperor Wu became dedicated to the preaching of the *Larger Prajñāpāramitā* translated by Kumārjīva.

Before Emperor Wu of Liang organized lectures on the *Prajñāpāramitā* in the *pañcavārṣika* assemblies, he had already laid significant groundwork, completing the exegesis of Kumārjīva's translation of the *Larger Prajñāpāramitā* in 512 CE. When he read through the *Sūtra*, he noticed the aforementioned narrative of Sadāprarudita's search for Dharma and highly praised the deeds of that bodhisattva, writing the following words in his "Zhujie dapin xu" 註解大品序 ("Preface to the Exegesis on the *Larger Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra*") collected in *Chu sanzang ji ji* 出三藏記集 (T. 2145):

> In ancient times, when the real teaching [of Buddha] had not been spread, in the place where the name of the Dharma had not been heard, [Sadāprarudita] continued to strive, travelling through grass and swamp and experiencing the dangers of long-distance travel. He concentrated his mind upon listening, contemplating the quietness and expecting a miracle, he perceived a voice in the sky. He sacrificed his life out of treasuring but a half stanza and sold parts of his own body out of honouring but a single sentence. He was willing to shed blood without doubt and delighted in freely donating his bone marrow [for the Dharma]—not to mention for the divine pearl of the dragon palace, the precious pavilion and the gold tablet.[15]

This passage is an abstract of the episodes from the narrative of Sadāprarudita, in which he hears a voice instructing him to seek the *Prajñāpāramitā* from the sky but is overcome with doubt. He then has a vision of a magically created Buddha who tells him of the city of Gandhavatī and the Bodhisattva Dharmodgata. Thereafter he enters into *samādhi* and sees the Buddhas of the ten directions. Embarking on his quest, he overcomes several obstacles and eventually reaches the city of Gandhavatī. There, he wishes to find a buyer to collect offerings for Dharmodgata, but his effort is hindered by the magic of Māra. In order to test Bodhisattva Sadāprarudita, Indra manifests as a Brahmin and asks Sadāprarudita to cut off his own flesh, blood and bone marrow in exchange for a dedication to the Dharma preacher, bodhisattva Dharmodgata. Then comes the bloody scene of self-immolation, which corresponds to the expression "willing to shed blood without doubt and delighting in donating the marrow without stinginess" in the quotation above: Sadāprarudita takes a knife and stabs himself in both arms so that his blood flows out. He also cuts off the flesh from his thighs and breaks his bone to extract the marrow. In addition, "the precious pavilion and gold tablet" mentioned by Emperor Wu apparently relates to one passage concerning the practice of veneration from Kumārajīva's translation of the *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra* (a parallel to the Sanskrit passage discussed in our last section): "In the middle of the precious pavilion, there is a big couch with seven jewels. There is a container made of four gems on the couch. The real gold tablet with the *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra* written on it is placed inside the container."[16]

Another source also testifies that Emperor Wu of Liang attached great importance to the episode of self-immolation in the narrative of Sadāprarudita. In 516 CE, Emperor Wu ordered Baochang 寶唱, a monk in charge of the Buddhist library of Baoyun Hall 寶雲殿 in Emperor Wu's Hualin Park 華林園, to edit a collection of Buddhist miracle stories titled *Jinglü yixiang* 經律異相 (T. 2121). The stories in this collection mainly derive from *Sūtras* and *Vinaya* texts, and some of them are also collected from such treatises as the *Da zhidu lun*, as well as from the Buddhist texts composed in China. The miracle stories fall into 39 categories according to the identity of the protagonist. The very first story in the third category "Bodhisattva" is titled "Satuobolun weiwenfa maixinxuesui" 薩陀波崙為聞法賣心血髓 ("Sadāprarudita sells his heart, blood and marrow to listen to the Dharma"), namely the episode of self-immolation in the narrative of Sadāprarudita.

It therefore seems quite clear that several aspects of the narrative of Sadāprarudita's search for the Prajñāpāramitā made a deep impression on Emperor Wu. He regarded bodhisattva Sadāprarudita as a model Dharma seeker, sacrificing himself to make donations to the Dharma preacher. Thus, his lecture on the *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra* could be further interpreted as being modelled after the Dharma preacher Dharmodgata.

Chen Jinhua has focused on the *pañcavārṣika* assemblies 無遮大會 held in the Buddhist Palace Chapel, the Chongyun Hall 重雲殿, of Emperor Wu. He noticed that the Chongyun Hall served "as a lecture-hall for the emperor, who was an avid preacher on Buddhism, especially on the *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra*" (Chen 2006, p. 53). The *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra* could be considered as a Dharma relic, whose veneration constituted a central part of Emperor Wu's Dharma assemblies. The chanting of the *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra*, and accompanying rituals, served also to foster the kind of psychological environment which helped bring about fervent emotion in the audience, compelling them to make lavish gifts and even enact self-immolation as a donative act (Chen 2006, pp. 45–46).

Previous studies on the Dharma assemblies of Emperor Wu of Liang have paid much attention to their social functions, such as enhancing a sense of solidarity among the populace, generating funding for Emperor Wu's charitable programmes, etc., (Chen 2006, pp. 76–77) or politically establishing a "Buddhist country" headed by the sovereign (Yan 1998). However, Murata (2020) argues that the veneration of the *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra* in Emperor Wu's Dharma assemblies could be regarded as a reconstruction of the scene in the narrative of Sadāprarudita (see below). In this line, I would like to further point out that the records of these assemblies would appear to suggest that the very circumstances of Emperor Wu's lectures, and even the participants' reactions within the Dharma assembly, could be also connected to specific episodes or scenes from the narrative. Emperor Wu's organization of the lectures could therefore reflect his intention to identify himself as a sacred Dharma preacher of the *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra*, as inspired by the narrative of Sadāprarudita.

First, it should be noted that the focus of the *pañcavārṣika* assemblies is not only on Emperor Wu but also on the gold copy of the *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra*. It is also highly likely that Emperor Wu did not preach the whole text in the Dharma assemblies but one particular chapter named "Sanhui pin" 三慧品. This title, or its equivalent *Sanhui jing* 三慧經, occurs repeatedly in historical accounts of the significant Dharma assemblies, which were made to coincide with other important occasions, such as a change of regnal title (the Chinese era name for official year numbering) or Emperor Wu's ordination as a monk, etc.[17]

The *Yujiang jinzi mohe banruoboluomi jing xu* 御講金字摩訶般若波羅蜜經序 ("Preface to the *Mahāprajñāpāramitā Sūtra* written in Gold Calligraphy for use in Royal Lectures"), collected in the *Guang hongming ji* 廣弘明集 *juan* 19 (T. 2103: 52.236b21–238a7), was composed by a Southern Liang historian, Xiao Zixian 蕭子顯 (489–537 CE), after Emperor Wu's lecture in 533 CE. Xiao Zixian was the composer of the *Nan Qi shu* 南齊書 and belonged to the royal family of the Southern Qi 南齊 (479–502 CE). This preface is a statement of fact and hence to be treated as a veracious historical account. Of particular relevance here is that it clearly relates how the gold-calligraphy *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra* and the *Sūtra's* container were produced:

> The gold calligraphy *Mahāprajñāpāramitā Sūtra* is the most honourable in the corpus of the Dharma … the emperor prefers the Mahāyāna teaching, roaming through the ocean that is the corpus of Dharma. His intention agrees with the truth/the Dao, bearing it in his mind and holding it. The majesty preaches by himself, and his words are excellent and remarkable … Unfolding the emerald fine silk, one writes the Chinese sigillary characters with gold ink on it. The equipment is decorated with priceless jewels. The brilliance of the collocation of gold and green colours even overshadows the precious Ganoderma lucidum.[18]

Accompanying the lecture on the *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra* by Emperor Wu of Liang, there was also a veneration of the text in the *pañcavārṣika* assembly. According to Xiao Zixian's preface, the prince was ordered to donate the *Sūtra* containers and make offerings to the gold-calligraphy copy of the *Sūtra*.[19] Murata has argued that the preparation for the Dharma assembly made by the royal family of Liang parallels the above-mentioned scene described from the narrative of Sadāprarudita, wherein the bodhisattva Dharmodgata prepared the golden tablet *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra* and the *Sūtra* container made of gems and gave donations to them (Murata 2020, pp. 89–94).

Moreover, Emperor Wu did not follow the description in the narrative in all regards. He did not inscribe the *Sūtra* on a gold tablet with melted *vaiḍūrya* but on silk with Chinese sigillary characters in gold ink. This style of scripture recalls the coetaneous writing culture of the Northern Wei royal family. Murata has found that, according to the *Wei shu* 魏書, Yuan Chen 元琛 (?–526 CE) gave a gold-calligraphy copy of the *Book of Filial Piety written in Gold Calligraphy* (*Jingzi xiao jing* 金字孝經), a popular Confucian scripture, as a present to the mother of the Northern Wei emperor around 515 CE.[20] In a close period, the Royal Highness of Anfeng 安豐王, Yuan Yanming 元延明 (484–530 CE), and the Royal Highness of Zhongshan 中山王, Yuan Xi 元熙 (?–520 CE), organized a Dharma assembly for the *Huayan jing* (Ch. 華嚴經, Skt. *Avataṃsaka Sūtra*) and also created one hundred copies of that *Sūtra* together with one gold-calligraphy copy, which were all kept in the *Sūtra* containers made of four gems (cf. Murata 2020, pp. 77–80).[21] The veneration of the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra* in the Northern Wei was stimulated by the dissemination of the *Shidijing lun* 十地經論, the *Treatise on the Daśabhūmika Sūtra*, belonging to the *Avataṃsaka* corpus (Tang 1983, pp. 629–30), and therefore must have begun following the arrival of Bodhiruchi and Ratnamati in Luoyang and their translation of the *Shidijing lun* in 508 CE.

Although accounts of the gold-calligraphy scriptures from the Northern Wei predate the earliest records of the gold-calligraphy *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra* of Empeor Wu, there is no evidence of the former directly influencing the latter. Furthermore, Emperor Wu composed the exegesis of the *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra* in 512 CE, the eleventh year of the Tianjian regnal period 天監十一年, and, according to the *Yujiang banruojing xu* 御講般若經序 ("Preface to the Royal Lecture on the *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra*") by Lu Yungong 陸雲公, after the composition of the exegesis, the emperor was personally engaged in preaching the *Sūtra*.[22] The gold-calligraphy copy of the *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra* could also have been created from that date, and it would therefore be safe to say that the gold-calligraphy copy of the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra* was made around the same time, both playing a significant role in the royal Dharma assemblies and the veneration of *Sūtras* in China.

Another account concerning Emperor Wu's lecture is the "Preface to the Royal Lecture on the *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra*" composed by Lu Yungong, who served as the secretary of the emperor, the Director of the Secretariat-Chancellery (zhongshu huangmen shilang 中書黃門侍郎), after Emperor Wu's lecture in the seventh year of the Datong regnal period 大同七年 (541 CE). Chen Jinhua has analysed the course of this Dharma assembly, pointing out that it parallels the Dharma assembly of 547 in several respects. For instance, both Dharma assemblies centred on the lecture of the *Sanhui jing* and were accompanied by a series of miraculous and propitious signs, as well as acts of self-immolation (Chen 2006, pp. 64–72). In particular, Lu Yungong recounts such a performance of self-immolation by a certain ascetic at the assembly:

> Shi Faxian 釋法顯 of the Aśoka Temple of Maoxian 鄮縣 in Kuaiji 會稽, who conducted ascetic practice and aspired to seek the understanding of wisdom, equalled Uttara in his thoughts and paralleled Sadāprarudita (Satuobolun 薩陀波崙, or simply Bolun 波崙) in his passionate sincerity. At the site of the lecture, after demonstrating the power of his aspiration, he cut his body and let his blood flow to the ground to express his sincerity.[23]

When listening to Emperor Wu's teaching, Fa Xian thus showed his sincerity in seeking Dharma in a manner akin to how Sadāprarudita's bodily sacrifice is described.[24] Lu Yungong further claims that the actuality of such acts of self-immolation verify the reality of the ancient stories [of Sadāprarudita and Uttara].[25] The expression, "he paralleled Sadāprarudita in his passionate sincerity" (*tong bolun zhi kendao* 同波崙之懇到), also indicates that Lu Yungong was quite acquainted with the contents of *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra* and the religious intentions of Emperor Wu of Liang. To his mind, the monk Faxian, in coming to listen to Dharma, corresponds to bodhisattva Sadāprarudita, and Emperor Wu, in preaching the *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra* to the Dharma preacher, bodhisattva Dharmodgata.

A similar strategy employed in Lu Yungong's preface to enhance the authority of Emperor Wu is to compare Huiling 慧令, the Great Saṅgha Rectifier 大僧正 who requested that the ruler preaches the *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra*, with the holy disciples Subhūti and Kaśyapa, these being two prominent disciples in Mahāyāna texts who typically make requests of the Buddha to preach.[26] This indicates that Emperor Wu was likened to the Buddha himself in accepting the request of Huiling.

Additionally, Lu Yungong also drew on other elements from the narrative when describing the landscape of Hualin Park, thereby connecting the site with the scene of the narrative. Chen Jinhua has already discussed the structure and layout of the Chongyun Hall 重雲殿 in this park (Chen 2006, pp. 48–52), along with other halls within the park that had associations with Buddhism: (1) Baoyun Hall 寶雲殿 (a Buddhist Library), (2) Dengjue Hall 等覺殿, where Emperor Wu received the bodhisattva precepts in 517 CE, and (3) Huaguang Hall 華光殿, in which Emperor Wu issued his famous prohibition of the consumption of meat and alcohol within the Samgha (Chen 2005). However, we only have limited information concerning the park's landscape, except for the following passage from Lu Yungong's preface, which concerns reconstructions made by Emperor Wu:

> The Hualin Park had been the place for entertainment and banquets of the inner court since the court moved to southern China [in 317 CE] . . . After the majesty took the throne, he abandoned the entertainment. He sent back all the beautiful girls of whole palace and shared the garden with the ordinary people . . . . Through the destruction of the beautiful park, one can realize impermanence. The precious pavilion as an illusory aggregation became solid by means of the ten powers [of the Buddha]. He gave away the heavenly park and established an "Enlightenment site" (Ch. *daochang* 道場, Skt. *bodhimaṇḍa*) . . . During the springtime, all things began to grow again. The wind and the sunshine were mild and warm, neither cold nor hot. The seven rows of trees with beautiful flowers and decorated with precious substances are shining. There are ripples in the eight-fold golden pools whose beds are decorated with jade. When the gate was opened, the masses gathered. Being hurried to join the Dharma lecture, the masses were noisy. After hearing the toll of the bell, they became silent.[27]

It is worth noting that the description of the landscape of the Hualin Park in Lu Yungong's preface, such as the precious pavilion, the seven rows of trees with precious substances, and the eight pools of meritorious waters, corresponds to the city of Gandhavatī described in the narrative of Sadāprarudita. In the narrative, a Buddha image manifests in the sky and describes the city for Sadāprarudita, it being the destination of his search for the Dharma. The city is surrounded by eight pools and seven rows of trees with precious substances, and Dharmodgata preaches the *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra* in the pavilion (Ch. *tai* 臺) or the peaked house (Skt. *kūṭāgāra*, see above note 6).

In his preface, Lu Yungong borrows the characteristic scenery of the city to sketch the landscape of the Hualin Park, albeit without mentioning Gandhavatī by name. This implies that Emperor Wu can be regarded, like the bodhisattva Dharmodgata, as the Dharma preacher of the *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra*. Previous studies have already revealed that the landscape of Gandhavatī is similar to that of Sukhāvatī in the smaller *Sukhāvatīvyūha Sūtra*. That is to say, the Dharma preacher Dharmodgata preached the *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra* in this city, just like Amitabha Buddha preaches in his Buddha-field of Sukhāvatī (Zhao 2020, p. 270). Thus, the description of the landscape of Hualin Park, under the influence of the narrative of Sadāprarudita, also suggests that the Dharma preacher, Emperor Wu, was regarded as having the same authority as the Buddha,[28] which is in line with the above case comparing Huiling with Subhūti and Kaśyapa.

In his record of the Chongyun Dharma assembly in 541, Lu Yungong therefore skilfully connects the scene of Emperor Wu's lecture with elements of the narrative of Sadāprarudita. His purpose, no doubt, was to affirm Emperor Wu of Liang as the Dharma preacher of the *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra* and so at once project his religious and political authority. At the end of the preface, Lu Yungong also states, "I, an inferior minister, participated in the lecture, and my duty is to take down the historical account. I carefully recorded the current events to complete this preface",[29] taking pains to establish himself as a reliable witness of the events that transpired at the Dharma assembly. However, in utilizing the narrative of Sadāprarudita, he would also appear inclined towards exaggerating the significance of the Dharma assembly and the authority of the Dharma preacher, Emperor Wu of Liang.

To sum up the discussion thus far, we have dealt with various sources related to Emperor Wu's role in the veneration and dissemination of the *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra*, including the ruler's own statements, in which he makes no disguise of his praise for the text and the narrative of Sadāprarudita, as well as accounts of the Dharma assemblies recorded by two witnesses, Xiao Zixian and Lu Yungong. It seems impossible that the accounts are totally independent and not influenced by Emperor Wu's personal intentions. Likewise, with regard to the record of Faxian's self-immolation, if we associate it with the fact that Emperor Wu thought highly of the Sadāprarudita narrative, it would be reasonable to assume that it was performed according to Emperor Wu's preference or even following Emperor Wu's order. However, the two accounts of the witnesses still exhibit remarkable differences in their narrative features: Xiao Zixian's account about the Dharma assembly in 533 appears to be more a statement of fact, in contrast to Lu Yungong's account about the Dharma assembly in 541, which is full of literary expression. The latter contains elements that seek to vividly recall the narrative of Sadāprarudita. The preface composed by Lu Yungong, the secretary of the emperor, could thus be regarded as a reproduction of the religious narrative within a historical document; it is a work of propaganda serving to establish the emperor's identity as a Dharma preacher of the *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra*.

