

Seeking the Vision of Mañjuśrī at Mount Wutai

SEEKING THE VISION OF MAÑJUŚRĪ AT MOUNT WUTAI

By

SUSAN ANDREWS, B.A.

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AUTHOR: Susan Andrews, B.A. (Mount Allison University)

SUPERVISOR: Professor Koichi Shinohara

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Abstract

In the Tang Dynasty (618-906) Mount Wutai emerged as the foremost sacred place in China. Scholars such as Birnbaum (1984, 1986) and Stevenson (1996) have attributed its development as a sacred site in this period to assertions made in contemporaneous Buddhist literature that a prominent bodhisattva appeared there. It was in this context, the argument follows, that the vision-tales discussed in this thesis—recounting the meeting of pilgrims to the holy mountain with Mañjuśrī—played an instrumental role in establishing Wutai as a sacred center. This thesis will demonstrate that although Mañjuśrī’s alleged manifestations contributed to Mount Wutai’s eminence, this was not the sole grounds on which its holy status was asserted. The paper will show that there were multiple ways in which scriptural and story literature framed the five-terraced mountain as a holy Buddhist site. Mount Wutai was alleged to be a place of particular numinousness not only because it was a place where Mañjuśrī entered the human realm, but also because it was a site where humans had exited the temporal and spatial realm and entered into manifestation monasteries. By examining four *Guang Qingliang Zhuan* narratives which frame the mountain’s holiness in this way—the record of the monk Wuzhuo’s entry into the Banruo Si (T51 1111b24-1112c), Shenying’s entry into the manifested Fahua Yuan (T51 1112c17-1113a14), the record of the monk Daoyi’s entry into the manifested Jinge Si (T51: 1113a15-1114a5) and the record of the monk Fazhao’s entry into the manifested Zhulin Si (T51: 1114a6-1116a22)—the thesis demonstrates that the terms on which Mount Wutai’s sacred status was created is even more nuanced than much of contemporary scholarship would suggest.

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In the Tang Dynasty (618-906) Mount Wutai emerged as the foremost sacred place in China. Scholars such as Birnbaum (1984, 1986) and Stevenson (1996) have attributed its development as a sacred site in this period to assertions made in contemporaneous Buddhist literature that a prominent bodhisattva appeared there. Contemporary scholarship holds that the mountain's pre-eminent status during the period was rooted largely in a scriptural claim—found in the *Foshuo Wenshu shili bannie pan jing*, the *Dafangguang fo huayan jing*, and the *Foshuo Wenshushili fabaozang tuoluoni jing*—that the bodhisattva Mañjuśrī's home was Mount Wutai. It was in this context, the argument follows, that the vision-tales discussed in this thesis, recounting the meeting of pilgrims to the holy mountain with Mañjuśrī, played an instrumental role in establishing Wutai as a sacred center. The record of the circumstances under which Mañjuśrī entered into the human world confirmed the legitimacy of the texts' claim. The settings of the meetings they described came to delineate the sacred landscape of the mountain.

This thesis will demonstrate that although Mañjuśrī's alleged manifestations contributed to Mount Wutai's eminence, this was not the sole grounds on which its holy status was asserted. The paper will show that there were multiple ways in which scriptural and story literature framed the five-terraced mountain as a holy Buddhist site. Mount Wutai was alleged to be a place of particular numinousness not only because it was a place where Mañjuśrī entered the human realm, but also because it was a site where humans had *exited the temporal and spatial realm* and entered into manifestation monasteries.

This thesis is organized into three chapters. The first of these introduces the textual sources which contain accounts of visions of Mañjuśrī at Mount Wutai. It places this literature within the context of the mountain's development as a sacred Buddhist space. These sources include both scriptural references, which link the bodhisattva and mountain, and miracle literature, which chronicles his encounters with pilgrims there. The former group of material includes sections of the *Foshuo Wenshu shili bannie pan jing*, the *Dafangguang fo huayan jing* and the *Foshuo Wenshushili fabaozang tuoluoni jing*. The latter includes relevant biographies of monk-pilgrims in Zanning's *Song Gaoseng Zhuan* and tales from the three Wutai mountain monograph, in particular Yanyi's *Guang Qingliang Zhuan*, as well as the Japanese monk Ennin's ninth-century diary. This chapter examines how these stories, detailing a religious figure's life and relationship to a place, promote Wutai as a sacred site where the bodhisattva enters the human realm.

The second chapter of this thesis focuses on the biography of the monk Wuzhuo, a Tang dynasty monk who traveled from Yongjia to Wutai in the second year of the Dali era (777CE). The biography details the monk-pilgrim's meeting with the bodhisattva Mañjuśrī and entry into a manifested monastery. The record of his experiences at Mount Wutai is preserved in both the *Song Gaoseng Zhuan* and the *Guang Qingliang Zhuan*. References to him appear in the *Guang Qingliang Zhuan* biography of the Huayan Patriarch Chengguan and the account of the Pure Land Patriarch Fazhao's entry into the manifestation Zhulin

Monastery in the same text. The second chapter offers a detailed translation of the *Song Gaoseng Zhuan* biography of Wuzhuo and compares it to the *Guang Qingliang Zhuan* record of Wuzhuo's entry into the manifested Banruo or Prajñā Monastery. It contextualizes this biography historically and aims to cast light on the sources available to Yanyi and Zanning in the compilation of the accounts. The chapter identifies points of significant similarity and difference in the ways that each text presents the mountain and monastery as a sacred site, highlighting the strategies with which the texts assert the authority of the pilgrim Wuzhuo, the bodhisattva Mañjuśrī and the five-terraced mountain. This chapter reveals some of the ways in which Wutai's status as a Buddhist center was established.

The third chapter of the thesis positions the *Song Gaoseng Zhuan* and *Guang Qingliang Zhuan* biography of Wuzhuo in a group of four connected stories. In addition to the record of Wuzhuo's experiences at Mount Wutai there are at least three other accounts in which an eight century monk-pilgrim enters into a manifestation monastery. The four narratives are arranged successively in Yanyi's mountain monograph. These vision-tales are the record of the monk Shenyong's entry into the manifested Fahua Yuan (Cloister of the Dharma Blossom T51: 1112c17-1113a14), the record of the monk Daoyi's entry into the manifested Jinge Si (Golden Pavilion Monastery T51: 1113a15-1114a5) and the record of the monk Fazhao's entry into the manifested Zhulin Si (Bamboo Grove Monastery T51: 1114a6-1116a22). The third chapter of this paper begins with a brief summary of each of the accounts and then turns to an extended analysis of

the way in which the manifestation monastery is constructed as a sacred site in these texts. While some of these vision-accounts have been translated and studied in isolation by Stevenson and Birnbaum, this thesis approaches the tales as a collection of stories united by genre, subject matter and history.

Comparing the descriptions of the entry into manifestation monasteries in these biographical accounts, chapter three highlights points of continuity and difference in the narrative strategies employed to assert the sacredness of Mount Wutai, the divine monasteries and, by corollary, their earthly replicas. Examining the stories of manifestation monasteries in accounts of the monks Shenying, Daoyi, Fazhao and Wuzhuo's Mount Wutai pilgrimages, the thesis identifies how these tales make use of other textual sources. These stories draw from the Daoist tradition of heavenly grottoes and the stories of the arhat Pindola Bharadvaja's miraculous appearances. The stories of manifestation monasteries describe Mount Wutai as a site which, in the manner of Daoist sacred peaks, is dotted with secret caverns housing numinous beings. Similarly, they portray it as a territory where Mañjuśrī, like his counterpart Pindola, is confronted in disguise. Clearly, the terms on which Mount Wutai's sacred status was created is even more nuanced than much of contemporary scholarship would suggest.

Chapter One

Mount Wutai, as its name suggests, is a five terraced mountain which is located in what is today Shanxi province. It is the northernmost of the four Buddhist holy mountains and in modern day China it is situated squarely within the borders of the state. During Tang times (618-907), however, this range of peaks was located at the periphery of the empire. The mountain was located to the north of the Tang political centers: the western capital Chang'an and Luoyang, the eastern capital. Wutai was farther still from southern China where, according to the 742 census, nearly half the population lived and from which numerous pilgrims to the sacred mountain journeyed.¹ Among China's many holy mountain territories, such as Mount Tiantai, Mount Lu and Mount Niutou, Wutai was set-apart by the remoteness of its location.²

Mount Wutai's proximity to the edge of the state made it, both during and after the Tang, a politically contested space. At times the mountain was located just within, and sometimes beyond, the perimeter of the dynasty. In the last years of the Tang and at points during the Five Dynasties period (907-960), for example, Wutai came under the control of the Khitans, the founders of the Liao

¹ Patricia Buckley Ebrey, *Cambridge Illustrated History of China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996) 120.

² One of Robert Gimello's principle insights in his article on the holy mountain in the Jin dynasty (1126-1234) is that Mount Wutai's location vis-à-vis the locale of other sacred domains contributed to the sense that the site merited not only devotional but also political attention in the form of, among other things, imperial patronage. Robert M. Gimello, "Wu-t'ai Shan during the Early Chin Dynasty: The Testimony of Chu Pien," *Chung-Hwa Buddhist Journal* 7 (1994): 501-612.

dynasty (907-1125).³ During the beginning of the Northern Song (960-1126) it was the domain of the Northern or Eastern Han Kingdom, a remnant of the Later Han dynasty (947-951).⁴ As a political frontier land where the Tang and the outside world met, Mount Wutai was a strategically important place. In a nation where mountains organized the sacred map and had long been used as markers of dynastic influence it was, further, a site of great symbolic significance.

The importance of mountain territories in China extends far back into its ancient past.⁵ From as early as the Qin dynasty (221-206BCE), when the *feng* and *shan* sacrifice was performed by Qin Shi Huangdi to announce the ruler's ascent to the throne, sacred peaks have been the sites of national as well as regional and local cultic activity.⁶ In pre-Han dynasty texts such as the *Shanhai jing jiaozhu* (Script of the Mountains and Seas), their sacred precincts are identified as the dwelling places of mountain gods (*shanshen*), mountain spirits (*shanling*) and mountain ghosts (*shangui*).⁷ In the early Daoist textual tradition the belief that mountains were home to powerful transcendent beings was advanced alongside

³ Gimello, *Chu Pien* 507.

⁴ Gimello, *Chu Pien* 507.

⁵ For an introductory discussion of the development of the mountain as a sacred site in China see: Terry F. Kleeman, "Mountain Deities in China: The Domestication of the Mountain God and the Subjugation of the Margins," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 114.2 (1994): 226-238.

Vladimir Liscak, "'Wu-Yueh' (Fiver Marchmounts) and Sacred Geography in China," *Archiv Orientalni: Journal of the Czechoslovak Oriental Institute* 62 (1994): 417-427.

Susan Naquin and Chun-fang Yu, eds., *Pilgrims and Sacred Sites in China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992).

⁶ Raoul Birnbaum, "Thoughts on T'ang Buddhist Mountain Traditions and Their Contexts," *T'ang Studies* 2 (1984): 5.

⁷ Kleeman, 231.

the ideal of the hermit who dwelt in their recesses.⁸ And references to the most prominent among the many sacred mountains, the *yue* (marchmounts), are found in literature from the Zhou dynasty (1050-403BCE) and, more generally, on oracle bone inscriptions from as early as the Shang dynasty (1600-1050).⁹ The importance of mountain territories in China stemmed from the understanding that they were home to divine beings and thus merited devotional attention. It was founded, further, in the perception that they demarcated and defended spheres of cultural and political influence and thus necessitated imperial attention.

With its introduction to China beginning in the first and second centuries, Buddhism encountered this wholly different arrangement of the sacred and profane. In its earliest form, sacred place in the Buddhist tradition of India had been geographically and temporally structured by the key events in the life of the Buddha. The sacrality of these places and the journeying of pilgrims to them are given license by the Buddha himself in the *Mahaparinirvana sūtra* where he identifies these sites, along with other places associated with biographies of the Buddha's disciples and the larger *sangha*, as the object of pilgrimage. In this textual tradition it is the Buddha who enshrines pilgrimage as an important component of Buddhist religious practice and who makes the relics of eminent Buddhists an important feature of it. While Buddhist pilgrimage remained, at least

⁸ This is an understanding which comes to the fore in the *Baopuzi* (Master Embracing Simplicity) by the alchemist Ge Hong (283-343CE) which reads: "all mountains, whether large or small, have gods and spirits. If the mountain is large, the god is great; if the mountain is small, the god is minor." Kleeman, 226-238.

⁹ References such as these have led scholars to speculate that the worship of mountains in China may have been performed as early as the Shang. Kleeman, 226-238.

initially, directed toward the sacred sites of India to which scholar-monks journeyed to retrieve sacred texts, pilgrimage came eventually to focus sacred space around a system of holy mountains.

By the Tang dynasty, Buddhist sacred place in China was centered on four major and many minor mountains. Sites on the Chinese landscape which had been the domain of national, regional and local cultic activity became centers of Buddhist learning and practice. The originally foreign tradition's claim to these mountain territories was asserted differently from place to place. In many instances, as Koichi Shinohara demonstrated in his discussion of holy Mount Lu, the presence of an extraordinary monk from beyond the mountain or the discovery of a sacred object on its peaks helped to establish a place as a Buddhist sacred center.¹⁰ The creation of these Buddhist spaces, Bernard Faure has shown, was often legitimized in Buddhist legend and hagiography. According to Faure, the encounter of Buddhism with popular religion and Daoism was often given muted expression in stories of monks meeting with and pacifying menacing snakes and spirits.¹¹ Yet while many of the peaks which became Buddhist realms came to be identified as such through a connection to objects and individuals from outside their borders, the Buddhist claim to the four chief holy mountains was justified in other terms.

¹⁰ The affiliation of the eminent monk Huiyuan (334-416) with particular places at Mount Lu, for example, contributed to the sense that this was a distinctly Buddhist place. Koichi Shinohara, "Literary Construction of Buddhist Sacred Places: *The Record of Mt. Lu* by Chen Shunyu," *Asiatische Studien* 53.4 (1999): 937-964.

¹¹ Bernard Faure, "Space and Place in Chinese Religious Traditions," *History of Religions* 26.4 (1987): 337-356.

The four major Buddhist mountains derived much of their sacred status from the understanding that they were home to a particular bodhisattva. Mount Emei was linked with Samantabhadra, Mount Putuo was believed to be the dwelling place of Avalokitesvara, Mount Shuihua was associated with Ksitigarbha and, finally, Mount Wutai was purported to be the home of Mañjuśrī. It was not principally stories of sacred objects and eminent pilgrims that established and reinforced the Buddhist claim to these territories. Instead it was by means of vision-tales recounting manifestations of these divine beings at the mountain territories that the bodhisattva's continued presence at these sites was established. Like numerous Buddhist sites, Mount Wutai was a place of religious importance prior to the introduction of Buddhism to China. As Richard Schneider explains in his article "Un moine Indien au Wou-t'ai Chan: Relation D'un Pèlerinage," it was known as the Mountain of the Purple Palace:

"A l'origine, le site du Wou't'ai chan était lié au taoïsme, et portait le nom de Tseu-fou chan, "les monts du palais de pourpe", nom qui continua, semble-t-il, à être en usage même lorsque tout lien avec le taoïsme eut disparu. Cependant ce n'est guère qu'à partir du V^e siècle qu'il devint un objet de dévotion bouddhique, bien que les sources traditionnelles prétendent la faire remonter beaucoup plus haut."¹²

With Mount Putuo, Mount Emei and Mount Shuihua, a Buddhist presence at the "Purple Palace Mountain" to which Schneider refers here was gradually asserted. The lore of this earlier tradition was subsumed under that of the Buddhist story tradition. Its spaces were incorporated into those of the Buddhist sacred map. As

¹² Richard Schneider, "Un moine Indien au Wou-t'ai Chan: Relation D'un Pèlerinage," *Cahiers d'Extrême-Asie* 3 (1987): 28.

with the other chief sacred sites, this was a transformation which occurred by means of a story and scriptural tradition which asserted that Mount Wutai was home to a bodhisattva. And yet even among these mountains, Mount Wutai was unique. In a tradition which held that the Buddha himself named the original Indian pilgrimage sites, the triad of scriptural passages which depicted the Buddha identifying the mountain as Mañjuśrī's home made Mount Wutai a sacred place of the most unique character.¹³ It is this collection of material to which the chapter now turns.

Scriptural evidence

Mount Wutai's preeminent status as the foremost Buddhist sacred place in Tang China was rooted in large part in a group of scriptural references that connected the bodhisattva Mañjuśrī with the mountain. These references are found in the *Foshuo Wenshu shili bannie pan jing* (Mañjuśrī -parinirvana sūtra), the *Dafangguang fo huayan jing* (Flower Ornament Scripture), and the *Foshuo Wenshushili fabaozang tuoluoni jing* (Scripture on the Dharani of Mañjuśrī's Precious Treasury of the Dharma). The first of these texts claimed that the bodhisattva Mañjuśrī would teach on a "snowy mountain" after the Buddha Sakyamuni's final passing. The second, the *Dafangguang fo huayan jing*, contended that Mañjuśrī's home was none other than Mount Clear and Cool. The third source declared that the bodhisattva would reside in the western regions

¹³ Shinohara touches on the implications which these scriptural references had on the strategies used to construct Mount Wutai as a distinctly Buddhist place in his article "Literary Construction of Buddhist Sacred Places: *The Record of Mt. Lu* by Chen Shunyu," 957.

during the age of the dharma's decline.¹⁴ Collectively these textual sources were interpreted by Chinese and south Asian Buddhists in such a way as to powerfully endorse the mountain's status as the bodhisattva's home in the age of dharmic dissolution.

The *Foshuo Wenshu shili bannie pan jing*, which Raoul Birnbaum suggests was written in the fifth or sixth-century, is attributed to the fourth-century Buddhist Nie Daozhen.¹⁵ Compared with the second and third texts listed above over the course of the Tang this *sūtra* became relatively unimportant to the cult of Mañjuśrī at Wutai. Its influence on the earliest developments of the tradition is, however, attested to in the frequency with which Huixiang makes reference to it in his mid-seventh-century monograph of Mount Wutai, the *Gu Qingliang Zhuan* or *Ancient Records of Mount Clear and Cool* (T.2098). Unlike the *Dafangguang fo huayan jing* and the *Foshuo Wenshushili fabaozang tuoluoni jing* which are, according to Birnbaum, quite possibly later texts, this scripture was in circulation in China early in the Tang. The section of this *sūtra* that was read by promoters of the cult of Mañjuśrī at Mount Wutai as proof of the bodhisattva's presence there is a response by the Buddha to a question about Mañjuśrī's *parinirvana*. Regarding this matter, the Buddha states:

Long dwelling in the meditative trance of heroic valor (*śūramgama-samādhi*), four hundred fifty years after my final passing, (Mañjuśrī) will go to a snowy mountain and—for five hundred transcendents—he

¹⁴ The meaning and significance of the prediction that Mañjuśrī would dwell on Mount Wutai in the era of the dharma's decline is discussed in chapter three on pages 90-93.

¹⁵ Raoul Birnbaum, "The Manifestation of a Monastery: Shen-ying's experiences on Mount Wu-t'ai in T'ang Context," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 106.1 (1986): 123.

will extensively proclaim the teachings of twelve divisions of the (Mahāyāna) scriptures.¹⁶

The snowy mountain (*xueshan*, Sanskrit Himavat) referred to in these lines was originally identified by Buddhists as part of the Himalayan chain.¹⁷ So too was a later reference in this text to the Fragrant Mount (*xiangshan*; Sanskrit Gandhamādana) taken to be part of the Himalayas.¹⁸ Supporters of the Mañjuśrī cult at Wutai, however, took these lines to refer to Wutai, an alternate name for which is Mount Qingliang or Mount Clear and Cool. As the Buddhist sacred mountain tradition developed, the assertion here that a special relationship exists between the bodhisattva and mountain would not remain a unique one. The belief that mountains were the dwelling places of transcendent beings was a notion that predated Buddhism's arrival in China and from which the tradition of four sacred Buddhist mountains grew. That the connection between Mañjuśrī and Mount Wutai was identified by the Buddha himself, however, made Mount Wutai's status among the Buddhist sacred sites distinct. This space, the *Foshuo Wenshu shili bannie pan jing* proposes, is not the appropriated sacred domain of a foreign tradition transplanted onto Chinese territory. Rather, like the *Dafangguang fo huayan jing* and *Foshuo Wenshushili fabaozang tuoluoni jing* suggest, the history of Mount Wutai's link to Mañjuśrī was known to the Buddha himself.

¹⁶ Birnbaum, *Shen-ying* 123.

¹⁷ Tansen Sen, *Buddhism, Diplomacy, and Trade: The Realignment of Sino-Indian Relations, 600-1400* (Honolulu: Association for Asian Studies and University of Hawai'i Press, 2003): 77.

¹⁸ Sen, 77.

It is in the chapter entitled “Dwelling Places of the Bodhisattvas” in the *Dafangguang fo huayan jing* that Śākyamuni Buddha identifies Mount Clear and Cool as one of twenty-two dwelling places of bodhisattvas. Like the *Foshuo Wenshu shili bannie pan jing*, this late-seventh century translation of the *Avatamsaka Sūtra* by the Khotanese monk Śikṣānada asserts that the bodhisattva resides with his retinue on the Chinese mountain.¹⁹ It reads:

There is a place in the northeast named Mount Clear-and-Cool. From ancient times till the present, bodhisattva assemblies have dwelt there. At present there is a bodhisattva named Mañjuśrī who, together with his retinue and assembly of bodhisattvas numbering ten thousand persons, is always in its center, extensively preaching the Dharma.²⁰

The third scriptural claim that helped to establish Mount Wutai’s status in the Tang is found in the *Foshuo Wenshushili fabaozang tuoluoni jing* (Scripture on the Dharani of Mañjuśrī’s Precious Treasury of the Dharma). Two translations of this text by Bodhiruci, a South Indian master, remain from 710.²¹ Here the speakers are the Buddha and a bodhisattva named Lord of the Secret Trances of the Vajra. The account begins with the bodhisattva requesting that the Buddha tell him where Mañjuśrī will dwell in the period following the Buddha’s final passing away:

“O Lord, you often have said these words to me in the past—‘After my final passing away, when a woesome age has fallen upon the Rone Apple Continent (Jambudvīpa), Mañjuśrī with broad abilities will benefit limitless sentient beings, and he will do the Buddha’s work.’ My sole wish, O Lord, is that you clearly and extensively describe to

¹⁹ Sen, 77.

²⁰ Birnbaum, *Shen-ying* 124.

²¹ Raoul Birnbaum, *Studies on the Mysteries of Mañjuśrī: A group of East Asian maṇḍalas and their traditional symbolism* (Boulder: Society for the Study of Chinese Religions, 1983): 11.

me in what place he shall dwell and further in what region he shall practice these beneficial acts. Due to your compassionate sympathy and upholding protection for all sentient beings, I wish that you will speak of it.”

Then the Buddha told the bodhisattva Lord of the Vajra’s Secret Traces: “After my final passing, in this Rose Apple Continent in the northeast sector, there is a country name Mahā Cīna. In its center there is a mountain named Five Peaks. The youth Mañjuśrī shall roam about and dwell there, preaching the Dharma in its center for the sake of all sentient beings.”²²

The bodhisattva’s question and the Buddha’s answer situate Mañjuśrī’s incarnation in time and space. The former identifies Mañjuśrī’s appearance with a woesome age, the era of decline, a link we will hear echoed in the biography of Wuzhuo and elsewhere in the vision-tale literature. The latter puts Mañjuśrī at Mahā Cīna (Great China) in the northeast on a five peaked mountain. This site, at least for proponents of the Mañjuśrī cult at Wutai, was easily identifiable as the northern mountain which in name means five-terraced mountain. Together with the other two prophetic scriptures—the *Foshuo Wenshu shili bannie pan jing* and the *Huayan jing*—the *Foshuo Wenshu shili fabaozang tuoluoni jing* was of paramount importance to the growing cult of the bodhisattva at Wutai Mountain. The scriptural references formed the textual context in which the vision-tales recounting the meeting of Mañjuśrī with pilgrims to Mount Wutai were written and read. Together they transported the sacred center of Buddhism from India to China and, in doing so, made a location on the periphery of the Chinese political map into a site at the center of the sacred one.

²²

Sen, 82.

Miracle Literature

Alongside this collection of sacred scriptures which asserted that the bodhisattva was present in China, developed a body of vision accounts in which pilgrims to Wutai encountered Mañjuśrī there. These stories confirmed that Wutai was, as these texts purported, the sacred center where Mañjuśrī preached the correct dharma in the age of its termination. Confirming the legitimacy of the texts' claims, the records of visions asserted the collective sacredness of the pilgrim, deity and site.

In the vision tales of Mount Wutai, the bodhisattva Mañjuśrī reveals himself to pilgrims in a number of guises and under a variety of circumstances. The different forms he assumes in this literature can be divided into three groups. In the first, Mañjuśrī appears to his followers in a recognizable form, as a prince astride a lion or a youth in monks' robes, for example. In these accounts he is easily identified as the bodhisattva of wisdom. In the second class of visions the tolling of a bell, a five colored cloud or unusual light are purported to be manifestations of the bodhisattva. In each of these stories Mañjuśrī is recognized as an unusual site or sound at Mount Wutai. Finally, in the third group of tales Mañjuśrī appears in disguise. In these stories the Buddhist pilgrims who meet and interact with Mañjuśrī, concealed as a monk or woman for example, do not realize that he is the bodhisattva. The particular place on the mountain and time of day, as well as the social setting of the encounter, seem not to be determining factors in the type of form the bodhisattva takes. In the first two of these three general

groups, however, the pilgrim to the mountain is often expecting or actively soliciting with prayer or obeisance an encounter with the bodhisattva. In the third, the ordained or lay pilgrim to Mount Wutai, though possibly at the mountain in search of a vision of Mañjuśrī, is unprepared for the encounter. Tales of manifestation monasteries are notable, as the third chapter will show, for the frequency with which Mañjuśrī appears to the monk-pilgrims in particular disguises.

We find an example of the bodhisattva appearing at Mount Wutai in a familiar form in a vision account in Zhang Shangying's *Xu Qingliang Zhuan*. This text is a record of Zhang's 1088 pilgrimage to Wutai and is the third in a triad of monographs on the mountain that will be discussed in the final section of this chapter. Throughout this first-hand account of his journey to the mountain, Zhang Shangying describes the variety of forms in which he, alone or in a group, sees the bodhisattva. On the eighth day of his pilgrimage at the Mimo Escarpment, Shangying describes how, for example, he witnessed "a path of white vapor [which] extended itself from the Five Terraces directly to the top of the escarpment, and in front of the cliff Mañjuśrī appeared astride a lion."²³ Later that same day, before Shangying, the monk Jizhe, an abbot and an entourage of women and servants: "[t]here was an auspicious cloud of golden hue, its radiant

²³ The Mimo escarpment is, in Gimello's estimation, a cliff near the Foguang Monastery (Monastery of the Buddha's Radiant Light) on the Southern Peak of Mount Wutai. Robert Gimello, "Chang Shang-ying on Wu-t'ai Shan," *Pilgrims and Sacred Sites in China*. Susan Naquin and Chun-fang Yu, eds. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992): 109.

coloration dazzling to the eyes. The Bodhisattva then appeared mounted on a green lion and entered into the cloud.”²⁴

In both these instances from Shangying’s text Mañjuśrī appears to devotees at Wutai mounted atop a lion within some type of cloud. It is obvious to those who experience the visions that it is Mañjuśrī whom they encounter. The form of the bodhisattva so easily recognized here is one which, Lamotte explains, was common throughout the Buddhist world:

Il apparait sous la forme d’un bodhisattva religieux, coiffé du pañcacīraka, composé de cinq mèches de cheveux ou d’une tiare à cinq pointes, ce qui lui vaut le titre de Pañcacīra. Il tient dans la main droite le glaive (khadga) qui tranche toute ignorance, et dans la main gauche le livre (pustaka) qui recèle toute connaissance. Il a le lion (simha) pour siège et pour monture. L’épithète que les textes bouddhiques lui attribuent le plus souvent est celle de Kumarabhuta “Jeune home” ou “Prince royal.”²⁵

The image of the bodhisattva prince astride his lion is one common in the textual as well as visual sources from Mount Wutai. It is the form of the bodhisattva which sat in front of the well-documented “Panorama of Wutai shan” in the Cave of the Thousand Buddhas at Dunhuang.²⁶ In fact, according to one miracle account recorded in the Japanese monk Ennin’s diary, it is the form that Mañjuśrī himself wanted replicated in imagery.

²⁴ Gimello, *Chang Shang-ying* 110.

²⁵ Étienne Lamotte, “Mañjuśrī,” *T’oung Pao* 48 (1975): 2.

²⁶ The 3.5m x 15.5m mural of Mount Wutai in Cave 61 at Dunhuang was executed between 947-957 (Wong) or 980-995 (Marchand). A sculpted image of Mañjuśrī astride his lion originally sat in front of the panorama of the mountain, its pilgrims and divine residents. Evidence of the image is found in the lion’s tale, a fragment of which remains on the mural.

Ernesta Marchand, “The Panorama of Wu-t’ai shan as an Example of Tenth-Century Cartography,” *Oriental Art* 22.2 (1976): 158-73.

Dorothy C. Wong, “A Reassessment of the Representation of Mt. Wutai from Dunhuang Cave 61,” *Archives of Asian Art* 46 (1993): 27-52.

In this tale of Mañjuśrī's manifestation at the Huayan Monastery an artist attempts to make an image of Mañjuśrī to adorn a temple on the mountain six times, but each time the image cracks as he is completing it. On his seventh try the monk prayed that the bodhisattva, if unsatisfied with the image, would himself appear. When Mañjuśrī did arrive, Ennin writes, the artist "opened his eyes and saw the Bodhisattva Monju [Mañjuśrī] riding on a gold-colored lion right before him. After a little while (Monju) mounted on a cloud of five colors and flew away up into space."²⁷ After correcting his image to match the vision of Mañjuśrī he had seen the image, at last, did not crack.²⁸

The image of the bodhisattva which Lamotte details above is certainly not the only form in which Mañjuśrī is recognizable to those he meets. In Shangyings's account he encounters the bodhisattva with a somewhat different appearance on another occasion. His description of this encounter simply states that, while praying and prostrating "he suddenly appeared to the left of the cliff and stood in the shining light."²⁹ It is not solely as a prince or youth atop his lion that Mañjuśrī is recognizable to his followers, though this is often the case.

In the vision literature of Mount Wutai Mañjuśrī not only appears to pilgrims in the form of a bodhisattva, he also makes his presence known through strange sounds, lights and sites at the mountain. On the third day of his journey to

²⁷ Edwin O. Reischauer, *Ennin's Diary: The Record of a Pilgrimage to China in Search of the Law* (New York: Ronald Press, 1955): 233.

²⁸ Gimello records a similar story set not at the Huayan Monastery but at the Zhen rong yuan (Hall of True Countenance). Here the artist An Sheng was visited many, many times by Mañjuśrī as he made a clay image of him. In this way the accuracy of the representation was guaranteed. Gimello, *Chang Shang-ying* 134,

Wutai Zhang Shangying describes, for example, how “[a]n auspicious five-hued cloud appeared, and an orb of white light leapt from the ground, revolving hundreds of times like a chariot wheel.”³⁰ The Japanese pilgrim monk Ennin tells of a similar sight he observes: “a colored cloud, shining bright and luminous” that his companion the monk Yiyuan identified as “a manifestation of His Holiness (Monju).”³¹ Describing the Grotto of the Holy Bell near the Dali Lingqing Monastery Ennin makes reference to the tolling of a bell and a group of unusual pebbles that are also considered manifestations of the saint. He writes that on the mountain:

from time to time can be heard the tolling of a bell. When it tolls forth, the mountain summits quiver. Tradition has it that this is a manifestation of His Holiness Monju, and this is traditionally called the Valley of the Holy Bell.

More than ten *li* due east of the monastery there is a high peak called Pao-shih-shan (“Jewel Mountain”). In (its) grottoes there are many pebbles, all of which have a five-colored nimbus. This too is the result of a manifestation of the Saint.³²

Mañjuśrī’s presence at Mount Wutai is known by his followers not only through his appearance to them in the form of a bodhisattva but also through his manifestation as anomalous features in the natural environment of Wutai. As Ennin’s discussion of the “Valley of the Holy Bell” makes clear, the bodhisattva’s manifestations in this form could and did result in a particular point on the mountain peaks being identified as a region of heightened numinousness.

²⁹ Gimello, *Chang Shang-ying* 110-111.

³⁰ Gimello, *Chang Shang-ying* 105.

³¹ Reischauer, *Ennin’s Diary* 250-251.

³² Reischauer, *Ennin’s Diary* 265.

Finally, Mañjuśrī, according to the vision-tale literature, appeared not only to pilgrims in familiar human and natural forms, but he also appeared to Wutai pilgrims in disguise. In one of the earliest records of the bodhisattva's manifestation at the mountain, Mañjuśrī is described as presenting himself to the Indian monk Buddhapāli in this way.³³ Buddhapāli came to Mount Wutai in 676 and was met by Mañjuśrī, in the guise of an old man, at its entrance. In this form, the disguised bodhisattva asked the monk whether or not he had brought with him a copy of the *Buddhoṣṇīṣa-vijaya-dhīraṅī sūtra*.³⁴ When Buddhapāli replied that he had not, the old monk insisted that he return to India in order to retrieve one and when he did so in 683 he was welcomed into the hidden precincts of the mountain. In Ennin's words

“[t]he monk went back to India and got the scripture and came back to this mountain, whereupon Monju led him and entered with him into this grotto. When (Buddha)pala entered, the entrance of the grotto closed of itself, and it has not opened to this day.”³⁵

In a second story, also recorded in Ennin's diary, Mañjuśrī appears in the guise of a pregnant woman who visits a vegetarian feast held at the Da Huayan Monastery, the Great Flower Garland Monastery.³⁶ At this feast, Ennin states, the patron was becoming increasingly disgruntled as more and more lay beggars from

³³ The tale of Buddhapāli's entry into the Diamond Grotto is preserved in the *Guang Qingliang Zhuan* as chapter twelve (T51.1111a19-1111b23).

³⁴ The Diamond Grotto (Jin gang ku) is located at the base of the Eastern Terrace in the Louguan Valley. The earthly replica of the Banruo or Prajñā Monastery was built next to it there. The scripture is in Taisho XIX 967. When reading the story of Buddhapāli's meeting, according to Birnbaum, “it is important to note that Mañjuśrī instructed Buddhapālita to return with a scripture from the esoteric traditions of Buddhism, for by the late-eight century—as the cult grew in popularity—Mañjuśrī became closely associated with the Chinese Chen-yen school that systematized these teachings.” Birnbaum, *Mysteries* 10.

³⁵ Reischauer, *Ennin's Diary* 247.

outside the mountain arrived at the feast, when a pregnant woman approached him and asked for a second helping of food. The patron refused to give the pregnant woman another helping, despite the fact that she told him the child in her womb also needed to eat. When she asked a second time for an additional portion he again denied her request. To this the woman said the following:

“If the child in my belly does not get food, then I too should not eat,” and, rising, she left the dining hall. Just as she went out of the door of the hall, she was transformed into Monjushiri, emitting light which filled the hall with dazzling brightness. With his bright jade-(like) countenance and seated on a lion with golden hair and surrounded by a myriad of Bodhisattvas, he soared up into the sky. The whole assembly of several thousand persons rushed out together and fell dumbfounded and insensible to the ground. They raised their voices in repentance and wept bitterly, raining down tears, and called out “His Holiness Monjushiri,” until their voices gave way and their throats were dry, but he never deigned to turn around and grew indistinct and then disappeared.³⁷

Three of the four stories of manifestation monasteries explored in this thesis detail, as this episode does, a meeting with Mañjuśrī in disguise. In these tales he is most often encountered in the form of an old monk or elderly man. Underlying this third type of manifestation, as this thesis will demonstrate, is a collection of tales about another Buddhist figure who appears to his followers as, among other things, an old man, a chiming bell or fragrant follower. Tales from one cult, the paper will show, are appropriated here to the ends of another.

Miracle tales such as the ones this chapter has described performed a critical role in the transformation of Mount Wutai from a site of local import prior

³⁶ Chapter two offers a full discussion of the Huayan Monastery on pages 42-44.

³⁷ Reischauer, *Ennin's Diary* 258-259

to Buddhism's introduction to a site that by the Tang was the sacred domain of the originally foreign tradition. These stories established the bodhisattva's presence at specific locales on the five-terraced mountain. In doing so, they confirmed that the claims made in the *Foshuo Wenshu shili bannie pan jing*, the *Dafangguang fo huayan jing* and the *Foshuo Wenshu shili fabaozang tuoluoni jing*. The vision tales, moreover, provided a model to be followed by future pilgrims to Wutai. Further, they laid the narrative foundation for the construction of temples, *stūpas* and images that marked the bodhisattva's continued presence at particular points on the mountain. These sites function much like the shrines Sallnow describes in a very different context:

The miraculous shrine that is its goal is a spot on the spiritually animated landscape where divine power has suddenly burst forth. Forces that are usually submerged have here broken the surface, in an epiphany that has become fixed in the perceptual territory of human beings. And not just in space: the shrine marks an irruption into history, the entry of the divine into the temporal as well as the spatial order of reality. By approaching it, pilgrims seek to tap its still active power, to draw this into their lives and thereby to induce existential change.³⁸

A majority of the sites that Zhang Shangying and Ennin visit above, like those Sallnow discusses, are the structural reminders of the bodhisattva's entry into the temporal realm. Scattered amongst these markers, however, are establishments of another sort: monasteries modeled on divine temples. Their origins are described in vision-tales unique within the wider Mount Wutai tradition. Unlike the tales in Ennin and Zhang Shangying's accounts, the stories of manifestation monasteries

involve not simply the disguised bodhisattva's entry into the human realm at Wutai. The accounts of the monks Wuzhuo, Daoyi, Fazhao and Shenying narrate the monk's exit from the temporal and spatial world into the realm of the Mañjuśrī. The temples constructed to mark this bursting forth, across the lines of human and holy, signal not only the bodhisattva's entry into the territory of humans but also the exit of the four monks from it.³⁹

Sources

One of the two principal sources from which this thesis draws is the *Song Gaoseng Zhuan* or The Biographies of Eminent Monks Compiled under the Song. The text is the third in a group of three Biographies of Eminent Monks, compilations of the biographies of monks from a wide range of time periods and places. Kenneth Ch'en, in his introduction to Chinese Buddhism, summarizes their contents as follows:

The *Kao-seng-chuan*, covering the period from the Later Han to ca.520, contained biographies of 257 monks and mentioned 200 others casually. The *Hsu Kao-seng-chuan*, covering the period from the Liang Dynasty to 667, contained biographies of 485 monks and

³⁸ Sallnow in David Frankfurter, "Introduction: Approaches to Coptic Pilgrimage," *Pilgrimage and Holy Space in Late Antique Egypt*, David Frankfurter, ed. (Leiden: Brill, 1998): 4.

³⁹ The understanding that sacred places are sites not only where the divine enters into the human realm but also where humans exit from it is found in the Indian *firtha* tradition. *Tirthas* are the mountain, river, forest, seacoast and city sites which define Indian pilgrimage. The verbal root of the noun *firtha*, ṣī or tarati, has as its primary meaning "to cross over" and *tirthas* derive their sacred status from the belief that they are places from which humans cross over from the temporal realm. While in the *Upaniṣads*, Eck explains, the crossing is believed to be between this world and the world of Brahman, a transition in knowledge, in modern India, she asserts, *tirthas* are considered points where heaven is accessed from earth. In this context the crossing is between the divine and temporal. In a similar way, manifestation monasteries in the *Song Gaoseng Zhuan* and *Guang Qingliang Zhuan* tales, like *tirthas*, are sacred spots where the boundary between the temporal and divine is crossed on the Wutai. Diana L. Eck, "India's *Tirthas*: 'Crossings' in Sacred Geography," *History of Religions* 20.4 (1981): 329.

mentioned 219 others; while the *Sung Kao-seng-chuan*, covering the period of 667-987, contained biographies of 532 monks and mentioned 125 others.⁴⁰

The first of these texts, the *Gaoseng Zhuan*, was compiled by the scholar monk Huijiao.⁴¹ Huijiao was a native of the south-western administrative district of Kuaiji. This was a region of intellectual and cultural life in which Buddhism was well-patronized by the upper-classes and officialdom. Huijiao is regarded as an exegete, a specialty that may be reflected in the sort of biographies he favored. He viewed his work as a corrective to previous attempts at clerical biographies while simultaneously drawing on them (Baochang's *Mingseng Zhuan* in particular), as well as on inscriptions, doctrinal treatises and discussions.

The second collection of biographies, the *Xu Gaoseng Zhuan* or Continued Biographies of Eminent Monks, was compiled by Daoxuan (596-667) a Vinayamaster and prolific seventh-century writer.⁴² His sources included stele inscriptions, eye-witness accounts, religious and secular documents and funerary inscriptions. The third collection, the *Song Gaoseng Zhuan* from which the biographies in this thesis are drawn, was compiled by Zanning (919-1001). It was commissioned by imperial order in 982 and completed in 988. The text was written not in the Song capital but in Qiantang and the circumstances of the text's

⁴⁰ Kenneth K. S. Ch'en, *Buddhism in China: A Historical Survey* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1964): 248.

⁴¹ Arthur Wright offers a most thorough account of the compilation of this text in "Biography and Hagiography: Hui-chiao's Lives of Eminent Monks," (1954) Repr. in *Studies in Chinese Buddhism*, Robert M. Somers, ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990): 73-111.

⁴² See the discussion of these sources on Buddhist biography in John Kieschnick, *The Eminent Monk: Buddhist Ideals in Medieval Chinese Hagiography* (Kuroda Institute, Studies in East Asian Buddhism, no. 10. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1997).

composition meant that Zanning's resources were more limited in scope than those of Daoxuan. Zanning's intended audience, further, directed his collection's content in particular ways. As Benn explains:

[t]he collection was written for the emperor, in order to assure support for the Buddhist establishment, and for that reason it is apologetic in nature. On the other hand, Zanning did go out of his way to explain and interpret in a way the perhaps Huijiao and Daoxuan, writing for a more Buddhist audience, may not always have thought was necessary.⁴³

The Biographies of Eminent Monks compiled by Zanning, Daoxuan and Huixiang are a window, as Benn suggests, into not only the subjects they describe, but also into the audience for which they were written. Their subject matter in some measure reflects the context in which they were read. This is certainly the case with the cult of Mañjuśrī at Wutai in the Tang. As Birnbaum points out:

[a] sense of Mañjuśrī's increasing significance in Chinese religious life can be gained by comparing the frequency of citation of his name in three successive compilations of biographies of eminent monks. In the *Kao-seng chuan* (T. L, 2059), compiled in the mid-sixth century, Mañjuśrī's name does not appear once. In the *Hsu Kao-seng chuan* (T. L, 2060) compiled in the mid-seventh century and including some early T'ang monks in its biographies, Mañjuśrī is mentioned in eleven of the chronicles. In the *Sung Kao-seng chuan* (T. L, 2061—roughly the same length as the *Hsu Kao-seng chuan*, both works consisting of thirty *chuan*), compiled in the late-tenth century and primarily consisting of biographies of T'ang monks, Mañjuśrī figures in the biographies of thirty-seven persons (fifteen of these references are related to Wu-t'ai shan).⁴⁴

The biography of Wuzhuo is taken from the third Biography of Eminent Monks.

⁴³ James Alexander Benn, "Burning for the Buddha: Self-immolation in Chinese Buddhism," Diss. University of California (2001): 132.

⁴⁴ Birnbaum, *Mysteries* 8.

The second source from which the thesis draws is the *Guang Qingliang Zhuan*, the Extended Records of Mount Clear and Cool, written by Yanyi. Yanyi's work is the second and longest in a well-known triad of mountain monographs about Mount Wutai. The first, the *Gu Qingliang Zhuan*, Ancient Records of Mount Clear and Cool, to which I made reference earlier in the chapter, was composed by the monk Huixiang who traveled to Mount Wutai in 667. Like his predecessor, Yanyi too resided on Mount Wutai. His text can be dated to 1060. Finally, the third monograph on Mount Wutai titled *Xu Qingliang Zhuan*, Further Records of Mount Clear and Cool, was written by the official, lay Buddhist and Daoist scholar Zhang Shangying (1043-1122). Zhang Shangying visited the mountain in 1088 and this text is a record of that visit.

The form and scope of Huixiang and Yanyi's texts are characteristic of the larger mountain monograph tradition. Both the *Gu Qingliang Zhuan* and the *Guang Qingliang Zhuan* draw together a wide range of lore and information on subjects ranging from the geography of the mountain and its flora and fauna, to the history of religious practice on the mountain and the biographies and vision experiences of visitors there. Zhang Shangying's text, in contrast, is a narrative record of his own pilgrimage to Mount Wutai. For this reason the references to the vision experiences of others, the flora and fauna and the practice on the mountain are all from Zhang's perspective as an eleventh-century pilgrim. In this way the text is different from the pair of texts to which it was appended and in the line of which it was consciously written.

Chapter Two

Two Versions of Wuzhuo's early life and monastic education: Zanning's *Song Gaoseng Zhuan*

The monk Wuzhuo was from Yongjia.

He had a broad intellectual capacity and was an upright man who maintained moral integrity. Giving heed to the Great Way, he set his mind on pilgrimage and arrived at the Cloud and Flower Monastery in the capital. There he followed the Dharma master Chengguan, studying and practicing the Huayan teachings. He was determined to understand all the branches of the *sūtras* and *śāstras*. He made an oath to roam in the ocean of Huayan teachings.⁴⁵

Zanning's biography of Wuzhuo begins, as is typical of the form, by giving the place of his birth. Wuzhuo, it states, was from Yongjia, a *xian*, or county, along the coast of southern China. A *xian* was the smallest of three administrative units in Tang China, subordinate to the larger *zhou* or prefecture and then, again, to the *du-du fu*.⁴⁶ Yongjia's prefecture was Wenzhou, a small prefecture of less than 25 000 households in the province or *dao* of Dongdao.⁴⁷ When contrasted with Chang'an, which was at the time the largest city in the world with a population of more than one million, the place from which Wuzhuo

⁴⁵ This translation of the *Song Gaoseng Zhuan* biography of Wuzhuo is my own.

⁴⁶ These *xian*, *zhou* and *du-du fu* were administrative units with permanent personnel. Together they were grouped, again, into the larger *dao* of which there were ten before 733CE and fourteen after.

Paul W. Kroll, "Basic Data on Reign-Dates and Local Government," *T'ang Studies* 5 (1987): 101.

⁴⁷ In 740 the average size of the 328 *zhou* was 25, 650 households or 146, 800 persons. The average *xian*, of which there were 1573 in 740, was made up of 5, 348 households or 30, 530 persons.

Denis C. Twitchett, "Varied Patterns of Provincial Autonomy in the T'ang Dynasty," *Essays on Tang Society*, John Curtis Perry and Bardwell L. Smith, eds. (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1976) 91.

journeyed to the Tang capital appears a small and remote coastal town.⁴⁸ The distance which he journeyed from Yongjia—from the south to the holy mountain at the far north of the dynasty—was immense indeed. Situating the monk's biography geographically, the account reminds the reader that a pilgrimage to Mount Wutai necessitated a journey to the borderland of the Tang. The magnitude of Wuzhuo's undertaking as well as the marginality of his destination relative to Tang society is made plain.

Discussing the mountain's status as a liminal space, Robert M. Gimello has argued that Wutai's peripheral location in the dynasty heightened the sense that it was a place where the human and divine worlds intersected.⁴⁹ Mañjuśrī's territory appears far to the edge of the familiar world, he suggests, when its location is compared with that of other Buddhist holy sites such as Mount Tiantai or Mount Lu. "[T]his, as well as the sheer holiness of the place," Gimello remarks, "may help to explain why accounts of such visits abound in references to Wu-t'ai's alterity and its distance from 'the center.'" ⁵⁰ The great distance a pilgrim traveled to the mountain alluded to in Wuzhuo's biography is, as Gimello notes, mentioned time and again in the set of vision accounts this thesis explores.

The *Song Gaoseng Zhuan* offers little information about Wuzhuo's early religious life. It provides nothing about the time at which he left home to become a postulant, became a novice and then a fully ordained monk. The text mentions

⁴⁸ Ann Paludan, *Chronicle of the Chinese Emperors: The Reign-by-Reign Record of the Rulers of Imperial China* (London: Thames and Hudson Ltd., 1998): 106.

⁴⁹ Robert M. Gimello, *Chu P'ien* 501-612.

⁵⁰ Gimello, *Chu P'ien* 505.

only that he was intellectually capable and morally upright. It then discusses Wuzhuo's time in the capital. The biography states that Wuzhuo turned his attention to the Great Way of Mahāyāna teaching and practice and then journeyed to the capital city. In Chang'an, the biography asserts, he went to the Cloud and Flower Monastery where he met and followed the fourth Huayan master, Chengguan. The source on which Zanning draws, places Wuzhuo in one of the centers of Tang Buddhist activity under the guidance of a key religious figure. Imre Hamar notes in his reconstruction of the biography of Chengguan, however, that the biography of Wuzhuo in the *Song Gaoseng Zhuan* is the only source that attests to the Huayan master's presence in Chang'an at this time.⁵¹

The monk Chengguan (born 738) was, like Wuzhuo, a native of southern China: he was born just north of Wenzhou in the larger Yuezhou prefecture.⁵² Tradition holds that during his early monastic education Chengguan mastered a wide range of Buddhist literature and studied with some of the most prominent Buddhist figures in his time, including the third Huayan master, Fashen, from whom he is said to have inherited the Huayan teachings. During his lifetime nine

⁵¹ In producing a critical biography of Chengguan, Hamar is interested in the *Song Gaoseng Zhuan* reference because, while scholarship has established that the Huayan master arrived in the capital in 796, the biography of Wuzhuo suggests that this may not have been his first visit to Chang'an. It is possible, but unlikely given that this is the sole source to place Chengguan in Chang'an at this time, Hamar argues, that Chengguan's path crossed with the great translator and advocate of Buddhism, Amoghavajra (705-774).

Imre Hamar, *A Religious Leader in the Tang: Chengguan's Biography* (Tokyo: The International Institute for Buddhist Studies, 2002): 46, 47.

⁵² Two of the principle sources used to reconstruct Chengguan's biography—the *Song Gaoseng Zhuan* and the *Miaojue taji* or Inscription of the Stūpa of Marvelous Awakening—identify different towns as the place of the monk's birth. Chengguan's birthplace is identified as Shanyin Inscription of the Stūpa of Marvelous Awakening and as Guiji in the *Song Gaoseng Zhuan*. Hamar, 71, 77.

rulers ascended the imperial throne and of them Chengguan served in the courts of seven. Not only was the Huayan master recognized by the imperial court but he also maintained relationships with the military governors who, following the An Lu-shan rebellion, wielded increasing power vis-à-vis the state. Chengguan not only participated in translation projects that were imperially sponsored, but he also produced a number of works on doctrine at the request of these governors and officials.⁵³ For Weinstein, Chengguan is an example of the prominent Buddhist clerics who, after the An Lu-shan rebellion, “continued to serve emperors as Precepts Masters or Imperial Teachers and happily accepted honorary court ranks [yet at the same time] cultivated relationships with military governors and other local officials, who increasingly appear as protectors of the faith.”⁵⁴

Not only was Chengguan a major figure in the Tang capital but, like Wuzhuo, he was, further, active at Mount Wutai. His connection to the mountain is reflected in one of the numerous honorary titles bestowed upon him—*Qingliang guoshi hao* or Imperial Preceptor of Qingliang—in the year 799 according to The Inscription of the Stūpa of Marvelous Awakening or *Miaojue taji*. Mount Qingliang or Mount Wutai, the inscription records, is a place where Chengguan spent many years of his life and it was the site where he composed the works for which he is best remembered: his *Commentary* and *Subcommentary* on the *Huayan jing* or the Flower Garland Sutra. The *Miaojue taji* suggests that

⁵³ Stanley Weinstein, *Buddhism under the T'ang* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987): 62.