3. The Narrative and Master Huisi's Vow to Create the Gold-Calligraphy *Prajñāpāramitā*

The *Nanyue sidachanshi lishiyuanwen* 南嶽思大禪師立誓願文 (*Tract on the Vow Pronounced* by the Great Dhyāna Master Si of Nanyue, T. 1933; henceforth *Tract on the Vow*) is traditionally attributed to the Tiantai master Huisi 慧思 (515–577 CE). It concerns a vow to create a gold-calligraphy copy of the *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra*. In fact, the veneration of the *Lotus Sūtra* 法華經 is also briefly mentioned in this text, but there are troubling inconsistencies concerning the two gold-calligraphy *Sūtras*. According to Stevenson and Kanno (2006, p. 89), the *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra* is mentioned by title almost thirty times. However, the *Lotus Sūtra* appears only three times, and only two of which speak explicitly of two 二部 gold-calligraphy Sūtras; this claim contrasts with the large number of instances where we find explicit reference to the production of only one text, viz., the *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra*.

Previous studies have divided the text of the *Tract on the Vow* into the following parts: (I) the Preface 序分; (II) Opening Refuges and Invocations 歸敬文; (III) Circumstances Leading to the Copying of the Sūtra 造經緣起; (IV) Main Text of Twenty-Seven Vows 誓願文; (V) Restatement of the Vows 重宣願; (VI) Petition 勸請; and (VII) Closing Injunction 後記

(Stevenson and Kanno 2006, pp. 84–86). The first-person narrative in part III reveals that the *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra* played a significant role in the course of Huisi's dissemination of the Buddha's teaching. After his full ordination as a monk in 534 CE, Huisi studied Mahāyāna teachings and visited many meditation masters in the period of the Northern Qi 北齊. At the age of 34, he preached in Yanzhou 兗州, but his lectures were prevented when he was poisoned by some enemy monks. Subsequently, he was invited by the governor of Yingzhou 郢州 to preach the Mahāyāna teaching 摩訶衍義. After he ate a meal that had been mixed with poison by five of his rivals, on the verge of death, he confessed to the Buddhas and recollected the *Prajñāpāramitā* (*nian banruoboluomi* 念般若波羅蜜), which rid him of the poison (T. 1933: 46.787a6-b14).

This episode seems to be associated with the protective function of the *Prajñāpāramitā*, as is stated in Kumārajīva's translation of *Larger Prajñāpāramitā* (T. 223), which Master Huisi used in his lectures:

> If a son or daughter of good family hears of this profound perfection of wisdom, then holds, gets close to, recites, and correctly recollects it, and remains true to his aspiration for *sarvajñā* (omniscience), he will not be harmed by evil things, such as fumigation with poison, venom, fire or water, sword or poisoning. Why? This perfection of wisdom is the great incantation, the highest incantation.[30]

This passage in the *Larger Prajñāpāramitā* highlights that such ritual actions as reciting and recollecting the Prajñāpāramitā will not only generate immeasurable merit but also offer protection from various dangers, including poisoning, due to the *Prajñāpāramitā* being a great incantation (Skt. *mahāvidyā*, Ch. *da mingzhou* 大明呪 tr. by Kumārajīva).

In 552 CE, Master Huisi subsequently left northern China for a place of refuge in the south. When he was 42 years old (557 CE), his lectures on the *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra* in Guangzhou 光州 were once again prevented by his rivals. Since he always came across his rivals' attack when preaching Prajñāpāramitā, he made a vow to produce a copy of the *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra* written in gold calligraphy and kept it in a *Sūtra* container made of seven treasures 七寶經函. Then, aged 43, he was invited by the governor of Nandingzhou 南定州, a state located close to Guangzhou, to preach the teaching of Mahāyāna and was again met with certain obstacles. So, Huisi once more vowed to create a gold-calligraphy copy of the *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra* and to make the offerings to it:

> At that time I made the vow: "I will create the gold calligraphy copy of the *Mahāyāna Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra* for all sentient beings. Pure *vaiḍūrya* and seven jewels will be used to make the *Sūtra* container that keeps the scrolls of the *Sūtra*. There will be a high couch with various precious substances, a baldachin with seven jewels, and canopies covered with pearls. All the equipment of offerings, such as flowers and necklace of precious stones, will be used as donations to the *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra*."[31]

This passage not only mentions the gold-calligraphy copy of the *Sūtra* but also outlines the circumstances of the *Sūtra's* veneration. It shares many features with the above-mentioned passage concerning the *Sūtra's* veneration from the narrative of Sadāprarudita, and its subsequent passage explicitly refers to the main figures of the narrative, the Dharma seeker Sadāprarudita and the Dharma preacher Dharmodgata, indicating that Master Huisi's vow too was inspired by the narrative of Sadāprarudita seeking the *Prajñāpāramitā*:

> Then I shall manifest countless physical bodies for the *ṣaḍ-gati* (the "six paths" in which sentient beings are reborn), in ten directions and over innumerable *kalpas*, until awakening. I shall preach the *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra* for all sentient beings in the ten directions. During the process, when I become a Dharma-preacher, I will be like Dharmodgata; when I become a disciple seeking the Dharma, I will be like Sadāprarudita. After making the vow, all the evil monks retreated.[32]

"Evil monks" may here refer to an arrogant rival monk, Huimiao 慧邈—following the biography of the Tiantai master Zhiyi 智顗 (538–597 CE), the *Sui Tiantai Zhizhe Dashi biezhuan* 隋天台智者大師別傳 (T. 2050), an important supplement to the *Tract on the Vow*

composed by Guanding 灌頂 (561–632 CE)—which relates the activities of the Buddhist community headed by Huisi at Mount Dasu 大蘇山 in Guangzhou. According to Guanding's account, Huisi's disciple Zhiyi defeated Huimiao in a debate over the Buddha's teaching and made him aware of the shallowness of his attainments. During the night, Zhiyi dreamed of another debate against an angry man, and he won the debate once again (Huimiao appeared in the dream in the audience). Subsequently, Zhiyi consulted with Master Huisi about his dream, and his teacher answered him by quoting the contents of Chapter 55, "Irreversibility", in the *Larger Prajñāpāramitā*, implying that Zhiyi did not waver when he faced the attacks of Māra.[33]

Guanding's account continues with the following event related to the gold-calligraphy *Larger Prajñāpāramitā*: when Huisi completed the gold-calligraphy copy, he entrusted Zhiyi to preach it. Only the concepts of "three *samādhis*" (*sansanmei* 三三昧) and the "insight of three contemplations" (*sanguanzhi* 三觀智) were open for discussion, with the remaining contents all straightforwardly declared by Zhiyi himself.[34] The *Mohe zhiguan* 摩訶止觀 (T. 1911), based on the lectures of Zhiyi and compiled by Guanding, also mentions the same fact: "Zhizhe of Tiantai preached the 'means of the doctrine' (Ch. *Famen* 法門, Skt. *dharmaparyāya*) that had been practised in his own mind ... He substituted for his teacher in preaching the gold calligraphy *Prajñāpāramitā* and was respected as the teacher of emperors in the dynasties of the Chen and Sui."[35] In addition, meditation terminologies here and in Zhiyi's early monograph, the *Shi chanboluomi cidi famen* 釋禪波羅蜜次第法門 (T. 1916), are drawn extensively from the exegesis of the *Larger Prajñāpāramitā*, the *Da zhidu lun*, which indicates the significant role the *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra* and its exegesis played in Zhiyi's early religious career.

From the dates of the above events, we can discern an underlying connection between the activities of Emperor Wu and those of Master Huisi. After the rebellion of Hou Jing 侯景, the emperor passed away in 549 CE, and his ceremonious lectures on the *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra* came to an end. Subsequently, Master Huisi, who came to take refuge in the south and dedicated himself to preaching the *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra*, made a vow to create a gold-calligraphy copy around 557 CE. His actions were apparently in emulation of Emperor Wu's; in addition to being acquainted with the narrative of Sadāprarudita, he even associated his own bodhisattva career in future lives with that of the bodhisattvas Sadāprarudita and Dharmodgata.

Veneration of the *Sūtra* thus extended beyond the Liang court and was a widespread phenomenon in 6th-century southern China. From the *Tract on the Vow*, it is also clear that its worship was closely integrated with certain other ideas that were prevalent in the Northern Dynasties. Unlike under Emperor Wu, as previous studies have noted, Huisi's *Sūtra* veneration was directly associated with idea of the Decline of the Dharma 末法 and the worship of the bodhisattva Maitreya, who is said to reside in Tuṣita Heaven awaiting the proper time to take his final rebirth as a Buddha. Several sections of the text express anxieties about the "Three Periods" of the True Dharma 正法, the Semblance Dharma 像法, and the Decline of the Dharma 末法, numbering 500, 1000 and 100,000 years respectively (cf. Stevenson and Kanno 2006, pp. 86–88; Murata 2020, p. 95).[36] At the end of one such section, (III) Circumstances Leading to the Copying of the Sūtra, the text specifically states that it was out of fear of decline that Huisi vowed to create the gold-calligraphy *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra* and a container made of seven gems: "By means of the great vow, all demons and evil disasters cannot destroy it. May the future Lord Maitreya appear in the world and preach the *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra* for countless sentient beings."[37] The *Sūtra* was thus intended for perpetuity and in anticipation of Maitreya's birth in the distant future.

These features are further confirmed by other sources related to Tiantai masters. Huisi's personal belief in Maitreya is firm and strong:

> Huisi awakened when he dreamed of the preaching of Maitreya and Amitābha, and so created statues of each and made offerings to them. He also had a dream that, following Maitreya, he joined the summit of Dragon Flower, together with the companions [of Maitreya]. He thought, "I received the *Lotus Sūtra* during

> the decline of the Dharma of Śakyamuni. Now, when I came across the Lord Maitreya, I felt deeply touched and sorrowful, and suddenly awakened." He made further efforts, and auspicious miracles occurred many times.[38]

Master Huisi's belief in Maitreya and the *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra* also influenced Zhiyi. According to Guanding's account in the *Sui Tiantai Zhizhe Dashi biezhuan* and *Xu gaoseng zhuan*, when Zhiyi was dying, he ordered his disciple Zhiyue 智越 to sweep and clean the Shicheng Temple 石城寺 so he could pass away before the stone image of Maitreya located there. Zhiyi faced west and recited the names of Amitābha and Avalokiteśvara together with the *Prajñāpāramitā*. Then, he divided his personal belongings into two portions: one to be used as a donation for Maitreya and the other to be assigned according to the *karman* 羯磨 (here denoting the rules of action within the monastic community).[39]

As Koichi Shinohara has pointed out, Zhiyi's decision to spend his final days in front of the stone image of Maitreya in Shicheng Temple was actually an incident for the Tiantai community. The stone image of Maitreya was known for its remedial capacity during Zhiyi's time, but Zhiyi failed to secure such a cure. As a result, Guanding was forced to introduce elements of the Amitābha cult to de-emphasize his failure to obtain a cure (Shinohara 1991, pp. 215–16). His recitation of the name of Prajñāpāramitā is also revealing of his attempt to be cured before his sudden death, an action that recalls the aforementioned episode from the *Tract on the Vow*, in which Huisi recollects the name of Prajñāpāramitā on the verge of death to successfully rid himself of the poison.

In comparison to Emperor Wu's lectures on the *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra*, which served to associate him with the Dharma preacher as a means to religious authority, in Tiantai biographies, more importance was attached to the eternal aspect of the gold-calligraphy copy of the *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra* in the context of the Decline of the Dharma, as well as to its protective function in the face of worldly dangers. Being themselves Dharma preachers of the *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra*, Tiantai masters also drew power from the text, as Emperor Wu did, albeit under entirely different circumstances.

4. Conclusions

The narrative of bodhisattva Sadāprarudita seeking for *Prajñāpāramitā* was composed during the formative phases of Mahāyāna Buddhism in India. When reading through the narrative, one is first attracted by its dramatic episodes and indeed impressed by the sincerity of the Dharma seeker. The narrative's emphasis on the text's veneration and attempt at affirming the authority of the agent of the text, the Dharma preacher, would moreover appear to have been quite successful, considering that the narrative itself was always transmitted within the *Prajñāpāramitā* corpus, which is otherwise a philosophical discourse, and that it finds repeated mention throughout history.

In the 6th century CE, the narrative contributed to Chinese Buddhists' enthusiasm towards the worship and propagation of the *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra* and its teachings. In the extant accounts of the Dharma assemblies organized by Emperor Wu of Liang, we can see that the very form of veneration described by the text, as well as the circumstances of the Dharma preacher's preaching and certain actions of the Dharma seeker, such as self-immolation, were all made to parallel scenes from the narrative. Emperor Wu of Liang himself intended to establish his religious identity as a Dharma preacher of the *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra*, and his actions further influenced others, such as his contemporary, Master Huisi, who vowed to create the gold-calligraphy copy of *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra*, following, it would seem, the example of Emperor Wu's Dharma assemblies.

For Chinese society of the 6th century CE, the narrative thus served as a perfect example to illustrate how the Dharma preachers and their followers may make use of religious narrative to garner veneration of Mahāyāna texts. The episodes and scenes of the Sadāprarudita narrative were constantly mentioned by the witnesses in the accounts related to Emperor Wu's Dharma assemblies and were possibly reproduced in very real ways. The underlying intention was to enhance the secular sovereign's sacredness by proclaiming his identity as a Dharma preacher of the *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra*. However, in the biographies

of Tiantai masters, the veneration of the text, as derived from the Sadāprarudita narrative, is further integrated with the protective function of the *Prajñāpāramitā*. This rather aimed at presenting the religious leader's miraculous capability in dealing with mundane problems via the power of the *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra*.

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Notes

1 Schopen (2005) also characterizes his own early work (i.e., Schopen 1975) as a "piece of juvenilia" (Schopen 2005, p. 153, n. 118) and has provided further clarifications on this topic (Schopen 2009, 2010, 2012) (cf. Apple 2014, p. 25).

2 He writes "since ritual [related to Mahāyāna Sūtras] involves magical power exceeding that of moral effort, the benefits are greater. The *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka-sūtra* (i.e., *Lotus Sūtra*) for example, describes the magnificent benefits that will fall on those who do no more than read, recite, copy, and uphold the *sūtra*" (Tanabe 2004, p. 532).

3 According to the historical record, the disciple of Zhu Shixing 朱士行, Farao 法饒, brought the first Sanskrit text from Khotan. Thirty years later, it was translated by the Khotanese monk Mokṣala (Wuchaluo 無叉羅; cf. T. 2145 *Chu sanzang ji ji* 出三藏記集, *Fangguang jing ji* 放光經記).

4 As for the brief introduction to these shorter *Sūtras*, cf. (Conze 1978, pp. 11–12).

5 Translated from the following passage in the *Daoxing banruo jing, juan* 9: 是中有菩薩, 名曇無竭, 諸人中最高尊, 無不供養作禮者. 是菩薩用般若波羅蜜故, 作是臺. 其中有七寶之函, 以紫磨黃金為素, 書般若波羅蜜在其中, 匣中有若干百種雜名香. 曇無竭菩薩日日供養, 持雜華名香, 然燈懸幢幡. 華蓋雜寶, 若干百種音樂, 持用供養般若波羅蜜. T. 224: 8.473a21-27.

6 For instance, the five copper plates of Helagupta made in the latter half of the first century (Salomon 2020) or the gold plate of the king of Odī (Swat, Pakistan), Seṇavarma, written in 14 CE (Baums 2012, p. 227).

7 The term *kūṭāgāra* consists of *kūṭa* "peak" (or "summit") and *āgāra* "house"; literally, it therefore means "peaked house", but all the Chinese translations use the word *tai* 臺 "pavilion".

8 Translated from the following Sanskrit passage: *tena khalu punaḥ samayena Dharmodgatena bodhisattvena mahāsattvena prajñāpāramitāyāḥ kṛtaśaḥ sapta-ratna-mayaṃ kūṭ'āgāraṃ kāritam abhūt lohita-candanālaṃkṛtaṃ muktā-jāla-pariksiptam catursu kūṭ'āgāra-koṇesu maṇi-ratnāni sthāpitāni yāni pradīpa-kṛtyaṃ kurvanti sma catasraś ca dhūpa-ghaṭikā rūpya-mayaś catur-diśam avasaktāḥ yatra śuddhaṃ kṛṣṇāguru dhūpyate sma yad uta prajñāpāramitāyāḥ pūjā'rthaṃ tasya ca kūṭ'āgārasya madhye sapta-ratna-mayaḥ paryaṅkaḥ prajñapto 'bhūt caturṇāṃ ratnānāṃ peḍā kṛtā yatra prajñāpāramitā praksiptā suvarṇa-paṭṭesu likhitā vilīnena vaiḍūryeṇa tac ca kūṭ'āgāraṃ nānā-citra-paṭṭa-dāmabhiḥ pralambamānair alaṃkṛtam abhūt* (Wogihara 1932–1935, p. 955).

9 The Chinese parallel in Kumārajīva's translation can be found in the *Xiaopin banruoboluomi jing* 小品般若波羅蜜經, *juan* 10: T. 227: 8.583b17-22.

10 Translated from the *Gaoseng faxian zhuan* 高僧法顯傳, *juan* 1: 衆僧住處, 作舍利弗塔、目連、阿難塔, 并阿毗曇、律、經塔。安居後一月 . . . . . 說法已, 供養舍利弗塔. 種種香華, 通夜然燈. 使伎樂人作舍利弗大婆羅門時詣佛求出家. 大目連、大迦葉亦如是. 諸比丘尼多供養阿難塔, 以阿難請世尊聽女人出家故. 諸沙彌多供養羅云. 阿毗曇師者, 供養阿毗曇, 律師者, 供養律, 年年一供養, 各自有日. 摩訶衍人則供養《般若波羅蜜》、文殊師利、觀世音等. T. 2085: 51.859b18-28.

11 For instance, one chapter titled "The method of depicting the great Prajñāpāramitā" ("Hua dabanruoxiang fa" 畫大般若像法 in *Tuoluoni ji jing, juan* 3, T. 901: 18.805a29-c17) discusses how to depict the female bodhisattva Prajñāpāramitā and the relevant rituals in detail. Another chapter, "The method of [creating] the *maṇḍala* of Prajñāpāramitā" ("Banruo tan fa" 般若壇法 in *Tuoluoni ji jing, juan* 3, T. 901: 18.808a4-809b8) appears to further develop the description of the sacred space in T. 227, and in the Sanskrit version of the *8000 lines Prajñāpāramitā*, but the object of veneration is changed from the *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra* to the female bodhisattva and other Buddhist gods.

12 Nattier (2008) has also pointed out that chapters two through thirty should be considered genuine translations of Zhi Qian who revised and polished the first Chinese translation by Lokakṣema. However, the first chapter of T. 225 should not be the work either of Zhi Qian or of Kang Senghui.

13 Modern scholarship tends to regard the *8000 lines* as the earliest version, upon which the texts of the *Larger Prajñāpāramitā* are based, whereas according to early Chinese Buddhists the former is nothing but an extract from a more comprehensive original (Zürcher 2007, p. 61)

14 The practice of "Pure Conversation" (*qingtan* 清談) among the literati "was one of the most important factors in the spread of Buddhism in the circles of the highest gentry" (Zürcher 2007, p. 95). Particularly in the East Jin 東晉 (317–420 CE), such eminent

monks as Zhu Daoqian 竺道潛 (286–374 CE), Zhi Mindu 支愍度 and Zhi Dun 支遁 (314–366 CE), etc., were all dedicated to the preaching of the *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra* (particularly the *Fangguang jing* 放光經).

15 Translated from the following Chinese passage: 設迺時曠正教, 處無法名, 猶且苦辛草澤, 經歷嶮遠. 翹心逿聽, 澍意希夷. 冀遲玄應, 想像空聲. 輕生以重半偈, 賣身以尊一言. 甘諜血而不疑, 欣出髓而無恪. 況復龍宮神珠, 寶臺金鍱. T. 2145: 55.54c3-7.

16 See *Xiaopin banruoboluomi jing* 小品般若波羅蜜經, *juan* 10: 其寶臺中有七寶大床, 床上有四寶函, 以真金鍱書般若波羅蜜, 置是函中. T. 227: 8.583b20-22.

17 The Dharma assemblies include the following: the Dharma assembly in the fifth year of the Zhongdatong regnal period 中大通五年 (533 CE) in the Temple of Tongtai 同泰寺, the assembly in the seventh year of the Datong regnal period 大同七年 (541 CE) in the Chongyun Hall, the assembly in the twelfth year of the Datong regnal period 大同十二年 (546 CE) when Emperor Wu donated his own body and the name of the era was changed to Zhong Datong 中大同 and the assembly in the second year of the Zhong Datong regnal period 中大同二年 (547 CE), when the regnal title was changed to Taiqing 太清, etc. (cf. Murata 2020, pp. 82–86).

18 Translated from the following passage of Xiao Ziliang's preface: 金字《摩訶般若波羅蜜經》者, 蓋法部之為尊 . . . . . 皇上愛重大乘, 遨遊法藏. 道同意合, 眷懷總持. 親動王言, 妙踰綸紱 . . . . . 乃摛以翠縑, 刻為金篆. 眾具寶飾, 品窮無價. 芝英讓巧, 金碧相輝. T. 2103: 52.236c6-13.

19 T. 2103: 52.237b22-23.

20 琛以肅宗始學, 獻金字孝經. *Wei shu* 20:529.

21 T. 2110: 52.514c23-28.

22 上以天監十一年注釋大品, 自茲以來躬事講說. T. 2103: 52.235c28-29.

23 T. 2103: 52.236a16-19. (Cf. Chen 2006, p. 67).

24 Murata (2020, pp. 58–59) also noticed that in this passage, the name of Sadāprarudita 波崙 occurs together with that of Uttara 欝多[羅]. The latter refers to the story from the *Xianyu jing* 賢愚經, in which Uttara took his own bone to use as a pen and his own blood as ink when writing the teaching of the Tathāgata 如來教 (T. 202: 4.351b12-25). This story is closely connected with another object of *Sūtra* veneration that was prevalent in medieval China, the scripture written in blood ink 血字經.

25 The preface states: 昔剜体供养, 析骨书写, 归依正法, 匪恪身命. 以今望古, 信非虛说. T. 2103: 52.236a19-21.

26 大僧正慧令 . . . . . 願等須提之問, 遂同迦葉之請. 迺啟請御講說斯經, 有詔許焉. T. 2103: 52.235c4-6.

27 See the following passage from "Preface to the Royal Lecture" collected in *Guang hongming ji* 廣弘明集, *juan* 19: 華林園者, 蓋江左以來後庭遊宴之所也 . . . . . 自至人御宇, 屏棄聲色, 歸傾宮之美女, 共靈囿於庶人. 重以華園毀折, 悟一切之無常. 寶臺假合, 資十力而方固. 捨茲天苑, 爰建道場 . . . . . 于時三春屆節, 萬物舒榮, 風日依遲, 不寒不暑. 瑞華寶樹, 照曜七重. 玉底金池, 淪漪八德. 洞啟高門, 雲集大眾. 趨法席以沸諠, 聽鳴鐘而寂靜. T. 2103: 52.235c8-20.

28 Skilling (2009, p. 91) has also discussed the concept of *śāstṛsamjñā* in *Prajñāpāramitā* texts, which equates the *Prajñāpāramitā* to the "Teacher" (i.e., the Buddha), while in the narrative of bodhisattva Sadāprarudita, the concept *śāstṛsamjñā* is further applied to the Dharma-preacher of the *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra*, emphasizing that the agent of text, the Dharma-speaker, is of equal authority to the Buddha (Skilling 2009, p. 85).

29 小臣預在講筵, 職參史載. 謹錄時事, 以立今序. T. 2103: 52.236b16-17.

30 *Mohe banruoboluomi jing* 摩訶般若波羅蜜經 T. 223, *juan* 9: 是善男子、善女人聞是深般若波羅蜜, 受持、親近、讀誦、正憶念、不離薩婆若心, 若以毒藥熏、若以蠱道、若以火坑、若以深水、若欲刀殺、若與其毒, 如是眾惡皆不能傷. 何以故？是般若波羅蜜是大明呪, 是無上明呪. T. 223: 8.283b5-10.

31 Translated from the following passage from the *Tract on the Vow*: 于時發願, 我為是等及一切眾生, 誓造金字《摩訶衍般若波羅蜜》一部. 以淨瑠璃七寶作函, 奉盛經卷. 眾寶高座, 七寶帳蓋, 珠交露幔. 華香瓔珞, 種種供具 供養般若波羅蜜. T. 1933: 46.787c1-5.

32 然後我當十方六道普現無量色身, 不計劫數, 至成菩提. 當為十方一切眾生講說般若波羅蜜經. 於是中間, 若作法師如曇無竭, 若作求法弟子如薩陀波崙. 發願之後, 眾惡比丘皆悉退散. T. 1933: 46.787c5-9.

33 Cf. T. 2050: 50.192a8-22.

34 Cf. T. 2050: 50.192a23-25.

35 According to Guanding's statement in *Mohe zhiguan*, *juan* 1: 天台智者說己心中所行法門 . . . . . 代受法師講金字般若, 陳隋二國宗為帝師. T. 1911: 46.1b13-16.

36 As Chen Zhiyuan has shown, in medieval China, two methods of counting the Buddha's birth year were accepted: the tenth year under the rule of King Zhuang of Zhou Dynasty 周莊王十年, which was adopted by historians from the Southern Dynasties to the Sui 隋, and the twenty-fourth year under the rule of the King Zhao of Zhou Dynasty 周昭王二十四年, which was prevalent in the Northern Qi 北齊. Huisi's opinion falls under the latter (Chen 2018, p. 126).

37 Translated from the following passage from *Tract on the Vow*: 以大願故，一切眾魔諸惡災難不能沮壞. 願於當來彌勒世尊出興于世, 普為一切無量眾生說是般若波羅蜜經時. T. 1933: 46.787c22-25.

38 According to the *Xu gaoseng zhuan* 續高僧傳, *juan* 17: 又夢彌勒、彌陀說法開悟，故造二像並同供養, 又夢隨從彌勒與諸眷屬同會龍華. 心自惟曰: " 我於釋迦末法受持法華, 今值慈尊, 感傷悲泣, 豁然覺悟, " 轉復精進，靈瑞重沓, T. 2060: 50.562c21-25.

39 Cf. T. 2060: 50.567b25-29; T. 2050: 50.196a9-14.

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T. 225 *Da mingdu jing* 大明度經 [Great Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra], 6 *juan*, translated by Zhiqian 支謙, T. vol. 8.

T. 227 *Xiaopin banruoboluomi jing* 小品般若波羅蜜經 [Smaller Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra], 12 *juan*, translated by Kumārajīva 鳩摩羅什, T. vol. 8.

T. 901 *Foshuo tuoluoni ji jing* 佛說陀羅尼集經 [Sūtra Collection of Dhāraṇī], 12 *juan*, translated by Atikūṭa 阿地瞿多, T. vol. 18.

T. 1509 *Da zhidu lun* 大智度論 [Exegesis on the Larger Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra], 100 *juan*, translated by Kumārajīva 鳩摩羅什, T. vol. 25.

T. 1911 *Mohe zhiguan* 摩訶止觀 [The Great Calming and Contemplation], 10 *juan*, Zhiyi 智顗, T. vol. 46.

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Article

Oneself as Another: Yantraputraka Metaphors in Buddhist Literature

You Zhao

Institute of Foreign Philosophy, Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies, Peking University, Beijing 100871, China; zhaoyou@pku.edu.cn

Abstract: While Buddhist teachings deny the presence of a stable, unchanging self, they must still make sense of human agency. In this article, I look through metaphors of mechanical men in Buddhist literature, which inform us of attempts to tackle the problem by resorting to figurative speech. With a selection of examples, we shall see not only a basic rationale of these metaphors, as well as the dynamics of their usage in Buddhist texts against different doctrinal backgrounds, but also their meta-philosophical role in penetrating through the agent-oriented "universe of discourse".

Keywords: metaphor; Buddhism; embodied experience; first person; universe of discourse

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1. Introduction

In the forest of Buddhist tales, one often comes across intriguing contrivances of one kind or another, such as those set up in the shape of human guardians and elephants (*hastiyantra*) to counter rival troops. These tales cannot show less care about the engineering details of the machinery described. Instead, the point is rather didactic, exploiting the fact that these mechanical men or animals never fail to perform their job, despite the fact that they are not what they appear to be. For example, in the *Aśokāvadāna*, Susīma rushed out in a fury towards Aśoka's city on hearing of his enthronement:

> Meanwhile, in Pāṭaliputra, Aśoka posted his two great warriors at two of the city gates and Rādhagupta at a third. He himself stood at the eastern gate. In front of it, Rādhagupta set up an artificial elephant (*yantramayo hastī sthāpitaḥ*), on top of which he placed an image of Aśoka that he had fashioned (*aśokasya ca pratimā nirmitā*). All around he dug a ditch, filled it with live coals of acacia wood, covered it with reeds, and camouflaged the whole with dirt. He then went and taunted Susīma: "If you are able to kill Aśoka, you will become king!"
>
> Susīma immediately rushed to the eastern gate, thinking "I am fighting with Aśoka (*aśokena saha yotsyāmīti*)!" But he fell into the ditch full of charcoal, and came to an untimely and painful end.[1]

From Susīma's point of view, he was dashing towards the newly crowned king mounted on an elephant,[2] as a monarch was supposed to be—other versions and parallels omit Susīma's shouting in first person.[3] However, the target turned out to be nothing more than a rough resemblance of Aśoka, purposefully arranged only to trap the envious brother. Using a scarecrow instead of the real king to end the combat renders the tragedy rather absurd and hence instructive: how easily fooled is a man blinded by his ignorance, anger and desires?

Other tropes of mechanical men may yield more complicated meanings. In this article, I aim to provide an outline of what I call the *yantraputraka* metaphors in Buddhist texts.[4] They suggest thinking of oneself as mechanical so as to immerse oneself in a completely different kind of embodied experience.[5] The following examples are roughly dated to the first half of the first millennium, which surely bears witness to their contemporaneous achievements of machine making. However, unlike other studies on *yantras* in Indian

literature, (Raghavan 1952; Ali 2016) I am little concerned with the historical and scientific facts these wonderful creatures reveal to us, but rather the rationale of using such a metaphor in making philosophical points: how did Buddhist scholars play with the stock metaphor, what did they attempt to do with it, and why does it work?

As we shall see, these examples generally introduce mechanical men or women in two ways: either straightforwardly as a simile or metaphorically as a plot device. If the first offers us a roadmap to read the stock metaphor, the second experiments with it and induces further speculations. While read side by side, they can complement one another to articulate a poetic argument of the Buddhist doctrine that persons lack selves. I hope to show that, as a mechanical man moves without possessing his own drives, the stock metaphor naturally questions the agency problem, given that a proper agent is traditionally understood as "self-dependent" (*svatantraḥ kartā*)[6]. Moreover, to invoke a mechanical participant in episodes of collective activities (encounter, collaboration or combat) has a special rhetorical power: by triggering the recognition of multiplied likenesses between characters and other characters or between characters and readers, such a device engages readers, raising suspicion and suspense among them, not only with regard to the main participants in the story but also their own.

Meanwhile, it is important to note that comparing human beings to *yantraputraka* in the Buddhist context does not merely reduce a living man to a pile of components. By taking an aesthetic rather than literal stance,[7] it facilitates the penetration through a common universe of discourse, in Ricoeur's terms, so as to transform from a motive-action-oriented to a cause-event-oriented mode of thinking (Ricœur 1992, pp. 64–67) and thence engender an utterly novel and surprising experience.[8] This stance makes the meaning of the same figuration distinct from that in other traditions. Cohen (2003) once illustrated the difference in her article: for Jain and Hindu authors, a humanoid represents an unanimated body that requires a separate agent to move, while for Buddhist authors, it stands for what living beings are (Cohen 2003, pp. 69–71). At the end of this paper, a brief comparison with similar tropes in Jain and Hindu texts will endorse her observation and offer a possible explanation for the divergent path of the same vehicle: while non-Buddhists take a third-person view when looking at a mechanical man, Buddhists rather insist on taking a first-person view to experience the possible life of a mechanical being.

By and large, this is a reconstructive case study of metaphors in Buddhist literature, with an underlying reflection on the interplay of literary devices and philosophical messages (Stepien 2020, p. 14). Accordingly, while limiting myself to sources from a specific era, I intentionally avoid organizing the following texts in a neat chronological order or based on their scriptural genres. Instead, I try to make use of these texts as a common pool of knowledge as it may have been to ancient writers, who did not only adopt the metaphor but also experimented with it. The actual usages of the stock metaphor thus do betray certain cultural backgrounds and doctrinal orientations of the time.

2. Embodied Experience as Dāruyanta

While contemporary thinkers tend to ask whether robots are sentient beings just like us, Buddhists might feel that it is more natural to turn the question around: are we, as human beings, in fact, artificial products? After all, everything in this phenomenal world is constructed (*saṃskṛta*); the living facts of an ordinary man are but conditioned states (*saṃskāra*). What is the ontological difference between a human and an activated robot, given that no self is found in either? In fact, from quite early on, it has been suggested that one can think or imagine oneself as a mechanical being in Buddhist traditions—"a physio-psychological machine", to quote Rahula (1978, p. 26). In fact, he was precisely referring to Buddhaghosa's (5th century) comments in the *Visuddhimagga* (henceforth Vism):

> *Tasmā yathā dāruyantaṃ suññaṃ nijjīvaṃ nirīhakaṃ, atha ca pana dārurajjukasamāyogavasena gacchati pi tiṭṭhati pi, sa-īhakaṃ savyāpāraṃ viya khāyati, evam idaṃ nāmarūpam pi suññaṃ nijjīvaṃ nirīhakam,*[9] *atha ca pana aññamaññasamāyogavasena gacchati pi tiṭṭhati pi sa-īhakaṃ savyāpāraṃ viya khāyatī ti daṭṭhabbaṃ.*[10]

> Therefore, just as a wooden contrivance is empty, soulless and without desires, while it walks and stands merely through the combination of strings and wood, yet it seems as if it had desires and occupation; so too, this *nāmarūpa* is empty, soulless and without desires, while it walks and stands merely through the combination of one another (i.e., *nāma* and *rūpa*), yet it seems as if it had desires and occupation.

The wooden contrivance is used as a handle here to illustrate the flow of mental and material events that are together taken as *nāmarūpa* without a self:[11]

(1) The embodied experience (*nāmarūpa*) is like a mechanical wooden man;
(2) A mechanical wooden man is not coordinated or controlled by any supervising soul that possesses desires;
(3) So is this embodied experience.

Let us look at the example more closely: pay attention to the demonstrative "*idam*". One may immediately recall the formulation of the four noble truths in suttas: "This (*idam*), monks, is the noble truth that is suffering . . . ". Such a demonstrative is not idle: "it relates to specific events that are perceived in real time . . . for objects that can be pointed to specifically by the observer" (Shulman 2014, pp. 145–58). To understand the current passage in this way, we believe that Buddhaghosa is not simply offering a true proposition through analogical reasoning but urging the reader to contemplate his or her own embodied experience, to think and to experience "now, this!" as a mere compound of *nāmarūpa*, the five-fold events. Note that, accordingly, he makes no attempt to figure out who pulls the strings. Meanwhile, it should not be mistaken that this soulless thing is inert: the mental or psychological remains an essential part of the complex. As a preceding paragraph emphasizes, the immaterial events (*cetasika*) are always involved, yet only too subtle to be aware of by means of ordinary perceptions (Davids 1921, pp. 591–92; Ñāṇamoli 2010, pp. 614–15). Through this comparison, Buddhaghosa could not make it more explicit: let us understand ourselves as robots, *to be* as if "we are all robots" (Cohen 2003, p. 71).

The exegetical tradition that Buddhaghosa passed down to us seems to have a special interest in making comparisons of embodied experience to mechanical man. This simile also occurred earlier in the Vism in the section of "Mindfulness Occupied with Body" (*kāyagatāsati*) among a dozen kinds of "Recollections as Meditation Subjects" (*Anussati-kammaṭṭhānaniddesa*).[12] Additionally, in the *Sumaṅgalavilāsinī* (SV) and *Papañcasūdanī* (Ps)[13] we encounter similar *metaphors*:

> abbhantare attā nāma koci sammiñjento vā pasārento vā n'atthi . . . suttākaḍḍhanavasena dāruyantassa hatthapādalāḷanaṃ viya...veditabbaṃ.[14]
>
> There is nothing inside called self that causes to bend or stretch. One should know that it is . . . just like the sport of hands and feet of a wooden mechanical [man] through the forces of pulling strings.
>
> *tam enaṃ bhikkhave nirayapālā ti ādim āha. tattha ekacce therā nirayapālā nāma n'atthi, yantrarūpaṃ viya kammam eva kāranaṃ karetī ti vadanti.*[15]
>
> Monks, it says "the guardians of the Niraya hell", etc. Regarding this, some elders explain that the beings named the guardians of the Niraya hell do not exist, the beings are just like a mechanical device. Like a machine, *kamma* alone makes the action.