⁵⁴ Weinstein, 62.

Chengguan was prompted to travel to the holy mountain when he read the chapter “Abodes (or Dwelling Places) of the Bodhisattvas” in the *Huayan jing*.⁵⁵ The *Song Gaoseng Zhuan* records that Chengguan vowed to visit Wutai in 776 and the *stūpa* inscription states that he remained there for ten years.⁵⁶ This places him at Wutai at the same time as Wuzhuo. The inscription reads:

[w]hen he came to the chapter of The Abodes (of the Bodhisattvas), he mused upon the idea that in the world of phenomena Mañjuśrī illuminates the Wutai (shan). Thus, he did not regard ten thousand *li* as distant, and was not afraid of the hazards of the journey. He took up residence at the Great Huayan monastery, and lived there for ten years.⁵⁷

The section of the late seventh-century text to which the inscription refers here contends that Mañjuśrī resided, with his retinue of bodhisattvas, at Mount Clear-and-Cool preaching the Dharma. It formed part of a triad of *sūtra* texts which linked the bodhisattva with Mount Wutai. The distance the *Miaojué taji* states the monk was compelled to travel when he read this text—ten thousand *li*—is an example of hyperbole used to underscore both the depth of the Huayan master’s resolve and the remoteness of the mountain’s location. Whether it was true or not, the assertion that Wuzhuo met Chengguan in Chang’an prior to 777 in the *Song Gaoseng Zhuan* suggests that, even if only in a peripheral way, the monk operated in an urban circle that wielded religious and political power in medieval Tang China.

⁵⁵ A section of this chapter of the *sūtra* is quoted in chapter one on page thirteen.

⁵⁶ Hamar, 33.

⁵⁷ According to Hamar, the inscription borrows from Chengguan’s *Commentary* where he writes “I did not consider ten thousand *li* a long way and, yielding to my fate, I stayed there.” Hamar, 49, 72.

The final statement that the *Song Gaoseng Zhuan* makes regarding the period of time prior to Wuzhuo's pilgrimage to Mount Wutai—that he sought to comprehend the *sūtra* and *śāstra* literature and made a vow to wander in the ocean of Huayan teachings— further links the monk to the Huayan tradition. *Sūtra* recitation, as Hamar reading Ch'en notes, was the usual form of examination for postulants seeking ordination.⁵⁸ The way in which the biography describes the work depicts Wuzhuo's exploration of the textual traditions as a form of pilgrimage. At a later point in the *Song Gaoseng Zhuan* biography, Wuzhuo is pictured comparing the vision experiences that originate in Wutai pilgrimage with his journey through the *sūtra* and *śāstra* literature.

Two Versions of Wuzhuo's early life and monastic education:
Yanyi's *Guang Qingliang Zhuan*

Yanyi's biography of Wuzhuo offers a different and much more detailed account of the years preceding the monk's journey to Mount Wutai. Like the *Song Gaoseng Zhuan*, the *Guang Qingliang Zhuan* identifies Yongjia as Wuzhuo's hometown. It adds that the monk's surname was Tong. In a similar way to Zanning's text, Yanyi's account mentions those qualities which made Wuzhuo exceptional: it describes him as having an outstanding natural disposition and being removed from his peers (T51.1111.b25-26). Beyond these basic details, however, the discussions of the years prior to Wuzhuo's pilgrimage in the biographies are very different. In fact, the sole event the *Song Gaoseng Zhuan*

⁵⁸ Hamar is reading Kenneth Ch'en's comments regarding *sūtra* recitation in *Buddhism in*

biography records from this period—Wuzhuo’s pilgrimage to the capital where he studied and practiced Huayan teachings under Chengguan—is absent from the biography in the *Guang Qingliang Zhuan*.

The mountain monograph describes Wuzhuo’s monastic education and ordination in detail. According to this text, Wuzhuo was twelve years of age when he left home and went to the Dragon Spring Monastery in Wenzhou. There he studied under the Vinaya master Yi. He recited the Mahāyāna *sūtras* several tens of thousands of times, developing the type of in-depth knowledge of Buddhist literature to which the *Song Gaoseng Zhuan* alludes (T51.1111b26-28). In the year 750, the eighth year of the Tianbao (“Heavenly Treasure”) period, Wuzhuo’s exceptional work led him to receive the complete precepts of a monk, the *dedu* rank.⁵⁹ According to the mountain monograph, he was twenty-one years of age at this time and would thus have been born in 729 (T51.1111b28-29).

The dates given for Wuzhuo’s birth by Yanyi and Zanning do not agree. If Wuzhuo was twenty-one in 750 as the *Guang Qingliang Zhuan* suggests, then he would have been thirty-seven or perhaps thirty-eight when he arrived at Mount Wutai in the year 777. The *Song Gaoseng Zhuan* states, in contrast, that Wuzhuo was only thirty-one at that time. In Zanning’s text, however, the old man he encounters at the mountain predicts (in what is most likely an allusion to the Prajñā Monastery) that at the age of thirty-eight the seeds of Wuzhuo’s merit will

China: A Historical Survey. Hamar, 33.

⁵⁹ There is more than one way to read this phrase according to the *Foguang Da Cidian* (*Dictionary of the Buddha’s Radiant Light*). While it can refer to final and full release, here it is

come to flower. One can conclude from these differences that some of the sources on which Yanyi and Zanning drew in compiling the *Guang Qingliang Zhuan* and the *Song Gaoseng Zhuan* were different.

The mountain monograph states that Wuzhuo began his monastic career doing the work of his master, *vinaya* study. After this, it reads, he went to Jinling, today the city of Nanjing on the coast of modern day Jiangsu province. In Jinling Wuzhuo is said to have studied with the Buddhist priest Niutoushan zhong (T51.1111b28-29). The individual to which the biography refers here is Huizhong (d.775), the fifth patriarch of the Niutou or Oxhead school of Chan. Again in contrast to the *Song Gaoseng Zhuan* narrative, Huizhong is an important figure in the biography of Wuzhuo compiled by Yanyi.

The Niutou school was a branch of Chan Buddhism centered south of Jinling at Mount Niutou. It was founded by Farong (594-657) in 634 and developed into a settlement of more than one hundred monks.⁶⁰ By the mid-eighth century, the Niutou school was the third faction in a Chan tradition recently bifurcated into the Northern and Southern schools, largely as a result of the monk Shenhui's (684-758) critique of the monk Shenxiu's (606?-706) teachings and status in the tradition.⁶¹ The Niutou school, according to Dumoulin:

used to indicate that Wuzhuo received the precepts of a fully ordained *bhikṣu*, the minimum age for which is twenty.

⁶⁰ Weinstein, 164.

⁶¹ Shenhui contended that Shenxiu's teachings, which he termed the Northern School, promoted a form of meditation that was inferior to the practice forwarded by what he called the Southern School of Chan. It was a flash of sudden awareness which erupted in daily life and not intuition formed from formal practice in the monastery that Shenhui contended led to enlightenment. Shenhui argued, moreover, that it was not the well recognized Shenxiu who had

succeeded, to a certain extent, in striking out on a path of its own between the Northern school's insistence on the need to meditate on the complete teachings of the Mahāyāna sūtras on the one hand, and the Southern school's strict adherence to the wisdom of the Middle Way and rejection of the sūtras as necessary for enlightenment on the other.⁶²

Huizhong, whom Wuzhuo saw sometime after 750, took over the Niutou Mountain community from his master Zhiwei (646-772) after he moved to Jinling.⁶³ As Yanyi's record suggests, however, the school was no longer centered at the mountain when Wuzhuo and the Niutou master met. At the request of the prefectural magistrate Huizhong moved the community to the Zhuangyan monastery in Jinling in 742.⁶⁴

In the biography of Wuzhuo compiled by Yanyi, a series of statements made by Huizhong are depicted as pivotal to the monk's development:

Having studied and searched for the principle that is the nature, Wuzhuo recognized that it miraculously matched the original source. Zhong said to him "your mind is intelligent by nature. Therefore you should let it come forth. All beings are originally not different. If the overshadowing clouds are removed, the space is originally pure." At these words Wuzhuo's dharma eye suddenly opened" (T51.1111c1-4).⁶⁵

What is striking is that the central role of Chengguan in the monk's development suggested in the *Song Gaoseng Zhuan* is here played by Huizhong. Interestingly, the words Huizhong speaks which lead to the opening of Wuzhuo's dharma eye,

inherited the teaching's of the Fifth Patriarch Hongren but rather his own teacher, Huineng, who had done so. Huineng and not Shenxiu, then, was in Shenhui's view the true Sixth Patriarch.

⁶² Heinrich Dumoulin, *Zen Buddhism: A History Volume I, India and China*, Trans. James W. Heisig and Paul Knitter (New York: Simon & Schuster Macmillan, 1988, 1994) 116.

⁶³ Hamar, 39, 40.

⁶⁴ Hamar, 39, 40.

⁶⁵ This translation from the *Guang Qingliang Zhuan* is my own.

the insight which leads to enlightenment, are very similar to material from a text central to another, earlier, Chan tradition that flourished a century prior to Wuzhuo's Wutai pilgrimage. The lines cited above from the *Guang Qingliang Zhuan* biography recall material from *The Treatise on the Essentials of Cultivating the Mind*, a text with connections to the East Mountain Tradition.

The Treatise on the Essentials of Cultivating the Mind is a late-seventh century record of the teachings of the Fifth Chan Patriarch Hongren (601-674). It was compiled by his students when they moved to the imperial capital from the mountain territory at Huangmei where Hongren taught a community of monks alongside the Fourth Patriarch Daoxin (580-651).⁶⁶ The monk Shenxiu, the Sixth Patriarch of what would become the Northern School, referred to the teachings of the Daoxin and Hongren collectively as the "East Mountain teachings" and it is from here that the tradition derives its name. While little is known about the administration, size or lifestyle of the East Mountain community, what information scholars do have about the sect suggests that Hongren taught meditation to students of diverse religious interests who visited the mountain location for short periods of time. In McRae's words, "[t]he East Mountain community at Huangmei seems to have been recognized throughout China by the second half of the seventh-century as a specialized training center in the second of the "three learnings" of morality, meditation, and wisdom."⁶⁷ Among these

⁶⁶ John R. McRae, *Seeing Through Zen: Encounter, Transformation, and Genealogy in Chinese Chan Buddhism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003): 37.

⁶⁷ McRae, 35.

itinerant students, as this chapter will discuss presently, were individuals of the Niutou lineage with close relationships to Huizhong.

The *Treatise on the Essentials Cultivation of the Mind*, from which the following passage is taken and which Hongren's followers believed contained the core of his teaching on meditation, bears a strong resemblance to the advice given to Wuzhuo by Huizhong. Huizhong's statement to Wuzhuo that "[a]ll beings are originally not different: if the overshadowing clouds are removed, the space is originally pure" seems to closely follow the thinking in this East Mountain text:

The *Treatise on the Sutra of the Ten Stages* says, "There is an adamant Buddha-nature within the bodies of sentient beings. Like the sun, it is essentially bright, perfect, and complete." Although vast and limitless, it is merely covered by the layered clouds of the five skandas. Like a lamp inside a jar, its light cannot shine. Further, to use the bright sun as a metaphor, it is as if the clouds and mists of the worlds were to arise together in all light the directions, so that the world would become dark. How could the sun be extinguished?
 (Question: Without the sun being extinguished,) why would there be no light?
 Answer: The sun's light is not destroyed, but merely deflected by the clouds and mists. The pure mind possessed by all sentient beings is also like this, in simply being covered by the layered clouds of discriminative thinking, false thoughts, and ascriptive views.⁶⁸

The sun and cloud metaphor operates in much the same way in this East Mountain text and Yanyi's account. It suggests in both that the Buddha-nature inherent in all sentient beings is, like the sun, obscured but not erased by clouds which are associated with discrimination. Realizing one's original nature, as the Niutou master contends, is a matter of the clouds being removed from the sun.

⁶⁸ McRae, 39.

It is a curious thing that the mountain monograph states that Wuzhuo had a close relationship to a school of Buddhism which flourished nearly a century before he lived. It is a connection which is, nevertheless, made explicit in the following lines from the *Guang Qingliang Zhuan*: “[h]e became a follower of the secret teachings of the East Mountain School” (T51.1111c4). It is surprising, moreover, that the thinking and language characteristic of that tradition are given voice in the words of Huizhong. As alluded to above, however, there is a link between the East Mountain tradition and the Niutou school. Both the Niutou patriarch who preceded Huizhong (Fa-chih or Fazhi) and his own master (Chih-wei or Zhiwei), Dumoulin explains, were among those students who studied with the Fourth Patriarch Hongren at Huangmei:

There is, however, clear historical evidence of a relationship between Bodhidharma Zen and Fa-chih (618-702), the fourth heir of the Ox-head tradition. He lived with the fifth Chinese Zen patriarch, Hung-jen [Hongren], on the East Mountain. A devotee of the Buddha Omitabha, he zealously practiced the invocation of the holy name of the Buddha, which was not unusual in the heterogeneous community of Hung-jen. Chih-wei [Zhiwei]... was a disciple of Fa-chih and is also said to have spent some time with Hung-jen. It was during the time that Fa-chih and Chih-wei were together on Mount Ox-head that the new school flourished. As a center of the Zen movement, the mountain reached its high point under Chih-wei's two disciples, Hui-chung (683-769) and Hsüan-su.⁶⁹

While only a matter of speculation, the historical connection between the leaders of the East Mountain community at Huangmei and the Niutou school in the generation prior to Huizhong may cast some light on what seems to be the

⁶⁹ Heinrich Dumoulin, *Zen Buddhism: A History Volume I, India and China*, Trans. James W. Heisig and Paul Knitter (New York: Simon & Schuster Macmillan, 1988, 1994) 116.

unusual blending of these traditions in the *Guang Qingliang Zhuan*. The relationship between the prominent monks of the different schools highlights, moreover, the fluid nature of sectarian affiliations and the widespread practice of itinerant learning and teaching. We see the same themes in Wuzhuo's journey to study with the Huayan master Chengguan and his travel to learn from the Niutou patriarch Huizhong. It is apparent, moreover, in the biography of Chengguan himself:

He called on master Zhong of Niutoushan, master Qin of Jingshan and master Quming of Luoyang to inquire about the Chan teaching of the Southern school. He visited Chan master Huiyun to understand the profound principle of the Northern school.⁷⁰

According to the *Song Gaoseng Zhuan*, Chengguan, like Wuzhuo in Yanyi's biography, also visited with the Niutou master Huizhong.

Wuzhuo's Mount Wutai Pilgrimage

By the second year of the Dali era (777) he reached Mount Wutai where he desired to behold the sage's territories freely for himself.⁷¹ In the fifth month he reached the Flower Garland Monastery.⁷² He put down his staff

⁷⁰ Hamar 78.

⁷¹ While the *Song Gaoseng Zhuan* purports that Wuzhuo journeyed to Wutai to behold the sage's territory freely, the *Guang Qingliang Zhuan* characterizes the monk-pilgrims' motivations at T51.1111c4-5 somewhat differently. Like Zanning's text, the monograph ties Wuzhuo's pilgrimage to the saint, stating that "he went to [Wu]tai to seek the great sage" but precedes this statement with another: "[t]here is no place the dao does not exist, nevertheless, if the realm is superior it is easier to follow." Embedded in Yanyi's passage is the dual-commitment that the world is equally imbued with the sacred and, then, dotted with places of heightened numinousness. It is a sentiment expressed elsewhere in the account, when Wuzhuo declares at T51.111c22-23: "All around in realms as many as the sands of the Ganges is the holy Buddhist monastery / Everywhere Mañjuśrī is speaking."

This dual attitude to sacred place is the subject of the following article by Jeffrey Meyer. Jeffrey F. Meyer, "The Miracles of Wutaishan, China: The Ambiguity of Place in Buddhism," *National Geographical Journal of India* 40 (1994): 141-148.

⁷² According to Yanyi's text, Wuzhuo stayed at the Huayan Monastery from the time of the full moon until the next new moon, approximately two weeks, before the encounter with the old monk described here took place (T51.1111c24-25).

and began by taking tea in the hall. He saw an old monk in a rustic hall lying on a bed at the north wall. The old man asked him, “Did you come here from the south?” “You brought some pearls,” he continued and requested to see them. Zhuo thereupon gave him the pearls. When Zhuo turned around the monk was no longer there. His mind became agitated and alternated between doubt and joy.

In the past Senming had seen the stone mortar and wood pestle and after obtained a holy monastery and observed a holy worthy. [Zhuo thought] “I want to rest. This is great and wonderful.” Then from the Prajñā Paramita Sūtra building he saw *jixiang* birds with luxuriant plumage flying in pairs to the top of the temple. From there the birds gazed toward the northeast, flapped their wings and left.⁷³

The next day two lights like two ears of grain came through the door. The lights slowly rose and then after an instant were extinguished. The monk Fadeng saw them in the same room and became frightened and asked “what is this sign?” Wuzhuo declared, “in order to eliminate the doubt of all living beings appear again.”⁷⁴ Subsequently, he saw the light right before him.⁷⁵

The Dali era (766-780) or “Great Chronometry” was inaugurated on December 16 in 766 and was the fourth and final reign period of the great Buddhist patron Emperor Daizong (r. 762-779).⁷⁶ Daizong, born Li Yu, ascended the throne after the death of his father Suzong (r. 756-762). The An Lu-shan rebellion which had beleaguered his father’s reign and severely weakened the state’s power vis-à-vis that of the military governors continued into the first year of Daizong’s reign. Even after its conclusion in 763, the most independent

⁷³ The *jixiang* (good fortune) birds fly about Wuzhuo’s head and then to the temple in the *Guang Qingliang Zhuan* (T51.1112a3-4).

⁷⁴ It is not immediately clear who the speaker is in this exchange between the monk and light. Read in conjunction with the mountain monograph, however, it becomes clear that Wuzhuo makes a request of the light.

⁷⁵ This translation from the *Song Gaoseng Zhuan* is my own.

⁷⁶ The first three reign periods were the Baoying or “Treasure Response” inaugurated 13 May 762, the Guangde or “Ample Virtue” inaugurated 14 August 763 and the Yungdai “Eternal Majesty” which began on 26 January 765. Kroll, 100.

military governors retained control of large territories in the dynasty's north.

Describing their status in the post-An Lu-shan Tang, Edwin G. Pulleyback writes:

[t]hough they accepted T'ang titles and owed nominal allegiance to the imperial government in Ch'ang-an, these former rebel generals governed their territories as virtually independent fiefdoms. They appointed their own officials, raised their own armies, collected their own taxes, and endeavoured to establish family dynasties and marriage alliances with one another... Generally speaking, the most the T'ang could achieve was to play off one governor against another and try to prevent them from combining forces to intervene in affairs outside their own province.⁷⁷

In short, Daizong inherited an increasingly politically and fiscally weak state which, in the years following the An Lu-shan rebellion was continually threatened at its borders.⁷⁸ In this climate of instability, the emperor, encouraged by his pro-Buddhist ministers and prominent Buddhist clerics, came to view Buddhism more and more as the protector of the Tang.

Emperor Daizong gave the Buddhist church and its leaders a central role in the affairs of the court and lavished immense financial support on the institutions and activities of the Buddhists, in particular the cult of Mañjuśrī at Wutai. At Mount Wutai in 776 and 777 alone, Daizong funded the reconstruction of the Jinge Monastery and repairs to the Yuhua Monastery. He had skilled workers released from official requisition labor to help in these construction efforts and allowed monks to be ordained to serve at the monasteries on the

⁷⁷ Edwin G. Pulleyback, "The An Lu-shan Rebellion and the Origins of Chronic Militarism in Late T'ang China," *Essays on T'ang Society*, John Curtis Perry and Bardwell L. Smith, eds. (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1976) 49.

⁷⁸ In 763, for example, the capital fell to Tibetan forces and Daizong was forced to flee Chang'an. In 764 under Pu Gu Huai'en's leadership, combined Uighar and Tibetan forces again threatened the state. Weinstein, 59, 77.

mountain.⁷⁹ When Wuzhuo arrived at Wutai in 777, then, he found himself in a hub of imperially sponsored Buddhist activity.

According to the *Song Gaoseng Zhuan*, Wuzhuo visited the Huayan Monastery or Flower Garland Monastery when he first arrived at Mount Wutai where, both the *Guang Qingliang Zhuan* and Zanning's text assert, he met a mysterious old monk.⁸⁰ The legendary roots of the Huayan Monastery extend far back into China's ancient past. During the Han dynasty Emperor Ming is alleged to have erected the temple, named the Dafulingjiu Monastery, to mark the site of an Aśoka *stūpa*.⁸¹ In the Tang dynasty the name of the monastery was changed to the Dahuayan Monastery in honor of the late seventh-century translation of the *Huayanjing* by Śikṣānanda.⁸² By Wuzhuo's time the monastery was one of the five imperially sponsored establishments at Wutai.⁸³ It was one of the largest

⁷⁹ Each of these acts were done by Daizong in response to a request made to the throne by the Buddhist monk Amoghavajra (Bukong 705-774) whose role in promoting the cult of Mañjuśrī at Wutai will be explored in the next chapter of this paper. It is discussed in much detail in Orlando (1981) and Birnbaum (1980). The above requests were approved on 12 June 766, 27 December 766, 20 March 767 and 29 April 767.

Raffaello Orlando, "A Study of Chinese Documents Concerning the Life of the Tantric Buddhist Patriarch Amoghavajra (A.D. 705-774)," Diss. Princeton University (1981): 56, 61, 62.

⁸⁰ The *Guang Qingliang Zhuan* begins the account of Wuzhuo's pilgrimage with a story, to be discussed in the final section of this chapter, in which he enters the manifested Qingliang Monastery.

⁸¹ Buddhist legend holds that Aśoka, who ruled India from 214-236BCE had 84 000 *stūpas* housing the sacred relics of the Buddha established throughout the Buddhist realm. The assertion that the Huayan Monastery is built atop one such burial mound claims a Buddhist presence at the holy mountain which predates the tradition's first-century entry into China. Buddhism is not a foreign tradition on Chinese soil, this type of legend contends, but rather a religion with a historical connection to China that extends far into its ancient past.

Birnbaum, *Shen-ying* 125.

⁸² Birnbaum, *Shen-ying* 125.

⁸³ This designation is discussed in some detail on pages 60-64.

monasteries with, according to Ennin's diary, twelve or perhaps fifteen separate cloisters.⁸⁴

As the first chapter of this thesis discussed, the Huayan Monastery is a site where a number of extraordinary visions of Mañjuśrī were purported to have taken place. Mañjuśrī, Ennin recorded, appeared here to an unfortunate sculptor whose images of the bodhisattva continually cracked. At this monastery the bodhisattva manifested himself as a pregnant woman at a vegetarian feast. In his diary Ennin states that he had one of his three visions at the Flower Garland Monastery and that his predecessor, the Japanese monk Reisen, also had a miraculous encounter there.⁸⁵ Arriving at the Huayan Monastery, then, Wuzhuo is entering a place on the mountain where the bodhisattva has made his presence at Wutai known on many occasions. It is a site which is recognized and supported by the imperial court and which marks Mañjuśrī's entry into the temporal realm.⁸⁶ Wuzhuo's encounter fits squarely into this tradition of Mañjuśrī's eruption into human history at the Flower Garland monastery.

At the time when Wuzhuo arrived at the Huayan Monastery, as the previous section of this chapter suggested, the Huayan master Chengguan would already have been in residence there. Neither the biography of Wuzhuo in the

⁸⁴ Edwin O. Reischauer, *Ennin's Travels in T'ang China*, (New York: Ronald Press, 1955): 167.

⁸⁵ The monk Reisen travelled to China with the Japanese embassy in 804. Ennin's diary notes that Reisen had a vision of a myriad of bodhisattvas at the Dahuayan Monastery. Reischauer, *Ennin's Travels* 201.

⁸⁶ Xuanzong (r712-756) bestowed an imperial plaque on the Jinguo monastery making it one of the five Wutai temples designated in this way. The other four temples were the Qingliang si, Huayan si, Foguang si and the Yuhua si. Birnbaum, *Mysteries* 30.

Song Gaoseng Zhuan nor the *Guang Qingliang Zhuan* makes reference to the monk meeting Chengguan at Mount Wutai. The biography of the Huayan master in the second mountain monograph suggests, however, that the two did indeed meet at this place.⁸⁷ According to Yanyi's biography of Chengguan (T 51, 2099: 1120) the Huayan master moved to the Prajñā Hall of the Flower Garland Monastery in order to write his Commentary on the *Huayan jing* or Flower Garland Sūtra. For this purpose and at his request, monks built Chengguan a pavilion at the monastery. When the construction was complete, the text reads at T51.1120b 4-5: "at this time the monk Wuzhuo of Wenzhou wrote calligraphy on the beam [of the pavilion] in the style of Xizhi."⁸⁸ This event, the text states, took place prior to the fourth month in the first year of the Xingyuan period (784), a time nearly a decade after the monk and the Huayan master had met in Chang'an according to the *Song Gaoseng Zhuan*.

The Prajñā Hall is one of the many cloisters at the Huayan Monastery. It is connected with visions in the biography of Fazhao, as well as of Wuzhuo. Chengguan's selection of Wuzhuo to write the inscription suggests that he might well have been an important figure at Wutai during his lifetime. It is tempting to speculate that he wrote an inscription near this site because it was a location which according to tradition Wuzhuo visited just prior to his entry into the

⁸⁷ Hamar, 51.

⁸⁸ Xizhi (321-379CE) is the inventor of the orthodox form of writing called *jiashu*. Matthews, 360.

manifested Prajñā Monastery. One wonders if, in compiling the biography of Chengguan at Mount Wutai, Yanyi might have had access to the inscription there.