Both adopted the trope of the mechanical man, yet we may observe the nuances between the two. While the first, following the previous example, prompts a first-person view to understanding one's embodied experience as self-less, the second identifies the hell-guardians in the infernal world as mechanical men who lack proper agency and are hence unreal. The latter seems to have little to do with thinking of oneself as mechanical, especially not with regard to one's embodied experience. However, if Mori (1997, p. 461) was right to attribute the second view to early Vijñānavāda, for whom the infernal beings are nothing more than a resemblance of an object (*viṣayābhāsa*), i.e., appearances of the

mind, then the difference between the two is perhaps smaller than it seems: both apply a reflexive approach to see how we are often duped in assuming something is real that is not.

Although the figure of the mechanical man is not well-attested in canonical suttas, it is not unknown to *Vinayavastu* and exegetical comments.[16] In fact, the earliest datable witness, as far as I can tell, is the first Chinese translation of the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā* (AP), the *Daoxing bore jing* 道行般若經 (henceforth DXJ). It proves that before Buddhaghosa, by the 2nd century of the common era, this simile had already become a popular one to illustrate a certain self-less state.[17]

The 23rd chapter of the DXJ (26th chapter of AP) starts with Indra's limited understanding of the altruist practice of a bodhisattva.[18] The Buddha reminded him that the benefit is innumerable if one aspires to full enlightenment. This topic led Subhuti to ask an interesting question: if the mind is as empty as mere illusion, how can it know anything and achieve the so-called unsurpassable full enlightenment by his aspiration on the path 心譬如幻，何因當得佛 (*kathaṃ ca bhagavan māyopamaṃ cittam, anuttarāṃ samyaksaṃbodhim abhisaṃbudhyate*)?[19] The discussion then turns to the non-conceptual and indifferent nature (*avikalpatva*) of the *prajñāpāramitā* with two sets of similes. First, when an aspiring Bodhisattva courses in the perfection of wisdom, he does not conceive how close or how far away full enlightenment is because the perfection of wisdom in function is totally indifferent, just like the space (*ākāśa*), a magical man (*māyāpuruṣa*), or a reflection (*pratibhā*) that has no inclination to anything.[20] Second, the Tathāgata or the perfection of wisdom neither favors (*priya*) one nor detests (*apriya*) another, i.e., with no desire to drive actions, it simply accomplishes what it is supposed to do.[21] The text then compares the *prajñāpāramitā* to an artificial body conjured up (*nirmita*) by the Tathāgata and a mechanical being (*yantrayukta*).[22] From these two sets of comparisons, one gains the impression that while the first group of similes emphasizes the state of mere appearance that has no conceptual constructions, the second focuses on the efficacy of bodily activities. This might be true, but it does not entail that the two sets of similes are fundamentally different from each other, but only that they can be context-sensitive to support different aspects that form the same argument. Further accounts of such a mechanical being provide us with more details:

> A. 譬如工匠黠師剋作機關木人, 若作雜畜. (a) 木人不能自起居, 因對而搖. (b) 木人不作是念言: "我當動搖屈伸低仰, 令觀者歡欣." 何以故? (c) 木人本無念故. 般若波羅蜜亦如是, 隨人所行, 悉各自得之. 雖爾, 般若波羅蜜亦無形無念.[23]
>
> Just as a skillful craftsman carves out a wooden mechanical man, or a certain [mechanical] animal. [Such a] wooden man cannot stand or stay by itself. It moves by depending on causes. The wooden man would not think: 'I shall move, shake, bend, stretch, lower or raise [my head], in order to please the audience.' How is that? A wooden man does not have any thought (*avikalpatvāt*). So is the Perfection of Wisdom: [a bodhisattva] accomplishes all [the work for the sake of] which he develops [the Perfection of Wisdom]. Despite that, the Perfection of Wisdom has neither form nor thought.[24]
>
> B. 譬如工匠作機關木人，若男若女，隨所為事，皆能成辦，而無分別。世尊！般若波羅蜜亦如是，隨所修習，皆能成辦，而無分別.[25]
>
> Just as a craftsman makes a wooden mechanical being, male or female, it accomplishes all that is supposed to be done, while it has no discrimination. Exalted One! So is the Perfection of Wisdom: [a bodhisattva] accomplishes all [the work for the sake of] which he develops [the Perfection of Wisdom], while he has no discrimination.

Let me first add a couple of philological notes with regard to the textual variation in A because it matters for our understanding of the metaphor.[26] First, neither of the two phrases (a) and (b) is attested in the AP or PP parallels[27] nor in variation B from Kumārajīva's translation, followed by later Chinese versions.[28] The way it stands in the DXJ looks

like a commentarial note on the simile, which is witnessed rather flexibly in other Prajñāpāramitā texts.[29] The same description is attested in the *Yogācārabhūmi* of Saṅgharakṣa:

> 觀四大身因緣合成, 若如幻化. 譬如假物, 則非我所有, 亦非他人. 猶如合材機關木人, 因對動搖: 愚者覩之, 謂為是人; 慧明察之, 合木無人.[30]
>
> Contemplate on the body composed of four great elements: it is just like an illusion, like a false object, that it does not belong to me or any other. Just like a wooden mechanical man moves on account of the combination of wood—on seeing that, the ignorant believes it to be a [real] man, while the wise observes by insights that there is no man but a combination of wood.

The affinity between the DXJ and the meditation book suggests that the additional description of the mechanical man in the DXJ might be inspired by meditation techniques available to the editor. Accordingly, this would inspire us to approach the DXJ paragraph in a particular way: we are not encouraged to infer an external causal agent from the motions of the mechanical man, but just like the case in the Vism, to experience what it feels like to *be* one ourselves.

On account of this, I do not strictly follow Karashima's translation of (a), as I find that there is little ground to interpret the phrase *yindui er yao* 因對而搖 as "somebody stands in front of it and moves it" (Karashima 2011, pp. 422–23, n. 276). Karashima did not only supply the subject of the sentence with the puppeteer but also read the *yindui* in a peculiar way. It is peculiar precisely because it is interpreted based on common sense: a puppeteer makes a puppet move.[31] However, as we have seen above, what is striking about the Buddhist use of mechanical man metaphors is exactly its omission of the external agent.[32] In the Buddhist context, seeking a causal agent is not at all the point of invoking the metaphor. Would the DXJ constitute an exception? I believe not. We can come to this conclusion by scrutinizing the word *yindui*. Since it has no witness in other languages, we have to look for its uses in early Chinese translations. In fact, this bi-syllable is only found in those texts attributed to Lokakṣema and Dharmarakṣa. The handful of cases shows that the word simply means "facing towards/depending on causes". To take Dharmarakṣa's more idiomatic uses of the word, for example,

> 如水中月, 亦如呼響, 因對而出.[33]
>
> Just like the moon on the water (*pratibimba*), and echoes (*pratirava* or *pratiśrutka*), it (i.e., *dharma*) arises by depending on causes (*pratītya* ?).
>
> 諸法住本原哉? 因對而發. [34]
>
> Does a dharma abide in its essence? [Not really,] it arises by depending on causes.
>
> 緣起因對, 無對無起也. [35]
>
> Dependent origination (*pratītyasamutpāda*) means depending on causes; there would not be origination without depending on [causes].

The first verse appears to play with the prefix *prati-*. Meanwhile, in classical Chinese, *yin* means "the cause", and *dui* literally means "facing towards" (as a preposition) or "to answer" (as a verb), which seems to draw out the meaning of *prati*. Hence, I propose reconstructing *yindui* as *pratītya* or perhaps (*hetu-*)*pratyayāpekṣā*, which is more regularly rendered as *yindai* 因待 in later translations. Similarly, the other two examples use *yindui* to gloss the notion of dependent origination in opposition to essentialist claims. Lokakṣema used the bi-syllable more freely than Dharmarakṣa. In the DXJ, at times, *dui* alone means "dependence"[36] or the causal contact (*samavahita*) of successive dharmas.[37] In whichever case, *yindui* does not allude to an external agent who stands in opposition, but the causal relation. The focus remains on the dharma caused to arise (*pratītyasamutpanna*). Therefore, there is good reason to read *yindui er yao* 因對而搖 simply as [the mechanical man] moves by depending on causes, i.e., the combination of wood and strings.

The paragraph in question is thus saying that a wooden man walks and stands like a real man, but he does not meet the criteria of a proper agent; he does not consciously instigate the actions (a, b), and he does not acknowledge the actions as his own (b). It is nothing more than a conjunction of wood and stuff set in motion. In spite of all that, a mechanical man accomplishes whatever is supposed to be done,[38] or more precisely, what he is made for (*kṛtyasyārthāya kṛtas*). So is the Perfection of Wisdom: it functions perfectly as it is prepared for, but it is not a self-dependent agent who drives its own activities. This idea was reformulated more explicitly and elegantly in a later Prajñāpāramitā text, *Suvikrāntavikramiparipṛcchā*: "The lack of an agent and the lack of someone who causes to act on the part of form, feeling, notion, compositional factors and consciousness, is itself the Perfection of Wisdom."[39] Thus, the *prajñāpāramitā* is not only insight or wisdom, as we usually put it for the sake of convenience, but a new mode of action and a new mode of embodied experience.

Moreover, the new mode of action and experience we have to remember is not easily taken in by an ordinary frame of mind. A reader would naturally follow up with questions, such as, then who set the machine in motion? Thus, in order to make the point solid and accessible, the teaching has to transform the listener's mindset, even temporarily. Nevertheless, how is that possible? Invoking the metaphor of a mechanical man, I argue, forces readers to suspend an ordinary portrait of action, an ordinary codification of our language to describe an action that requires a real agent with real motives. It facilitates a reader to penetrate through universes of discourse, from the agent-motive-oriented to the cause-event-oriented. Therefore, the metaphor, more than a mere analogy, also works as a thinking tool. It prepares one to experience oneself as completely of another kind. Not until then does it make the new mode of action comprehensible.

The *hypothetical line of thought* of the mechanical man (b) in the first person plays its role here. Similar thoughts are also found in other early Mahāyāna scriptures, such as the *Śālistambasūtra*.[40] In the majority of these cases, the thought is always expressed and then denied the status of being factual. If we believe that such detail does not just randomly occur in various contexts but is picked up by choice, the *hypothetical line of thought* is thus purposefully put forward to make a point. However, what is the point of uttering an impossible thought? In my view, aligning with the mechanical man metaphor that invites readers to contemplate their own embodied experience, this *hypothetical thought* in the first person is also intended to put readers in the shoes of a self-less state, here the Perfection of Wisdom, making them "capable of articulating what truth feels like when attained by a specific embodied individual" (Mikkelson 2020, p. 68), despite the fact that it is hardly effable.

3. Mechanical Youth versus Painted Corpus

Quite different from the standardized and emotionally neutral simile used to gloss the idea of the non-self in Mahāyāna sūtras and Pali exegesis, the following stories of exquisite mechanical men and women generate abundant feelings, including curiosity, desire, wonder, mourning, and ridicule, followed by a sense of peace—a palette of rasas indeed. In fact, such a mechanical being became a favorable plot in the broad Jātaka-Avadāna genre, and it grew into highly elaborated variations. The first example is from an early collection of Jātakas, the *Shengjing* 生經 translated by Dharmarakṣa in the 3rd–4th century. This "Five Men of the King" 國王五人經 (Chevannes 1911, vol. II. pp. 12–13, no.163) is parallel to the much more famous *Puṇyavanta Jātaka* in the *Mahāvastu*. (Marciniak 2019, pp. 42–48). They share the same characters and general framework of the story but with a completely different tale of the second prince Śilpavanta, which is exactly our focus here.

> 時第二工巧者, 轉行至他國, 應時國王, 喜諸技術. 即以材木, 作機關木人; 形貌端正, 生人無異; 衣服顏色, 黠慧無比; 能工歌舞, 舉動如人.
>
> Then, the second [prince] Śīlpavanta (skillful of crafts) travelled to another state, whose king at the time was fond of various kinds of art. [The craftsman] thus manufactured a wooden mechanical man with logs, who was good-looking, hardly

different from a real man; with incomparably smart clothes and outlook; and good at dancing to music; behaving just like a human being.

辭言: " 我子生若干年, 國中恭敬, 多所餽遺." 國王聞之, 命使作伎. 王及夫人, 升閣而觀. 作伎歌舞, 若干方便, 跪拜進止, 勝於生人. 王及夫人, 歡喜無量.[41]

[The craftsman] report [to the king]: "My 'son' was born quite a few years from now. [He is] respected in [our own] country [for his art], by which he received abundant gifts." On hearing this, the king asked him to display his art. The king, together with his wife, went up to the spectacular pavilion. [The "son"] started showing dances to music, with different kinds of skills. [He] bowed down, proceeded or halted, [with a deportment even] more charming than a living man. [This made] the king and his wife extremely happy.

In this brief opening, three perspectives are integrated: the "father", the omniscient figure; the "son", the un-knower; and the king, an outsider (emphasized by the "foreignness" of the craftsman). Śīlpavanta obviously knew from the beginning what this youth was, though the youth did not know for himself, while for the time being, the king could only believe what he sees. Let us hang onto this crucial detail prepared for further scenarios. Another intriguing point is that the craftsman introduced his work of art as "his son" in Chinese 我子 (from [*yantra*-]*putraka*?). The narrator (possibly the translator) seeks to exploit this father–son relationship to facilitate the effectiveness of the main plot. Let us continue.

便角瞻眼, 色視[42] 夫人. 王遙見之, 心懷忿怒, 促勅侍者: " 斬其頭來! 何以瞻眼視吾夫人? 謂有惡意, 色視不疑." 其父啼泣, 淚出五行, 長跪請命: " 吾有一子, 甚重愛之, 坐起進退, 以解憂思. 愚意不及, 有是失耳. 假使殺者, 我共當死. 唯以加哀, 原其罪疊."

[The artist "son"] then coveted the queen with the corner of his eyes. Seeing this from a distance, the king burst into anger and urged his servants: "Cut off his head! How does he dare to covet my wife? That is absolutely evil-minded and creepy!" The "father" cried, having five lines of tears [on his face]. He kneeled for a long time and begged: "I [only] have one son that I love him so much. [He has been with me no matter I am] sitting, standing, going or leaving, which gives me great comfort. It is my stupidity to have failed to [discipline him], up to this point for him to make such a mistake. If you want to kill him, I shall die together. May you have mercy on him and forgive his crimes."

時王恚甚, 不肯聽之. 復白王言: " 若不活者, 願自手殺, 勿使餘人." 王便可之. 則拔一肩楯, 機關解落, 碎散在地. [43]

At the time, the king was too wrathful to accept this. [The craftsman then] begged the king again: "if you must let him die, please let me kill with my own hands, and do not make others execute him." The king thus agreed. [The craftsman] pulled out a wedge from [his son's] shoulder, the mechanism collapsed and fell apart onto the ground.

Throughout these scenes, Śilpavanta insists on naming the dancer as his son. The outspoken intimacy makes his unbearable grief on the king's order of execution so reasonable for someone witnessing the death of one's own blood that, for a moment, we almost forget that the "son" is not real. The narrative then cracks quite unexpectedly, with the father begging to "kill" his son with his own hand. At the collapse of his "son", we do not only awake to what we should have known from the beginning, that the whole scenario was all carefully orchestrated by Śilpavanta, and that the "son" is only a puppet, but also realize how deluded we were immediately before this moment, just like the king. In such a way, the narrative leads the readers to penetrate back and forth between two realms of facts: one deluded and the other the truth.

王乃驚愕: " 吾身云何瞋於材木? 此人工巧, 天下無雙, 作此機關, 三百六十節, 勝於生人!" 即以賞賜億萬兩金. 即持金出, 與諸兄弟, 令飲食之.[44]

> The king was astounded: "Why would I myself have been angry with [a pile of] logs? The craft of this man is unparalleled in this world, who made this mechanism with three hundred and sixty pieces. Almost a real human being!" [The king] thus granted him billions of gold coins. The craftsman left with these gold coins, distributed them among his brothers for their beverage and food.

The end of the story may appear less surprising. However, the number of bones is notable: three hundred and sixty, a precise anatomical observation in agreement with mainstream Indian medical traditions.[45] We learn the same from the embryology transmitted along with Buddhist meditation manuals and introduced to the Chinese world around the same time. In the *Daodi jing* 道地經 (*Yogācārabhūmi* of Saṅgharakṣa, translated by An Shigao in the late 2nd century), we read: after the head to toes appeared, followed by arteries to ears, during the twenty-seventh week of conception, the embryo is equipped with three hundred and sixty jointed [bones].[46] A baby soon to be born is only capable of moving. Similarly, when a man is frightened still or about to die, the three hundred and sixty bones are said to shake and fall.[47] The number, therefore, marks the edge of a living man with active bodily movement. With such a concrete picture, we are drawn back to doubt again whether the youth is or is not a real man.

This unsolved question offers us a key with which to read the story: we should understand the whole as a metaphorical plot. At face value, it relates a craft master's exhibition of his skill with a mechanical youth to a king. However, in actuality, it tells us how the Buddha's teachings work on a reader-practitioner through meditation upon one's own embodied experience.[48] Suppose that, at the end of the story, the king gets the same message which we glean from the similes in the DXJ and Vism, meaning that he realized not only the falsehood of the mechanical man but also that of what it is compared to: himself. Consequently, the whole dramatic scene mirrors what we experience by hearing the profound teaching of *non-self*, and the king's experience mirrors ours. We can roughly break the process into three steps:

(1) Exhibition of the mechanical youth: pay attention to one's embodied experience;
(2) Decomposition of the mechanical youth: analyze the experience and find only events;[49]
(3) Immersion in the mechanical youth: experience anew from a first-person perspective.[50]

There is no doubt that this is one of the most fascinating moments in this collection of Jātaka stories. No wonder it immediately captured readers' attention as soon as it was translated into Chinese and was incorporated into the *Liezi*,[51] where the king happened to meet a craftsman on his way home from a tour of inspection in the west.[52] Meanwhile, in the Buddhist world, the same metaphorical plot seems to have been transmitted quite stably in mainstream Sarvāstivāda communities. We also have more concise versions in the *Bhaiṣajyavastu*,[53] the *Vinaye*, as is quoted in the *Prasannapadā*, etc.[54] However, what we are going to read closely here is a rather playful variation in a Tocharian fragment of the *Punyavanta Jātaka*, known as the "Painter and Artisan" story.[55] The eighth tale in the *Za piyu jing* 雜譬喻經 (T207) proves to be an earlier version of the same story.[56] However, due to the different morals they present, I will not treat them equally here. The following will largely be based on the Tocharian episode, which stands out as more experimental and philosophically more sophisticated.

There is a painter from a foreign country (again!) that came to stay in his artisan friend's house. The latter introduced him to a female servant—in fact, one of his own works. The pretty maiden aroused the burning desire of the painter. He could not help but to take her hand as she was not verbally responsive. Inevitably, the mechanical girl collapsed into a pile of wood. The painter was utterly fooled. Then, he thought to himself, "Just like this thing I perceived was put together from rags, ropes and sticks, so is also the perception human beings have of the *ātman* put together from bones, flesh, and sinews..." (Cohen 2003, p. 71). The purpose of invoking a mechanical person is outspoken here: to understand every human being in the same way. However, the story does not end here

with the painter's "awakening moment". Instead, as a revenge and a challenge,[57] in the deep night, the painter is said to create a self-portrait hanging dead on the wall:

> Thereupon, in the morning, the artisan having come to the painter, saw the mechanical girl fallen in pieces and saw the painter hanging dead on the hook . . . Thereupon the artisan was intending to cut the rope with the axe. Then, the painter, having come out in sight, says to the artisan-teacher:
>
> Do (it) not, do (it) not. Be not sad, O artisan!
>
> Not thy wall, not my painting, destroy with cause!
>
> Look closely, friend. First make (out) the tokens:
>
> One (is) the painting, another the painter. Why do you not recognize (it)?[58]

Compared to the version in the *Shengjing*, everything is doubled here: two artifacts made by two men, two moments of delusion, with two different sentiments, terminated twice by two revelations. Through the doubled structure and the painter's determination to challenge his friend, this variation seems to suggest a certain hierarchy between the two artists, that the painter's work is more deceptive: he deluded his artisan friend only by a mere resemblance, [59] without anything tangible and movable that is usually considered to be the inferential sign of a soul or a self (see below). As Martini (2008, p. 92) insightfully pointed out, "believing the reality of a represented image is in itself a powerful analogy to the deception of mind-made *saṃsāra.*" The mind is the cause, the real "painter" who is meant to be revealed here in this version. The structure of the story thus guides one to proceed from the mindfulness of embodied experience to the more subtle examination of one's mental projections so as to be fully aware of the root of delusions.[60] We can probably also surmise that it witnessed some actual challenges from the idealists to the reductionists around the middle of the first millennium: a Yogācāra-Vijñānavāda era was on its way.[61]

4. Inference from Moving Limbs: Non-Buddhist Perspectives

Before we close the discussion, let us take a quick look at non-Buddhist uses of *yantra-putraka* metaphors. Due to the limits of my knowledge and the scope of this article, I will confine myself to the following examples that were purposefully selected from Jain and Brahminical works of the same era: *Mahābhārata*, *Gaṇadharavāda* and *Vākyapadīya*. They all integrate the metaphor in their discussions of agency. In contrast to Buddhist invocations of such a comparison in a first-person point of view, the stock metaphor in the non-Buddhist context assumes that one must infer from the moving limbs that there is a separate soul, with no suggestion to immerse oneself within it, and no attempt to penetrate an ordinary universe of discourse.

As is known to many, a wooden puppet is a common motif in the *Mahābhārata* (Mbh). When Samjaya consoles Dhṛṭarāṣṭra that he should keep calm even if the war turns out to be inevitable, he compares a man to a wooden puppet (*dāruyantravat*) that is manipulated by an external force—God, chance, or past deeds. A man is not the agent of his good or evil karma, thus not (fully) responsible for his deeds (Mbh 5.156-14-15.)[62] Therefore, one should not hesitate but act in accordance with his duty. Similarly, Draupadī complains that human suffers just like a wooden girl (*dārumayī yoṣā̱*) controlled by the God (Mbh 3.31.22). Even her alias *Pāñcālī* conveys the meaning of "puppet" (Hiltebeitel 1980, p. 106). Her actual challenge to the divine power is another fascinating topic that is beyond the scope of the present article. Nevertheless, we can definitely see how Draupadī, as a puppet herself, questions the agency problem. In all of such cases in the Mbh, the figure of a puppet always leads to an external power that pulls the strings.

The *Gaṇadharavāda* is a handbook of essential teachings attributed to Jinabhadra. The sixth dialogue between Maṇḍika and Mahāvīra focuses on the bondage and liberation of the soul (*jīva*)[63]. In the center of the piece, he raises a question: given that the soul is formless (*amūrtatva*), and we admit that formless things do not move, just like the space (*ākāśa*), how do we know the soul exists, and it can move to higher realms? Mahāvīra

replied that in spite of being formless, the soul is indeed qualified by its actions (*sakriyā*). Why? Because we can infer from the moving limbs.[64]

kattāittaṇao vā sakkirio'yam mao kulālo vva |

dehapphandaṇao vā paccakkham jantapuriso vva || 1846

Or it is recognized as being active on account of its being the doer, etc., like a potter;

or because the movements of the body are directly perceived, like a mechanical man.[65]

Unlike the Buddhists, whose conception of *nāmarūpa* presumes the concomitance and interplay of mental–physical events, the Jains, in agreement with other realists, are more typical dualists with regard to the mind–body relationship: the body is inert, "just as we learn the causal force of wind when we see the trees wave, we know the existence of man (*ātman*) while we see the activities of body".[66] In this sense, the body is nothing but the material instrument of the moving and sentient (*cetana*) soul. It does not seem that the invocation of a mechanical man here aims to invite readers to consider their own personhood as such, nor suggest a different kind of discourse or frame of thought oriented towards the phenomenology of experience. Instead, it relies totally on inference based on daily observation and ordinary language.

Similarly, but on a much larger scale, Bhartṛhari (5th century) compared the whole world to a mechanism, which would be out of order without the pulling force of time:

tam asya lokayantrasya sūtradhāraṃ pracakṣate |

pratibandhābhyanujñābhyāṃ tena viśvaṃ vibhajyate || III.9,4[67]

[They] say it (i.e., time) is the string-holder of this world-machine, Everything is individuated by it through [its] restraint and release.

The commentator Helārāja (11th century) made it clear that the whole world is here compared to a mechanical man whose activities are bound to time, the string-holder of a puppet. Things are told apart as concealed or manifested, born or dead, through the power of time, just like a string-holder can cause the mechanical man to open or close his eyes by pulling the strings. This is a cosmological type of account, in the ethos of *Puruṣa Sukta*, and perfectly echoes the beginning of the *Brahmakāṇḍa* of *Vākyapadīya*, where the eternal Word Brahma is the whole that appears to be manifold due to the force of time (*kālaśakti*) (Biardeau 1964, p. 30). As with the inference from moving limbs in the *Gaṇadharavāda*, here, it looks at the moving world from the outside and infers from the activities that there must be an overpowering agent, the final cause of the universe. Unlike the Buddhist texts investigated above, the comparison here does not compel one to feel like a mechanical man from the inside. I believe that this is the crucial point why it is ultimately so different when the same figuration is applied in Buddhist and non-Buddhist contexts.

The consequence of this different way of applying the *yantraputraka* figuration is twofold: it argues for different ontological views of the self, and it yields a completely different atmosphere when a mechanical man is invoked in narratives. Let us take a well-known episode from the *Kathāsaritsāgara* (XLIII)[68] to illustrate the observation. When Naravāhanadatta first visited the Snow City (*Hemapura*):

> He entered that city by the market street, and beheld that all the population, merchants, women and citizens, were wooden automata (*kāṣṭhayantramaya*), that moved as if they were alive (*sajīvavat*), but were recognized as lifeless (*nirjīva*) by their want of speech (*vāgviraha*) . . . he entered, full of wonder, that palace, which was resplendent with seven ranges of golden buildings. There he saw a majestic man [i.e., Rājyadhara] sitting on a jewelled throne, surrounded by warders and women who were also wooden automata, the only living being (*cetana*) there, who produced motion (*spandana*) in those dull material things (*jaḍa*), like the soul (*adhiṣṭhātṛ*) presiding over the senses.[69]

This silence with noises, solitude within a crowd, and a fantastic yet quirky atmosphere immediately confronts any reader. The Hemapura looks like a prosperous city.

The king, living in a city of mechanical beings made by his own hand,[70] is now safe from arrest for the crime he never committed. However, wherever the king's eyes and ears fall upon, we wonder, does he not find a mere absence of the soul, except for himself? On the contrary, imagine one enters a city of bodhisattvas who act just as mechanical beings do. How would it feel like? I suppose it should be wonderous rather than gothic, blissful rather than lonely because nothing is absent.

5. Conclusions

Indian literature has never been short of imaginations about mechanical beings, simple or cunning, entertaining or challenging. These beings can be a mechanical animal that fights in a battle and returns in triumph from impossible missions, or more frequently, a mechanical man or woman that interacts with real human beings. In this article, I chose to take a close look at Buddhist uses of this figuration as a simile or metaphorical plot device. As shown above, a mechanical man is thought not to be an independent agent but is effective in all kinds of physical–mental activities. By invoking the metaphor, it invites the reader to consider and experience from the first-person perspective how "agency" works in a being without an enduring self.

As a case study of metaphor in Buddhist literature, I hope to show how we could understand a metaphor and why (not always but quite often) we should take it seriously.

First of all, there is no necessary contradiction between rational sense and metaphors.[71] On the contrary, our ancient writers made good use of metaphors out of rational choices to convey crucial philosophical messages. While it is true that some similes and metaphors are hastily dropped into theoretical or literary compositions, others are carefully designed to reveal novel ideas. These metaphors are even "far from being merely ornamental", but "highly important in developing argumentation and outlining its soteriological horizons." (Tzohar 2018, p. 3).

Second, metaphors are particularly useful for Buddhists to philosophize because they evoke subjective experiences. Some of them are used as thought experiments that become especially indispensable when one encounters the limits of ordinary language, just like in our examples: if our language is encoded with the sense of agent and motive, how is it possible to use the same language to make sense of actions with no agent and motive? In order to crack open a closed system of semantics and reasoning, Buddhists resort to metaphors in order to bring in utterly novel experience and understanding.

From anonymous storytellers to Buddhaghosa, our authors seem to have been aware of this unique function of metaphors. In this particular way, the mechanical man serves not only as a comparison, but also a site where readers can explore what is essential to the human experience and understand how persons can function without a self. To be more precise, by transforming the subjective experience, the *yantraputraka* metaphor breaks through the ordinary sphere and creates "a new descriptive frame [that] produces the sort of person for whom this sort of new description can be true" (Kachru 2021, p. 295). Through reflexive analysis and re-immersion in what is normally misunderstood to be a causal agent, the metaphor of the mechanical man invites individuals to transform their embodied experience so as to be prepared for the extra-ordinary. Therefore, an uttering of the metaphor is a speech act: it encourages one to think and act in the *possible mode of being*.

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Abbreviation

Mbh *Mahābhārata*. See (Sukthankar 1933–1966)
T *Taishō shinshū daizōkyō* 大正新脩大藏經. See (Takakusu and Watanabe 1924–1932)

Notes

1 Strong's (1989, pp. 209–10) translation from Mukhopadhyaya's edition (1963, p. 42) with my own minor changes.

2 Elephants are known as an emblem of a sovereign. Aśoka story circles even emphasize his sovereignty through his natural inclination towards elephants, e.g.,: *ahaṃ hastiskandhenāgato mama yānaṃ śobhanam ahaṃ rājā bhavisyāmīti* (Mukhopadhyaya 1963, p. 37).

3 Compare the *Ayuwang zhuan* 阿育王傳 1 (T. 2042, 50.100c16-26), where Susīma is said to 直趣象上欲捉阿恕伽; "He rushed straight towards the elephant to seize Aśoka" (Mukhopadhyaya 1963, p. 42, fn.11; Przyluski 1923, pp. 234–35). A more concise version is found in the *Za ahan jing* 雜阿含經 23 (T. 99, 2.163b8-14; Skt. *Saṃyukta Āgama*): 彼王子即趣東門.

4 The term for such mechanical beings is not univocal. Apart from *kāṣṭhayantramaya,* lit. "one made of wood contrivance", *dārumaya, dāruyanta, yantarūpa(ka), yantraputraka, yantrapuruṣa,* etc., are among the most common ones (Cohen 2003, pp. 65–66). For convenience, I will stick to *yantraputraka* or "mechanical man" in this article unless the text in focus uses something else.

5 In light of Ganeri's (2012) reconstruction of Buddhist philosophy of mind as "No Place Views", I use "immerse" and "embodied" in their phenomenological sense as he does, without any implication of dualism in terms of mind-body problem.

6 *Aṣṭādhyāyī* 1.4.54 (Cardona 1997, p. 611).

7 For a definition of aesthetic stance, see Kachru (2020, p. 9).

8 On figurative speech that generates novel experience in general, see (Fogelin 2011, p. 69). Gummer also agrees that "metaphors are never 'just' metaphors: they do the crucial work of linking two different concepts . . . that enables new ways of thinking about the issue in question-and new kinds of speech acts." (in Stepien 2020, p. 200).

9 Compare the use of *nirīhaka* in the Mahāyāna context, e.g., AP (Vaidya 1960, p. 230): *tatkasya hetoḥ ? nirīhakā hi ānanda sarvadharmā agrāhyā ākāśanirīhakatayā. acintyā hy ānanda sarvadharmā māyāpuruṣopamāḥ. acintyā hy ānanda sarvadharmā māyāpuruṣopamāḥ.*

10 This is part of the proper examination of *nāmarūpa* (*nāmarūpaṃ yathāvadassanaṃ*) from the 18th chapter of Vism: "The Purification of View" (*Diṭṭhivisuddhiniddesa*). See Davids' edition (1921, pp. 594–95); my translation based on Ñāṇamoli's (2010, p. 618).

11 Vism (ibid. p. 593): *nāmarūpamattam ev' idam, na satto, na puggalo atthīti, etam attham saṃsanditvā vavatthapeti.* "This is mere mentality-materiality, there is no being, no person" is confirmed by a number of scriptures. (Ñāṇamoli 2010, p. 616)

12 There, Buddhaghosa offers a careful description of righteous observation from hair to toe and compares the mesentery part (*okāsato*) holding on to the marionette's strings (*yantasuttakam iva*). See Davids' edition (1921, p. 258); Ñāṇamoli's (2010, pp. 251–52) translation. For meditations on the body in aid of abundant similes in the *Majjhima Nikāya* and Vism, etc., see Collins (1997, pp. 190–94). On the role of body in advanced meditation, see (Shulman 2021).

13 This is not an exhaustive list of examples. Others include the commentary of *Jātaka* ascribed to Buddhoghosa (ad *Jātaka* no.512, verse 8): *dārukaṭallako vā'ti dārumayayantrarūpakaṃ viya.* (Fausbøll 1963, vol. 5, p. 18).

14 *Sāmaññaphalasuttavaṇṇanā* in *Sumaṅgalavilāsinī* (Rhys Davids et al. 1968, Vol. 1, p. 197).

15 *Devadūtasuttavaṇṇaṇā* in *Papañcasūdanī* (Horner 1977, Vol. 4, p. 231). Mori rendered *yantarūpa* as "contrived image" (1997, p. 461), but I stick to "mechanical man" in order to remain consistent in this paper.

16 One may speculate that such a carved (or moulded, embroided, painted) girl that is forbiden in monks' life might be an inspiration for further philosophical experiments with them. For example, in the *Wufen lü* 五分律 [*Mahīśāsaka Five Part Vinaya*] (T. 1421, 22.182a17-19) and *Shisong lü* 十誦律 [*Sarvāstivādin Ten Recitation Vinaya*] (T. 1435, 23.182c11-22), the Buddha sanctions that if a monk purposefully touches a wooden girl, he gets a *tuṣkṛta* offense. A particularly interesting case is found in the *Sapoduo bu pini modelejia* 薩婆多部毘尼摩得勒伽 3 [**Sarvāstivāda Vinaya Mātrikā*]. A monk confessed his sexual pleasure with a wooden mechanical girl, which is said to open her vagina; he committed a *pārājika*: " 有比丘見木女像端正可愛, 生貪著心, 即捉彼女根欲作婬. 女根即開, 尋生怖畏疑悔, 乃至佛言: ' 若舉身受樂, 犯波羅夷. 若女根不開, 犯偷羅遮.' 如木女, 金銀七寶石女, 膠漆布女, 乃至泥土女亦如是." (T.1441, 23.584a1-5) It is notable that (as informed by Dr. Li Wei), such intricate a machinery is not attested in other Vinayas, hence even a monk has certain sensual pleasure with a wooden girl, he does not offense the *pārājika*. For the metaphor in the Sarvāstivāda Vinaya quoted by *Prasannapadā*, see below, note 54.

17 This was then followed by its recurrence in the *Da zhidu lun* 大智度論 (**Mahāprajñāpāramitopadeśa*), as well as a considerable range of Mahāyāna sutras. For example, in the *Da boniepan jing* 大般涅槃經 13 [*Parinirvāṇamahāyānasūtra*]: " 若以進止俯仰視眴知有我者, 機關木人亦應有我." (T. 375, 12.688c3-4) *Da fangdeng daji jing* 大方等大集經 14 [*Mahāsaṃnipāta*]: " 善男子! 喻如工匠刻作木人身相備具, 所作事業皆能成辦, 於作不作不生二想. 菩薩為成就莊嚴本願故, 發勤精進修一切業, 於作不作不生二想, 去離二邊, 亦復如是." (T. 397, 13.98a16-20.) The DZDL used this simile frequently. Not only a donor (dātr) is compared to a yantraputraka, but also a Bodhisattva who accomplishes his goal in a human body (T. 1509, 25.168a18-22.). Some give more weight to the bodily aspect, while some portray it as more or less the same as other illusory things. At the end of the day, all conditioned dharmas are just like a mechanical being, functioning by coordination of various causal factors. (T. 1509, 25.326a8-28.)

18 See Karashima (2011, pp. 413–24). This frame is probably echoing Indra's request and his repeated frustration in searching of the *Self* in the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*. See Kapstein (2001, chp. 2).