Wuzhuo's mysterious encounter at the Huayan Monastery takes place in the hall when he is taking tea. He meets an old man seated on a bed there. Without being told, the man knows where Wuzhuo has journeyed from and what he has brought with him. Their exchange is a brief one in the texts, both of which allude to the old man's mysterious knowledge. The *Guang Qingliang Zhuan* account adds, however, that the monk invited Wuzhuo to drink tea with him and made a link between the Diamond Grotto and the history of tea drinking at the mountain.⁸⁹ In both texts the encounter ends when, as Wuzhuo turns around, the monk vanishes. At this point in the biography, the *Song Gaoseng Zhuan* makes reference to another monk, Senming, who obtained a holy monastery after seeing a stone mortar and pestle. The mention of the sight of these objects, which seems to recall Daoist tales of *fengshi* and immortals, perhaps anticipates the monk's major vision of a holy monastery which followed. The strange lights and birds which Wuzhuo observes are signs of Mañjuśrī's presence at Wutai that, like the mortar and pestle, precede his major meeting with the bodhisattva at the Diamond Grotto.

Mañjuśrī appears to pilgrims in the vision literature of Mount Wutai in a number of forms. Most often he makes his presence known to pilgrims through strange sounds and sights like the beams of light which Wuzhuo sees with the

monk Fadeng in Zanning's account or Faxiandeng in the *Guang Qingliang Zhuan*. Wuzhuo reacts to the lights he observes in a way not unusual in the miracle literature of Wutai: he makes a request of the light to eradicate his "net of doubt." The light obliges Wuzhuo.

In the third mountain monograph there is a similar example in which Zhang Shangying encounters a strange light on the second day of his pilgrimage from the Zhenrong yuan or the Hall of True Countenance. Shangying notices a series of unusual colorful lights in the sky just prior to midnight and, the text records, he reacts as follows:

"This must be a *samādhi* flame. To call it a lamp is to speak merely in conventional terms." He then knelt and announced, "Utterly transcendent is the realm of the sage, well beyond my ken. The range of an ordinary person's consciousness is restricted. If this be no human lamp, then let it appear directly before me."⁹⁰

Like Wuzhuo, Shangying asks the light he sees to respond to a request. When it does so, by approaching the Pavilion of Clear Brilliance where he is stopped, the text continues:

Shangying's whole body shivered violently as though he had been drenched in ice and snow. He then exclaimed, "My doubting mind has been resolved." As soon as he had spoken, the light returned to its original place.⁹¹

In both accounts the beams of light eliminate the doubts of their observers by answering their requests. Visions such as these attest to the fact that the bodhisattva is present at Mount Wutai. They also suggest that the individuals who

⁸⁹ At T51.1111c27 the text reads: "*zhuo chaji song jingongku lai*." Does the line suggest that a record of drinking tea came from the cavern to the monastery?

observe his manifestations, Wuzhuo and Zhang Shangying, are themselves powerful figures.

While in the miracle literature of Mount Wutai colorful lights and clouds are the most frequently mentioned natural manifestations of Mañjuśrī's presence on the mountain's peaks, there are also examples of unusual birds like those Wuzhuo sees mentioned in the literature. Ennin, for example, describes the birds he sees while standing at the Southern Terrace. On the second day of the seventh moon of 840 after his visit to the Jinge or Golden Pavillion Monastery, Ennin comments on the scene he observed:

[o]ne cannot see the floors of the deep ravines and profound valleys, and one hears only the sound of the flowing (waters) in their hidden springs and mountain streams. Strange birds soar at (different) levels above the many peaks..., but there are few which fly up to the summit of the terraces.⁹²

The extraordinary birds Ennin and Wuzhuo mention, like the strange lights Wuzhuo observes, are examples from a body of vision literature which attests to the bodhisattva's presence at the mountain peaks.

Like much of the Mount Wutai vision literature, the biography of Wuzhuo describes these visions as occurring in particular places and at certain points in the day. It is the morning and Wuzhuo is at the Prajñā cloister of the Huayan Monastery, for example, when according to the mountain monograph he sees two beams of light. He is at the same place in the evening when he observes the

⁹⁰ Gimello, *Chang Shang-ying* 105.

⁹¹ Gimello, *Chang Shang-ying* 105.

⁹² Reischauer, *Ennin's Diary* 257.

jixiang birds according to Yanyi's text. Situating the visions in this way the tales operate as records of Mañjuśrī's presence at the mountain. The visions function, moreover, as models for future Wutai pilgrims. The *Guang Qingliang Zhuan* account of the monk Fazhao's pilgrimage, for example, describes how Fazhao was re-tracing Wuzhuo's steps when he went to the Diamond Grotto in search of a vision of the bodhisattva. In this instance the tale of Wuzhuo's experiences at Mount Wutai operated as a guide for a later pilgrim to the sacred center.

Thereupon Wuzhuo went toward the Diamond Grotto, he faced the inside and paid respect to it. Then he sat down and took a nap. He heard someone say "drink water" and awoke to find an old man addressing an ox. He had an old appearance and his robes were made of a coarse fabric. He wore hemp sandals and wore a strange head covering.⁹³ Zhuo took his hand and asked him "Where did you come from?" The old man replied, "I came from outside the mountain seeking provisions. Where am I now?"⁹⁴ "You are seeking the provisions at Wutai Mountain," Zhuo replied. The man turned around and asked Zhuo "Why have you come here?" Zhuo told the old man: "I heard the Diamond Grotto is here and thus I came to take pleasure in someone else's merit." The old man asked "Are you tired?" "No," replied Zhuo. "Since you are not tired," the man inquired, "why were you worn out and sleeping?" Zhuo said, "I am an ordinary man and dull-witted, how can you find it strange?" The man said, "if you are dull witted why not drink some tea?" The old man pointed to the northeast, where Zhuo saw a monastery at a distance of several steps from them. The old man led the ox walking in front and Zhuo followed stepping behind him.⁹⁵

The biography of Wuzhuo forms part of a collection of stories which describe the Diamond Grotto as a site of particular numinousness on the holy

⁹³ The description of the man's appearance is detailed and in most respects straightforward. He looked old (*gumao*) and wore a short robe (*duanhou*) of Sthūla, a coarse fabric. The man's head covering (*jinguo*) was very strange (*shenyi*). He wore sandals of hemp (*zhuma*). The term *huanxing* is not translated here but might refer to the man's body being encircled in the Sthūla robes.

⁹⁴ In the *Guang Qingliang Zhuan* account the old man tells Wuzhuo that he has come from the foot of the mountain to beg for alms and that his family dwells at the mountain (T51.1112a12-

mountain. At this site he has, what is according to the *Song Gaoseng Zhuan*, his second and in the *Guang Qingliang Zhuan* his third meeting with a stranger at the mountain. The Diamond Grotto, it will be recalled from the first chapter, is the cave into which the monk Buddhapāli was absorbed with the bodhisattva Mañjuśrī.⁹⁶ The individual Wuzhuo encounters at the cavern is, like the individual Buddhapāli met, an old man. He tells Wuzhuo that he is from outside the mountain. In the lore of the Diamond Grotto, the bodhisattva frequently appears to pilgrims, sometimes, as with the story of Wuzhuo and Buddhapāli, in the guise of an old man or monk. In many cases the accounts describe a pilgrim who enters or tries to enter the cavern and the site is often identified as the dwelling place of Mañjuśrī at Mount Wutai.

The tradition which identifies the grotto as the home of Mañjuśrī, though a long one, is not exclusive in the earlier tales of visions and miracles set at the mountain. While it was established firmly by the time at which Yanyi composed the *Guang Qingliang Zhuan*, in Huixiang's earlier *Gu Qingliang Zhuan*, for example, there is a story which identifies the grotto as the home of a mountain lord (*shansheng*). One instance in which the sacred cavern is identified as the realm of a figure other than Mañjuśrī is found in the story of the Buddhist monk

13). Given that Mañjuśrī is to reside at Mount Wutai this is, perhaps, a better clue to the man's identity than is offered in the *Song Gaoseng Zhuan*.

⁹⁵ This is my own translation from the *Song Gaoseng Zhuan*.

⁹⁶ Like Wuzhuo, Buddhapāli had encountered an old man when he arrived at the mountain in 676. The old man asked the monk whether or not he had brought with him the *Buddhoṣṇīṣa-dhāraṇī-sūtra* and when Buddhapāli replied that he had not, the old man sent him to retrieve it from India in order to meet the bodhisattva. It was after Buddhapāli arrived in Chang'an with this sutra in 683, the legend goes, that he entered the grotto never to return.

Xiangyun of Zhou in Huixiang's monograph. Xiangyun, according to this text, became a resident at Mount Wutai like Wuzhuo. One day, while wandering alone on the peaks, he encountered a group of mysterious figures, one of whom stated that he was the mountain lord. The text reads:

When Hsiang-yün heard of the numinous qualities of this mountain, he went to live on it. Some time later, south of the (Great Faith) Monastery, he saw several tens or so of persons, all about a *chang* tall. In their center there was a person who was extraordinarily imposing and awesome. This person came directly to welcome him. Bowing his head, he said, "Please, Master, travel on our route for seven days." Yün said, "I am not acquainted with you. Who are you, O patron? Where is your home?" He replied, "Sir, I am the spirit-lord of this mountain. I live in the Diamond Grotto."⁹⁷

In this *Gu Qingliang Zhuan* account the Diamond Grotto is identified not as the home of Mañjuśrī but as that of a mountain spirit or mountain lord, a figure purported to inhabit China's sacred mountain territories prior to the advent of organized Daoism and Buddhism's first-century arrival.⁹⁸ The connection in this early biography suggests that the Buddhist claim to this natural feature on Wutai's peaks was not an exclusive one. Rather, it shows that prior to the development of the cult of Mañjuśrī at Mount Wutai the site was home to an earlier story tradition which was gradually appropriated by the Buddhist cult of Mañjuśrī there. In the *Guang Qingliang Zhuan* and *Song Gaoseng Zhuan* a site originally the domain of

⁹⁷ Raoul Birnbaum, "Secret Halls of the Mountain Lords: The Caves of Wu-t'ai Shan," *Cahiers d'Extrême-Asie* 5 (1989-90): 122.

⁹⁸ *Shansheng, shanshen and shanling* are mentioned in the first chapter discussion of sacred mountain space in China prior to Buddhism's arrival.

mountain lords has been transformed into the object of Buddhist pilgrimage. The story of Wuzhuo not only reflects but also assists this transition.⁹⁹

In the story of Buddhapāli, the mountain lord and bodhisattva are not only described as inhabiting the same domain, they are also depicted as acting in a similar fashion. The mountain lord and bodhisattva invite a Buddhist monk to follow them and both offer the pilgrims food to eat. In Huixiang's *Gu Qingliang Zhuan* the mountain lord of the Diamond Grotto feeds the Buddhist monk Xiangyun an herb. By consuming this food, the story purports, Xiangyun "gained ascension to immortality."¹⁰⁰ In the *Guang Qingliang Zhuan*, the old man suggests that Wuzhuo should drink tea to sharpen his dull mind. The tea, the next section of the text asserts, has an extraordinary effect. References to transforming food and drink in accounts of the monk Fazhao's entry into a manifested monastery led Stevenson to ask "[h]ow do the Wutai pilgrimage cult and quasi-Daoist elements such as grotto-heavens and transmutation of the body through elixirs of immortality figure into Fazhao's quest?"¹⁰¹ When the biography of Wuzhuo is read in conjunction with that of Fazhao and similar tales the answer, it

⁹⁹ In the vision-literature of Mount Wutai there is evidence of the story traditions which existed at the mountain prior to Buddhism's arrival at the holy site. There are also accounts in which the Buddhist claim to the territory is established but the tradition that Wutai is the abode of Mañjuśrī is not yet fixed. See for example the *Song Gaoseng Zhuan* biography of the Tang monk Haiyuan (T50.882c). In this biography Haiyuan is identified as a manifestation of Samantabhadra at Wutai. This is a troubling identification for Zanning, who writing at a much later date when the link between Mañjuśrī and the mountain was firm. In an attempt to smooth over Samantabhadra's appearance in Mañjuśrī's realm, Zanning concludes with a somewhat confusing scholastic gloss.

¹⁰⁰ The aim of Buddhist monks is not typically identified as immortality. This is an objective more closely associated with the Daoist tradition. Birnbaum, *Secret Halls* 122.

¹⁰¹ Daniel Stevenson, "Visions of Manjusri on Mount Wutai." *Religions of China in Practice*, Donald S. Lopez, Jr., ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996): 211.

seems, is that the lines between the Wutai Mañjuśrī cult and the tradition Stevenson characterizes as quasi-Daoist are not so rigid in stories of manifestation monasteries.

When they arrived at the monastery gates the old man called “Kunti three times and a young boy called back and opened the door. He was about fourteen or fifteen and he had falling hair, balanced eyebrows and wore a short coat of course wool. The boy led the ox and the men went along into the monastery. Zhuo saw all the things on the ground were of lapis lazuli and the temple passages and verandas in every case shone of gold. This was not a place created by human hands. The old man squatted on an ivory bed, pointed to a brocade seat and indicated to Zhuo to sit there. The young boy offered them two cups of tea and they drank the two facing each other. He lifted a tortoise shell vessel, filled it with kolimuss, and gave each man a spoon. When Zhuo swallowed it had an extraordinary effect: his mind became clear and he remembered past things.¹⁰²

The mysterious old man’s identity is revealed when he arrives at the manifested monastery. At its gates he calls several times for Kunti and a young man, described as fourteen or fifteen years of age and dressed in modest clothes, answers him. The youth leads the pair with the ox into the monastery and then brings them food and drink. Looking about the lavishly adorned monastery, Wuzhuo deduces that it was not created by human hands. However, he does not, it would seem, draw any particular significance from the young man’s presence there. Kunti’s arrival at the doors of the monastery might have immediately revealed the old man’s identity to Zanning and Yanyi’s audiences. Kunti, here written () but written () in the *Guang Qingliang Zhuan* version, is an

¹⁰² This is my own translation of the biography in the *Song Gaoseng Zhuan*.

attendant of Mañjuśrī.¹⁰³ The old man Wuzhuo has followed from the Huayan Monastery is none other than the bodhisattva in disguise.

The reference here to Kunti, phonetically similar in both texts, but written with distinct characters, indicates something not only about the disguised man's identity, but also about the composition of the texts themselves. The variation between these spellings suggests, first and foremost, that Zanning and Yanyi are relying on different sources. These sources, rather than being inscriptions or other written documents, might well have been oral or originally oral in nature. As I mentioned in the first chapter of this thesis, when compiling their texts, Zanning and Yanyi did not rely exclusively on written documents. That the sound of Kunti, not script, is preserved in the accounts might suggest that an oral tradition informed the composition of the accounts.

The use of the character *zai* () in this section of the account lends force to the hypothesis that an oral tradition is being imitated or preserved in parts of both the *Song Gaoseng Zhuan* and *Guang Qingliang Zhuan* accounts. *Zai*, meaning to be at, is used as an emphatic marker in phrases spoken by the old man and Wuzhuo here. In Zanning's text, for example, it concludes the line "*ci nai shi you zhi qing zai*," "[a]t this then you will have grasping!". It acts as an emphatic marker in the parallel line from the *Guang Qingliang Zhuan* version: "*shi you zhi qu zai ye*," "you will have grasping!" This usage of *zai*, repeated elsewhere in the

¹⁰³ The *Foguang Da Cidian* or *Dictionary of the Light of the Buddha*, quoting from the *Huiyuan*, suggests that the monk Wuzhuo from Hangzhou met Kunti at Mount Wutai. Given the monk's name, the location he is purported to have met the youth, as well as the proximity of

texts, is a Tang colloquialism which adds a casual flavour to the men's exchange.¹⁰⁴ The use of the word here points, once again, to the possibility that Zanning and Yanyi's accounts retain or mimic the character of an oral tradition.

In the *Song Gaoseng Zhuan* the Diamond Grotto encounter is Wuzhuo's second meeting with an old man, while in the *Guang Qingliang Zhuan* it is the third such episode. In both accounts, as in the Huayan Monastery, the pair drinks and eats together. The tea and food have an extraordinary effect on Wuzhuo's mind, as the old man said they would. When he consumes them Wuzhuo remembers the past. Similar tales suggest that this is not an anomalous feature of stories in which a monk enters into a manifestation monastery at Mount Wutai. In the tales of Fazhao's entry into the manifested Zhulin Monastery and Daoyi's journey into the manifested Jinge Monastery, both the monks are pictured eating and drinking with the bodhisattva. In the collection of tales in which a monk enters a manifestation monastery at Mount Wutai, eating and drinking with the bodhisattva is a standard convention.

The old man said, "Since the time at which you left home and became a monk, what have you been trying to do? What have you been thinking about?" He replied "I have been cultivating but have not achieved enlightenment. I have tried both the two vehicles of Mahāyāna and Hinayāna. I have tasted them without claiming them fully. The old man said "I don't know, what mind did you seek at the time you left home to become a monk?" Zhuo said, "I sought the Great Vehicle, Mahāyāna *bodhi* mind." The man said, "All you have

Hangzhou to Wenzhou, it is tempting to speculate that Wuzhuo of Hangzhou and Wuzhuo of Wenzhou are one and the same person.

¹⁰⁴ Another example of this *zai* being used in this way is found in the lines "*Yi you sheng jiao zai*," for example, giving force to the exacerbated Wuzhuo's statement "But the holy teachings contain this!" (T51.1112b9-10).

to do is practice by means of that mind (the *bodhi* mind to which Zhuo just referred) and you'll get it." The old man then stated "Given your excellent conduct, when you are thirty-eight then the root of merit will be planted in the soil and will flourish."

"For now," the old man continued, "go slowly down the mountain, seek the road but don't hurt your legs. I am old and decrepit and come from outside to here. I am extremely exhausted and I'm going to rest." Zhuo asked, "can I stay one night?" He said, "you can't. You have two attendants around you and if they do not see you tonight they will be endlessly distressed. Then and only then you will have a sense of attachment arise." Zhuo said, "As the disciple of Gautama, what place of attachment would I have. Although I have companions, I am not attached to them." The old man asked again, "you have three robes don't you?" He said, "I have held them since I received the precepts." The man said, "This is an object of attachment." Zhuo said, "But the holy teaching contains this. If you allow me to stay for a time then I will meditate and give up the robes. If there are extremely good reasons, the Buddha will permit it." The old man said, "If you follow Hinayāna (vinaya) then you will have no difficulty, you do not have to give up the robes. You ought to guard them."

The old man adjusted his collar, rose suddenly and started walking.

Zhuo approached him in small steps. The old said the following:

"To purify the mind for one thought moment is *bodhi*."

It is better than making *stūpas* of seven jewels numbering as many as the sands in the Ganges.

The jeweled *stūpas* ultimately crumble to be dust,

Whereas purifying the mind for one thought moment leads to ultimate wisdom."

Zhuo listened and concentrated on what he heard and thanking him said: "Receiving this secret *gatha* you proclaimed is like drinking *tihu*. Being allowed to enter the wisdom gate do I dare to forget the instruction? One can say you know speech that is to be carved on the mind."¹⁰⁵

In the context of a manifested monastery atop a holy mountain at the Tang periphery, the meandering nature of Wuzhuo's discussion with the disguised Mañjuśrī does not feel out of place. Rather, the contents of the bodhisattva's

comments, which range from the subject of Wuzhuo's decision to become a monk to the nature of attachment, seem to mirror in their disjuncture and opaqueness the strangeness of the surroundings. The conversation, which the old man leads by asking Wuzhuo a series of questions, is filled with cryptic statements. The shape of the discourse resembles in several respects the pattern of Chan pedagogy which John McRae has termed the "encounter dialogue".

The encounter dialogue is the name which McRae has assigned to the bimodal discourse between an often unnamed student and his named Chan teacher which is frequently found in material that depicts the activities of Chan practitioners prior to the Five Dynasties (907-960). This image of middle, largely Tang, Chan pedagogy, which McRae argues is the retrospective creation of later Five Dynasties and Song (960-1126) tradition, does not emphasize the setting of an encounter but focuses almost exclusively on the master's unexpected and puzzling statements. McRae characterizes the exchanges as follows:

...Chan encounter dialogue eschews the straightforward exchange of ideas; it is characterized by various types of logical disjunctions, inexplicable and iconoclastic pronouncements, gestures and physical demonstrations, and even assultive behaviour...¹⁰⁶

The *Guang Qingliang Zhuan* and *Song Gaoseng Zhuan* accounts of Wuzhuo's experiences at the manifested monastery do not wholly conform to the model McRae has identified in, among other sources, the *Song Gaoseng Zhuan* itself. Setting, generally ignored in the encounter dialogue, is an important backdrop to

¹⁰⁵ The translation of the biography is my own.

¹⁰⁶ McRae, 78.

this tale of a monk's entry into Mañjuśrī's realm. Nevertheless, the old man's remarks regarding attachment here, as well as those he makes at the Diamond Grotto, conform closely to McRae's description of teacher and student interactions. The encounter dialogue appears frequently in representations of later Tang Chan in sources contemporaneous with the compilation of Zanning and Yanyi's works.

The old man called his junior Kunti and told him to escort the monk on his way. At the point of departure he tapped Zhuo on the back saying "Go." Zhuo bowed again. He walked side by side and in step with the boy. When they reached the front of the Diamond Grotto he asked the boy "What is this monastery? There is no inscribed tablet hung up?" The boy pointed to the Diamond Grotto and asked back to Zhuo "What is this grotto?" Zhuo said, "From generation to generation tradition has called it the Diamond Grotto." The boy said "Beneath Diamond what letters are written?" Zhuo thought for an instant and said "Beneath the Diamond Grotto there is *banruo* (*prajñā*) written." The boy smiled, "The one suited to enter (the grotto) is the one who sees Prajñā Monastery."

Zhuo took the boy's hand, bowed and then told him he would depart. The youth stared fixedly at Zhuo as if he wanted to say something. Zhuo said, "send me off." The youth gave the following verse:

"The face that doesn't show anger is the vessel you offer the Buddha.

Speech free of anger puts forth beautiful fragrance.

The heart free from anger is a precious gem.

Without contamination, without defilement,
There is the eternal truth of Buddha reality."

When the verse finished Zhuo was in a state of blurry indistinction. Both the youth and the holy monastery disappeared and Zhuo saw only the mountain grove, stones and rock. Sorrow filled Zhuo's chest. He could not stop his sobs and sighs. He lamented, "These writings

are like a flute or bell's sound which remains only a distant echo in one's ears."¹⁰⁷

The notion that particular abilities or attributes qualify an individual to enter a sacred site comes to the fore in the exchange between Wuzhuo and Kunti at the Diamond Grotto. In this discussion, Wuzhuo demonstrates his readiness to enter the grotto with his answer to Kunti's question: "What letters are written beneath the Diamond Grotto?". Because the monk is able to see that *prajñā* or *banruo* is written there, the youth declares that he is fit to enter the Diamond Grotto. Wuzhuo's ability to see and read the phrase "*prajñā*" at the Diamond Grotto demonstrates his worthiness to enter the cavern and, it would seem, the manifested monastery which he has already visited there.

The lore surrounding the Cave of the Reflection image in Nagarahara, an earlier pilgrimage site beyond the borders of Wutai and those of the Chinese state, framed the capacity to see a vision in much in the same way as Kunti does the writing here at the Diamond Grotto. Located at the northwest of the Indic world (in present day Afghanistan), the Cave of the Reflection image was a major Buddhist pilgrimage site between the fourth and sixth centuries. It was a destination to which, for example, the monk Faxian journeyed from China in 399CE and the monk Xuanzang traveled in 629CE. It was reputed to be a place where a pilgrim's ability to see the miraculous image of the Śākyamuni Buddha acted as a barometer of his or her mind's purity. Raoul Birnbaum characterizes the tradition of this site in the following way:

¹⁰⁷ This translation from the *Song Gaoseng Zhuan* is my own.

at this site, a pure-minded person could gain a direct vision of Śākyamuni Buddha manifesting himself from a spirit realm and receive genuine teachings from him. The primary purpose of pilgrimage to this site was to receive teachings, not to gain merit... a luminous image of Śākyamuni —said to have been created in a miraculous manner by the Buddha himself—could be discerned on the rock wall. Legend has it that this image was made by Śākyamuni after he vanquished the evil nāgas dwelling in this cave who had been terrorizing inhabitants of this region.¹⁰⁸

Much as Wuzhuo's ability to see the writing at the grotto allowed him to access the Prajñā Monastery and receive an audience with the bodhisattva, the purest mind, it was thought, opened one's eyes to an image created by the Buddha himself and, ideally, enabled one to receive a teaching from him at the Cave of the Reflection image. The notion of sacred places being sites which open to a select few is apparent here and also elsewhere in Mount Wutai's vision literature.

The story of the monk Buddhapāli reveals an understanding of the entry and exit from sacred places which is similar to that found in the lore of the Cave of the Reflection image and tale of Wuzhuo's experiences at the Diamond Grotto. Seeing hidden letters in the account of Wuzhuo's Wutai experiences operates much in the same way as bringing a special text to the holy mountain does in the tale of Buddhapāli. In order to enter the mountain's holy precincts and meet Mañjuśrī, Buddhapāli is instructed by a mysterious stranger to retrieve a particular scripture from India. By successfully completing this action, the Indian monk is able to enter the Diamond Grotto with the bodhisattva; the perception that the

¹⁰⁸ In the lore of the Cave of the Reflection image's origin is an example of the narrative Bernard Faure argues gives expression to the process Buddhism's geographical and cultural expansion. Here a Buddhist monk, the Buddha himself, banishes a menacing snake from a

mountain is dotted with sacred sites accessible to those who demonstrated their fitness is highlighted again. At the end of this chapter, I will discuss two additional *Guang Qingliang Zhuan* episodes which depict mental preparedness as a necessary quality for entering into a sacred place. In contrast to the examples here, however, they portray a monk who lacks this attribute. These sections of the mountain monograph depict Wuzhuo as incapable or unwilling to fulfill a certain action and rendered, therefore, unable to enter or remain in an especially numinous place.