19 Vaidya (1960, p. 217); T. 224, 8.466a16-17.

20 DXJ 8: " 譬如幻師作化人, 化人不作是念: 師離我近, 觀人離我遠." (T. 224, 8.466b22-24.)

21 DXJ 8: " 般若波羅蜜, 敵無所愛, 敵無所憎. 怛薩阿竭所有, 無所著, 無所生. 般若波羅蜜亦如是, 亦無所生, 亦無所著." (T. 224, 8.466c2-5.)

22 In Lokakṣema's translation, this is followed by an additional set of similes, including a boat, desert, sun, water, etc., which are not attested in other parallels (Karashima 2011, p. 423, n.280). The final part of the chapter thus seems to have more fluidity than other parts.

23 DXJ 8 (T. 224, 8.466c9-14). Zhi Qian's translation largely follows the DXJ and retains the content of phrases (a) (b) that are absent from other versions: "譬如匠工黠師刻作機關人，若作雜畜，不能自起居，因對搖。木人本不念言:'我當動搖屈申低仰，令觀者喜.'" (*Da ming du jing* 大明度經 5, T. 225, 8.501c13-15). See the AP parallel below in note 40.

24 My translation, based on Karashima's (2011, pp. 422–23) partial translation in footnotes. In his Glossary, Karashima (2010, pp. 519–20) gave examples of *wuxing* 無形 corresponding to *svabhāva* or *asad-bhāva*, and I feel this is probably the case here.

25 *Xiaopin bore boluomi jing* 小品般若波羅蜜經 9 (T. 227, 8.576a16-19) parallels better with the AP, see below in note 27.

26 For the idea of "textual variation" in the Prajñāpāramitā text families, see Zacchetti (2021).

27 *tadyathāpi nāma bhagavan dakṣeṇa palaganḍena vā palaganḍāntevāsinā vā dārumayī strī vā puruṣo vā yantrayuktaḥ kṛto bhavet. sa yasya kṛtyasyārthāya kṛtas, tac ca kṛtyaṃ karoti. sa ca dārusaṃghāto'vikalpaḥ. tatkasya hetoḥ? avikalpatvād eva bhagavan dārusaṃghātasya. evam eva bhagavan bodhisattvo mahāsattvo yasya kṛtyasya kṛtaśa imāṃ prajñāpāramitāṃ bhāvayati, tacca kṛtyaṃ karoti. sā ca prajñāpāramitā avikalpā. tatkasya hetoḥ? avikalpatvād eva bhagavan asyāḥ prajñāpāramitāyā iti.* (Vaidya 1960, p. 219)

28 T. 228, 8.661c18-23; T. 220, 7.851a8-15; T. 220, 7.915c7-10.

29 In fact, the only version of the Prajñāpāramitā literature that I found to include (b) is in the *Ratnaguṇasaṃcayagāthā*, despite the fact that it is put into the mouth of the "magical man" (*māyākārapuruṣa*) rather than a mechanical man. See *Ratnaguṇasaṃcayagāthā* XXVI. 5: (A) *yathā māyakārapurusasya na eva bhotī tosiṣyimāṃ janata so ca karoti kāryaṃ* (Yuyama 1976, p. 103); (B) . . . *te śisya māṃ* . . . (Obermiller 1937, p. 96); *tosiṣyi* can be read as first-person singular future in this form of hybrid Sanskrit, see Yuyama (1973, p. 149,§36.11). If it is true that the *Gāthā* derived from a north-western recension of the AP (Ji 1995, pp. 234–55), the DXJ may belong to a recension from an approximate region where such cultivation techniques were popular.

30 The Chapter on Bodhisattva 菩薩品 of the *Xiuxing daodi jing* 修行道地經 30 [*Yogācārabhūmi* of Saṅgharakṣa] (T. 606, 15.229c14-19).

31 Occasionally, it is said to be moved by natural powers. For example, we find another variation of the *yantraputraka* trope in the *Da zhuangyan lun jing* 大莊嚴論經 5; this mechanical man is wind-forced: " 但以風力故, 俯仰而屈伸." (T. 201, 4.285b20-23.) Althought such cases do attribute mechanical man's movement to certain external force, yet notably, it is not a *sūtradhāra*.

32 I thank one of my anonymous reviewers for highlighting this point that he/she believes to be crucial.

33 Dharmarakṣa's translation of the *Tathāgatamahākaruṇānirdeśa*, the *Da'ai jing* 大哀經 (T. 13, 2.398.419a1). The newly discovered Sanskrit fragment covers this chapter and runs up to the beginning of the next, but it does not included the verse quoted (Ye 2021; confirmation via personal communication).

34 *Chixin fantian suowen jing* 持心梵天所問經 [*Viśeṣacintibrahmaparipṛcchā*, translated by Dharmarakṣa in 286 AD] (T. 585, 15.13c28).

35 *Foshuo pumen pin jing* 佛說普門品經 [*Samantamukhaparivarta*] (T 315a, 11.771c27-28); parallel to the *Da baoji jing* 29 [*Mahāratnakuṭa*]: " 因緣和合起, 離緣終不生." (T. 310, 11.161b3.)

36 DXJ 8 (T. 224, 8.466a24-29).

37 DXJ 16 (T. 224, 8.457a17-19): " 佛言: ' 初頭意, 後來意, 是兩意無有對.' 須菩提言: ' 後來意, 初頭意無有對, 何等功德出生長大?'" AP XIX (Vaidya 1960, p. 175): *paurvako bhagavamś cittotpādaḥ paścimakena cittotpādenāsamavahitaḥ paścimakaś cittotpādaḥ paurvakeṇa cittotpādenāsamavahitaḥ. katham bhagavan bodhisattvasya mahāsattvasya kuśalamūlānām upacayo bhavati?*

38 Haribhadra's *Āloka* (Vaidya 1960, p. 513): *sa ca dārusaṃghāto'vikalpa ity anena kriyāsāphalyavikalpaviraho nigaditaḥ.*

39 Quote from the *Tathatāparivarta*, Salvini's translation (Salvini 2008, p. 48): *na hi suvikrāntavikrāmin rūpasya kaścit kartā vā kārayitā vā. evaṃ vedanāsamjñāsaṃskārāṇām. na vijñānasya kaścit kartā vā kārayitā vā. yā ca rūpavedanāsamjñāsaṃskāravijñānānām akartṛtā akārayitṛtā iyaṃ prajñāpāramitā.* (Hikata 1958, p. 32.) More or less the same as in Xuanzang's translation, *Da bore boluomiduo jing* 大般若波羅蜜多經 595 (T. 220, 7.1081a14-21). Hikata dated the text to the 5-6th century AD (ibid., p. LXXXII); (Zacchetti 2015, p. 197).

40 E.g., *evaṃ yāvad ṛtor api naivaṃ bhavati—ahaṃ bījasya pariṇāmanākṛtyaṃ karomi iti.* (Vaidya 1961, p. 109.)

41 T. 154, 3.88, a17-23

42 The term *seshi* 色視 "having one's eyes fixed on beauty/forms" is interesting here, forming an antithesis with *kongguan* 空觀 "the insight of emptiness". Dharmarakṣa used the same pair of expressions in another section of the *Shengjing*: " 不曉空觀, 但作色視." (T. 154, 3.71a13-21.)

43 T. 154, 3.88, a24-b3.

44 T. 154, 3.88, b3-7.

45 See Hoernle (1907, pp. 22–26), who also mentioned that the 360 bricks in the fire altar are compared to the number of bones in the *Śatapathabrahmaṇa* (p. 105).

46 " 二十七七日, 三百六十節具." (T. 607, 15.234a15-c5; T. 606, 15.187b16-17).

47 The king shakes with his 360 bones out of fear in the Chinese versions of Śyama Jātaka, *Pusa shanzi jing* 菩薩睒子經 (T. 174, 3.437a23-27; T. 175a, 3.439a16-17).

48 This is suggested by other variations of the plot, e.g., *Da zhuangyan jing lun* 大莊嚴經論 5 (*Kalpanāmaṇḍitikā*): " 譬如幻師以此陰身作種種戲, 能令智者見即解悟." (T. 201, 4.285a3-4.)

49 The execution of the mechanical youth is like one artificial being hindered by another artificial being, resonant in many Mahāyāna sutras and Nāgārjuna's famous verse: *nirmitako nirmitakaṃ māyāpuruṣaḥ svamāyayā sṛṣṭam | pratiṣedhayeta yadvat pratiṣedho 'yaṃ tathaiva syāt ||* VV 23 (Westerhoff 2010, p. 49).

50 *Da zhuangyan jing lun*: " 我諦觀身相, 去來及進止, 屈申與俯仰, 顧視并語言, 諸節相支拄, 骨肋甚稀踈, 筋纏為機關, 假之而動轉. 如是一一中, 都無有宰主, 而今此法者, 為有為無耶?" (T. 201, 4.278c1-6).

51 *Shengjing* thus helps to redetermine the date of the *Liezi*, see (Ji 1950).

52 The new setting intimates a slightly different view. Richey (2011, p. 195) cited Campany (1996, p. 309): "Chinese literary trope of visits to foreign climes 'envisions the periphery as the locus of the simple, the natural, and thus by implication the primordial condition that has been progressively lost in the Central Kingdom'."

53 Dutt (1984, p. 166); T. 1448, 24.77a25-b18.

54 *Prasannapadā* ad *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* 1.3: *vinaye ca yantrakārakāritā yantrayuvatiḥ sadbhūtayuvatiśūnyā sadbhūtayuvatirūpeṇa pratibhāsate, tasya ca citrakārasya kāmarāgāspadībhūtā | tathā mṛṣāsvabhāvā api bhāvā bālānāṃ saṃkleśavyavadānanibandhanaṃ bhavanti ||* See MacDonald (2015, p. 179, and fn. 346).

55 For a comparison of the two versions, and their possible origin, see Beguš (2020, p. 4).

56 T. 207, 4.523c29-524a20.

57 The sense of competitive revenge is made rather explicit in T. 207, tale 8: " 主人誑我, 我當報之." (T. 207, 4.524a10).

58 (Lane 1947, pp. 41–45). Due to my ignorance in Tocharian, I completely rely on Lane's (and Cohen's partial) translation of the story.

59 Beguš believes that there is no practical difference between painter and artisan (2020, p. 19).

60 *Mañjuśrīnairātmyāvatārasūtra*: "All forms (rūpa) are like paintings on a scroll. Empty (śūnya), they are not material substance (dravya) [but are] like what is projected by a magic spell." Quoted from Martini (2008, p. 92, and note 11); (Kachru 2015, p. 10).

61 A few other variations of the story from the Dārṣṭāntikas, e.g., tale 29 of the *Da zhuangyan jing lun* (T. 201, 4.285b16-c2); for the French translation, see Huber (1908, pp. 147–50). Compare tale 20 (T. 201, 4.285a18-26; Lüders 1979, pp. 204–5).

62 Sukthankal 1933–1966, vol. p. 110. Samjaya's words is in fact ambiguous. See (Hudson 2013, pp. 125–26).

63 *Ganadharavāda* vv.1802–1806 (Vijaya 1942, pp. 309–13).

64 *Ganadharavāda* v.1845 (Vijaya 1942, pp. 348–49).

65 Chāyā: *kartrāditvato vā sakriyo'yaṃ mataḥ kulāla iva | dehaspandanato vā pratyakṣaṃ yantrapuruṣa iva ||* (Vijaya 1942, pp. 349–50). Solomon's interpretation is slightly different (Solomon 1966, p. 40, 160–61, 291).

66 *Apidamo dapiposha lun* 阿毘達磨大毘婆沙論 199 [**Mahāvibhāṣā*] on realist views: 如見樹動知風所為, 機關動時知人所作. "Just as from the movement of the tree, [we know] it is the work of wind; from the movement of the mechanical man, [we know] this is effectuated by a [real] man." (T. 1545, 27.p. 995c27-28.)

67 *Vākyapadīya* III.9,4, with Helārāja's *Prakāśa*: *yantrapuruṣaprakhyaṃ viśvaṃ sūtradhārapuruṣakalpakālapratibaddhaceṣṭam. kālena hi svaśaktyā bhāvānāṃ sthaganonmajjane janmanāśaparyāye vibhajatā, sūtradhāreṇeva yantrapuruṣasya sūtrasañcāravaśenonmeṣanimeṣādikriyākāriṇā, viśvaṃ prāptapaurvāparyapravibhāgaṃ pravibhāgalakṣaṇāś ceṣṭāḥ kāryante.* (Iyer 1973, p. 42.)

68 Such stories with sophisticated machines that arose at the turn of the second millennium are very likely "the result of wider cosmopolitan interaction with the Abbasid world". (Ali 2016, pp. 466–71.)

69 *Kathāsaritsāgara* 7.9.10-15 (Durgaprasad and Parab 1915, p. 195). Tawney's (1924, vol. III, p. 281) translation.

70 *Kathāsaritsāgara* 7.9.58: *sarvaḥ kṛto mayā.* (Durgaprasad and Parab 1915, p. 197). Admittedly, this fictional city is also modelled on a dualist view of sentient beings composed of "dull materials" and a supervising soul, here, the robot citizens and the king Rājyadhara.

71 "In the English-speaking tradition of philosophy of language it has generally been taken for granted that the ideal rational language is literal and univocal and has a unique relation to truth . . . The presence of metaphors and other tropes in language is a deviation from rational sense." In contrast to literary language that is closely connected with the analysis of science, "metaphoric language . . . is ambiguous, holistic in meaning and context-dependent, and in this view fit only to express subjective attitudes and emotions." (Hesse 1993, p. 49.)

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Article

How Did Bhikṣuṇī Meet Indian Astrology? Viewing the Buddhist Narration and Logic from the Story of the Mātaṅga Girl

Liqun Zhou

Department of Sanskrit and Pali, School of Asian Studies, Beijing Foreign Studies University, Beijing 100089, China; liqun21cn@bfsu.edu.cn

Abstract: The story of *Śārdūlakarṇāvadāna* consists of stories of the present life and past life. The former is about a girl from the low-caste *Mātaṅga* tribe who pursues Ananda, a disciple of the Buddha, but her pursuit ends in vain, and she eventually converts to Buddhism. The latter is about a low-caste king demonstrating his knowledge of the Vedas and astrology in a bid to marry the daughter of a great Brahmin for his son. The story could be seen in various Buddhist texts, such as the *Divyavadāna* from Nepal and the *Mātaṅga Sutra* in China. This paper studies the narration and logic of *Śārdūlakarṇāvadāna* stories, and it makes conclusions on the commonalities in the compilation of Buddhist narratives by analyzing the beginning and end of the story, as well as its narrator, narratee, and the four conflicts (i.e., the caste barriers, the violation of precepts, the use of incantations, and the use of expertise in seeking marriage).

Keywords: *Mātaṅga*; narrator; narratee; conflicts in storyline

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1. Introduction

The modern Indian writer Rabindranath Tagore's dance drama, *The Chandalika*, Shang Xiaoyun's Peking Opera *Modengnü* (摩登女), and Zhang Daqian's copy of the ancient fresco *Modengnü* (摩登女) all coincidentally focus on the female protagonist the Mātaṅga girl from the sutra *Śārdūlakarṇāvadāna, The story of Tiger's Ear* in English (Zhou 2020, pp. 3–4). The modern Chinese word "mó dēng (摩登)", a transliteration of the English word "modern", is indeed borrowed from the ancient Chinese translation of the sutras with its cultural connotations of Indian women (Zhang 2007, p. 31). Both the figure and the vocabulary are associated with the *Śārdūlakarṇāvadāna* (in short, the ZKA), which was translated into Chinese around the fourth century AD.

In the second volume of *A History of Indian Literature*, published in 1913, Winternitz, a leading German expert on Indian literature, refers specifically to the ZKA story as one of the most impressive stories in the *Divyāvadāna*. Throughout many years of research, I have been amazed at the delicate combination of Buddhist literature and astronomy in this story. It seems that no scholar has yet responded squarely to the specific reasons why the ZKA story is so interesting. The following elements of the story are all important in shaping the text: the young disciple of the Buddha, Ananda, being courted by a young girl; the attempt of a young girl from a lower caste to love beyond caste and religion; the correspondence between the four main characters in the past-life story and the present-life story; the father in the past-life story showing his great knowledge of all ancient India in order to help his son in his courtship; and the knowledge of astrological divination, namely, the astronomical knowledge of ancient India, narrated by a low-caste king. This paper attempts to discuss in detail the narration and logic of the *Śārdūlakarṇāvadāna*, with a view to examining the commonalities and individuality of the text.

The ZKA contains two metaphorical parts: one of the past life and the other of the present life. The present part[1] focuses on the story of Bodhisattva's disciple, Ananda, who

was pursued by the Bodhisattva during the Buddha's lifetime and was converted into the monastic community. The second is about Bodhisattva's past life. In the previous life as King *Triśaṅku* of the *Mātaṅga* tribe, the Buddha wished for the great Brahmin named *Puṣkarasāriṇ* (the previous life of the *Mātaṅga* girl's mother) to marry his daughter, Prakṛti (the previous life of the *Mātaṅga* girl), for his son, *Śārdūlakarṇa* (the previous life of Ananda), but this was objected to. The Buddha told King *Puṣkarasāriṇ* and his subjects that this woman had been married to Ananda in all her previous five hundred lives, which is why she fell in love with him in this life and pestered him so much. Finally, she converted to the Buddhist order and became a member of the monastic community.

There are many versions of the story containing the present life, e.g., the Chinese translation, which includes. Ch 1 of the ZKA, i.e., *Modengjia jing* (supposed to be translated by Zhulvyan and Zhiqian) 摩登伽經（題為竺律炎+ 支谦譯), chp. 2 of the ZKA, i.e., *Shetoujian taizi ershibaxiu jing* (translated by Dharmarakṣa Zhufahu) 舍頭諫太子二十八宿譯 (竺法護譯), *Foshuo modengnü jing* (supposed to be translated by An Shigao) 佛说摩邓女经（題為安世高譯), and *Foshuo modengnü jiexing zhong liushi jing* (anonymous) 佛說摩登女解形中六事經（失譯); the Nepalese Sanskrit critical edition in the 17th century *Śārdūlakarṇāvadāna*; and the Tibetan translation in the ninth-century *sTag rNa'i rTogs pa brJod pa*. The story is widely circulated in various Buddhist texts, such as the Central Asian Sanskrit text *Merv avadāna*, the Sanskrit version *Divyāvadāna* from Nepal, and *Binaiye* (鼻奈耶), all of which fully exemplify the characteristics of the *Divine Stories*.

The main content of the Oxford Sanskrit text of the ZKA is the story of the past life of Ananda and the Mātaṅga girl. The *Triśaṅku*, the King of *Mātaṅga*, uses his learning and knowledge to debate with the great Brahmin Puṣkarasāriṇ about the marriage of his daughter and Prince Śārdūlakarṇa (Tiger's Ear). The debate centered on whether Caṇḍāla, as a bastard caste outside the four castes, was qualified to ask for a Brahmin daughter. Brahmin families were prominent in ancient India and had the privilege of mastering the transmission of certain knowledge for generations, such as those who recited the Yajurveda for generations and those who had knowledge of astrology for generations. The topic that Triśaṅku and Puṣkarasāriṇ discussed contains not only the origins of the Vedas but also the knowledge of the 28 lunar mansions. There are a few parallel texts of ZKA containing stories from the past lives: the Chinese translations of the ZKA, i.e., *Shetoujian taizi ershibaxiu jing* (translated by Dharmarakṣa Zhufahu) 舍頭諫太子二十八宿經（竺法護譯); the seventeenth-century Nepali Sanskrit text of the ZKA; and the ninth-century Tibetan translation of the ZKA.

2. The Narration and Logic of *Śārdūlakarṇāvadāna*

2.1. The Opening and Ending Phrases

The narrative style of Buddhist texts has a certain paradigm. It is generally accepted that Buddhist scriptures begin with the words "Thus have I heard", which is the original text of the Buddha's words as heard by Ananda, i.e., "Buddhavacana". The Sanskrit text of the ZKA begins with "oṃ, namo ratnatrāyāya. evaṃ mayā śrutam". "Om salute the Three Treasures, thus have I heard". The other versions of the *ZKA* and the Tibetan Sanskrit text have only the phrase "Thus have I heard", and none of them has the phrase "Om salutes the Three Treasures". The *Modejia jing* (摩登伽經) begins with the phrase "As have I heard (如是我聞)", and the *Shetoujian taizi ershibaxiu jing* (舍頭諫太子二十八宿經) begins with the phrase "Heard as this (聞如是)", but, although the Chinese translations are slightly different, they also do not contain the phrase "Salutations to the Three Treasures". The Sanskrit text on which the ZKA is based is mainly the 1886 Sanskrit text written in the Bengal district and the 1837 Sanskrit text given by Hodson to the Asiatic Society in Paris, and it is likely that the phrase "saluting the Three Treasures" was added by a nineteenth-century scribe. In both Chinese translations, the phrases "heard as this (聞如是)" and "Thus have I heard (如是我聞)" are translations of the Sanskrit phrase "evaṃ mayā śrutam". It is generally believed that "heard as this (聞如是)" appears in an earlier translation of the sutra, while "Thus have I heard (如是我聞)" appears in a later translation, used by translator Yi

Jing (義淨) from the Tang Dynasty and translator Shi Hu (施护) from the Song (宋) Dynasty, gradually becoming a standard in the translation of Buddhist texts.

The Sanskrit critical edition of the ZKA from Nepal ends the same way as the edition of the ZKA in *Divyāvadāna*. "*idam avocad bhagavān/āttamanasas te bhikṣavo bhagavato bhāṣitamabhyanandan//Iti śrīdivyāvadāne śārdūlakarṇāvadānam//*". The English translation is as follows: "After His Holiness had said this, the bhikṣus rejoiced at His words. The above is the śārdūlakarṇāvadāna in auspicious Divyāvadāna". The end of Ch 2 of the ZKA reads, "The Buddha said thus. And the king, Prasenajit, was overwhelmed with joy and enthusiasm, and the elder Brahmacharyas and the bhikṣus saluted the Buddha. the *Shetoujian taizi ershibaxiu jing* (舍頭諫太子二十八宿經)" (Ch 2 of the ZKA, vol. 21, 419c25–c27). The Sutra of the Bodhisattva ends with the following words: "The Buddha said this sutra. The king of Prasenajit and the four tribes followed it with joy. *The* second volume of *the* Modengjia jing (摩登伽經)" (Ch 1 of ZKA, vol. 21, 410b12–b13). The Sanskrit scribe clearly knew that the Sanskrit text of the *ZKA* came from the *Divyāvadāna*, whereas the compilers of Ch 1 and Ch 2 of the ZKA may not have seen the collection of the *Divyāvadāna* and did not mention that the story came from the *Divyāvadāna*. In the Sanskrit text, the concluding parts do not mention King Prasenajit, whereas, in both the above two Chinese translations, he is explicitly mentioned. At the end of Ch 2 of the ZKA, more details are added, and the people who were delighted by the Buddha's words were not only the *bhikṣu*s and King *Prasenajit*, but also other "elderBrahmacharyas", i.e., brahmins and householders; after hearing the story of the parable, in addition to being delighted, they also "saluted the Buddha" by paying homage to him. They were delighted to hear the story of the parable, and they also "saluted the Buddha".

The *Avadāna* is one of the nine or twelve sutras, pronounced *Abotuona (* 阿波陀那), and it is formally identical to the Jātaka. Broadly speaking, the *Avadāna* includes Buddhist literature, Buddhist praise, and karmic stories. The Sanskrit text is represented by the *Avadānaśataka*, the *Divyāvadāna*, and the *Jātakamālā*, and its Chinese translation includes *The Sutra of Virtues and Fools* (賢愚經), *The Sutra of the Six Degrees* (六度集經), *The Sutra of the Hundred Metaphors* (百喻經), *The Sūtra of Collected Hundred Occasions* (撰集百缘經*Avadānaśātaka*), *The Discourse on the Bodhisattva's Origin* (菩薩本生鬘), *The Miscellaneous Treasure Sutra* (大莊嚴經論), *The Discourse on the Great Sutra* (大宝藏經), and *The Bodhisattva Ben Yuan Sutra* (菩薩本缘經). Venerable Yin Shun (印顺) and Ding Min (丁敏) (Yinshun 印順 1999, p. 460; Ding 1996, p. 71) classified the *avadāna* stories into categories, namely, *avadāna-itivṛttaka*, *avadāna-jātaka*, *vyākaraṇa*, and *avadāna-vyākaraṇa*, presenting *avadāna*. According to their classification, the ZKA is the type that connects the stories of this life with the ones of the past, i.e., *avadāna-itivṛttaka* (譬喻本事). Since the past-life story features the incarnations of the Buddha and his disciple Ananda, the ZKA is said in a narrow sense to be an *avadāna-jātaka* (譬喻本生). In a broader sense, this life is a type of metaphorical skill, and as the word "metaphor" appears in the title of the ZKA, it is considered a type of metaphorical skill according to Ding Min's classification. According to Fan Jingjing's research, The Sutra of the Heavenly Parables is, unlike the others, an anthology of parables scattered throughout the sutras and rituals. In his doctoral thesis, Tsutomu Matsumura divides the development of metaphorical literature into four stages: first, it became entangled with the sutra and the tales of the present life; then, it became a separate branch of the twelve divisions, but of such a variety that it was not yet linked to the concept of the same; and next, stories were selected from the canonical stories and other texts (e.g., the Great Sutra treatises) to form collections of stories, such as the Celestial Metaphor Sutra, to which the metaphorical stories of Gilgit belong. It is from *The Sūtra of Collected Hundred Occasions* (撰集百缘經) onwards that the metaphorical literature takes a fully independent path of development.[2]

2.2. Narrator

In cases where the narrator is also a literary character, they may play a role of greater or lesser importance in the events that they are telling. They may be the main character, an important character, a minor character, or even a mere bystander; sometimes, they may be

a character only in their part of the narrative and be absent in others; sometimes, although they do not play a role in the events that they tell, they may also be a character in the events told by other narrators (Shanruzod in *The Thousand and One Nights*). There are narrators who are also male protagonists, as in the case of the male protagonists in literary works such as *The Consciousness of Zeno*, *Great Expectations*, and *Kiss me deadly* (Prince 1982, p. 15).

In various Buddhist artistic subjects, the handsome young man standing at the right hand of the Buddha is His Holiness Ananda (*Ānanda)*. Ananda followed and served the Buddha for a long time, and Buddhist texts record that he fanned the Buddha to bring refreshment and brought him cool water to quench his thirst, making him Buddha's closest disciple. As he accompanied the Buddha for a long time, naturally, he heard the Dharma the most. After the Buddha's nirvana, the monks recited the teachings that they had heard at the first gathering so that they would not die out. Many sutras begin with Ananda asking the Buddha a question that brings up the rest of the story. Ananda remembered and recited the most sutras, so everyone called him "the first to hear much (多聞第一)". Young, handsome, erudite, knowledgeable, and single, Ananda seemed to be the ideal male figure for young girls in ancient India, where literacy rates were low.

2.3. Narratee

If there is at least one narrator in any narrative, then there is also at least one narratee, who may or may not be explicitly referred to as "you". In many narratives where the narratee is not referred to as "you", the "you" may be removed without trace, leaving only the narrative itself (Prince 1982, p. 17).

Apart from the *dārṣṭāntika*s who preach *avadāna* stories at great festivals, these stories are also told in the homes of lay people during pujas. Andy Rotman summarizes several situations in which stories are told in *Divyāvadāna*: Firstly, stories are told when answering questions for the monastic community and telling stories of karma. Secondly, stories are told when preaching the *Dharma* to the lay congregation who come to hear it. Thirdly, the Dharma is told after receiving offerings in the homes of lay people, which Rotman speculates is the *avadāna* story (Rotman 2008). In ancient India, the distinction between a *dārṣṭāntika* and a chanting teacher is very clear. The former used various illustrations, parables, stories, and, in later times, stories of karma in particular in order to spread doctrine and compile a group of classics. The latter, however, were mainly responsible for the consecration and glorification of the Buddha. In ancient China, there was also a separation between the "chanting of the Buddha's name" and the "preaching of the Buddha's teachings in a miscellaneous sequence of causes and effects, and the quoting of *avadāna* story in the background". However, since the brilliance of Huiyuan (慧遠), the singing teacher has been required to speak about the "three lives of karma ". It has since become customary for the chanting teacher to be the teacher of *avadāna* stories (Fan 2020, pp. 126, 136).

The Sanskrit and Chinese versions of the ZKA, which tells the story of the cycle of karma in two lives, may have been the versions used by *dārṣṭāntika*s in India and in China. The story of the past lives in the ZKA was told to King *Prasenajit* and many of his ministers, who listened and followed it with joy. In fact, the whole story of the ZKA and, indeed, the entire text were created for ordinary people with an interest in Buddhism. In the ZKA story, there are two or more narrators, and it is one of them to whom the whole story is ultimately addressed. In contrast to the other narratees, the ZKA addresses King *Prasenajit*, who was in a position of power.

3. Conflicts in the Main Plot of the Story

The ZKA has been described as the most interesting story by Winternitz, the author of *A History of Indian Literature*, probably because the conflicts in the storyline are more obvious and more frequent, thus creating several interesting story conflicts, such as the caste barrier, the violation of precepts, the use of incantations, and the use of expertise in seeking marriage, which produces several points of interest.

3.1. The Conflict of Caste Barriers

The heroine of the story is called the *Mātaṅga* girl, which translates as *modengjia* (摩登伽), or *modengnü* (摩登女), etc. India has a complex system of castes and tribes, and *Mātaṅga* is the name of a tribe that belongs to the caste of *Caṇḍala* (sometimes spelled Chandala). The *Caṇḍala* caste is known as the "lowest of the low", well below the Brahmins (*Brāhmaṇa*), Kshatriyas (*Kṣatriya*), Vaishyas (*Vaiśya*), and Shudra (*Śudra*) castes. Usually, the offspring of a union between a high-caste Brahmin woman and a Shudra man were called *Caṇḍala*[3], an outcaste (Varṇasaṃkara). This is because ancient Hindu Dharma literature, such as *Manusmṛti*, states that the marriage of a woman of a lower caste to a caste higher than her own is considered a civil marriage and that marriage to a man of a lower caste is considered a reverse marriage. A man of the *Caṇḍala* caste, regardless of which caste he intermarries with, gives birth to a woman of the *Caṇḍala* caste, meaning that once a Caṇḍala is born from a reverse marriage, the offspring will always be *Caṇḍala* as well.

In ancient India, occupation, residence, possessions, food, and dress were closely linked to caste and tribe, and the *Caṇḍala* caste, the "lowest of the low", lived in the worst conditions. The *Manusmṛti* states that "the dwelling place of *Caṇḍala*s must be outside the village, they must be treated as mendicants, and their possessions must be dogs and donkeys. They must wear the clothes of dead, they must eat food from broken plates, their ornaments must be made of iron, and they must wander forever. Those who practice the law must not have a desire to associate with them; their affairs must be done within them; they must intermarry with people of their own kind. By day they must go out to do their business after they have been marked by the king's command; they must carry the dead bodies of those who have no relatives; these are the usual conditions. They must always follow the king's order to execute the guilty according to the rules; they must take away the clothes, bedclothes and ornaments of the executed. The untouchable, the unknown, the impure, eve' if outwardly Aryan, but not actually Aryan, must be determined by their own conduct. Vulgarity, rudeness, cruelty and a habit of not observing one's duty are the characteristics of the impure-blooded people of this world" (Jiang 2007, p. 212). The caste system was like a great net that strictly limited the *Caṇḍala*s' food, clothing, and shelter so that they lived their lives as humble as ants.

The *Mātaṅga* tribe, so the story told, was responsible for repairing people's carts on the roads. When it was not harvesting time, to earn enough money, they would put sharp stones on the road and deliberately break the wheels of vehicles, and then they would repair the vehicles for money[4]. This kind of business is common in poor and inaccessible places. The *Mātaṅga* girl of the *Caṇḍala* caste, born into a family of Brahmins and Shudras married against their will, may live outside the village, taking off her shoes, wearing the clothes of the dead, carrying iron ornaments, and eating food from broken plates when she enters the village. She wishes to invite other girls to her house and entertain them with good food and drink; girls of a higher caste than her are reluctant to go. Whenever she steps outside her house, she is discriminated against in many ways, large and small. The only light in life is that the mother of the modem girl is a Brahmin woman with knowledge and the ability to cast mantras and to protect her and give her comfort if others bully her.

The meeting between Ananda and the *Mātaṅga* girl in this life was purely fortuitous. According to the precepts of the Buddha's time, monks in India did not cook their own food but went out in the morning to beg for food with a bowl. On his way back to his monastery, Ananda felt thirsty, so he went to a large pool and asked a girl who was fetching water for a drink. The girl who was fetching water was none other than the *Mātaṅga* girl, who at first refused Ananda's request, saying that she was the *Caṇḍala* caste and was not fit to give water to a passenger. Ananda said that he was a Buddhist monk, that there was no inferiority or superiority in his heart, and that all men were equal. He pleaded with the girl to give him water to drink as soon as possible, after which he had to continue his journey. The *Mātaṅga* girl could not resist Ananda, so she fetched water for him from a pitcher, and when he had finished drinking, Ananda left rapidly. Ananda returned to the abbey to recite the sutra and meditate, but the *Mātaṅga* girl fell in love with Ananda from this

brief encounter. She liked Ananda's looks, voice, words, and even the way he raised his hands. This would have been unthinkable in another time and place, but it would have made sense in India, where the caste system was so rigid. As mentioned earlier, people from the lower castes are discriminated against everywhere; they have to live outside the village, they have to take off their shoes to enter the village, and few shops will sell them garlands, milk, or other daily necessities. As the lowest of the low castes, the *Caṇḍala*s were never given the opportunity to eat or drink with the higher castes, let alone provide them with drinking water. In order to keep their holiness untainted by the lower castes, the higher-caste people would not accept food and water from the lower castes in any case. So, Ananda's act of drinking from the *Mātaṅga* girl's water jar broke the barrier of caste in her mind and made her feel recognized and accepted, feeling that this handsome monk was like a heavenly god. It is not surprising that the *Mātaṅga* girl was attracted to Ananda and wanted to be with him.

3.2. Conflicts against Buddhist Precepts

As a monk, Ananda was not allowed to enter secular life, such as marrying and having children. Embarrassed and frightened by the approval and courtship of the *Mātaṅga* girl, Ananda kept fleeing. But the *Mātaṅga* girl followed Ananda into the city and begged for food, walking as Ananda walked and standing as Ananda stood. This is a rather unorthodox situation for a Buddhist monk or a secular family. When Ananda ignored the *Mātaṅga* girl, the girl's mother used a mantra to catch Ananda and make him walk into their home, trying to let them get married in order to keep her daughter alive. In the nick of time, the Buddha used his magical powers and learned that Ananda was confined; he used a mantra to break the Brahmin woman's mantra, and Ananda was able to return to the monastery. The *Mātaṅga* girl had no other choice but to stay at the door of the monastery. Such a thing would still be inappropriate for a monk. Buddha himself spoke to the *Mātaṅga* girl and her family and told her that she could only be with Ananda if she became a *bhikṣuṇī* and joined the Buddhist Sangha. In fact, even after becoming a *bhikṣuṇī*, the *Mātaṅga* girl could not be with Ananda in the same way as a couple in secular life. Knowing all this, she left her parents and became a *bhikṣuṇī* in order to be closer to her beloved.

Generally, a *bhikṣu* takes hundreds of precepts, some of which forbid one to "change one's mind through lust". A *bhikṣu* is forbidden from having physical contact with a woman, speaking intimately with a woman, fornicating with a woman, preaching too much for a woman, sitting alone with a woman, staying in the same house with a woman, walking on the same path as a woman, being in close distance to a *bhikṣuṇī*, to walk together, or to travel in a boat together. It is clear from the scope of these precepts that the modem woman trailing Ananda, wishing him to be her husband, and guarding the door of the monastic residence had already seriously violated the precepts. The Buddha, as the leader of the monastic community, could not have allowed her to continue. It was a more feasible solution to involve the *Mātaṅga* girl in the monastic community, to ordain her, to speak to her, and to bind her by the precepts of the monastic community. The Buddha had the *Mātaṅga* girl shave and dress in monk's clothing, with the dharma name *Prakṛti*, after which he gave her a discourse on the Four Noble Truths of Suffering, Concentration, and Destruction. As a *bhikṣuṇī*, the Bodhisattva was enlightened and attained the Four Noble Truths and the fruit of Arahatship. Previously, there had been no women in the Buddhist monastic community, and the inclusion of women in the community of *bhikṣuṇī*s shocked King *Prasenajit* and his subjects. The Buddha had to explain the matter, so he told the story of how the *Mātaṅga* girl and Ananda had been husband and wife for five hundred lifetimes, hoping to gain an understanding of the monastic community and the secular crowd.