In this section of the *Song Gaoseng Zhuan* the subject of government and manifestation monasteries is also addressed. In the voice of Wuzhuo the earthly and divine institutions are juxtaposed. Arriving at the Diamond Grotto, Wuzhuo notices that the monastery he sees lacks an inscribed tablet and thus asks Kunti what the place is named. The inscribed tablet to which Wuzhuo refers here marked a monastery as a government or national monastery. Kunti replies to the monk's question with one of his own and Wuzhuo demonstrates his capacity to see the secret writing at the site. This exchange, as just noted, presents an opportunity for the monk to demonstrate his readiness to enter the manifestation monastery. It also provides the text an opportunity to compare directly the national, or government, and manifestation monastery. Tang temples, as noted in the discussion of the Huayan Monastery above, were classified into two principle categories: those temples which were officially recognized by the imperial court

territory and then establishes the site as decidedly Buddhist. Faure's work is discussed in chapter

and those which were not. The former class of monasteries, described in Ch'en's

"The Role of Buddhist Monasteries in T'ang Society," were:

created by imperial edict and located all over the empire... The national monasteries were accorded preeminent status in their respective communities; they were inhabited by highly educated monks, the elite in the monastic community; and they were supported by funds from the imperial treasury.¹⁰⁹

Alongside these national or government monasteries were nonrecognized temples.

Nonrecognized temples, like the manifested Prajñā Monastery above, did not

possess the inscribed tablet given to the Jinge or Golden Pavilion Monastery, the

Qingliang or Clear and Cool Monastery, the Huayan or Flower Garland

Monastery, the Foguang or Buddha's Radiant Light Monastery and the Yuhua

Monastery at Mount Wutai. Given that there were at least seventy-two

monasteries at Mount Wutai during the Tang, however, the five government

monasteries designated in this way represented a privileged minority.¹¹⁰ The lot of

the majority of Wutai monasteries Ch'en characterizes as follows:

the nonrecognized temples... did not enjoy the preferred status of the recognized institutions. They were usually village temples, private hermitages, shrines, or sanctuaries, inhabited by monks who were ordained privately; they had little or no landed property or industrial installations to speak of. They were often the first ones to feel the blows of any movement directed against Buddhism.¹¹¹

In the earthly realm, government monasteries enjoyed a privileged place among

monastic institutions. They existed somewhat under the umbrella of imperial

one. Birnbaum, *Mountain Traditions* 11-12.

¹⁰⁹ Kenneth Ch'en, "The Role of Buddhist Monasteries in T'ang Society," *History of Religions* 15 (1976): 212.

¹¹⁰ Birnbaum, *Shen-ying* 119.

¹¹¹ Ch'en, *Buddhism in China* 273.

protection and were the recipients of imperial support in the form of goods, cash and feasts. Beside the manifestation monastery, however, the national or government monastery is only an earthly complement to the “real thing.”

In identifying the absence of a tablet at the manifestation monastery, Wuzhuo shows that the Banruo or Prajñā monastery is different from the Huayan, Jinge, Foguang, Qingliang and Yuhua monasteries. Interestingly, one of these official monasteries is a replica of the manifestation monastery entered by Wuzhuo’s counterpart Daoyi. Four figure prominently in the stories of manifestation monasteries. The manifestation Prajñā monastery, it seems, is wholly different from them. Not only does it lack an inscribed tablet but it is, furthermore, only accessible to individuals with a particular ability. Like the Cave of the Reflection image, the manifested monastery is a place obtained only by those who can see *banruo* or *prajñā* written. While the earthly domains supported by the emperor are entered through a door, the bodhisattva’s temples are accessed through special sight.

The miraculous and government monastery are deliberately contrasted in another biography of an eminent monk, the biography of Yauntong in Daoxuan’s *Xu Gaoseng Zhuan (Further Biographies of Eminent Monks)*.¹¹² In this account the manifestation Zhulin monastery is compared favorably to a government supported official monastery. According to the biography, the Northern Qi (550-

¹¹² This episode is explored by Koichi Shinohara in his article “The story of the Zhulin monastery: biography, miracle story, and sacred places.” The story of Yuantong’s miraculous experiences are recorded in a parallel account in Daoxuan’s miracle collection *Ji shenzhou sanbao*

577) monk Yuantong entered the Zhulin monastery at Gushan, at the suggestion of a mysterious monk. Once inside it Yuantong meets the old master who says to him:

You reside in a government monastery. It is hard to give up the generous support you receive there. How could you lower yourself to our level? There is nothing in this monastery to see.¹¹³

While the monastery's abbot allows Yuantong to remain in the monastery for one night, he instructs him to have his name removed from the registry of the government monastery if he wants to stay at the monastery permanently. The next day when Yuantong leaves, presumably to do just that, the monastery disappears leaving the monk alone on the mountain peaks.

In the speech made to Yuantong when he first arrives at the manifested Zhulin Monastery, the government monastery and manifestation monastery are contrasted by the old abbot. He mocks the luxuries afforded to monks who renounce the ordinary world and enter into state-supported temple. Even in divine monasteries, the abbot suggests, monks from this type of establishment would be dissatisfied. In the story of the manifested Zhulin Monastery the national monastery emerges as a comfortable playground beside the "real" manifestation monastery in this exchange.¹¹⁴

gantong lu (Collected record of the Three Jewel Miracles in China T.2106:52.424ab) which is also discussed by Shinohara in this work.

¹¹³ Shinohara, *Zhulin monastery*.

¹¹⁴ The third chapter of this thesis will discuss in some detail the relationship which stories of manifestation monasteries at Mount Wutai seem to have to the Chinese cult of Pindola Bharadvaja. Interestingly, the abbot of the Zhulin Monastery at Gushan who talks with Yuantong here is identified as none other than the bodhisattva Pindola Bharadvaja in the appendix to Daoxuan's *Xu Gaoseng Zhuan*. See Shinohara, *Zhulin monastery*.

The experience of entering and finally having to depart from a manifested monastery leaves Wuzhuo, like many of his Mount Wutai counterparts, sorrowful. With the monastery's disappearance, Wuzhuo stands alone on the mountain peaks. He is filled with grief and he sobs uncontrollably. It is a reaction which is frequently encountered in the vision-tale literature of Mount Wutai. After Mañjuśrī's departure from the maigre feast at the Huayan Monastery which he attended disguised as a pregnant woman, for example, the banquet-goers "raised their voices in repentance and wept bitterly, raining down tears, and called out "His Holiness Monjushiri," until their voices gave way and their throats were dry".¹¹⁵ In another story from the holy mountain, the Northern Qi dynasty (550-577) monk Mingxu meets a strange monk at Mount Wutai.¹¹⁶ The monk joined Mingxu in his search for the bodhisattva there. It was only after the two parted ways that Mingxu discovered he was, in fact, Mañjuśrī. According to the tale, Mingxu cried every time he recalled his encounter with a strange monk at Mount Wutai for the duration of his life. Like Wuzhuo in the *Song Gaoseng Zhuan* and *Guang Qingliang Zhuan* accounts, the individuals who have encountered the bodhisattva at Mount Wutai in these examples are stricken with grief.

Yet the tears in these examples are expressions not only of sadness but also of regret. At the time of their meeting, neither the attendants at the maigre

¹¹⁵ Reischauer, *Ennin's Diary* 258-259.

¹¹⁶ This story is discussed by Shinohara in his analysis of the strategies used to construct Mount Wutai as a sacred Buddhist site. Koichi Shinohara, "Literary Construction of Buddhist Sacred Places: *The Record of Mt. Lu* by Chen Shunyu" *Asiatische Studien* 53.4 (1999): 960-961.

feast nor the monk Mingxu recognized the disguised bodhisattva for who he truly was. Do Wuzhuo's tears reflect this sentiment? Is his a vision misinterpreted? The third section of this paper will address these questions in conjunction with the other accounts of a monk's entry into a manifestation monastery. The end of a vision encounter affects these monks much as it does Wuzhuo.

He looked carefully where the old man of the mountain had stood and there was a luxuriant white cloud flowing upwards. Not far from the ground it became a cloud with a five-colored rainbow. Above the cloud was the great sage riding a lion surrounded by many bodhisattvas. After a while a cloud from the east gradually covered the bodhisattva's face. The rest of the figures were covered in the cloud and disappeared.

Zhuo then saw the Temple for Enlightenment of Fenzhou's abbot Xiuzheng with six others. They went together to the front of the grotto and worshipped. Suddenly they heard the mountains and rocks shake and roar with a sound like the crash of thunder. All the other monks ran away. For a good while there was silence and they observed nothing. Zhou thus told the story of his encounter and the six men were distraught at not having seen the appearance.

After this, Zhuo remained as a hermit living in hiding in this mountain until his death. In the Yuanhe year his disciple Wenyi wrote about him here.¹¹⁷

Wuzhuo encounters Mañjuśrī in each of the three forms which the first chapter identified in the vision literature of the holy mountain. The monk meets him in the guise of an old man with his attendant Kunti. He sees evidence of the bodhisattva's presence in the beams of light and auspicious birds which he observes at the Huayan Monastery. Finally, Wuzhuo sees a five-coloured cloud in which the bodhisattva is visible atop a lion and surrounded by his retinue. This

¹¹⁷

This translation is my own.

vision occurs where Wuzhuo had met the mysterious old man and confirms, perhaps, that he was, in fact, Mañjuśrī.

The tradition of Wuzhuo's visions being passed from generation to generation in an oral form begins when he relays what he has observed to a group of monks from the Temple of Enlightenment in Fenzhou. In the *Guang Qingliang Zhuan* version these men implore Wuzhuo to write a *shilu* () or "virtual record" which would chronicle his experience at the holy mountain for future generations (T51.1112c5). The first-hand transcript of experiences, or *shilu*, to which Yanyi's account refers here was, according to the text, the model on which the earthly replica of the manifestation Banruo or Prajñā Monastery was patterned (T51.1112c6). While according to Daniel Stevenson this genre of textual material was not used frequently in the composition of biographies of eminent monks, one wonders if here it is, in fact, available to Yanyi as he composes the *Guang Qingliang Zhuan* record.¹¹⁸ In the case of the Pure Land Patriarch Fazhao, his *shilu* was erected on a tablet at the site where the replica of the manifestation monastery he had entered was built.¹¹⁹

The statement with which the *Song Gaoseng Zhuan* biography concludes may also reveal a source which was available to Zanning, as well as Yanyi, when compiling the account of Wuzhuo's experiences at Mount Wutai. The biography

¹¹⁸ Stevenson, 205.

¹¹⁹ In reference to Fazhao's *shilu*, Stevenson writes: "Fazhao's record of the divine Bamboo Grove Monastery took shape and was circulated concurrently with his efforts to raise funds for the monastery's terrestrial counterpart. When the construction was completed, the narrative itself was carved on a stele at the site of the monastery as a kind of "testimony to its divine origins."

concludes with the assertion that in the Yuanhe years (beginning 806) Wuzhuo's disciple Wenyi wrote about him. The character with which this statement concludes is *yan* (). In some instances the sentence final *yan* indicates that the action which the speaker describes is performed at the place at which he speaks. Its use in this example is significant to our understanding of the process by which Zanning composed the biography. Used here the final line may read either that Wuzhuo's disciple wrote a record of his life or that Wuzhuo's disciple wrote a record of his life *at this place*. In the latter case, the phrase may well suggest that, while compiling the biography, Zanning is reading from an inscription on a memorial *stūpa* or a copy of an inscription, written by Wenyi at a particular site.

At the time of its introduction to China, Buddhism adopted the Chinese convention of writing biographical tomb inscriptions. The large body of written biographical material that these *stūpa* inscriptions produced, as Shinohara has discussed, informed to a greater or lesser extent the majority of the Biographies of Eminent Monks.¹²⁰ The inscriptions followed a standard form which included a description of the circumstances of the monk's death and a record of the circumstances of the *stūpa*'s construction. The final line of the *Song Gaoseng Zhuan* biography might very well be this record of the construction of Wuzhuo's memorial inscription by his disciple Wenyi. If so, then the final line of the

One wonders if the *shilu* of Wuzhuo's experiences might have been displayed at the mountain in a similar fashion. Stevenson, 209, 210.

¹²⁰ Koichi Shinohara, "Two sources of Chinese Buddhist Biographies: *stupa* inscriptions and miracle stories," *Monks and Magicians: Religious Biographies in Asia*, Eds. Phyllis Granoff and Koichi Shinohara (Oakville: Mosaic Press, 1988): 120.

biography may allude to a *stūpa* inscription which Zanning had at his disposal when compiling the record of Wuzhuo's life.

Two Additional Encounters in Yanyi's *Guang Qingliang Zhuan*

In its record of Wuzhuo's experiences at Mount Wutai, Yanyi's mountain monograph chronicles two additional visions along with the miraculous encounters detailed in the *Song Gaoseng Zhuan*. The *Guang Qingliang Zhuan*, like Zanning's biography, describes the monk's visions at the Huayan Monastery and his entry into the manifested Prajñā Monastery. It describes, further, Wuzhuo's entry into the manifested Qingliang Monastery and a second visit to the Diamond Grotto. According to Yanyi's text, these events occurred when the monk first arrived at the holy mountain and, then, sometime after his entry into the Prajñā Monastery. Insofar as these additional visions involve a meeting with an old man or monk, take place at key sites at Wutai and describe the monk's exit or attempt to exit the temporal and spatial realm, the episodes are similar to those vision experiences common to Zanning and Yanyi's versions. The miraculous encounters detailed in the *Guang Qingliang Zhuan* but not the *Song Gaoseng Zhuan* are, however, different from those already discussed in at least one respect: they depict the monk Wuzhuo's unwillingness or incapacity to perform an action and his subsequent inability to enter or remain in a sacred site.

According to the mountain monograph, Wuzhuo enters not one but two manifested monasteries. The *Guang Qingliang Zhuan* records that around sunset on the day Wuzhuo arrived at the foot of Mount Wutai he observed what the text

states explicitly was a manifested monastery (T.51.1111c6-7). When Wuzhuo knocked on the door, the text reads, he was answered by the youth Kunti.¹²¹ The youth receives permission from the head monk to invite Wuzhuo inside the monastery and, once inside, the head monk and Wuzhuo have a conversation. Kunti is an attendant of Mañjuśrī. His presence at the Qingliang Monastery, like the Prajñā Monastery, suggests that its abbot is the bodhisattva.

The discussion between the abbot and Wuzhuo weaves from topic to topic. When it turns to the state of the Buddha-dharma in Wuzhuo's native region, it touches on a subject frequently encountered in the vision literature of Wutai. Wuzhuo tells the disguised monk that because it is the second era of the dharma's decline (*xiangfa*) the *vinaya* (law) and *śīla* (ethics) are divided (T51.1111c11-12). Regarding the Buddha-dharma at the holy mountain, the abbot tells Wuzhuo that the common and sacred are currently intermingled like snakes and dragons. The *Foshuo Wenshushili fabaozang tuoluohi jing* (Scripture of the Dharani of Mañjuśrī's Precious Treasury of the Dharma) predicted that the bodhisattva would preach the Dharma on a five-peaked mountain in Mahā Cīna during the period of the dharma's decline. According to Wuzhuo in this *Guang Qingliang Zhuan* passage, the current era is the first but not final of three eras of the dharma's dissolution. References to a time of degeneration are common in the literature of Wutai and, the third chapter will show, in the manifested monasteries in

¹²¹ Kunti, written here , is a variation on the name as it is written elsewhere in the monograph at T51.1112a19.

particular. It is a reference, however, made in the *Guang Qingliang Zhuan* version of Wuzhuo's experiences but at no point in the *Song Gaoseng Zhuan* biography.

When Wuzhuo asks the abbot of the manifested monastery about the number of monks in the region, he offers a puzzling reply which resembles those uttered by Buddhist teachers in the Chan encounter dialogues described by McRae. Answering Zhuo's question, the mysterious monk states "[b]efore there were three-three (or thirty-three) and after there were three-three (again, perhaps, thirty-three)" (T51.1111c14-15). Wuzhuo remains silent for a time after the abbot speaks. When he asks Wuzhuo whether he understood him, the monk says "no" and thus the abbot declares: "if you do not understand then you must go. It is not fitting that you should rest here for long" (T51.1111c16). The abbot has Kunti lead Wuzhuo out of the monastery and from there they travel together to the Diamond Grotto.

Arriving at the Diamond Grotto, Wuzhuo asks the youth the monastery's name, to which he replies that it is the Qingliang Monastery.¹²² Kunti then confirms that the monk did not understand the statement "in front three-three, behind three-three." Wuzhuo turns to see the cavern and when he looks back the transformation monastery has vanished. Wuzhuo is thus alone on the mountain peak and filled with sorrow. At this point, according to the monograph, he utters the following verses:

¹²² Legend holds that the Qingliang Monastery was the first monastery established at Mount Wutai and that it was built by Xiao Wendi of the Northern Wei (r. 471-499). It was one of five national or government monasteries in Wuzhuo's time and was located between the Southern and Western Terrace. Marchand, 168. Gimello, *Chang Shang-ying* 132.

All around in the realms as many as the sands of the Ganges is the holy
 Buddhist monastery.
 Everywhere one can see Mañjuśrī speaking.
 As soon as he spoke I do not know what seal he opened.
 I turned my head and saw only the old mountain cliff? (T51.1111c22-
 23).¹²³

Wuzhuo has an experience which transforms his way of seeing in a divine version of the Qingliang Monastery. Its earthly counterpart is the temple where the monk Daoyi stayed at the time of his miraculous 736CE vision. The monk he met while there, this *gatha* implies, is one he recognized as Mañjuśrī. When he first arrived at the monastery Wuzhuo was invited to remain there for the night, just as the monk Yuantong had been at the manifestation Zhulin Monastery at Gushan. However, because Wuzhuo could not understand the disguised monk's utterances, he was instructed to leave at once. In contrast to the story of the monk's visions with Kunti at the Diamond Grotto which show Wuzhuo successfully reading the secret inscription, this encounter pictures him failing to understand the abbot's puzzling speech and, as a result, being turned out of a sacred site.

According to the mountain monograph, after his entry into the manifested Prajñā Monastery at the Diamond Grotto and his vision of Mañjuśrī with his retinue in a cloud there, Wuzhuo often contemplated these extraordinary experiences until one day he returned to the grotto (T51.1112c7-8). There the monk met, once again, an old man. The man invited Wuzhuo to enter the cavern. Wuzhuo declined. At this, the old man entered the grotto alone and did not return. Standing in front of the cave Wuzhuo then watched as several men in purple

clothing approached and entered the Diamond Grotto. His heart filled with doubt and, like Xiangyun in Hiuxiang's *Gu Qingliang Zhuan*, he approached one man to ask who they were. The man told Wuzhuo that 10 000 bodhisattvas dwelt within the grotto which concealed the Great Sage the Mañjuśrī bodhisattva who could be seen there preaching the *Huayan jing*. His doubts allayed, Wuzhuo approached the cavern. The long and detailed entry on Wuzhuo in Yanyi's *Guang Qingliang Zhuan* finishes with the statement: "Wuzhuo was filled with joy. He took a few steps but the stone grotto was small and narrow. It would not allow him to enter and so there he stopped" (T1112c15-16).

Not only does the mountain monograph account of Wuzhuo's entry into the manifestation Prajñā Monastery include an episode in which the monk's lack of understanding results in his eviction from the monastery, but it also ends with an account of his ultimate failure to enter the Diamond Grotto. Wuzhuo declines an invitation to go into the cavern only to be told by the band of mysterious purple-clad monks that Mañjuśrī, as the early eighth-century translation of the *Huayan jing* asserts, is inside preaching the *sūtra* to a myriad of listeners. Because he did not take the first offer, the opening will not expand for him to enter when he tries to moments later. The episode with which the long mountain monograph account concludes is reminiscent of the monk Mingxu's meeting with an old monk and the banquet attendants' encounter with the greedy pregnant woman at

the Huayan Monastery. Wuzhuo fails to recognize what is being offered to him and, when at last he does, it is too late.

Chapter Three

The record of Wuzhuo's experiences at Mount Wutai is not the sole *Song Gaoseng Zhuan* and *Guang Qingliang Zhuan* account in which a Tang monk enters into a transformation monastery at the holy mountain. Rather, it is one of at least four such accounts arranged successively in Yanyi's mountain monograph. The stories are the thirteenth, fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth chapters of the text, the titles of which are given similarly: the text states the monk's name followed by the name of the manifestation monastery into which he entered. While three of the vision-tales are presented chronologically, the tale of Wuzhuo's entry into the manifestation Banruo or Prajñā Monastery, though the latest vision, is placed first. The arrangement of the accounts in the monograph presents the entry into a transformation monastery as a collection of similar stories. The similar manner in which the accounts are titled suggests there is a connection between them as well. What follows in the first section of this chapter

is a brief introduction to each of these vision-tales with a summary of their contents.

“The Monk Shenying Enters the Manifested Cloister of the Dharma Blossom”
(T51 1112c17-1113a14)¹²⁴

The record of the monk Shenying’s entry into the manifested Cloister of the Dharma Blossom is the fourteenth chapter in Yanyi’s *Guang Qingliang Zhuan*. It is the shortest account of its type and chronicles the earliest vision of a manifestation monastery. According to the text, the monk Shenying arrived at Mount Wutai from Nanyue, the Southern Marchmount, in the year 716CE.¹²⁵ The early date at which the monk’s vision experience is set may help to explain the many respects in which it differs from those of Daoyi, Fazhao and Wuzhuo. The *Guang Qingliang Zhuan* chronicle of Shenying’s journey appears in translation in Birnbaum’s “The Manifestations of a Monastery: Shen-ying’s Experiences on Mount Wu-t’ai in T’ang Context”. The following reading of the account draws on Birnbaum’s work and all the quotations below are taken from it.¹²⁶

The *Guang Qingliang Zhuan* record of Shengying’s Pilgrimage

Shenying was from Cangzhou and his family name was Han.¹²⁷ At age seven or eight he was awakened to the Way and he began his religious training when he was ten years old. After he was fully ordained Shenying became a wandering monk. His travels took him to the Southern Marchmount, Nanyue,

¹²⁴ Unlike Wuzhuo, Fazhao and Daoyi, Shenying enters into a manifested *yuan* (cloister) at Mount Wutai, one building within a monastery-complex.

¹²⁵ The long history of the sacred marchmounts (yue) is mentioned in the first chapter.

¹²⁶ Birnbaum, *Shen-ying* 110-37.

¹²⁷ Cangzhou was a large prefecture of more than 100 000 households on the northeast coast.

where he met Shenhui.¹²⁸ The Chan master said to him “you have great karmic affinities with Mount Wu-t’ai. You should travel northwards to pay reverence to the Great Sage Mañjuśrī and seek out his vestiges” (127). Without paying attention to fatigue, Shenying made the journey to Wutai.

In the sixth month of 716 Shenying arrived at the holy mountain where he wanted to pay reverence to Mañjuśrī. He went to the Cloister of the Flower Ornament King and observed a day of ritual abstinence.¹²⁹ The next day Shenying went wandering alone in a grove to the west of the cloister. Suddenly he saw a monastic residence with a tablet reading “Cloister of the Dharma Blossom.” He entered and circumambulated the compound. Inside a Prabhūtaratna Buddha *stūpa* which seemed as though it was made by divine hands appeared.¹³⁰ In the cloister there was also a Tower of the Benevolent King who protects the Nation and a large triple gate. Both were adorned with images of Mañjuśrī, Samantabhadra and

Wright and Twitchett, 458.

¹²⁸ Shenhui (684-758), recall, was the critic of the form of Chan practice advocated by the students of the monk Shenxiu (606?-704). His attack precipitated a rift in the tradition between what he termed the Northern and Southern schools of Chan.

Regarding the possibility that Shenhui met Shenying at the Southern Marchmount, Nanyue, Birnbaum writes that the Chan monk:

“could indeed have met Shen-ying there in 715 or 716, as suggested by this account. Shen-hui studied with Hui-neng in Kuang-tung from around 708 until 713. Then, following his master’s death, Shen-hui traveled about until settling down in 720 by imperial order at the Lung-hsing ssu in Nanyang.” Birnbaum, *Shen-ying* 127.

¹²⁹ This reference to ritual abstinence is unique among the stories of manifested monasteries and uncommon in the wider vision-literature of Mount Wutai. The practice seems to be preparation here for the vision which follows. It operates in a similar way to the abstinence practiced by the Huayan Monastery artisan who was unable to craft an image of Mañjuśrī only after a vision of him. Ennin’s diary records the craftsman’s consternation: “[m]y whole life I have cast Buddhist images, and never before have I had them crack. When making the image this time, I observed religious abstinence with my whole heart and used all the finesse of my craft.” Religious abstinence is practiced by Shinnying and the unnamed artist in two vision-tales in which images feature prominently. Reischauer, *Ennin’s Diary* 200.

their retinue. The cloister also housed a diagram of the lineage relationships of the Wutai temples.

As he prepared to leave, Shenying saw a congregation of divine monks. Harboring doubts, he left. As he began to walk away he heard a sound and turned to find that the structure had vanished. The monk lamented and wept saying “this must have been manifested by the Great Sage. For me, this place has great karmic significance.”

Shenying established a retreat hut at the site where he had entered the manifested cloister. He vowed, “I will build a monastery like the manifested cloister and live in it for the remainder of my years.” With the help of the congregation the monastery was constructed. When it was complete the total cost was more than one million cash. Shenying travelled to Yizhou to gather materials to make images for the monastery.¹³¹ The walls of the building were decorated with paintings by Wu Daotzu.¹³² A tablet was erected at the monastery and, until his death at age seventy-five, Shenying served as its abbot. Shenying’s memorial *stūpa* remains at the site.¹³³

“The Monk Daoyi enters the Manifested Golden Pavillion Monastery”
(T51: 1113a15-1114a5)

¹³⁰ Prabhūtaratna, a buddha of the distant past, is closely associated with the teachings of the *Lotus Scripture*. When they are properly taught, then this buddha manifests at that place within his *stūpa*, to certify the authenticity of these teachings. Birnbaum, *Shen-ying* 129.

¹³¹ Yizhou, like Cangzhou, was a larger prefecture in the northwest of the dynasty located more toward the interior. Much of Shenying’s biography is set in this area where Mount Wutai is itself located. Wright and Twitchett, 458.

¹³² Wu Daotzu (ca700-760) was the pre-eminent figure painter of the mid-Tang and much of his work was completed with imperial sponsorship. Birnbaum, *Shen-ying* 129.

¹³³ One wonders if Yanyi, composing this account at Wutai, had this *stūpa* inscription available to him.

What little biographical information scholars have about Daoyi is found in the *Guang Qingliang Zhuan* record of his experiences at Mount Wutai summarized here and in the *Song Gaoseng Zhuan* biography of the Chan monk. Daoyi was born in Jiangdong, which is located on the southern shore of the Yangtze River, in Quzhou.¹³⁴ The sources on Daoyi's pilgrimage agree that in 736 he arrived at Wutai. Later in that same year he began constructing the Jinge or Golden Pavillion Monastery, an earthly replica of the manifestation monastery he entered while wandering alone on the mountains peaks. Perhaps because of the An Lu-shan rebellion, Daoyi's monastery, though begun in the 730s, remained incomplete until 767 or 770.¹³⁵ At this time, the monk Amoghavajra successively petitioned the imperial throne for financial support to complete the Jinge Monastery. The project was part of Amoghavajra's work to promote esoteric Buddhism, the cult of Mañjuśrī at Wutai and, more broadly, the interests of the Buddhist monastic community in Tang China. Interestingly, while great attention is paid to the details of the monastery's construction in the *Song Gaoseng Zhuan* biography, little is written about this subject in the mountain monograph. Compared to Zanning's text, however, the *Guang Qingliang Zhuan* offers an extensive account of Daoyi's Wutai vision-experiences. The outline of the longer mountain monograph version given here is informed by a summary of the *Guang*

¹³⁴ Quzhou was a large prefecture of more than 40 000 households in southern China. It is on the coast and just north of Wuzhuo's home prefecture, Wenzhou. Wright and Twitchett, 458.

¹³⁵ This explanation of the disruption in the monastery's construction is offered by Stanley Weinstein in his discussion of the effects of the An Lu-shan rebellion on Chinese Buddhism.

Qingliang Zhuan account in Raoul Birnbaum's *Studies on the Mysteries of Mañjuśrī: A group of East Asian maṇḍalas and their traditional symbolism*.

Quotations taken from this source are noted with in-text citations.

The *Guang Qingliang Zhuan* record of Daoyi's Pilgrimage

The monk Daoyi was from Jiangdong. In 736 he set out for Mount Wutai with another monk. When they arrived at the mountain, they stayed together at the Qingliang Monastery.¹³⁶ Hoping to find the place where Mañjuśrī dwelt, Daoyi went alone toward the northeast. As he wandered he thought about how he had left home to become a monk during the final age of the dharma's dissolution and reflected that during this period Wutai was the sole place the bodhisattva could be seen. Daoyi considered the ease with which he had journeyed to Wutai and attributed this to Mañjuśrī's protection.

All of a sudden Daoyi noticed an old monk. He was riding on an elephant and approached Daoyi on a path not visible to him. The aged monk spoke to Daoyi revealing, among other things, that he knew he had travelled from south of the Yangtze to the holy mountain and that he had not done so alone. After speaking to Daoyi for some time the old monk instructed him to return the

Weinstein, reading the *Song Gaoseng Zhuan*, states that the construction was finished in 767CE. Stevenson offers 770CE as the date. Weinstein, 80. Stevenson, 208.

¹³⁶ The Qingliang Monastery is discussed in chapter two.

following morning in order to have a vision of Mañjuśrī. Daoyi thanked him.

Then both the monk and animal vanished.¹³⁷

The next day Daoyi set out again from the Qingliang Monastery, this time toward the western peak of Mount Wutai. While he walked along he saw a glowing light, an unusual *stūpa* and, then, the aged monk riding the elephant. Together the pair journeyed onward until they came across an assembly of monks eating in a hall. Daoyi parted ways with the aged monk there and he carried on alone until he met a youth of thirteen or fourteen who identified himself as Jiyi.¹³⁸ The youth told Daoyi that he was at the Jinge or Golden Pavillion Monastery, and he led him toward an enormous golden monastery with a triple-gate and golden bridge and filled with objects of gold.¹³⁹ As he toured the cloisters of the monastery Daoyi came upon the old monk who had been riding the elephant seated on a couch. Daoyi realized then that the monk was, in fact, the bodhisattva Mañjuśrī.

The monk and bodhisattva sat together and conversed. Mañjuśrī asked about the Buddha-dharma in Jiangdong. Daoyi replied, “The period of the end of the law is now firmly established there. There is little respect for ethics (*śīla*) and

¹³⁷ Neither the monk’s musings on the age of the dharma’s decline and the bodhsattva’s protection, nor the encounter with a monk atop an elephant are included in the much briefer *Song Gaoseng Zhuan* biography of Daoyi.

¹³⁸ The *Song Gaoseng Zhuan* version of Daoyi’s Wutai experiences also records a meeting between the monk and youth; however, Jiyi or Perceives Unity is traveling with the old monk when they first meet. It is he who invites Daoyi to enter the monastery to drink tea.

¹³⁹ In his reading of Zhang Shangying’s monograph Robert Gimello has noted the multiple references to golden bridges in the vision-literature of Wutai. An unidentified golden bridge is visible on the Panorama of Mount Wutai in Cave 61 at Dunhuang. Gimello offers the accounts of Fazhao and Daoyi as possible episodes to which the bridge refers. As will presently be discussed,

monastic rules (*vinaya*). (People hold that) if something is not proven by eyewitness, it cannot be known”(16). Daoyi then asked the disguised Buddhist priest about the Buddha-dharma in the region of Wutai.¹⁴⁰ The great sage replied:

“[As for the Buddha-dharma at this center], while all the pure ones together dwell in a realm not subject to name-and-form, still they accord with conditioning causes in order to benefit all beings. This then is the Great Vehicle” (16).

Mañjuśrī had Ji yi bring in some food for Daoyi to eat and tea to drink. He then instructed the youth to take the monk to tour the twelve cloisters.¹⁴¹ After doing so Daoyi bid Mañjuśrī farewell and left. Having walked a hundred paces, he turned to find that the scene had disappeared. He could see only the empty mountain scene and that was all. Thereupon Daoyi knew it was a manifestation monastery.

When he returned to Chang’an, Daoyi reported these experiences to the emperor Xuanzong. In the first year of the Dali era (766) construction began on the monastery under Daizong.¹⁴²

the Golden Pavillion is a noticeable absence on the mural. It is the sole government monastery not pictured there. Might this, in fact, be the reference to it?

¹⁴⁰ In the line “*Qing heshang yue “ci zhong fofa ruhe?”*” at 1113c: 11-12, Birnbaum reads *cizhong* as referring to the essence of Buddha-dharma. This reading is unconvincing when read in conjunction with the phrase which precedes it: “*Yi yin ci fang gan ziwun.*” The disguised bodhisattva has just asked Daoyi about the state of the Buddha-dharma in his home region. The text reads: “thereupon Yi dared to make an inquiry about this region,” this region meaning Mount Wutai. The line is likely an introduction to the direct quotation which follows. *Cizhong* in the following lines would refer to the region of Wutai, and the phrase might then be translated as “What is the Buddha-dharma like in this place?” With this in mind the summary above diverges slightly but significantly from Birnbaum’s reading of the text in *Studies on the Mysteries of Mañjuśrī*.

¹⁴¹ Each of these twelve cloisters is named in the *Guang Qingliang Zhuan* account. The episode is not included in the *Song Gaoseng Zhuan* biography.

¹⁴² A description of the monastery’s construction constitutes one-quarter of the *Song Gaoseng Zhuan* biography. This version of the account mentions that a monk by the name of Shuntou or Cunda collected materials to build the monastery. It states that he was originally an

“The Monk Fazhao enters the Manifested Bamboo Grove Monastery”
 (T51: 1114a6-1116a22)

The monk Fazhao was the fourth patriarch of the Pure Land school, a tradition of Buddhism which began to receive attention at the imperial court in earnest in the years following the An Lu-shan rebellion.¹⁴³ His method for intoning the name of Amitābha Buddha, the “*wuhui nianfo*” or “the five-tempo Buddha recitation,” as well as the monastery constructed to replicate the manifested Zhulin or Bamboo Grove Monastery, were both products of the monk’s visionary experiences.¹⁴⁴ In the late 770s Fazhao worked to generate support for the construction of the Bamboo Grove Monastery and promoted the *wuhui nianfo* form of practice in the Tang capital. He was recognized in both the courts of Daizong (762-779) and Dezong (780-805) and during the latter years of the former’s reign was invited to give a lecture at the court where he was honoured with the title National Teacher (*guoshi*).¹⁴⁵ As a result of his efforts, Fazhao’s *wuhui nianfo* was instituted, first, in the Pure Land cloisters of state temples in the capital and then the cloisters in state temples throughout the nation.¹⁴⁶ During his lifetime this method for intoning Amitābha’s name became

Indian monk of the Nālandā monastery, a famous monastery north of Rājagṛha. Zanning’s biography also mentions that, upon the monastery’s completion, it was put under the control of the monk Amoghavajra.

¹⁴³ This subject is discussed somewhat more fully later in the chapter. Weinstein, 73.

¹⁴⁴ Fazhao is purported to have received the method of intoning the Buddha’s name directly from the Amitābha Buddha himself at Nanyue or the Southern Marchmount. The “*wuhui nianfo*” is endorsed as the best mode of practice for the age of the Dharma’s dissolution by Mañjuśrī in the record of Fazhao’s experiences at Mount Wutai below. Stevenson, 205.

¹⁴⁵ Weinstein, 74.

¹⁴⁶ Stevenson, 203-222.

very popular and the Pure Land master thus became one of the best known monks in Chang'an during the post-An Lu-shan period.

Chinese compendia preserve eight or nine biographies of Fazhao, one of which is the record of the Pure Land Patriarch's entry into the manifested Bamboo Grove Monastery in the *Guang Qingliang Zhuan*.¹⁴⁷ Text-critical study indicates that this nearly identical group of written accounts, which focus on the monk's visionary experiences at Mount Wutai, originate from the "veritable record" (*shilu*) written and circulated by Fazhao himself.¹⁴⁸ The "veritable record" or *shilu* is the type of document a group of monks from Fenzhou implored Wuzhuo to write near the conclusion of the *Guang Qingliang Zhuan* but not *Song Gaoseng Zhuan* account. Compared with the epitaph or commemorative testimonial, Stevenson asserts in his translation, this is a literary genre which informs Buddhist biography less frequently.¹⁴⁹ The *Guang Qingliang Zhuan* record of Fazhao's entry into the manifested Bamboo Grove Monastery is the longest and final account of its type in Yanyi's text. The summary of its contents below relies on Stevenson's translation of the *Guang Qingliang Zhuan*.

The *Guang Qingliang Zhuan* record of Fazhao's Pilgrimage

The monk Fazhao was from Nanliang. The details of his early life are unknown. On the morning of the thirteenth day of the second month in 767 he was eating in the refectory of the Cloud and Peak Monastery when a vision of

¹⁴⁷ Stevenson, 205.

¹⁴⁸ Stevenson, 204.

¹⁴⁹ Stevenson, 205.

Mount Wutai appeared in his bowl. On the mountain he saw a monastery with a tablet reading “Bamboo Grove Monastery of the Great Sage” near the Foguang or Buddha’s Radiant Light Monastery. On the morning of the twenty-seventh day of the month a second vision of the mountain appeared in Fazhao’s bowl. This time he saw the Huayan monastery along with the other monasteries at the mountain.¹⁵⁰ Fazhao confirmed that the scenes which appeared in his bowl were, in fact, the holy mountain by speaking with two former pilgrims to Mount Wutai.

In the early afternoon of the second day of the sixth month of 769 a rainbow-coloured cloud appeared above the Xiangdong Monastery in Genzhou where Fazhao was practicing in the sanctuary for Buddha-mindfulness. In the clouds were towers, pavilions and divine monks ten feet tall. Seeing this vision, monks did prostrations and wept. The people of Hengzhou observed the Amitābha Buddha, Mañjuśrī and Samantabhadra with their retinue of ten thousand bodhisattvas.

That night, as he practiced walking meditation, an old man appeared before Fazhao. He said to him: “Master! Once you vowed to go to Mount Wutai. How is it that you still have not gone?” Fazhao replied, “[t]imes are in turmoil and the journey is dangerous. If I go will I ever get there?” The old man told the monk that he ought to go to the mountain. On the thirteenth day of the eighth month Fazhao set out for Mount Wutai from the Southern Marchmount. He went with ten companions. The group encountered no difficulties on their way.

¹⁵⁰ The Foguang (Buddha’s Radiant Light) and Huayan (Flower Garland) Monasteries are

Sometime during the first days of the fourth month of 770 the group arrived at Mount Wutai. From a distance they saw a white light opposite the Monastery of the Buddha's Radiance. When they arrived at the monastery on the sixth day of the month it was just as it had appeared in Fazhao's gruel bowl. In the latter part of that night a white light descended toward Fazhao. When he asked some of the monks there what it was, they replied "we frequently witness the inconceivable auroras of the great sage." Fazhao set out alone in pursuit of the light.¹⁵¹

A league to the northeast of the monastery Fazhao came to a stone portal in front of which stood two youths in blue robes. The youths identified themselves as Sudhān and Nānda.¹⁵² They led Fazhao through the portal and toward the northeast. After five kilometres the trio came to a magnificent monastery. The pillar beside it read: "Bamboo Grove Monastery of the Great Sage." The scene was just as it had been in the monk's gruel bowl.

both state monasteries at Mount Wutai.

¹⁵¹ The manifested monastery is much like the relic in a miracle tale preserved by Ennin. Following a strange light, in this account, leads to a manifestation monastery. In the story in Ennin's diary the same action leads to a sacred object. Near the Mount Zhi Cloister where he was staying, Ennin witnessed a crowd of people paying reverence and making offering to relics of the Buddha. They had recently been discovered by a "scripture-reciting monk who had followed several beams of light which had interrupted his practice. The light led to a cliff and digging beneath it the monk discovered three jars of the Buddha's relics." Reischauer, *Ennin's Travels* 193.

¹⁵² Sudhāna is the legendary pilgrim at the conclusion of the *Huayan jing* who seeks out Mañjuśrī. Gimello calls him "the great archetype of all who search for Mañjuśrī." Anthony Tribe, reading the *Gandavyuha Sūtra* characterizes the relationship between the two as one of "spiritual friends," his teaching in their first meeting (quoted here) "immediate, practical, down-to-earth." In the *Gandavyuha Sūtra*, Mañjuśrī says to Sudhāna: "[i]t is good that you follow spiritual friends, having set your mind on supreme enlightenment, that you should inquire into the process of bodhisattvas, wishing to fulfill the path of bodhisattvas. Attending and serving spiritual friends in the beginning, the logical course, for the accomplishment of omniscience."

Fazhao entered the monastery lecture hall where he met Mañjuśrī and Samantabhadra with their retinue of bodhisattvas. Both sat atop lion thrones. Fazhao paid reverence to them and then asked which form of practice was most essential and expedient in the period of the dharma's decline. Mañjuśrī replied that "the practice of Buddha-mindfulness that you have been using is perfectly suited to the current age" (214). Mañjuśrī briefly described this form of practice. Both bodhisattvas touched the monk's head, gave him a prediction regarding his enlightenment and spoke a series of verses. Then Fazhao toured the other cloisters of the monastery. Walking through them he came across a garden in which there were fruit of the seven jewels. When Fazhao ate the fruit his body felt tranquil. The youths escorted the monk to the gates of the monastery and, when Fazhao looked down, both the monastery and youths vanished.

On the eighth day of the month Fazhao moved to the Prajñā Cloister at the Huayan Monastery.¹⁵³ On the thirteenth at midday he went to the Diamond Grotto where the monk Wuzhuo had seen the great sage.¹⁵⁴ At the cavern Fazhao did prostrations and invoked the names of the thirty-five buddhas. A crystal *vaidūrya*

Anthony Tribe, "Mañjuśrī: Origins, Role and Significance (Parts I & II)," *Western Buddhist Review* 2 (1994): 23-49.

¹⁵³ This is the site where Wuzhuo saw a pair of *jixiang* birds flying and observed two beams of strange light. It is also the place where Chengguan resided at Wutai prior to the construction of the cloister in which he wrote his commentary on the *Huayan jing*.

¹⁵⁴ The biography of the monk Wuzhuo and the account of Fazhao's experiences at Mount Wutai bear an interesting chronological relationship to each other. While the *Guang Qingliang Zhuan* dates Fazhao's pilgrimage to Wutai to 770, the account makes reference to Wuzhuo's earlier visions at the sacred mountain. According to the *Song Gaoseng Zhuan* and the *Guang Qingliang Zhuan*, however, the monk Wuzhuo did not arrive at Mount Wutai until the mid-770s. In this account from the mountain monograph, nevertheless, Fazhao is described retracing Wuzhuo's footsteps here though, according to an account elsewhere in the same text, Wuzhuo has not yet taken them.

with Mañjuśrī and Samantabhadra with their retinues and Buddhapāli in its interior suddenly materialized. Though Fazhao became joyful at this sight he did not reveal this to his companions and the group returned to the monastery.

At midnight Fazhao spotted five holy lamps on the mountain slopes. He prayed “May they multiply into one hundred lamps” (216). The lamps multiplied to number one hundred. Then he prayed a second time saying, “May they divide into a thousand” (216). Immediately the one hundred lamps divided into one thousand. Fazhao, overcome, went to find the sages he had seen earlier that day at the Diamond Grotto.

When he arrived at the cavern Fazhao used the method of the five tempos, *wuhui nianfo*, to recite the name of Amitābha one thousand times. He cried and struck himself until a divine monk appeared. The monk identified himself as Buddhapāli and led Fazhao into the Diamond Grotto.

Inside the grotto a single cloister with the name “Monastery of the Diamond Prajñā” written on a gold post before it came into view. The enormous cloister was adorned with the seven precious gems. It housed a copy of the Diamond Prajñā Sūtra (*Vajracchedika-prajñāpāramitā*) and the rest of the canon. Fazhao bowed before the bodhisattva Mañjuśrī and asked him when he would attain nirvana. Mañjuśrī stated that:

Your heart is truly set on being a bodhisattva. During such an evil age as this one, to be able to make this sublime vow to bring happiness and benefit to beings that you utter now (means that) you are certain to realize supreme enlightenment quickly. Without fail you will soon

fulfill the immeasurable vows of Samantabhadra, become a teacher of gods and men, and save countless numbers of beings (217).¹⁵⁵

Mañjuśrī insisted that Fazhao drink tea and eat medicinal foods. Then he told Buddhapāli to lead him out of the monastery. Fazhao pleaded with the bodhisattva to let him stay but Mañjuśrī explained that because his body was profane he simply could not. Because his karmic connection with the bodhisattva had come to fruition, however, upon his death he would go to the Pure Land of Amitābha and, then, directly to Mañjuśrī.

Upon leaving the monastery Fazhao felt joy and sadness. Because he believed that telling his experiences to others would cause them to doubt and slander the events, he kept them a secret. After seven days passed a single divine monk appeared to the monk and said, “[w]hat you saw in your visions was the true domain of Mount Wutai. Why don’t you tell other people about it?” (219). Then he vanished. The next day a second divine monk materialized. He instructed Fazhao write a *shilu* (verbatim record) of these events explaining that:

[e]ven when the great sage Mañjuśrī himself appears in this region, people still slander the event. Should any less of a response be expected for your visionary experiences? And yet, if you enable numerous people to hear of them, some will conceive the desire to come to this place. They will thereby extinguish countless sins accumulated over boundless numbers of lives, put an end to evil and cultivate the good, invoke the name of the Buddha, and achieve rebirth in the Pure Land... (219).

The monk vanished. Fazhao made a record of his experiences at Mount Wutai.

¹⁵⁵ The exchange between Fazhao and Mañjuśrī seems in tone and content to recall the exchange discussed from the *Gandavya Sūtra*. In the *Guang Qingliang Zhuan* account Fazhao, it seems, plays the role of “archetypal pilgrim” that is Sudhāna’s in the earlier text. The exchange

During the first nine days of first month of 771 the monk Huicong went with more than thirty monks of the Huayan Monastery to the Diamond Grotto. They placed a commemorative stele at the site. As they did so they heard the sound of a temple bell. The group said to Fazhao: “What you witnessed is surely not false” (219). Together they made a record of their own experiences on the wall of their chamber at the hermitage.

On the thirteenth day of the ninth month of 777 Fazhao went with a group of individuals which included eight junior monks to the Eastern Peak of the holy mountain. There the group observed ten beams of white light and a hued globe of light with Mañjuśrī on blue lion and fine snow within it.

At a later date, Fazhao identified the place on the Central Terrace of Mount Wutai to the west of the Huayan Monastery where he had entered the manifestation monastery. He constructed a monastery there based on this visionary monastery and named it the Zhulin (Bamboo Grove) Monastery.

Sacred Mount Wutai
in the stories of Manifestation Monasteries

In the stories of manifestation monasteries Mount Wutai is depicted in ways similar to the larger vision-tale tradition. The mountain is presented as far from the center of the Tang. Pilgrimage to the sacred site, the accounts of Shenying, Daoyi, Fazhao and Wuzhuo suggest, necessitates what can be an arduous journey. Wutai is described as one, if not the sole, location where a vision

here is very different from the “encounter dialogue” of the Wuzhuo biography. It suggests a different relationship between the figures.

of the Mañjuśrī bodhisattva can be obtained. The era in which pilgrims are processing to the mountain, according to three of the four accounts, is that of the dharma's decline. This collection of vision-tales, like the broader Mount Wutai tradition of which it is a part, depicts the mountain as a place made sacred by Mañjuśrī's constant presence.

The potential hardship of a pilgrimage to Wutai and its distant location are highlighted in Yanyi's record of the monk Fazhao's experiences there. Prior to his pilgrimage, the Pure Land Patriarch has a night-time encounter with an old man. Having already seen a pair of visions of the mountain in his gruel bowl but having not yet travelled to Wutai, Fazhao sees the mysterious old man appears before him. The old man asks him why he has not gone to the sacred mountain. Pilgrimage to Wutai required that Fazhao travel from the south at Nanyue to the north-western front of the Tang. The monk's reply underscores the danger he perceived to be associated with this long pilgrimage. Fazhao says to the stranger: "[t]imes are in turmoil and the journey is dangerous. If I go will I ever get there?"¹⁵⁶

The exhaustion associated with the long journey to Mount Wutai is mentioned in the description of the monk Shenying's pilgrimage. Regarding the monk Shenying's pilgrimage from the Southern Marchmount, Nanyue, the mountain monograph reads: "when he received the monk's teachings (those of Shenhui), Shenying urged himself onward neglecting fatigue" (T51.1112c24-25).

¹⁵⁶ Stevenson, 213.

The biography of the monk Daoyi, too, addresses the vastness and potential perils of the Wutai pilgrimage. It does so in the voice of Daoyi as he wanders alone on the mountain peaks. The monk, according to the *Guang Qingliang Zhuan* version, but not the *Song Gaoseng Zhuan* biography, muses to himself about the lack of difficulties he experienced on the way to the mountain. The text records that Daoyi attributed the ease of his journey to the protection of the Mañjuśrī bodhisattva.

Unlike many of the other sacred Buddhist territories in China, Wutai was located far from the everyday world. In Gimello's words, the mountain "differed markedly from other peaks, like T'ien-t'ai Shan or Lü Shan, which were perhaps no less sacred but rather clearly more domestic."¹⁵⁷ Wutai's remoteness, references to which abound in this literature, contributed at once to the hardship of the journey there and the perceived sacrality of the place.

A second factor which made this borderland territory a sacred place in the Tang, according to the vision-literature of Wutai and the stories of the manifestation monasteries in particular, was the commitment that the current age was that of the Dharma's dissolution. This was the era in which, according to the *Foshuo Wenshushili fabaozang tuoluoni jing* (Scripture on the Dharani of Mañjuśrī's Precious Treasury of the Dharma) translated by Bodhiruci in 710, Mañjuśrī would dwell at a five-peaked mountain in Mahā Cīna. In the *Guang Qingliang Zhuan* version of Wuzhuo's entry into the manifested Prajñā

¹⁵⁷ Gimello, *Chu P'ien* 505.

Monastery, recall, the abbot at the manifested Qingliang Monastery asked him about the state of the Buddha-dharma in the his home region. Wuzhuo replied that the *śīla* and *vinaya* were divided because it was the second period of the Buddha's teaching. The period to which Wuzhuo makes reference here is the *xiangfa* age or the age of "replica teachings" (T51.1111c11-12). This is the era which:

follow[s] the period of genuine teachings when an incarnate Buddha and his disciples can answer questions directly, when spiritual principles and spiritual persons are honoured and respected... [and is] characterized by somewhat superficial understanding and practice of spiritual principles.¹⁵⁸

The *xiangfa* era, though a time in which the understanding of the Buddha-dharma has declined, is only the first in a series of three successively worse periods in the dharma's dissolution. It is the fourth of these, the *mofa* era, which both the mountain monograph accounts of Fazhao (T51.1113c10) and Daoyi (T51.111b22) state is the current one.

In Yanyi's account of Daoyi the current era is identified as the final age of the dharma's dissolution when the disguised old monk in the Jinge Monastery asks Daoyi about the state of the Buddha-Dharma in his native region. This is the same question which the abbot of the manifested Qingliang Monastery asked Wuzhuo in the mountain monograph record. As in the case of Wuzhuo's biography, the episode is chronicled in the *Guang Qingliang Zhuan* version of Daoyi's biography but not the *Song Gaoseng Zhuan*. The answer Daoyi offers the disguised Mañjuśrī is similar to the one given by the monk Wuzhuo. According to

¹⁵⁸ Birnbaum, *Mountain Traditions* 9.

the text, the monk said to the mysterious stranger that because it was the *mofa*, or final era of the dharma's decline, the *śīla* and *vinaya* were not respected. Earlier in the text the monk made this identification as he searched out the bodhisattva at the mountain. Daoyi reflected that he had left home to become a monk in the *mofa* era.

The *Guang Qingliang Zhuan* account sets Fazhao's pilgrimage to Wutai in the final era of the dharma's dissolution as well. When Fazhao asks the bodhisattva in the manifested Zhulin Monastery about practice, the question he poses characterizes the nature of the *mofa* (final age), here the *modai* (final generation):

[w]e ordinary unenlightened beings of this latter age (when the dharma is in decline) are far removed from the time of the Buddha. Our powers of wisdom grow increasingly inferior, and the obstructions of our impurities ever deeper. All manner of afflictions beshroud and bind us, so that our intrinsically enlightened Buddha-nature has no possibility of manifesting. Among the vast array of Buddhist teachings, I am at a loss to tell which form of Buddhist practice is the most essential, and which will lead most easily to buddhahood...¹⁵⁹

Fazhao's vision of the disguised Mañjuśrī simultaneously endorses the Pure Land monk's *wuhui nianfo* practice and confirms that, as the *Foshuo Wenshushili fabaozang tuoluoni jing* predicted, the bodhisattva resides on the sacred slopes of the five peaked mountain in the period of the dharma's dissolution. According to the records of the monk Daoyi, Fazhao and Wuzhuo, but not that of Shenying,

¹⁵⁹

Stevenson, 214.