3.3. The Conflict over the Use of Mantras to Capture Ananda

The *Mātaṅga* girl was the daughter of a Brahmin woman and was, therefore, intelligent and clever. Knowing that she could not easily marry Ananda, she went home and asked her mother, who was skilled in mantras, for help. Naturally, her mother refused to help at

first, fearing that doing so would bring about the destruction of her family. The *Mātaṅga* girl pleaded bitterly and repeatedly expressed that she could not live without Ananda. Despite her displeasure, her mother had no choice but to relent and grant her request. The mother painted the floor of her house with cow dung and covered it with white thatch, and she made a large fire in the middle of the house. She took one hundred and eight flowers of the magical curse and chanted a mantra as she circled the fire, throwing one flower into the fire after each recitation. Her mantra was

> "Pure and stainless saffron and jasmine! Where you are bound, there is lightning. The god sends forth rain, lightning and thunder as he wishes. To astonish the great king as well as gods, men and gandharvas—O gods of planets with fire and gods of planets without fire!—and so that Ānanda shall return, meet with, approach and embrace Prakṛti, I perform this ritual."
>
> "*amale vimale kuṅkume sumane/yena baddhāsi vidyut/icchayā devo varṣati vidyotati garjati/vismayaṃ mahārājasya samabhivardhayituṃ devebhyo manuṣyebhyo gandharvebhyaḥ śikhigrahā devā viśikhigrahā devā ānandasyāgamanāya saṃgamanāya kramaṇāya grāṇāya juhomi svāhā//*".[5]

After the mantra was cast on Ananda, his mind was confused, and he went into ecstasy and unconsciously came towards the home of the *Mātaṅga* girl. When Ananda arrived, he saw her making her bed and suddenly had an awakening, yet he was still unable to control his body and wept in pain. He hoped that the Great Compassionate Buddha would get him out of his suffering. Seeing Ananda's plight with his celestial eyes, the Buddha recited the six mantras:

> "Fortitude, stalwartness, good conduct and safety to all living beings! Let this clear, pure, calm mind-stream bring to all a fearlessness. In which all calamities, dangers and disturbances are quelled, and to which gods, yogins and all adepts pay homage—by the truth of this speech, may the monk *Ānanda* be safe."
>
> "*sthitir acyutiḥ sunītiḥ/svasti sarvaprāṇibhyaḥ//saraḥ prasannaṃ nirdeṣaṃ praśāntaṃ sarvato 'bhayam/ītayo yatra śāmyanti bhayāni calitāni ca//tadvai devā namasyanti sarvasiddhāśca yoginaḥ/etena satyavākyena svastyānandāsya bhikṣave//*",[6]

Then, he used his divine power to help Ananda escape from the grip of the Mātaṅga woman and her daughter and return home.

According to ancient texts of India, people believe in the power of the body, speech, and mind. In Hindu mythology and literature, episodes in which vows and mantras become a reality and cause great hurt to mundane people and even celestial gods are commonly used. In the Ramayana, for example, Rama does not believe in *Sītā*'s chastity, and the many seers make *Sītā* swear to Rama to prove her innocence. "Looking at all the people, *Sītā*, dressed in a yellow robe; his eyes downcast and his head bowed, folded his hands and said: 'If I have never wanted any man but Rama; then ask the goddess of the earth to show a gap for me to enter.' *Sītā* thus vowed, and an unexpected miracle occurred; the lioness of the supreme heavens sprang up before him in the earth. And the great dragon of infinite strength, with his head, brought up the throne; and this throne came from heaven, and all the treasures of heaven were made. Then the goddess, the Mother of the Earth, put her arms together and embraced *Sītā*; saluting and welcoming her, she placed her on the throne. And Siddhartha sat on the throne, and all at once she fell into the earth; and scattering to *Sītā*, a continual rain of flowers fell into the blue sky. All at once the gods of heaven shouted, "Goodness!" And the cries did not stop, "Goodness! Goodness!" They cried out, "How virtuous *Sītā* is. When they saw *Sītā* enter into the earth, the gods were overjoyed; and as they spoke thus, they all returned one by one to their heavenly palaces" (Ji 1984). After *Sītā* had made her vow, Mother Earth welcomed her into the Earth, and the vow was fulfilled, and Rama could not see her again. Buddhism also believes in the power of the body, speech, and mind, and there is a tradition of using mantras in Hindu Tantra, Tibetan Tantric Buddhism, and Japanese Shingon Buddhism. For the layman, the

mantras in the ZKA have a mystical quality and have powers beyond nature. The mantras in the story are worthy of being phonetically translated into different languages as they were originally written. Buddhists or secular people, reciting them according to the text, may have magical powers.

3.4. The Story Conflict of Seeking Marriage with Specific Knowledge

In the past-life story, the conflict focuses on how a low-caste king can marry a daughter of a great Brahmin for his son. The story of the *Mātaṅga* girl profoundly demonstrates the deep-rootedness of the caste system in India. As a king, *Triśaṅku* had power, influence, and property. His son, *Śārdūlakarṇa* (Tiger-ear), was a man of great wisdom, good looks, and fine conduct, and of a compassionate and gentle disposition, possessing all the rare virtues. When the great Brahmin *Puṣkarasārin* heard that the *Caṇḍala* King wanted to marry his own talented and virtuous daughter for his son, he felt that the marriage proposal was an insult to the highest caste by the lower caste and became angry and rebuked him for telling *Triśaṅku* to leave quickly so that other Brahmins would not laugh at him. The main reason for *Puṣkarasārin* 's rejection of the courtship was that the *Caṇḍala* caste was not worthy of a Brahmin, as that caste "does not possess the precepts and cannot understand the subtleties of the Vedas" and "the Brahmins do not associate with them" (Ch. 1 of ZKA, p. 402, a23–24.). The traditional Indian texts, such as Rig Veda's "*Puruṣasūkta* (Song of the cosmic being)", have four castes that arise from different parts of the cosmic being's mouth, arms, legs, and feet, while the *Manusmṛti* treatises and other dharma texts prescribe how people of different castes should live with regard to various aspects of social life, such as clothing, food, housing, marriage, birth, and death. Without being condescending, *Triśaṅku* used his knowledge of the Vedas to redefine the origins of caste, arguing that the four castes were simply four brothers born of one mother who were engaged in different occupations and that the other outcastes were the same, with no distinction between higher and lower castes.

The knowledge of the Vedas is available to people today in many ways, but in ancient India, only the three so-called regenerate castes of Brahmins (*Brāhmaṇa*), Kshatriyas (*Kṣatriya*), and Vaishyas (*Vaiśya*) had the opportunity to learn it, and only Brahmins could teach it. The Brahmins held the knowledge, others who had the desire to know were not permitted to learn, and most could not read or write[7]. In particular, the more special knowledge, such as astrological divination and medicine, was read, recited, composed, and applied in practice only by special Brahmin families and was not known to ordinary Indians. After impressing *Puṣkarasārin* with his lectures on Vedic sources, *Triśaṅku* went on to teach a dozen more topics on astrological prophecy, which completely convinced the great Brahmin. The astrological divinations and the astronomical calendar included the names and characteristics of the *nakṣatra*s (lunar mansions); the fraction of days and nights, the length of hours, and the fraction of moments; the unit of length, the weight unit of gold, and the volume unit of grain; the fate of those born on the day of the night; the divination of cities built on the day of *nakṣatra*; the divination of rainfall in the last month of the summer on the day of *nakṣatra*; the divination of lunar eclipses on the day of *nakṣatra*; the desirable and undesirable events on the day of *nakṣatra*; the fraction of days of *nakṣatra*, the length of shadows and the change of hours on the day of *nakṣatra*; and the divination of earthquakes. These divinations are presented one by one in a dialogue between *Puṣkarasārin* and *Triśaṅku*, similar to the format of some intellectual texts. The astrological divinations are based on Vedic astrology, an early stage of Indian astronomy. Some of the divinations in the ZKA text are very similar to those in the *Garagasaṃhitā*, which dates from around the second century AD.

Puṣkarasārin was so impressed by *Triśaṅku*'s profound knowledge that he finally gave his daughter in marriage to *Triśaṅku*'s son without a second thought. As a result of this, Ananda and the *Mātaṅga* girl were husband and wife for five hundred lifetimes in the past, living in love and harmony. In this life, Ananda became a disciple of the Buddha, and the *Mātaṅga* girl became a bhikshuni. In a previous life, the Buddha was King *Triśaṅku*;

Ananda was the son of King *Triśaṅku*; and the *Mātaṅga* girl was the daughter of *Puṣkarasārin*, whose mother was the great Brahmin *Puṣkarasārin*. The castes of the Buddha, Ananda, and the mother and the *Mātaṅga* girl were reversed in their previous lives and present lives. The Buddha, as a wise man who knew all the causes of the world, was known as the "World Solver". He knew everything, and after shaving the *Mātaṅga* girl, he told the story of Ananda's past life with the *Mātaṅga* girl to appease the discontent of various groups, including the rest of the monastic community, King *Prasenajit*, and his subjects.

Each of the four conflicting stories mentioned above has great contradictory tension. The *Mātaṅga* woman's desire to break the caste barrier and marry Ananda would have been difficult to achieve in ancient Hindu society, where the caste system was deeply entrenched and daily life was heavily regulated. Because of Ananda's Buddhist identity and his philosophy of the equality of all beings, Ananda's act of asking the *Mātaṅga* girl for a drink of water crossed the barriers of the caste system and won the girl's heart. However, as a monk, Ananda had to follow the many precepts of the Buddhist monastic order: not to speak too much to women; not to live, walk, sit, or lie together; and not to have lustful desires for them. He could not respond to the love of the *Mātaṅga* girl and had to look to the Buddha. The Buddha's solution was to incorporate the *Mātaṅga* girl into the monastic community and make her a *bhikṣunī*. However, after becoming a *bhikṣunī*, he then had to explain to the disciples, including King *Prasenajit*, why he had accepted a woman from a lower caste into the monastic order. The precepts of the monastic order came into conflict with the resolution of the matter of the *Mātaṅga* girl's pursuit of Ananda. The mother of the *Mātaṅga* girl, because of her daughter's bitter pleading, used a mantra to capture Ananda in the hope of getting him to give in and marry her daughter, turning the wish into reality. The use of the power of language is quite common in Indian culture. Religions such as Hinduism and Buddhism, which also originated in India, have countless stories of the use of mantras and have even formed several sects featuring them. The exclusive knowledge of caste, the Vedas, astrology, etc., was originally held by special Brahmin families and was not often passed on. The Buddhist sutra, the ZKA, has a low-caste king using expertise such as astrology to overcome the difficulties of courtship and marry the daughter of a great Brahmin for his son. Even the long and systematic nature of astrological knowledge gives the impression that this is an early Indian textbook on astrology. The discourse of expertise also becomes a distinctive feature of the ZKA. The four story conflicts mentioned above converge in the ZKA to drive one story climax after another. In fact, any one of the four conflicts is enough to create a good narrative work. The convergence of the above four elements helps the work to shine and spread for over 1700 years.

4. Conclusions: Viewing the Buddhist Narration and Logic from the Story of the "Mātaṅga Girl"

The *Śārdūlakarṇāvadāna*, as one of the Sutras of the *Divyāvadāna*, has some similarities to other Buddhist sutras but also some differences. It is a sutra that begins with the words "Thus have I heard" and ends with the words "The bhikṣus rejoiced after hearing the words of the World Honoured One". The narrator is the same as Ananda, but the actual author is the *avadānika* (metaphorist). The narrator in the text is not necessarily the true narrator of the whole story. According to studies by Bangwei Wang and Jingjing Fan, the Indian avadānikas in Buddhist history may have been the true compilers of the *avadāna* stories. Between the first two centuries BCE and the second century CE, there was a widespread trend among Buddhist scholars to make Buddhism more acceptable to a wider audience by increasingly using so-called *avadāna*s in the manner and form of their preaching to produce classics, and these people gradually came to be known by the name of *dārṣṭāntika*s (Wang 2014, p. 78). There are two Sanskrit equivalents of a metaphorist, *dārṣṭāntika* and *avadānika*. *Dārṣṭāntika* may favor the use of exemplary (*dṛṣṭānta*) statements, while *avadānika* tends to use the three-life karma story (*avadāna*) statements. However, the two terms perhaps reflect the succession of historical eras: when the early collections of metaphorical tales were still relatively diverse and mixed, the metaphorist was *dārṣṭāntika*; when they developed

into the standard three-life karma story (*avadāna*), the metaphorist was *avadānika* (Fan 2020, pp. 124–25).

In terms of the narratees of the narratives, the readers of the sutras, in general, are the four members of the monastic community, laymen, and common people who have an interest in Buddhism. *Avadāna* stories arise primarily for the purpose of declaring good and evil. During the unfolding of a narrative, the similarities or differences between the narratee and the narrator, between the narratees and characters, between the narratees and other narrators, and between the narratees and the real reader and the distance between the narratees and the real reader can all be changed. The temporal distance between the narrator and the narratees can change, affecting the tone of the narrative and the development and main idea of the story.

The ZKA has circulated in different linguistic texts, including Sanskrit, Chinese, and Tibetan, and it has been carried out with some local adaptations. But its ability to spread across time and space relies on the uniqueness of its differences from other Buddhist texts. The first point is that the *Śārdūlakarṇāvadāna* covers ancient Indian astronomy and can be regarded as a sort of astronomical textbook, an expertise usually held by a few Brahmin families in India. The second point is that the narrator of the ZKA, Ananda, is also the male protagonist of the story of both his past life and present life. The third point is that the readership of the ZKA may have included divination enthusiasts, astronomical and calendrical researchers, and ordinary people with a practical need for divination.

The fourth uniqueness is that the ZKA brings together four kinds of story conflicts: the conflicts of breaking the caste barrier, of breaking Buddhist precepts, of using a mantra to capture Ananda, and of overcoming the difficulty of seeking marriage with knowledge. The above four kinds of story conflicts are intertwined, resulting in a climactic reading experience. The breaking of the caste barrier reflects the Buddhist concept of the equality of all beings. However, a monk followed the precepts of the Buddhist monastic order and could not respond to the love of the *Mātaṅga* girl. The girl's mother tried to solve the problem by using a mantra to capture Ananda to make their marriage happen. The solution to the problem was to incorporate the *Mātaṅga* girl into the monastic order as a *bhikṣunī*. Then, the Buddha had to explain in past lives why it was possible for a low-caste woman to enter the monastery. In the story of a previous life in the ZKA, a low-caste king used expertise such as astrology to overcome the difficulties of courtship and marry the daughter of a great Brahmin for his son. Ananda and the *Mātaṅga* girl were married for 500 lifetimes before they became entangled in this life. The four interlocked links drive the storyline forward and conclude satisfactorily by responding to the opening conflict.

Whether it is a literary story with clear contradictions, an astrological text with a significant readership, or a mantra that is always mystical, it can be broadly assumed that the main purpose of the ZKA in combining these elements was to make Buddhism more widely available and accessible to a wider audience. According to the research, the real source of the modern Chinese word "mó dēng 摩登", as a transliteration of the English word "modern", would be the Buddhist story "*Śārdūlakarṇāvadāna*", which was popular in areas along the Silk Road more than 1700 years ago. Perhaps, while people's group memories fade away as individual lifespans come to an end, living creations are still able to transcend language, region, and time, displaying a different luster and gaining constant life in a new time and space.

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Abbreviations

ZKA	*Śārdūlakarṇāvadāna* in Sanskrit.
Ch 1 of the ZKA	《大正新脩大藏經》T21, No. 1300, 摩登伽經（题为竺律炎、支谦譯）.
Ch 2 of the ZKA	《大正新脩大藏經》T21, No. 1301, 舍頭諫太子二十八宿經（竺法护譯）.
ZKA in *Divyāvadāna*	*dūlakarṇāvadāna* in The *Divyāvadāna: A Collection of Early Buddhist Legends*, ed. Edward Byles Cowell and Robert Alexander Neil, Cambridge 1886: The University Press, pp. 611–55.
ZKA from Nepal	*The Śārdūlakarṇāvadāna*, ed. by Sujitkumar Mukhopadhyaya, Santiniketan 1954: Viśvabharati.

Notes

1 The storyline is narrated according to *Śārdūlakarṇāvadāna*, Ch 1 of the ZKA, i.e., Modengjia jing (摩登伽經), and its English translation The Mātaṅga Sutra (Giebel 2015), as well as some other parallel texts (Cowell and Neil 1886; Mitra 1882; Mukhopadhyaya 1954; Vaidya 1959; Hiraoka 2007; Tatelman 2005).

2 Cf. (Fan 2020, pp. 71–72), the idea of Matsumura comes from Hisashi Matsumura, *Four Avadānas from the Gilgit Manuscripts*. The Australian National University, 1980. Diss., pp. XXXIX–XL.

3 Cf. (Jiang 2007, p. 206), "Shudra and the Vaishya girl, with the Kshatriya girl and the Brahmin girl, would give birth to a mixed race of Ayoghas, Kshatris and *Caṇḍala*, the lowest of men. 蔣忠新譯《摩奴法論》第十章第12 條" 首陀羅與吠舍姑娘、與剎帝利姑娘和婆羅門姑娘所生的是雜種性阿約格弗、剎德利和人中最低賤者旃陀羅。".

4 Cf. Ch 1 of ZKA, p. 403, c23–24, (Giebel 2015). "Once there was also a person who was traveling along the road when his carriage broke down, whereupon he repaired it, and so he was called *mātaṅga* 時複有人，于路遊行，其車破壞，因便修治，名摩登伽。" Cf.Ch 2 of ZKA, p.414a9–11, "Once there was also a woman who was traveling along the road of the wild, broke others' carriage who become auspicious or unauspicious then, and she was called *mātaṅga* 有一婦人，行在異路曠野屏處，破壞車轂，眾人吉凶，是故世間得凶呪種。".

5 The mantra is from the Sanskrit text *Śārdūlakarṇāvadāna*, not from Ch 1 of Modengjia jing 摩登伽經. I took a reference from Joel Tatelman's draft of the English translation of the ZKA, Heavenly Exploits 33, and checked (Giebel 2015) on the English translation of Ch 1.

6 The second mantra here is from the Sanskrit text *Śārdūlakarṇāvadāna*, not from Ch 1. I took a reference of Joel Tatelman's draft of the English translation of the ZKA, Heavenly Exploits 33, and checked (Giebel 2015).

7 In the 2011 Indian census, the average literacy rate in India was 74%, 82.14% for males and 65.46% for females; at the end of British colonial rule in 1947, the average literacy rate in India was 12%; how can one presume that the literacy rate in ancient India was no higher than 12%?

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