Wutai is a pilgrimage destination at the edge of dynasty to which pilgrims journey in the era of the dharma's dissolution.

The notion that Mount Wutai is a sacred site at least in part because Mañjuśrī is present there in the era of the dharma's decline is developed in the three later of the four *Guang Qingliang Zhuan* accounts and it is given greatest emphasis in the tale of the Pure Land Patriarch Fazhao's vision experiences there. This is perhaps not surprising given that the understanding that the current era was that of the dharma's dissolution held a central place in the belief and practice of the Pure Land tradition. Pure Land Buddhism, as I noted above, began to swell in popularity during the period in which Wutai emerged a sacred Tang center.

Weinstein, regarding the relationship between the Tang court, Pure Land Buddhism and the politically destabilizing events of the mid-eighth century, writes:

Despite the growing fervour with which the common people were receiving the Pure Land doctrines, the court virtually ignored the existence of Pure Land Buddhism before the An Lu-shan rebellion... It was only in the second half of the eighth century, after the T'ang rulers had been jolted out of their complacency by the widespread insurrections, that the court took cognizance of the Pure Land faith that had already rooted itself deeply among the common people in both the provinces and the capital cities of Ch'ang-an and Lo-yang.¹⁶⁰

In the period just prior to Fazhao and Wuzhuo's Wutai pilgrimages the Pure Land tradition—which held that the age of the dharma's decline had arrived—began to receive popular and imperial support in earnest. This is the historical context in which the stories of manifestation monasteries were set. It may cast some light on

the evolution of this particular strategy for asserting the mountain's sacrality in the vision-texts.

The reasons for which the Tang monks in tales of manifestation monasteries travel to the holy mountain are many. Common to each account, however, is at least one reference to the desire to meet Mañjuśrī there. According to the *Guang Qingliang Zhuan*, the monk Shenyong set out for Wutai at the suggestion of the Chan monk Shenhui. Shenyong, the text states, had travelled to the Southern Marchmount where he was told by him that he had karmic affinities with Wutai. Shenhui told Shenyong that he ought, therefore, to go to the mountain, pay reverence to the bodhisattva and seek out his dwelling places (T51.1112c24). As in the biography of Wuzhuo, a famous Tang Buddhist figure is pictured as instrumental in the path the monk's religious life follows. At the instruction of a most prominent Southern Chan leader, Shenyong seeks out Mañjuśrī at Mount Wutai. The connection between these monks, as with Chengguan or Huizhong in Wuzhuo's biography, depicts the Cangzhou monk as an active player in the most influential Buddhist circles of his day. The monk Shenyong's decision to search for the bodhisattva at Wutai suggests something about the people he knows. The account of the Patriarch Fazhao's decision to visit the holy mountain, in contrast, tells the reader something about who he is.

The monk Fazhao's pilgrimage to Mount Wutai, according to the *Guang Qingliang Zhuan*, was precipitated by a series of four visions.¹⁶¹ Prior to his journey to Mount Wutai the Pure Land master observed a pair of visions in his gruel bowl. Next a rainbow, clouds with divine monks and a cloud with the bodhisattvas Mañjuśrī, Samantabhadra and Amitābha were seen above the Xiangdong Monastery where he practiced meditation. Finally, an old man appeared before him alone one night. This mysterious aged man, the final in a series of four visions, directs Fazhao to go to Mount Wutai. Once at the mountain it is his desire to see the bodhisattva Mañjuśrī which prompts Fazhao to return to the Diamond Grotto where he enters the manifested Prajñā Monastery (T51.1114a25).

The description of the Pure Land Patriarch's decision to travel to Wutai, like the account of his experiences there, devotes much of its attention to things which make him a unique pilgrim, such as the series of visions which precede his pilgrimage. The text depicts Fazhao as a special pilgrim to Mount Wutai and an exceptional teacher in the era of the dharma's decline. The emphasis on his virtues reflects his status in the Tang Buddhist church and the imperial court. The

¹⁶¹ In the *Xu Qingliang Zhuan*, Zhang Shangying has a dream of the Diamond Grotto prior to his pilgrimage to the holy mountain. This dream, Gimello comments, "is an example of a literatus's availing himself of a venerable Chinese literary convention, namely, the motif of the prescient dream journey...[we should not] be surprised that this dream focused on a cave or grotto," he continues, "for such things have always been among the most common Chinese venues for oneiric revelations, particularly in those literary traditions influenced by Taoism..." Perhaps the prescient vision journey in the record of the Pure Land master's pilgrimage is a variation on this literary convention. Gimello, *Chang Shang-ying* 131.

nature of the account might further stem from the type of source on which the mountain monograph chronicle is based: his *shilu*.

Nothing is said about the monk Daoyi's decision to go to Mount Wutai in either the *Guang Qingliang Zhuan* or the *Song Gaoseng Zhuan*. According to the text nothing is known about his early religious life. The account begins, therefore, with his Wutai pilgrimage which involved a second, unnamed monk. More than in any of the other accounts, the monk Daoyi remains in the background of the text, the pilgrim's persona lives only in the shadows of a discussion of the bodhisattva Mañjuśrī's manifestations at the holy mountain. The sole statement the texts make regarding Daoyi's motivations once at Mount Wutai expresses the sentiment common to all the accounts. Daoyi, according to both, wandered the mountain peaks alone hoping to find the place where the bodhisattva dwelt (T51.1113a21).

The stories of manifestation monasteries form part of the larger vision literature of Mount Wutai, which verified claims made in the Buddhist scriptural tradition that Mañjuśrī's home was the Chinese holy mountain. The aim of their pilgrimages, and the assertion in three of the four texts that the current era was one of dharmic decline, present the mountain as it is described in the *Foshuo Wenshu shili fabaozang tuoluoni jing*, as well as the *Huayan jing* and the *Foshuo Wenshu shili bannie pan jing*. The stories of manifestation monasteries depict the mountain as the place where the bodhisattva enters into the human world. They also present it as a site from which humans have exited the temporal and spatial realm.

Common Feature of the Mount Wutai stories of Manifestation Monasteries

The tales of the monks Shenying, Daoyi, Fazhao and Wuzhuo depict the discovery of, entry into and departure from manifestation monasteries in a similar fashion. This section of the paper will address these similarities which unite the tales of manifestation monasteries as a collection within the large body of vision-literature set at Mount Wutai.

Contrary to many pilgrims who meet the bodhisattva in other Mount Wutai vision-tales, the monks in this small group of stories are by themselves on the day that they come across or are led into manifestation monasteries.¹⁶² When Shenying stumbles upon the manifested Cloister of the Dharma Blossom, he is wandering alone to the west of the Cloister of the Flower Ornament King. Similarly, Daoyi, according to Yanyi and Zanning, was wandering alone to the northeast of the Qingliang Monastery when he came upon the manifested Jinge Monastery. Wuzhuo entered the *manifested version* of the Qingliang Monastery, in the mountain monograph version of the story, when he arrived by himself at the foot of Mount Wutai. He entered the manifested Banruo or Prajñā Monastery after leaving from the Huayan Monastery on his own. Likewise Fazhao was by himself when he followed a strange light to the northeast of the Foguang Monastery. There he came across the portal leading to the manifested Zhulin Monastery. He also returned on his own from the Huayan Monastery to the Diamond Grotto

¹⁶² While Daoyi, Fazhao and Wuzhuo are led into the manifested monasteries by Buddhapāli, Kunti and Sudhāna (figures who had long been associated with Mañjuśrī), the monk Shenying enters the Dharma Blossom Cloister alone.

when he entered the manifested Banruo or Prajñā Cloister there. While in much of the vision-literature of Mount Wutai visions of Mañjuśrī and his realm are obtained by groups of lay and ordained pilgrims, the monk in these accounts is always journeying alone when he discovers or is taken into a manifestation monastery.

Imperially-supported monasteries play a prominent role in tales of manifestation monasteries.¹⁶³ In most of these stories the lone monk-pilgrims are said to have been residing at government or national monasteries while at the holy mountain. According to the *Guang Qingliang Zhuan* and the *Song Gaoseng Zhuan*, Daoyi, Fazhao and Wuzhuo stayed at the Qingliang, Foguang and Huayan Monasteries. All of these establishments were state or government monasteries. The role which this type of monastic institution plays in the tales of their divine counterparts suggests to the reader that the sites have an exceptional connection with the bodhisattva and his realm. Unlike the *Song Gaoseng Zhuan* story of Wuzhuo's experiences at the Diamond Grotto and the tale of the manifested Zhulin Monastery at Gushan, these accounts do not by and large deliberately contrast government-sponsored monasteries with their divine counterparts, let alone poke fun at them. In the construction of the manifestation monasteries'

¹⁶³ Interestingly, government monasteries might also occupy a central place on the Panorama of Mount Wutai in Cave 61 at Dunhuang. Of the sixteen establishments which Marchand was able to identify in the painting, he notes only one which is an earthly replica of a manifestation monastery, the Zhulin Monastery. Of the five government monasteries in the mid-Tang, however, four are represented on the mural. The Jinge, Golden Pavilion Monastery, is not there and Marchand notes its absence. Because cartouches on the map are blocked out, because many of the sites have yet to be identified and because the government monasteries, due to their familiarity, might have been most easy to identify, the suggestion that government establishments have a

Mount Wutai replicas, the monk pilgrims solicited the financial support of, among others, the imperial court. It is perhaps not surprising, then, that the tales of Daoyi, Fazhao and, in the mountain monograph version, Wuzhuo indirectly endorse the sacrality of government institution by implying that they are spaces on Mount Wutai from which one can gain an extraordinary vision.¹⁶⁴

As with the description of their discovery, the accounts of the monk-pilgrims experiences inside the manifestation monasteries share a number of common features. The records of Fazhao, Wuzhuo, Daoyi and Shenying depict the monk touring the monastery's cloisters, learning its name and seeing, if not meeting, individuals who reside there. Much of the account of the monk Shenying's entry into the Cloister of the Dharma Blossom, for example, records the things which he observes in the establishment which included the following: lodging for traveling officials opposite a hall for religious practice; images of Mañjuśrī and Samantabhadra; a triple-gate measuring thirteen bay and a Prabhūtaratna Buddha *stūpa*.¹⁶⁵ In a similar fashion, the *Guang Qingliang Zhuan* account of Daoyi's entry into the Jinge Monastery gives the names of all twelve

prominent place on the mural remains only a hypothesis which requires further investigations.

See: Marchand, 170.

¹⁶⁴ Zanning's audience might also have shaped the content of these biographies. His work was commissioned by the imperial throne in 982 and, in writing the text, Zanning aimed to ensure support for the Buddhist church in China.

¹⁶⁵ Tang monasteries, as Ch'en explains in his article on this subject, were places where literati stayed when they needed respite from urban life and the responsibilities of officialdom. The establishments, national monasteries in particular, were also used to house scholars writing the civil service exams. Given the role of monasteries in Shenying's time it would not be surprising to see a lodge for travelling officials in a monastery like the Cloister of the Dharma Blossom. One wonders, however, just how many travelling officials made their way to the manifestation cloister on which the earthly establishment was based. Ch'en, 214-219.

cloisters at the monastery and, in the voice of Daoyi speaking to Mañjuśrī, describes the character of the place:

[t]he monasteries and lodgings of the monks here are vast. I have seen myself that they are made of yellow gold. It is beyond the ability of ignorant sentient beings to measure its extent; one can say that it is inconceivable.¹⁶⁶

Like the manifested Zhulin Monastery at Gushan, which the abbot in jest says can only disappoint a resident of a government monastery, the Jinge Monastery, as well as the other manifested monasteries at Mount Wutai, is a magnificently adorned place which overwhelms its visitors. The contents, appearance and dimensions of the buildings are given much attention in the accounts. These stories are works of what Daniel Stevenson has aptly termed “architectural revelation.”¹⁶⁷ Just as stories of Wutai pilgrims’ visionary experiences map out the mountain landscape for future travelers and attest to the mountain’s link to the divine, these stories create the blueprints for the earthly monasteries built at Mount Wutai. The tales come to operate, in effect, as testaments of the establishments’ supernatural beginnings.

The names of the Jinge, Fahua, Banruo and Zhulin monasteries, like the monasteries themselves, are divine in origin. According to the *Song Gaoseng Zhuan* and *Guang Qingliang Zhuan* they were made know to the monk-pilgrims on inscribed tablets or by a monastery attendant. In Yanyi’s chronicle of Fazhao’s pilgrimage, the name of the manifested Zhulin Monastery is written on an

¹⁶⁶ Birbaum, *Mysteries* 15.

¹⁶⁷ Stevenson, 208.

inscribed golden tablet erected at its entrance. Inside the Diamond Grotto, according to this same tale, the name “Monastery of Diamond Prajñā” is likewise written on a gold name post. The cloister which Shenying came upon near the Cloister of the Flower Ornament King was named with a tablet as well. And while there is no inscribed tablet identifying the manifested monastery Wuzhuo enters, the word *banruo* is written in secret letters beneath the Diamond Grotto.

In many of these stories, tablets like those which identify government monasteries give the names of the manifestation monasteries; however, in Yanyi’s record of the monks Daoyi and Wuzhuo’s entry into the manifested Jinge and Qingliang monasteries, the youths Jiye and Kunti identify the monasteries. Jiye tells Daoyi that he is at the Golden Pavilion Monastery when he first arrives there. As they leave the manifested Qingliang Monastery, Kunti tells Wuzhuo its name. In the case of Daoyi’s *Song Gaoseng Zhuan* biography, however, the name of the monastery is not given at the time of his vision. Though the monastery is described as shining brightly with gold, its name is mentioned in the text only once in reference to the construction of the monastery. Unlike the other manifested monasteries, the name of the Jinge Monastery, according to Zanning’s text, is divine only insofar as it captures the principle quality of the monastery: its golden color.

The sights which Daoyi, Fazhao, Shenying and Wuzhuo see inside the manifested monasteries, including their residents, suggest to them that the place which they have entered is not human in origin. The bright golden color of the

monastery gates, towers, bridges and posts, like the unusual lights, flowers and sounds of Mount Wutai, give these pilgrims the sense that they are in a special, sacred space. To the monk Shenying, for example, the Prabhūtaratna Buddha *stūpa* “seemed like a work of the divine, rarely to be equaled.”¹⁶⁸ Looking at the lapis lazuli floors and golden halls as he entered the Banruo or Prajñā Monastery, Wuzhuo similarly concluded that the place was not created by human hands. The presence of extraordinary figures—Mañjuśrī and Samantabhadra with their retinues in the story of Fazhao, the disguised Mañjuśrī in the tale of Daoyi and the divine monks Shenying observes—must have diminished any of the doubts the monks harbored about the nature of the place which they toured. Certainly the pleas of the monks Fazhao and Wuzhuo to remain in the manifested Banruo or Prajñā Monastery suggest that they considered it a special site, though in both the *Guang Qingliang Zhuan* and *Song Gaoseng Zhuan* versions of Wuzhuo’s biography there is little evidence that he recognized the disguised bodhisattva before he exited the monastery. Each monk, whether he sees Mañjuśrī within the monastery or not, makes some statement to the effect that the place which he has entered at Wutai is no ordinary establishment. In every case, his suspicions are confirmed when, upon leaving the monastery, it vanishes leaving the monk alone on the mountain peak.

When departing from the manifestation monastery or being confronted with the prospect of doing so in these vision-tales, Fazhao, Shenying and Wuzhuo

¹⁶⁸ Birnbaum, *Shen-ying* 128.

react in ways that are like those of other Wutai pilgrims in similar situations: the monks become distressed or grief-stricken. In the *Guang Qingliang Zhuan*, Shenying, realizing that the cloister he entered had disappeared, is said to have lamented and wept. Wuzhuo, in the mountain monograph, sobbed uncontrollably after he exited the manifested Banruo Monastery. When he was told by Mañjuśrī that it was time for him to leave the manifested Banruo or Prajñā Monastery, Fazhao begged to remain there. The bodhisattva replied to his pleas with the following explanation: “[i]t is impossible. This present body of yours is fundamentally impure and profane in substance. There is no way that you can remain here.”¹⁶⁹ The Pure Land Patriarch must depart from the monastery for reasons which do not place the responsibility directly on him. In contrast to Wuzhuo, who was forced to leave the Qingliang Monastery because of his lack of understanding, Fazhao was prevented from staying at the manifested monastery by the nature of the human body in general and not some fault of his own. When Fazhao did eventually leave, like Shenying, Daoyi and Wuzhuo, he experienced “(mixed feelings of) joy and sadness [which] did not abate.”¹⁷⁰

A trope common to the broader vision-literature of Mount Wutai spills over into the tales of manifestation monasteries. The sorrow and sobbing of the monk-pilgrims in the stories are not, however, like the tears of the Huayan Monastery banqueters and the monk Mingxu who are grief-stricken when they realize that the disguised bodhisattva had been with them. Shenying did not

¹⁶⁹ Stevenson, 218.

encounter Mañjuśrī in the monastery. Fazhao and Wuzhuo, in the *Guang Qingliang Zhuan* if not the *Song Gaoseng Zhuan*, recognized the bodhisattva when they met.¹⁷¹ The monks tears were thus not those of remorse for not seeing and perhaps therefore mistreating the bodhisattva. The end of a vision, it seems, is enough to elicit this powerful response.

The final subject discussed in each of the stories of manifestation monasteries is the construction of their earthly replicas. The *Song Gaoseng Zhuan* biography of Daoyi proceeds directly from the record of his experience in the manifestation monastery to this topic. As I noted above, it describes the construction of the Jinge Monastery in some detail. Like the record of Shenying's pilgrimage in the *Guang Qingliang Zhuan*, Zanning's record notes something about the individuals involved in the establishment of the monastery, the building materials used and the nature of the project's support. There is, nevertheless, a difference in the emphasis of these detailed records. While the account of Shenying states that he remained at the monastery as its abbot until the time of his death, the biography of Daoyi says nothing is about his later life. In contrast to Shenying, he is not pictured playing a central role in the monastery's construction. Further, it is not Daoyi, but rather Amoghavajra, who the text says was installed as abbot of the Jinge Monastery. As with the discussion of the rest of his pilgrimage to the mountain, Daoyi remains out of the spotlight. In the *Guang*

¹⁷⁰ Stevenson, 218.

¹⁷¹ Considering Wuzhuo states in the *Guang Qingliang Zhuan* that his vision of the mountain was transformed by Mañjuśrī's speech it seems that the monk recognized the old man with his attendant Kunti was the bodhisattva Mañjuśrī (T51.1111c22-23).

Qingliang Zhuan version of his experiences, which contains a briefer summary of these details, this is also the case.

In contrast, Yanyi's record of Fazhao's pilgrimage alleges that the Pure Land Patriarch played the central role in the monastery's construction. The description of the building of the Zhulin Monastery, as in the rest of the account, places the monk in the limelight. The text makes no mention of the project's sponsors or the ordained and lay Buddhists who aided Fazhao. It concludes by stating only that sometime after 777CE:

Fazhao measured out a distance of fifteen leagues in the southerly direction from the Huayan Monastery, thereby arriving at the foot of a hill in the Central Terrace (of Wutai). There he specially constructed a monastery based on the ground plan of the Bamboo Grove Monastery of the Great Sage that he had encountered (in his vision). He gave it the name "Bamboo Grove."¹⁷²

Finally, the mountain monograph of Wuzhuo's entry into the Prajñā Monastery says the very least about the building of the monastery. It states only that the *shilu* which he was asked to make by the Fenzhou monks provided the model on which the divine monastery's earthly replica was built. The *Song Gaoseng Zhuan* version says nothing at all about the construction of the Prajñā Monastery at Mount Wutai. An explanation of this noticeable absence from the biography of Wuzhuo lies, perhaps, in the source on which Zanning relies in this discussion. One source he was likely using here was a biographical equivalent to the *stūpa* inscription written by Wuzhuo's disciple in the early years of the ninth-century. Given that Wuzhuo had only just arrived at Mount Wutai in the second

year of the Dali era (777), this memorial inscription must have been composed less than a quarter-century after his death and perhaps even before that time. The Banruo or Prajñā Monastery, according to the *Foguang Da Cidian* (Dictionary of the Light of the Buddha), was constructed by Wuzhuo's *followers or successors* on the Eastern Terrace of Mount Wutai.¹⁷³ Perhaps the monastery's construction is not mentioned in the *Song Gaoseng Zhuan* biography of Wuzhuo because at the time that the source on which Zanning is depending was written the establishment had not yet been built. Wuzhuo's successors might well have built the Prajñā Monastery in the Louguan Valley after the Yuanhe period (806-820).

The stories of Fazhao, Shenyong, Wuzhuo and Daoyi, to a greater or lesser degree, depict the exit from the temporal realm and entry into the manifestation monastery in a similar way. In these accounts the monks have set out wandering alone on the mountain on the day that they enter a manifestation monastery. Though hoping to see Mañjuśrī at the mountain, none of these pilgrims is aiming to enter this type of place. Once inside, each monk is portrayed touring the cloisters of the manifested monastery, noting the extraordinary objects it houses and seeing, if not meeting, mysterious figures identified as such. In every case the name of the establishment is given to the monk, whether on an inscribed tablet of by an individual. Leaving or preparing to leave, Shenyong, Fazhao and Wuzhuo are depicted as being filled with sorrow. The experience of entering a

¹⁷² Stevenson, 220.

¹⁷³ *Foguang Da Cidian* (Dictionary of the Light of the Buddha): 4303. The dictionary also notes that the monastery was reconstructed during the Ming.

manifestation monastery is chronicled in a similar fashion in all the stories, every one of which except for the *Song Gaoseng Zhuan* biography of Wuzhuo makes some reference to the construction of the earthly version of the manifestation monastery at Mount Wutai. The particular emphases of the stories—the attention placed on Daoyi versus Fazhao, for example—suggest something about the sources used to compile the accounts and the status of the monk in the larger tradition. The particular foci of the texts point to the context in which they were composed—by a third party after the monastery was compiled with imperial money, by the monk himself as he promoted a particular mode of practice and generated financial support for the monastery, for example—and then heard.

At a level more fundamental than the particular subjects addressed in the discussion of manifestation monasteries, the stories of Shenying, Fazhao, Daoyi and Wuzhuo have a special relationship to one another. These stories of manifestation monasteries are a distinct group of tales within the vision-tale tradition of Mount Wutai at a more basic level: in contrast to much of the vision-tale literature these stories depict *the exit from rather than entry into the ordinary temporal and spatial realm*. Much of the vision-tale literature of Mount Wutai, as I discussed in the first chapter, chronicles the variety of circumstances and various forms in which the bodhisattva has entered into the human realm. Together they establish Wutai as Mañjuśrī's dwelling place. While the tales of the Shenying, Fazhao, Daoyi and Wuzhuo record the appearance of Mañjuśrī at Mount Wutai, they do so alongside a description of a monk-pilgrim's departure from the human

world. As this thesis has suggested in several places, this is a model of the vision-tale and sacred place which finds a close parallel and precedent in the story of the monk Buddhapāli's entry into the Diamond Grotto. It is a narrative which has connections to story traditions beyond the borders of Buddhism.

The stories of manifestation monasteries and the tale of Buddhapāli, insofar as they each describe an eminent monk's exit from the human realm and his entry into the sacred precincts of the bodhisattva, are a related group of vision-tales. In the *Guang Qingliang Zhuan* version of these tales their connection is one which extends beyond matters of content. In Yanyi's text, the stories of manifestation monasteries follow the account of the monk Buddhapāli's entry into the Diamond Grotto, chapter twelve (T51: 1111a19-1111b23). The five episodes are titled in a similar fashion: the name of the monk is given followed by the name of the place into which the monk is purported to have entered.¹⁷⁴ The arrangement of the accounts and the similar manner in which they are titled suggests a relationship between these accounts of transformation monasteries and the tale of the Diamond Grotto. Each describes an "entry into" a sacred place. The story of Buddhapāli, as I discussed in chapter two, is related to an earlier, pre-Buddhist story tradition set at the holy cavern with a strong link to the Daoist tradition of heavenly grottos and transforming elixirs.

¹⁷⁴ For example "the record of the monk Buddhapāli's entry into the Diamond Grotto," chapter twelve, precedes "the record of the monk Wuzhuo's entry into the manifested Prajñā Monastery."

Just as the tale of Buddhāpali has a strong link to the Daoist tradition, stories of manifestation monasteries, modelled on the tale of Buddhāpali, also make use of this non-Buddhist story tradition. In the *Baopuzi* (Traditions of Divine Transcendents) by Ge Hong (born 283), an early Daoist text to which I referred in the first chapter, there is an example of the type of narrative at work in stories of manifestation monasteries and the Diamond Grotto. The account of Wang Lie resembles in many respects this group of Wutai vision-tales but is set at a site far beyond its perimeter.

The story of Wang Lie is set at the Embracing-the-Calf Mountain in Hedong and centers on the official's experiences inside a mountain cavern there. Like Fazhao, Wuzhuo, Daoyi and Shenying, Wang Lie, according to this text, stumbled upon and entered a hidden and sacred site while wandering by himself on the peaks of the numinous mountain. In the *Baopuzi* tale, Wang found a stone beam on which there were two silk scrolls inside this place and from there the text continues:

Wang took them up and tried to read them, but he could recognize none of the characters. He dared not remove the book, so he replaced it on the beam, but he managed to memorize how to write the forms of a few dozen of its characters, and these he showed to Ji Shuye. Ji knew all the characters, which delighted Wang, and so they headed back together to read the text; but, although the path Wang had taken to it was quite clear, when they arrived there they could not find the cave again. Wang (later) privately told one of his disciples that this happened because Ji had not yet become fit to attain the Way. According to the scriptures on divine transcendence, divine mountains open up once every five hundred years, and the stony marrow that is inside them emerges. If you get some of this and ingest it, you will

live as long as Heaven endures. What Wang had earlier obtained must have been this.¹⁷⁵

In this religious biography, mountains are described as territories with secret recesses which house secret teachings written in cryptic text. They are places which spew forth powerful edible substances that, like those in the stories of manifestation monasteries and the tale of Xiangyun in the *Gu Qingliang Zhuan*, affect those who eat them in extraordinary ways. Like the Diamond Grotto at Mount Wutai, the secret caverns of the Embracing-the-Calf Mountain are accessible to only certain mountain travelers. The individuals who do enter in, like Wang but not Ji or Fazhao but not Wuzhuo, do so because of their level of mental acuity or spiritual accomplishment.

In the tales of Daoyi, Fazhao and Wuzhuo, the monk-pilgrims to Wutai, like Wang Lie at the Embracing-the-Calf Mountain, eat foods and drink teas of an extraordinary quality. The substances which they consume are not emitted directly from the mountain as with Wang Lie. Rather, as in the case of Xiangyun's meeting with the mountain lord of Wutai in the *Gu Qingliang Zhuan*, the monks are given food and drink by the divine figure who dwells at the mountain. Inside the manifested Jinge Monastery, for example, Daoyi, according to the mountain monograph, consumes tea and medicinal food which are fragrant and have an aromatic flavour (T51.1113c16-17). The monk Fazhao, in the same text, eats fruit from the seven-jewelled tree in the manifested Zhulin or Bamboo

¹⁷⁵ Robert Ford Campany, *To Live as Long as Heaven and Earth: A Translation and Study of Ge Hong's Traditions of Divine Transcendents* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002):

Grove Monastery of the Great Sage and, “upon finishing the entire fruit,” the *Guang Qingliang Zhuan* states, “his body and mind felt deeply tranquil.” In the manifested Prajñā Cloister which Wuzhuo had already entered and in which he drank tea, Fazhao likewise eats medicinal foods and drinks tea offered to him by Mañjuśrī. Chronicling this encounter the text reads:

[Mañjuśrī] sent the lad, Nānda, to fetch tea and medicinal foods. Fazhao stopped him, saying, “I need no medicines.” But the Sagely One replied, “Just take it. There is nothing to fear,” whereupon he handed him two bowls of broth. The flavour of one of the bowls was extraordinarily ambrosial. After he finished it, Mañjuśrī again gave him three more bowls, together with medicinal foods, all of which were served in vessels of precious crystalline *vaidūrya*.¹⁷⁶

In stories of manifested monasteries, the containers in which potent food and drink are offered to the Buddhist monks, like the substances themselves, are extraordinary. In the manifested Banruo or Prajñā Monastery, Fazhao is presented with a crystal *vaidūrya* containing medicinal broth and at this same site, according to the *Song Gaoseng Zhuan*, Wuzhuo drinks curative tea and eats kolimuss in a tortoise-shell bowl. The *Guang Qingliang Zhuan* preserves an exchange between the Wuzhuo and the aged monk on this very subject. At T51.1112a24-26 the text reads:

The youth brought tea in two containers. Each was a shallow cup of lapis lazuli. He gave each man honey in a vessel made of tortoise-shell. The old man asked Wuzhuo, “In the south there are these things, aren’t there?” Wuzhuo said, “There aren’t.” “Since there aren’t these things in the South, what do you drink tea in?” Wuzhuo didn’t reply.¹⁷⁷

339.

¹⁷⁶ Stevenson, 218.¹⁷⁷ This translation is my own.

Manifested monasteries in the vision-tales of Mount Wutai, like the mountain grottoes in the *Gu Qingliang Zhuan* account of Xiangyun and Ge Hong's biography of Wang Lie, are sites in which mountain-pilgrims are given powerful substances. The extraordinary containers in which foods are served mirror their contents.

Manifested monasteries are not only places where pilgrims consume fragrant and fantastic food but, like the cave at Embracing-the-Calf Mountain, they are also sites where the monks receive teachings. In the *Baopuzi*, the teachings which Wang obtained were in a script which, like the inscription Wuzhuo saw at the Diamond Grotto, only a few could decipher. It is a curious thing that it was Ji Shuye and not Wang who, like Wuzhuo, could read the text. In Wang's estimation it was because Ji was unfit to attain the way that the pair could not find the mountain cavern together.

In the stories of Daoyi, Fazhao and Wuzhuo, the monks receive teachings directly from the bodhisattva. The character of the exchanges is quite different. The records of Wuzhuo's experiences at Mount Wutai describe how at the manifested Prajñā Monastery and the manifested Qingliang Monastery the monk had long conversations with an old man or old monk. In both texts the teachings which these men imparted came in the form of puzzling statements about the nature of attachment, the *sangha* at Wutai and proper practice. Through cryptic pronouncements, Mañjuśrī attempted to jar Wuzhuo into understanding. The

bodhisattva's pedagogy in these instances seems to mirror that of Tang Chan masters in Five Dynasty and Song texts.

The exchange between the monk Daoyi and Mañjuśrī and the monk Fazhao and Mañjuśrī, as well as Samantabhadra, follows a different pattern. In both, the monks ask the bodhisattva(s) a question to which he offers a lucid reply. The exchange in the mountain monograph record of Daoyi's experiences is very brief. The information he receives during the course of the conversation, which is not recorded in the *Song Gaoseng Zhuan* version, pertains to the status of the Buddha-dharma at Mount Wutai and the character of the Golden Pavilion Monastery. In the record of Fazhao's experiences at the manifested Zhulin Monastery, however, both Mañjuśrī and Samantabhadra speak at great lengths to the monk. Like Daoyi in the *Guang Qingliang Zhuan*, Fazhao asks questions regarding, among other things, practice in the age of the dharma's dissolution and his own spiritual development. The teachings he received must have well satisfied the Pure Land *bhikṣu* who had created, at Amitābha's instruction, the *wuhui nianfo* and was promoting it throughout Tang China in the age of the dharma's decline. During the course of their conversations, Samantabhadra enjoined Fazhao and all beings to "always show deference toward *bhikṣuṣ*."¹⁷⁸ Mañjuśrī told him "[t]he practice of Buddha-mindfulness (*nianfo*) that you have been using is perfectly suited for the current age" and predicted that he was "destined to realize

¹⁷⁸ Stevenson, 215.

supreme enlightenment soon.”¹⁷⁹ While in the tales of Wuzhuo’s experiences at Wutai Mañjuśrī attempts to jar the monk into understanding with cryptic statements, the bodhisattva’s teachings in the stories of Daoyi and Fazhao are, by comparison, straightforward pronouncements on matters of Buddhist thought and practice.

For Raoul Birnbaum, the similarities between tales set at the Diamond Grotto prior to and then following Buddhism’s presence at the holy mountain suggest that there was “a common matrix within which the organized religions, separated by self-definition, operated.”¹⁸⁰ He argues that elements common to the tales of Xiangyun and Buddhapāli—their setting, the presence of divine beings within the hidden grotto—demonstrate that the stories pulled from a pool of common narrative resources in their attempt to establish the site as a sacred place. The stories of manifestation monasteries discussed in this paper incorporate many elements of the records of Wang Lie, Xiangyun and Buddhapāli’s exit from the temporal and spatial realm. Stories of hidden grottos, potent elixirs and cryptic teachings, it would seem, provided narrative direction for tales of manifestation monasteries at Mount Wutai. Any boundaries which existed between the Daoist and Buddhist story traditions at this locale are blurred in tales of manifestation monasteries which assert Mount Wutai is a sacred Buddhist territory because individuals exited the ordinary world and entered into hidden sites from its peaks.

¹⁷⁹ Stevenson, 214, 215.

¹⁸⁰ Birnbaum, *Mountain Lords* 131.

While the records of Fazhao, Daoyi and Wuzhuo's experiences at Mount Wutai portray the monks taking food from and interacting with the bodhisattva Mañjuśrī inside manifestation monasteries, the tale of Shenying depicts no such scenario. Compared with the other accounts of its type, the record of Shenying's Mount Wutai experiences is unique in a number of respects. Most significantly, many of the elements common to the records of Daoyi, Fazhao and Wuzhuo's pilgrimages are absent from the Shenying account. Inside the manifested Cloister of the Dharma Blossom, Shenying does not meet with, learn from or eat with the bodhisattva. These elements of the biographies of Daoyi, Fazhao and Wuzhuo, frequently encountered in Daoist tales of mountain grottos, do not make their way into the earliest and shortest Mount Wutai story of a manifested monastery. In the account Shenying, rather, is alone in the manifested Cloister of the Dharma Blossom but for some divine monks he sees as he departs. In contrast to the monks in the three later vision-tales, further, the Cangzhou monk does not meet Mañjuśrī on the slopes of the holy mountain. Neither the *Guang Qingliang Zhuan* nor the *Song Gaoseng Zhuan* versions of the tale make any mention of the bodhisattva manifesting himself in the guise of an aged man or monk. This form of the bodhisattva is encountered on many occasions in the accounts of Daoyi, Fazhao, Wuzhuo and Buddhapāli. It is, in fact, one of the elements of the narrative which seem to distinguish stories of manifestation monasteries from their Wutai vision-tale counterparts. In Yanyi and Zanning's texts, however, the sole manifestations of Mañjuśrī which Shenying is said to have observed are

images of the bodhisattva inside the divine monastery. Though an explanation of the unique character of the Shenying account within these tales of manifestation monasteries is beyond the scope of this paper, it is interesting to briefly consider the historical context in which the tales are set.

At first glance it appears that only two of the four visions of manifestation monasteries at Mount Wutai share a very close historical relationship. In the *Guang Qingliang Zhuan*, Shenying's pilgrimage is the earliest vision of a divine monastery at the holy mountain and is set in 716CE. Daoyi is purported to have arrived at the mountain two decades after Shenying, in 736CE. The year in which Fazhao is alleged to have journeyed to Mount Wutai in the mountain monograph is later still, 770CE, and according to the same source he was at the mountain in 771CE and then, again, in the ninth month of 777CE. The biography of Wuzhuo in the *Song Gaoseng Zhuan* and the parallel account in the *Guang Qingliang Zhuan* assert that Wuzhuo arrived at the holy mountain after the Pure Land master, in the fifth month of 777CE.¹⁸¹ In the *Song Gaoseng Zhuan* it states that Wuzhuo remained as a hermit at Mount Wutai until his death. From the details given in Zanning and Yanyi's texts, it appears that only the monks Wuzhou and Fazhao shared a close historical relationship: the monks were both pilgrims to the holy mountain in 777CE. When the construction of the monasteries at Mount Wutai is considered, however, the earthly replica of the miraculous Jinge

¹⁸¹ The record of Fazhao's experiences, again, makes this chronology a matter of some debate.

Monastery Daoyi entered, if not the monk himself, has a close historical tie to Wuzhuo and Fazhao's vision experiences.

In the *Guang Qingliang Zhuan* and *Song Gaoseng Zhuan* Wuzhuo and Fazhao's journeys into manifested monasteries take place within the decade following the construction of the Jinge Monastery. At this time, the project was carried out with the financial support of, among others, the imperial court. While construction of the Jinge Monastery had begun in 736CE, as I mentioned earlier in the chapter, building was interrupted sometime before its completion and it was not until the beginning of the Dali era (766-780) that construction on the Golden Pavilion Monastery resumed. The reconstruction of the Jinge Monastery was funded, in large part, by Emperor Daizong who, on 12 June 766, approved the monk Amoghavajra's request to provide support for its completion.¹⁸² In the year 767 or 770 construction on the monastery was finished.¹⁸³ The dynamics of Daizong's reign form the backdrop of his decision to fund the reconstruction of the Golden Pavilion Monastery. They were, moreover, part of the political and religious context of the monks Fazhao and Wuzhuo's Mount Wutai pilgrimages. When the record of the Jinge Monastery's construction is considered, the three most similar of the four stories of Mount Wutai manifestation monasteries appear to share an interesting historical relationship. Financially supporting the project, Daizong may well have lent some force to a particular tradition of miracle stories

¹⁸² Orlando, 56.

¹⁸³ Weinstein and Stevenson give different dates for the project's completion. The former, reading Zanning's biography of Daoyi, asserts the construction ended in 767 and Stevenson gives the year 770. Weinstein, 80. Stevenson, 208.

set at Mount Wutai. This is the tradition which finds expression in the similar accounts of Daoyi, Wuzhuo and Fazhao.

In the vision-literature of Mount Wutai, as the first chapter of this thesis noted, Mañjuśrī reveals himself to pilgrims in a number of forms and under a variety of circumstances. His manifestations at the holy mountain can be divided into three groups: the bodhisattva appears in his recognizable form, as a prince astride a lion, he makes his presence known with strange sights and sounds and, finally, he enters the human realm in clever guises. In the tales of manifestation monasteries Mañjuśrī is present in all of these forms. One thing which sets this group of stories apart from the larger body of Mount Wutai vision-literature, however, is the frequency with which the bodhisattva appears in the guise of an old man or monk.

In the stories of Daoyi, Fazhao, Wuzhuo but not Shenying's experiences at the holy mountain Mañjuśrī, as I have already noted, appears as a mysterious stranger or monk. He does so in each of these tales on several occasions. In the biography of Wuzhuo in the *Song Gaoseng Zhuan* and the *Guang Qingliang Zhuan* he appears as an aged man with his attendant Kunti at the manifested Prajñā Monastery. In the mountain monograph version of the tale, Mañjuśrī again appears with the youth when he manifests himself as an abbot in the manifested Qingliang Monastery. In Yanyi's record of Daoyi's pilgrimage the bodhisattva approaches the monk in the guise of a mysterious and aged stranger riding an elephant on several occasions. It is not until their third meeting, inside the

manifested Jinge Monastery, that Daoyi recognizes him as Mañjuśrī. Zanning's biography also depicts the bodhisattva in this form but in this version of the story the pair meets only once, at the manifested Golden Pavillion Monastery. The Pure Land master Fazhao is likewise approached by a string of mysterious strangers and divine monks prior to and following his pilgrimage. These figures, never explicitly identified as Mañjuśrī, implore the monk to journey to Mount Wutai and instruct him to compose a *shilu* detailing his experiences there. Unfamiliar aged monks and mysterious strangers figure prominently in the stories of manifestation monasteries which depict Mañjuśrī as an unexpected and disguised companion.

In the Buddhist story tradition there is another figure who is often portrayed in this way: the arhat Pindola Bharadvaja. In its Chinese form the cult of Pindola centered on his position as the guardian saint of refectories and the crucial role which he played at ceremonial feasts. With its introduction to China, the ceremonial meal emerged as a substitute institution for the Indian tradition of begging and provided a key opportunity for the laity to accrue merit by feeding Buddhist monks and nuns.¹⁸⁴ The maigre feast was fundamental to the relationship of lay and ordained Chinese Buddhists and the arhat Pindola was believed to play a key role in it.¹⁸⁵ It was Pindola's presence at these events which

¹⁸⁴ See on this subject: Richard B. Mather, "The Bonze's Begging Bowl: Eating Practices in Buddhist Monasteries of Medieval India and China," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 101.4 (1981): 417-424.

¹⁸⁵ In his article "Taking a meal at a lay supporter's residence: the evolution of the practice in Chinese *vinaya* commentary," Koichi Shinohara analyzes the portrayal of the ceremonial meal in the *āgama* stories and *vinaya* passages cited in the monk Daoxuan's (596-667) commentaries,

was understood to indicate that merit-making, the principle objective of the feast, had occurred. Pindola's presence at the maigre feasts was not always easy to detect.

In the stories of Pindola, the arhat appears to his followers in a similar fashion to Mañjuśrī in the vision-literature of Mount Wutai. In the following characterization of the Chinese Pindola tradition, John Strong highlights how the arhat was purported to manifest himself in disguises:

the cult of Pindola is essentially conceived of as a rite of hospitality. It consists of inviting Pindola to the monastic assembly and offering him two things: food and/or a bath. Pindola, it should be specified, may or may not accept this invitation; it depends on the purity of heart with which it is extended. But if he does accept, he comes either in disguise as an old man, as a wandering stranger, or in even more mysterious ways than that. His presence, therefore, though it is a sign that the rite is being carried on properly, is not always easy to detect.¹⁸⁶

Like Mañjuśrī at the slopes of Mount Wutai, Pindola appears to his followers in the form of an old man or a mysterious stranger. He makes his presence known with strange sights and sounds. Like Mañjuśrī at the Huayan Monastery feast, however, when he appears among his followers the monk Pindola often goes unrecognized.

as well as the commentary itself. Within this material he identifies a transition which occurs in the "mechanism" of merit-making at ceremonial feasts. While in the former texts it is the Buddha to whom the food is offered and then his ordinary monks whose presence at the maigre feast makes it a merit-producing event. In the latter source, the Chinese commentaries themselves, it is the presence of an unrecognized or invisible supernatural guest at the feast which makes the occasion an opportunity to produce merit. This unrecognized guest is the monk Pindola Bharadvaja and the extended discussion of how to prepare for this unseen guest in these commentaries of "receiving the invitation for a meal at a lay supporter's residence" (Daoxuan T.1804.40.135a-138a and Daoshi 171b-173c) reflects what Shinohara terms "[a] distinctive new concern, associated with the cut of Pindola and mysterious supernatural visitors to the meal" (19).

¹⁸⁶ John S. Strong, "The Legend of the Lion-Roarer: A Study of the Buddhist Arhat Pindola Bharadvaja," *Numen* 26, 79.

In his discussion of the tradition of taking meal at a lay supporter's residence Koichi Shinohara details a number of Pindola stories which show him appearing unexpectedly and in disguise to congregated Buddhists. The following account, taken from the *Qing bintoulu fa* (The Scripture on Inviting Pindola T.784:32.784bc) quoted by Daoxuan (596-667) in his commentary on "receiving the invitation for a meal at a lay supporter's residence," offers one example of the arhat's surprising and subtle manifestations to his followers. The text tells the story of a lay elder who invited Pindola to the vegetarian feasts which he hosted for Buddhist monks. At these ceremonial feasts, according to the text:

[t]he flowers that were placed under the mat kept wilting. After the third feast, an old monk appeared to the distressed host and told him that each time he was invited, he accepted the invitation, but when he arrived as an old man in shabby clothing the elder's servants beat him and chased him away. The elder realized that this old monk was Pindola. Ever since then, when a feast is offered to the monks the gate to the residence is kept open, and if Pindola arrives to participate in the feast, the flowers are said not to wilt.¹⁸⁷

The guardian saint of the refectory, like the bodhisattva Mañjuśrī, manifests himself in the form of an old monk and makes his presence known with unusual flowers. The unusual flowers, initially overlooked as insignificant frustrations in this tale, operate as signs of the arhat much like the brightly coloured flowers which grow on the slopes of Mount Wutai which, according to the vision-literature of the mountain, are evidence of the bodhisattva's presence there. These phenomena are read as subtle signs of a divine figure's presence which sometimes, as in the next story, remain unnoticed.

The central role of the unrecognized stranger in the cult of Pindola is highlighted in the following example from the *Fayuan zhulin* (Jade Forest in the Dharma Garden T.2122). This text includes a series of miracle stories in the section on “accepting the invitation for a meal.” The following story is taken from the *Mingxiang ji*. The story centers on the Buddhist minister He Chong (296-346) and is set, again, at a maigre feast:

At one large banquet, attended both by monks and lay people, a monk appeared. Dressed shabbily and behaving like a low-born person, this monk went up to the empty seat set up for Pindola. He sat there silently without saying a word. Everyone in the hall was taken aback, saying that there must be some mistake. He Chong, too, was disturbed and showed his displeasure. The lowly monk took the mid-day meal at the high seat, and after the meal was finished he picked up the bowl and went out of the building. He then said to He Chong, “Your effort at Buddhist cultivation has been in vain,” and threw the bowl high up in the sky and left. He Chong and others rushed to look. The bowl shone brightly and disappeared. Everyone was filled with regrets and carried out repentance over many days.¹⁸⁸

In this story Pindola appears as a mysterious stranger at a banquet. His unruly appearance and brash behaviour shock the attendants, who remain ignorant of the monk’s true identity even as he sits in the seat reserved for Pindola in these ceremonies. The role which the arhat is pictured in here is one which Mañjuśrī plays at the maigre feast at the Huayan Monastery. In this tale Mañjuśrī appears in the guise of pregnant woman with the gall to ask for a second portion of food. In both these texts, the divine guests remain undiscovered until it is too late. Mañjuśrī and Pindola’s departures leave both congregations in tears

¹⁸⁷ Shinohara, *Taking a meal* 26.

¹⁸⁸ Shinohara, *Taking a meal* 34.

The affinity between the earlier Pindola and later Mañjuśrī traditions is unmistakable. The chief forms in which the guardian saint of refectories manifests himself to devout Buddhists in the early stories of ceremonial feasts are the same ones which Mañjuśrī manifests himself in the vision-tales of Mount Wutai and stories of manifestation monasteries in particular. It may well be that the stories of the unexpected and often unrecognized Pindola Bharadvaja lie in the background of the Wutai tradition. The later stories of manifested monasteries may indeed be making use of the Pindola story tradition recorded in these early Buddhist texts. The form in which Mañjuśrī is depicted most frequently in the stories of Daoyi, Fazhao and Wuzhuo but not Shenyong, is another element of the narratives which differentiates the earlier and later texts from each. This later tradition of tales assert that Mount Wutai is a place made sacred by the bodhisattva's appearance there in the guise of, among other things, an aged monk and an old man.

Conclusion

This paper addresses the relationship between religious biography and the creation of and competition for sacred place, subjects which converge in the question: how do stories detailing a religious figure's life and relationship to a place contribute to the sense that a site is sacred and merits devotional attention, such as pilgrimage, and protection, from groups with competing claims to that site? The paper pursued one answer to this question in the context of medieval China. It looked specifically at the biography of the Tang monk Wuzhuo and the record of his pilgrimage to Mount Wutai. The accounts of Wuzhuo's life and pilgrimage experiences are found in the *Song Gaoseng Zhuan*, compiled by Zanning between 982 and 988, and Yanyi's *Guang Qingliang Zhuan*, composed around 1060. The thesis identified references to him in the *Guang Qingliang Zhuan* record of the Pure Land Patriarch Fazhao's Mount Wutai pilgrimage and in the biography of the Huayan Master Chengguan in this same mountain monograph. The comparison of the account of Wuzhuo's life and pilgrimage with the larger Wutai vision-literature tradition in this thesis showed that, by chronicling the bodhisattva's entry into the human world at Mount Wutai, these vision-tales confirmed claims in the *Foshuo Wenshu shili bannie pan jing*, the *Foshuo Wenshu shili fabaozang tuoluoni jing* and the *Dafangguang fo huayan jing* that the holy mountain was home to Mañjuśrī. In this way, the paper suggests, the accounts of Wuzhuo's life and pilgrimage with the larger vision-tale

tradition of which it is a part, contributed to the Tang understanding that Mount Wutai was a sacred Buddhist domain.

In the tales of Wuzhuo's Mount Wutai experiences and in the larger vision-tale tradition of which it is a part, however, the claim that the mountain is home to Mañjuśrī is not the sole grounds on which the mountain's sacred status is asserted. Rather, *this thesis has demonstrated*, there were multiple ways in which the vision-literature framed the five-terraced mountain as a holy Buddhist site. In its exploration of the relationship of Wuzhuo's biography to the wider story tradition, the paper has shown that the Mount Wutai was alleged to be a place of particular numinousness because the current era was that of the dharma's dissolution. Its holy status was linked to its location at the periphery of the dynasty. The mountain was, of course, purported to be sacred because it was identified as the site where Mañjuśrī entered the human realm. At the same time Mount Wutai was pictured as the place from which a group of monks exited the ordinary human realm. In numerous ways the accounts of Wuzhuo's life and relationship to Mount Wutai, in conjunction with the larger vision-tale tradition of which it is a part, promoted the understanding that Mount Wutai was a sacred site.

A comparison of the record of Wuzhuo's experiences at Mount Wutai with the larger Wutai vision-tale tradition brought to light not only its similarity to this body of literature but also the significant way in which the tale of Wuzhuo's pilgrimage differed from it: Wuzhuo's biography not only chronicles the entry of the bodhisattva into the human world but also records the exit of a monk-pilgrim

from the ordinary temporal and spatial realm. And, this comparative work has shown, it is not the sole *Song Gaoseng Zhuan* and *Guang Qingliang Zhuan* account of this type. The record is, rather, one of at least four such accounts. These vision-tales are the record of the monk Shenying's entry into the manifested Fahua Yuan (Cloister of the Dharma Blossom T51: 1112c17-1113a14), the record of the monk Daoyi's entry into the manifested Jinge Si (Golden Pavillion Monastery T51: 1113a15-1114a5) and the record of the monk Fazhao's entry into the manifested Zhulin Si (Bamboo Grove Monastery T51: 1114a6-1116a22). Each of these tales suggested that the mountain was a holy site because Mañjuśrī was present there. These four stories, further, asserts its sacred status by chronicling the exit of a Tang monk from the human realm at Wutai and his entry into a manifestation monastery.

Though some of these tales of manifestation monasteries have been studied in isolation by scholars such as Stevenson and Birnbaum, this thesis approached them as a collection of stories united here by subject-matter, setting and genre. Consequently, the paper brought to light several new insights about the relationship between the cults of different bodhisattvas in the Tang and the use of non-Buddhist textual traditions in the Mount Wutai vision-literature. The paper identified certain features which are common to tales of manifestation monasteries and suggested that these accounts might well constitute a story type. The paper showed, moreover, that stories of manifestation monasteries at Mount Wutai make use of the Daoist tradition of heavenly grottoes and transforming

elixirs. The record of an individual's exit from the temporal and spatial realm seems to find inspiration here. It suggested, further, that the image of the bodhisattva Mañjuśrī as an aged and unknown monk or man is a product of interactions between the cult of Mañjuśrī at Wutai and the cult of Pindola in China. This relationship helps to broaden our understanding of the interactions of bodhisattva cults during the Tang. The paper, then, not only showed that in the vision tales of Mount Wutai the Buddhist claim to the mountain was framed, at once, in a number of different ways but also highlighted some of the connections between the cult of Pindola and the Daoist mountain traditions with this literature.

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